

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 5 June 2024**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE) BILL 2024**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced by Mr Jihad Dib, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (10:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Before I commence, I acknowledge two young leaders, Anannya and Harry, guests of the member for Gosford. The member tells me they are future leaders in Gosford. They have an outstanding local member.

I am pleased to introduce the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024. The Minns Labor Government has made action on climate change a whole-of-government priority. We are taking strong action on climate change to reduce our emissions, make our communities and environment more resilient to extreme weather events, and ensure our economy is strong, robust and built on local secure jobs. Last year we legislated the emissions reduction targets to give New South Wales a net zero future. A key part of that is decarbonising our energy system. Today we are taking further steps to ensure New South Wales has a clean energy future. This is good for our environment and good for our economy. New South Wales households will benefit from cheaper power. Small businesses will benefit, enabling them to spend less on their power bills and more on employing people. Industry will benefit, creating new export opportunities and high-paying jobs. Landowners and regional communities will also benefit from this transformation.

The New South Wales energy system is swiftly transitioning to one based on renewable energy. As we make this important transition, the legislative framework that it relies on must keep pace. This is an omnibus bill that supports delivery of the energy transition by updating relevant legislation to secure New South Wales' clean energy future. Through this bill, the New South Wales Government is seeking to streamline approval processes for critical electricity system infrastructure; strengthen the New South Wales transmission licensing framework; incentivise storage projects; clarify existing positions regarding support for green hydrogen and regulation-making powers to ensure the safe operation of pipelines; refine EnergyCo governance arrangements; and enable strategic benefit payments to be paid to eligible landowners and others with interests in land who host new transmission infrastructure.

The bill amends five pieces of legislation that relate to different parts of the energy system: the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020, which I will refer to as the EII Act. It would not be a second reading speech that I was reading if it did not have lots of acronyms. I acknowledge the member for Manly, who also loves acronyms. The bill amends the Electricity Supply Act 1995, which I will refer to as the ES Act; the Pipelines Act 1967, which I will refer to as the Pipelines Act; the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, which I will refer to as the EUA Act; and the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991, which I will refer to as the just terms Act. I will address each schedule to the bill individually.

I turn first to the amendments in schedule 1 to the bill. In total, three amendments are made to the EII Act. Those amendments include an accelerated regulatory approval process to recover the costs of electricity system security infrastructure projects. Those projects will ensure the New South Wales electricity system remains stable as renewable electricity generation increases and coal-fired power stations close. It currently takes up to three years for regulatory approval of those projects under the National Electricity Rules and up to an additional three

years to deliver those infrastructure projects due to supply chain issues, with only three equipment suppliers globally for some equipment types.

These amendments provide a faster process to approve cost recovery of those critical projects by including them in provisions for priority transmission infrastructure projects which the Minister for Energy can direct electricity network operators to carry out. By speeding up approval cost recovery, network operators can place orders for equipment sooner and get this critical infrastructure built as soon as practical. We estimate that could save each project between 18 and 30 months, which is time we cannot afford to lose as our power stations close. Speeding up the delivery of those infrastructure projects will help maintain the system security of the New South Wales electricity grid and reduce our dependence on coal-fired power stations for these essential system services.

The amendments to the ES Act introduce a requirement for a network operator authorised to carry out renewable energy zone [REZ] network infrastructure projects to hold and maintain a network operator licence. The REZ network infrastructure projects are vital to the future of New South Wales electricity reliability as coal-fired power stations retire, delivering large amounts of new energy to power our regions and cities. The first of these renewable energy zones is the Central-West Orana [CWO] Renewable Energy Zone, which is expected to initially provide at least 4.5 gigawatts of new network capacity.

The amendments will ensure that the preferred network operator for the CWO REZ project will be required to hold and maintain a transmission operator's licence under the ES Act, ensuring the declared CWO transmission system will be operated and maintained safely. The amendments will also enable licence conditions to be imposed regarding specified performance and reliability standards and business continuity requirements. The amendments provide greater clarity to industry and the community on the licensing requirements under the ES Act for REZ network infrastructure projects.

Turning to incentives for clean energy technologies, the ES Act enables current and prospective green hydrogen producers to apply for a 90 per cent discount on electricity network charges. Through this bill, minor amendments to the ES Act will clarify the scope of the discount and the Minister's regulation-making powers so that the concessions process can operate more effectively. These concessions support green hydrogen production in New South Wales, which will play a critical role in industrial decarbonisation. Finally, on the ES Act, this bill makes amendments to support the delivery of Energy Security Safeguard schemes. It updates the definition of "market customer" in the Energy Savings Scheme to reflect the Australian Energy Market Operator's [AEMO] introduction of a new participant category. This change maintains the definition of "market customer" for the purposes of the ES Act as it was prior to the market operator's change. Those now categorised by AEMO as "integrated resource providers" will continue to be captured by the ES Act and participate in the scheme as the policy intends.

A further amendment to energy security safeguard schemes provides a regulation-making power to prevent Energy Savings Scheme and Peak Demand Reduction Scheme liability being incurred on electricity purchased by battery facilities. The policy intent in those schemes is for liability to apply to end users. A battery facility is not an end user because the electricity it purchases is later converted back into electricity and sold on to end users such as homes and business. The amendment enables liability to be removed from electricity purchased by battery facilities, which play a critical role in the energy transition. This Government takes energy storage seriously, and we are glad to take steps to incentivise more battery storage in New South Wales.

I now turn to schedule 3 to the bill. The amendments to the Pipelines Act proposed in the bill will make it easier to modernise the safety and technical regulation framework for pipelines in New South Wales, ensuring that the legislation remains fit for purpose for the future energy transition. This includes adjusting for future changes in pipelines use, such as transporting hydrogen and other renewable fuels. Relating to futureproofing the legislation for the energy transition, that includes additional abilities to prescribe requirements to better regulate for public safety—for example, by requiring certain actions in the event of an escape and ignition of substances from a pipeline. The changes to be introduced into the regulation include facilitating the requirements for decommissioning plans to ensure that when pipelines operations are ceased it happens safely and properly as well.

The changes will omit some offences and penalties from the Act at a date determined by proclamation so they can be relocated to the regulation to make it easier to regularly review and update penalty units to ensure consistency with other jurisdictions and to reflect risks and potential impacts on the public from any breach of provisions. These amendments do not change the current regulatory framework or penalty unit amounts. Any changes to this will be done through revising the Pipelines Regulation in consultation with industry and other stakeholders. The amendments to Pipelines Act will occur in two stages: the strengthening of regulatory-making powers will commence on bill assent, and the removal of offences and penalties from the Act to be relocated in the regulation will commence by proclamation when the new regulation for offences and penalties comes into force. Those changes will ensure that New South Wales pipelines safety and technical regulation is fit for purpose in supporting the ongoing and future energy transition.

I now turn to schedule 4 to the bill. Schedule 4 amends the EUA Act with respect to the governance arrangements of the Energy Corporation of NSW, known as EnergyCo. EnergyCo has functions under the EUA Act and functions as the infrastructure planner under the EII Act for New South Wales renewable energy zones and priority transmission projects. The amendments in schedule 4 will refine and strengthen arrangements to EnergyCo's governance arrangements, building on amendments to the EUA Act made by the Energy Legislation Amendment Act, which were assented to on 12 December 2023 and will commence on proclamation.

The amendments in schedule 4 recognise the important role that EnergyCo is playing in the energy transition under the bipartisan road map and will support EnergyCo to function as a fully fledged delivery agency in response to recommendations of the New South Wales Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up. The changes in schedule 4 are necessary to balance providing the new EnergyCo board with sufficient autonomy and flexibility as EnergyCo delivers critical new electricity infrastructure, while ensuring that strong ministerial and departmental oversight is maintained.

The amendments in schedule 4 refine and strengthen EnergyCo's governance arrangements to ensure that the EnergyCo board is responsible for the performance of the functions of EnergyCo and the CEO; provide an information-gathering power for the Minister for Energy; provide a qualified direction power for the secretary; clarify requirements for corporate reporting and board procedure; ensure continuity of the CEO's employment under the new governance arrangements; and allow the EnergyCo board to establish committees and provide that members of those committees are protected from personal liability. Making these changes is now a priority for the Government and it will enable EnergyCo's revised governance arrangements to be in place before the EnergyCo board commences in July 2024. The amendments in schedule 4 set EnergyCo up for success in delivering its functions while also ensuring that the Minister and the Government have sufficient oversight and information to ensure positive outcomes for New South Wales electricity consumers and communities.

I now turn to schedule 5 to the bill. Schedule 5 implements the Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme through amendments to the ES Act, the EUA Act and the just terms Act. This will support the successful delivery of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, which involves the delivery of new transmission infrastructure in New South Wales to enable the energy transition. The Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme, publicly announced in October 2022, aims to ensure that private landowners or holders of other interests in land who are hosting new or eligible transmission infrastructure share in the benefits of the energy transition. This policy will be enabled by the bill and is a key part of how the New South Wales Government continues to acknowledge the important role of private landholders in this critical energy transition.

Landowners currently receive a one-off compensation payment under the just terms Act for hosting new transmission infrastructure projects. The Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme provides an additional financial benefit of \$200,000 per kilometre to people with interests in land that host transmission projects critical to energy transformation. This payment will be made annually or as determined by the guidelines set by the Minister, for a period of 20 years. This approach acknowledges the ongoing presence of the infrastructure. New South Wales is the first State to implement such a scheme. I note that Victoria and Queensland have followed New South Wales' example and implemented similar schemes—but we were the first. The amendments will implement the scheme to ensure that landowners receive additional financial benefits, with eligibility prescribed by guidelines that transmission operators who hold the requisite licences must adhere to.

The amendments will also ensure that payments made under the scheme are separate, in addition to, and will not reduce the compensation payable under the just terms Act. That sounds pretty fair to me. These amendments are long overdue and are required now to ensure host landholders have clarity regarding their overall compensation and benefit-sharing picture for hosting critical transmission infrastructure. This Government is committed to ensuring that regional communities benefit from the transformation of our energy system. This change is one of the key ways we are delivering on this. On this World Environment Day, when we have a couple of young people sitting in the gallery who are at Parliament to talk about their future and the importance of acting on climate change, it gives me a great sense of pride to be part of a government that acts on such important things.

A clean energy future carries tremendous opportunities for New South Wales. A lot of attention is paid to the challenges we face and to the disruption that the energy transition causes to some individuals. Of course, we need to manage these things, but that does not take away from the fact that New South Wales—our economy, our households, our small businesses, our workers—will benefit from having a reliable supply of low-cost power. Our renewable energy plan will deliver that supply, steadily, in an orderly way and in a way that benefits New South Wales consumers, lowers our emissions and builds the base for our State's prosperity in the future. We are pleased to be able to ensure our legislative framework is fit for purpose as we deliver a clean energy future for New South Wales.

I acknowledge all the people who have worked on this incredibly important bill. A bipartisan approach has led us to this point. I acknowledge the shadow Minister, who is in the Chamber. I also acknowledge the work of

Minister Sharpe and her staff on the bill. We stand on the cusp of something extraordinary. This Government is looking at how it can protect our future and go into it with everything in place to ensure that we have a reliable, affordable energy supply, while at the same time providing a benefit to the communities of New South Wales and to the consumers of electricity. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Committees*

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day resolved that the Hon. Aileen MacDonald be discharged from the committee and the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones be appointed as a member of the committee.

**COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION**

**Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day resolved that the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones be discharged from the committee and the Hon. Aileen MacDonald be appointed as a member of the committee.

*Bills*

**BAIL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) BILL 2024**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 15 May 2024.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:35):** On behalf of the Opposition I speak in debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 and I indicate that the Opposition will support the bill but will be moving one amendment. Schedule 1 to the bill, importantly, does more than merely tinker with the wording in the Bail Act—something that I have observed from time to time in the 37 years that I have been an admitted lawyer in this State. For the first time a bill contains a commitment by the Government to electronically monitor certain persons granted bail, which was, of course, the centrepiece of my private member's bill, the Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024, which I second read prior to the introduction and second reading of this bill.

Schedule 1 to the bill contains provisions relating to electronic monitoring—a complete game changer with regard to bail in this State for certain domestic violence offences. The adoption by the Government of electronic monitoring in respect of its bail provisions came about in an interesting way. For many weeks, when the Opposition had the running on this matter, the Premier indicated it was unlikely that the Government would adopt electronic monitoring as part of its bail reforms. On the morning of Cabinet's decision, the Premier told Ben Fordham on his 2GB radio program that electronic monitoring would not be part of the Government's legislation. A few hours later I told Ray Hadley on his 2GB radio program that this was a missed opportunity, and that the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report delivered in May last year on electronic monitoring of domestic violence offenders on parole had shown a 33 per cent reduction in reoffending. The sample size was nearly 1,000 people.

The control group consisted of domestic violence offenders on parole who did not have electronic monitoring. It was conducted by the research arm of the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice. It found that there was an overwhelming case for the use of technology to monitor compliance with conditions of bail that had geographic exclusions, and that it would be a real game changer. Courts have been imposing conditions on bail for hundreds of years, but technology has not been used to monitor whether people comply with them. In the modern world and with the assistance of modern technology, there is no reason why we should be operating as if court orders were from the 1800s, especially when we have compelling evidence that electronic monitoring would drive down reoffending by 33 per cent. It is almost impossible to think of any other program that has had such an impact on reoffending for domestic violence.

I am happy to say that the Premier was rolled by Cabinet, within a number of hours of speaking to Ben Fordham. Indeed, that afternoon Cabinet decided that electronic monitoring would be part of the Government's package. That was announced on 14 May and included in the bill. The presumption of electronic monitoring for bail granted in serious domestic violence offences was in my private member's bill. There are some differences. My bill covered a much broader class, because it included all domestic violence offences with regard to persons

within a domestic relationship. This bill includes the more narrow class of those who are an intimate partner. But it also has a wider operation in other respects, in that it includes coercive control. The Opposition believes that this is an excellent beginning for electronic monitoring, and we support it.

The bill also allows for bail authorities to order electronic monitoring in circumstances where there is not a presumption, as did our bill. The test for rebutting the presumption of electronic monitoring is not substantially different from what was in our bill. This bill contains the same consequential amendment to section 29 of the Bail Act as our bill. This bill extends the cases where a stay can be granted pending an appeal of a grant of bail, as did our bill. So there are substantial similarities between this bill and the private member's bill that I introduced. One noticeable change is that this bill does not have a provision that excludes registrars from making valid decisions. As we know, registrars do not need to be legally qualified. In the judicial hierarchy, they are at a level below magistrates. A recent focus has been on bail decisions made by registrars on weekends, and the unsatisfactory fact that magistrates are not deciding those important bail decisions.

In some courts in New South Wales, registrars are making those decisions on weekends; in other courts, magistrates are making those decisions. Although the media release by the Premier, the Attorney General and the Minister for Women on 14 May announced that there would be changes to ensure that bail decisions are made by magistrates on weekends, that did not make its way into the bill, whereas my private member's bill had such a provision. I will move an amendment to exclude registrars from making bail decisions in the case of all serious personal violence offences, not just domestic relationships. The Opposition believes that an exclusion of registrars deciding those matters is important to maintain confidence in our judicial system and consistency of decision-making in such important matters of public safety.

The Government bill also introduces new provisions into the Bail Act, which we support. It introduces new show cause offences for serious violence offences against an intimate partner and coercive control offences under section 54D of the Crimes Act, which will operate from 1 July. It introduces a new consideration for the grant or refusal of bail generally—that there has been behaviour which may constitute domestic abuse. Schedule 2 introduces amendments to the Surveillance Devices Act that deal with circumstances in which surveillance devices may be used as an indicium of domestic violence.

The bill is substantially the same as the private member's bill that the Opposition introduced some weeks ago. Given that there was clear agreement between the Government and the Opposition on this bill, it is regrettable that the Government blocked our motion for urgency, which would have seen this bill move quickly through the Parliament. It would have required the Attorney General to introduce the bill and give a second reading speech, which he did immediately after our suspension of standing orders was voted against by the Government. It would have then facilitated debate on the bill, on which there is substantial agreement between the Government and the Opposition. It could have been debated and proceeded to the upper House. It could have been passed many weeks ago and been of benefit to the safety of our citizens. It could have also allowed the bureaucracy to commence preparation for the introduction of electronic monitoring, which is a very beneficial policy change.

It is substantially different to merely changing the words in the Bail Act, which tends not to have a dramatic impact on results, as we have seen over many years. Now that electronic monitoring has been introduced in the bail context, I assume it will operate in a similar way to the parole context. Parole is at one end of the judicial process—that is, after charge, trial, conviction, imprisonment and early release. Bail operates at a much earlier stage of the judicial process, after a charge has been made and consideration must be given to what will occur between charge and trial.

The electronic monitoring will operate by subjecting a person on bail to geographical restrictions. If they breach those geographic restrictions, the monitoring personnel will notify the person on bail that they are in breach of their conditions. If they do not rectify that breach, the police and the participating victims will be immediately notified that there is a breach of the bail conditions and the geographical restrictions. That will provide the participating victim with an opportunity to enact their personal safety action plan. It will provide forewarning in circumstances where, under the current system, victims have no forewarning at all. This may be of particular benefit in parts of New South Wales, particularly in regional areas, where police are more thinly deployed than in urban areas. It will give participating victims in those localities a degree of warning. It is not a perfect system; no system is perfect. But it is a significant improvement on the current system.

In addition to that, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics show that electronic monitoring has a substantial deterrent effect against reoffending. Electronic monitoring results in a 33 per cent reduction in the rate of reoffending by domestic violence perpetrators on parole. If that is replicated in the bail context—and there is no reason to think that it would not be—it will create a substantial change to the status quo. The Opposition supports the schedule 1 and 2 changes to the Bail Act. The Opposition will move a very small amendment to the bill to prevent registrars from determining bail in serious personal violence offence cases. That is not only an

important improvement to the bill but also consistent with the Government's press release. By making that amendment the Parliament would oversee and ensure the implementation of the changes that were announced.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (10:52):** I support the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. Domestic and family violence is a national crisis. We must take a balanced and evidence-based approach to reverse the trajectory of this scourge. Maximising the safety of victim-survivors and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions are critical priorities for the New South Wales Labor Government. The bill will deliver better outcomes for both of those objectives. The heartbreak associated with recent domestic violence deaths, including the death of Molly Ticehurst, is not limited to the friends, families and communities of the people who have died; the heartbreak has shaken the nation. We feel the sadness, anger and frustration of those communities and families. Those emotions only strengthen our resolve to act. Our justice system must be fit for purpose and equipped with the tools needed to ensure that victim-survivors are not at unacceptable risk of violence from dangerous offenders.

The prevention of domestic and family violence requires a multifaceted approach. The justice system alone cannot fix the crisis. That is why the bill is one part of an ongoing suite of measures this Government is advancing to make a difference in the response to domestic, family and sexual violence. We are listening to victim-survivors, community stakeholders and experts. We certainly listened when we developed this particular bill. We took our time to ensure the stakeholders understood and believed this bill was the right way to progress. But our work does not end here. We will continue to work hard to achieve meaningful change.

I turn to the reforms outlined in the bill. Broadly speaking, the bill implements several changes to our justice system. Firstly, and arguably most importantly, the bill reverses the presumption of bail for serious domestic violence offences. That is a significant change to how the Bail Act operates. The bill also requires electronic monitoring of people who are charged with serious domestic violence offences and are on bail; expands the category of offences in which bail decisions can be stayed; makes changes to make it easier to prosecute offenders who use surveillance tactics to maintain control over their victims; and includes associated amendments to support the changes.

I now elaborate on how those changes will work in practice. Schedule 1 to the bill introduces new requirements into the Bail Act 2013 to strengthen the legislative framework of bail for domestic violence offenders. It introduces three new definitions into section 4 of the Bail Act 2013 relating to domestic and family violence. "Domestic violence offence" has the same meaning as in section 11 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. An "intimate partner" of a person is someone who is or has been married to that person, is or has been their de facto partner or has or has had an intimate personal relationship with them, whether or not that relationship involves or has involved a relationship of a sexual nature. "Serious domestic violence offence" means an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900 which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or more when committed against an intimate partner, or a corresponding offence committed in another jurisdiction. That is an important definition in the bill.

Examples of offences that fall within the scope of the definition of serious domestic violence offence when committed against an intimate partner include causing grievous bodily harm with intent; sexual intercourse without consent; kidnapping; and choking or strangulation to render a person unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance with the intention of enabling the commission of an indictable offence. The bill adds two new categories of offences to the list of show cause offences in section 16B (1) of the Bail Act 2013. It is important to note that a bail authority must refuse bail for a show cause offence unless the accused shows why their detention is not justified. If the accused can meet that requirement, they must also pass the unacceptable risk test to be granted bail. That requires a bail authority to determine if there is an unacceptable risk that an accused person will fail to appear at any proceedings for the offence; commit an offence; endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community; or interfere with witnesses or evidence.

The two new categories of show cause offences include the serious domestic violence offence and the new coercive control offence, which will come into effect on 1 July. Coercive control refers to a pattern of behaviours that seek to dominate and control a victim. Coercive control goes to the heart of domestic violence and we must reject it in all of its forms. Leading up to coercive control becoming an offence, the Government has launched a comprehensive statewide educational campaign, "It's not love, it's coercive control. Know the signs of abuse." It is vital that this message cuts through, particularly to hard-to-reach communities. The campaign focuses on engaging culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This week we announced further targeting for First Nations communities.

In addition to the expansion of show cause offences, this bill will amend section 18 (1) of the Bail Act 2013 to require explicit consideration of key factors related to domestic abuse, not limited just to those involving intimate partners. Domestic abuse will include both physical and non-physical abuse and can include but is not

limited to financial abuse, stalking, causing injury or death to an animal, and behaviours that restrict access to family members and friends. Currently the Bail Act only requires the bail authority to take the views of family members and victims into account with respect to serious—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** 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.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome members of Warradale Men's Shed and Mr Bob Morgan, guests of the member for Wollondilly, and Harrison Smith and Anannya Bandaru, guests of the member for Gosford. I think they might have been in here a little earlier and were acknowledged by the Minister. I welcome guests of mine, from the Lake Macquarie electorate. My guests are from the Men's Probus Club of Belmont. I do not want the member for Swansea thinking that I am poaching from her area, but quite a number of those gentlemen are from the Lake Macquarie electorate. So we will share the honour of hosting the club members. I welcome student leaders from high schools across New South Wales, joining us in the upper gallery, attending the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program conducted by the parliamentary education unit. I truly hope they are having a wonderful experience today. I know that they have met a number of members of Parliament today. I hope they take this away as a significant memory of their time here in Parliament. I acknowledge Natan Bedrosian, a guest of the member for Leppington.

#### *Question Time*

#### **WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:05):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Construction of Wollongong Hospital's palliative care ward was completed 12 months ago. Since then, all 18 beds have remained empty. Is that a casualty of the Minister's cuts to palliative care funding?

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

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:05):** There are a few slight problems with the question. I will not over-egg them. Some years ago, the only thing the Libs did for Wollongong Hospital was to leave a hole in the ground. That is something the member for Kiama does not talk about a lot, but those of us who have lived there all our lives remember one or two things, and those of us who were born there, like the member for Wollongong and me, may remember one or two things more. Let me go through palliative care one more time so that the community who may not have heard me talk before about the importance of palliative care can understand what the Government is doing.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Last year there was an increase of 6 per cent. In the ongoing year, there is an increase of 8 per cent, which is a significant investment in capital across regional, rural and metropolitan areas. Most important, however, is an increase in staffing. I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition has highlighted the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, of which Wollongong Hospital is the major hospital for palliative care. Annoying for my office and the department, I tend to want to know exact figures around, from a budget perspective, how they have changed previously, year on year, and where we are taking it. Obviously, I have a table to do that. In 2022-23 for Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, of which Wollongong is a part, the previous Government allocated \$1.56 million. That is not bad. It is pretty good, I think you would say—reasonable. In 2023-24—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Hang on. How can I be more relevant?

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

*[Interruption]*

Regardless of how the Minister feels about it, the standing orders prescribe that members will resume their seats when directed to do so by the Speaker.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Minister has gone nowhere near 18 empty beds at Wollongong Hospital.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition. He will resume his seat. The Minister has been directly relevant.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Funding for palliative care in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District includes Wollongong Hospital. I do not know how more relevant the member wants to get. It was \$1.56 million under his Government.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** In our first year, it was \$2.145 million; the next year, \$2.53 million. The member should get his facts right.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister has two seconds remaining.

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is about relevance, taken under Standing Order 129. When will the Minister apologise to people who will have to die in pain because of his brutal cuts to the palliative care budget?

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Hornsby on three calls to order. I warn the member for Hornsby that I will no longer tolerate his recent behaviour during question time. The member for Hornsby will be removed from the Chamber if he continues to take spurious points of order about relevance or any other matter.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: It is early in question time but, Mr Speaker, I invite your attention, and that of members of the House, to Standing Order 131 (8), which was inserted at the instigation of the member for Wahroonga when he was Leader of the House. It states that points of order are not to be "vexatious, repetitive, interfering or used to make a statement". I ask that that standing order be enforced and members be called to order when they are in breach of it.

**The SPEAKER:** Some behaviour in the Chamber is frustrating for all members. I have dealt with the issue so I do not need to address the point of order from the Leader of the House. All members, including Government members, are expected to comply with the standing orders and rulings of the Speaker. The member for Hornsby has been given a clear warning about what will happen the next time he takes a spurious point of order. Members on both sides of the Chamber have been disrespectful to me. It is getting out of hand. We will have decorum in the Chamber.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:11):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the greatest threat to addressing the housing crisis in New South Wales?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:11):** I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. There is a housing crisis in New South Wales, by any objective measure. The average annual amount paid by renters and mortgage holders in New South Wales is astronomical. Interest rates are adding to the exasperation that households are feeling. As a result of a lack of supply in the housing market, something needed to change. The productivity commissioner has said that Sydney will be a city without grandchildren in the years ahead. The average house price is half a million dollars more than the next most expensive city, Melbourne, and rents have had double-digit increases on the back of double-digit increases.

As a result of that, the Government has made a decision to have a sensible but far-reaching reform of planning in New South Wales with the transport oriented developments [TODs]. That has been as a result of the undoubted and unquestioned crisis in housing in New South Wales. But in an act of recklessness and cynicism in the other place, the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has introduced a bill that would smash up that State environmental planning policy and those zonings in Sydney. It was a reckless act from the New South Wales Opposition designed to entrench the current situation, which has locked out a generation of young Australians from the housing market in this State. The Opposition will replace it with nothing—no plan for housing, no plan for zoning, no plan for targets, no plan for building and no plan for economic development.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** In its place, presumably, is the bureaucracy, red tape, delay and entrenched process that has seen true nimbyism and a generation of young Australians locked out of the housing market in this State. The supposed reason for the bill is that the New South Wales Government has not engaged in enough negotiations with the councils, despite the Opposition conveniently neglecting the fact that the Government has negotiated outcomes with 12 of the 13 councils. There is only one holdout, and that is Ku-ring-gai. That has been widely



condemned by civic, business and political leaders in this State, with exception of The Greens. The Liberals and The Greens are in it together to block supply for young Australians in our community.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I quote some of the people who have slammed their recklessness. Housing Now! has said that it is dismayed by the Opposition's shortsighted decision to overturn a policy that will deliver more housing for key transport districts in this city.

**Mr Greg Warren:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant a two-minute extension. Members will come to order. The Premier may answer the question in a robust fashion but members should understand the requirement for at least a level of decorum. The Premier is the leader of the Government and he will be heard in silence.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order: I would like the Premier to withdraw his comment about The Greens because it lacked factual information.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. I call the member for Newtown to order for the first time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No, The Greens are just as responsible as the Liberals, without a shadow of a doubt.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** The Greens have not seen the bill, let alone have a position—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** A decade's worth of nimbyism by the New South Wales Greens needs to be called out.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** That is not true.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Newtown will resume her seat.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It absolutely is true.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Newtown that she is on two calls to order. That is not the way to take a point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Greens are just as bad as the Liberals. They have been into nimbyism for a decade. It is the truth. I will not withdraw my comment. Housing Now! has said, "We urge political leaders to put the interests of the community ahead of political pointscoring." The Urban Taskforce said, "The bottom line is that this creates the uncertainty that builders of housing need." The Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW [UDIA] issued a media release today stating that it has called on the New South Wales Parliament to support policies that will boost the housing supply and reject legislation from the Opposition that would allow parts of the Transport Oriented Development [TOD] to be abolished. It went on to state:

Not only would this legislation undermine the TOD program, but it would set a dangerous precedent where key policies, critical to the operation of the New South Wales planning system, could be abolished or amended.

Who said that? It was Stuart Ayres, the head of the UDIA. That is the policy from the party of business, the party of builders and the party of housing. It has got cream pie on its face because of a reckless policy, which would not just undermine transport oriented developments but allow Opposition parties, along with The Greens, to yank any kind of planning anywhere in the State that they did not like. If members want certainty in the construction sector, they should not vote for the bill. If members want some kind of momentum when it comes to economic development, they should not vote for the bill. If people want a political party that will put the next generation of young Australians at the back of the queue, they should vote for the Liberal Party.

#### LITTLE WINGS CHARITY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:17):** My question is directed to the Premier. In 2022 the Premier said, "We cannot wait to help Little Wings in 2023," but he left that amazing charity out of the budget last year. Only after inquiries from *The Daily Telegraph* has he committed anything in the upcoming budget. Does it take a media inquiry to force the Premier to keep his promises?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:18):** That is another cynical question from the New South Wales Opposition. That is the truth. The bottom line is that the New South Wales Government—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —has provided \$400,000 and the Opposition would have—

**The SPEAKER:** All members will come to order and listen to the Premier's answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —people believe that Little Wings had funding from the previous Government.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** No, we didn't say that.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That's the implication of the question; that's the supposition of the question.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The truth remains that this funding from the New South Wales Government is the largest State government funding to Little Wings in its existence. The member for Dubbo neglected to mention that in his question. Did any member hear that in the question? No. It is half-truths, partial facts and a lack of transparency when it comes to that information. The bottom line is that, to its credit, Little Wings has relied on private philanthropy, along with millions of dollars from the Commonwealth Government, to fund its operation.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The New South Wales Government will step in with \$400,000. We are prepared to work with them.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** But at the end of the day, if members opposite are going to ask questions then they may as well be transparent and provide all of the information, rather than asking half-baked questions.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Dubbo to order for the second time. I call the member for Port Macquarie to order for the first time. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time. Members will cease interjecting.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:19):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's commitment to deliver reliable transport, connected to communities?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:19):** I want to take the House on a little bit of a journey. I may be the transport Minister but this is more of a journey in time, back to 1988. It was a pretty good year—we had the bicentenary and Expo 88. We were dancing to *Dirty Dancing* and having the time of our lives; it was pretty good.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Sydney had a population of about 3½ million people, and the Labor Government invested in our train services through the '80s. Premier Wran and Premier Unsworth created a shiny new futuristic train called the Tangara.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Since then, the beautiful Tangara has become Australia's most recognisable train. They were built in Newcastle and they were built to last. They have been serving Sydneysiders for decades, but they are showing their age a bit. They need a little bit of TLC; they need a little bit of love. Our Government is absolutely committed to building the trains to replace those Tangaras right here. But building trains takes time, so we need to make sure that Sydneysiders keep getting reliable transport services as our city grows. We need to extend the life of the Tangaras so that we have a healthy fleet until our locally built trains are ready. They have served us for 35 years and we need them to serve a little bit longer. That is why the Government is committing \$447 million in the budget to undertake critical upgrades of our 55-strong fleet of Tangaras.

Make no mistake, that life extension is absolutely critical. The Tangaras had 700 failures last year alone. They are becoming more unreliable, and we cannot let that happen. They serve across our train network, but most importantly on the T4 line through the eastern suburbs, through the city, through the Illawarra and down to the South Coast. Those trains are critical to our network and we need to make sure they are providing the services that we need. If we do not do that work, we will have to retire up to five of them every year. They serve the people of Sydney and they can continue to serve them well, thanks to our investment. That will ensure that passengers have a reliable journey, most importantly—that they can get from A to B. But we will also do critical work to replace the brain—the computer in the train. At the moment it is basically running on the equivalent of Windows 95. [*Extension of time*]

Windows 95 will be replaced with the equivalent of a brand-new MacBook. We will make sure the trains can process information really quickly and communicate with our rail operations centre. We will put CCTV on the trains and make sure passengers can hear the announcements. People on the T4 line sometimes struggle to hear the guard. We will make sure they have screens to tell passengers what station they will turn up to. We will make sure that passengers have a safe and reliable journey into the future.

Most importantly, we will do that work right here. We will do it at Hornsby, Auburn and Flemington with Sydney Trains staff. Members opposite had an obsession with buying overseas-made assets. Let us remember the trams that cracked, the ferries that could not fit under bridges and the trains that could not fit the tracks—total disasters. They also offshored thousands of jobs in the process, ultimately resulting in a higher price for taxpayers. It was a total policy failure. They also outsourced all of the work. In 2015, members of the then Liberal Government thought that maybe they should upgrade the Tangaras. They signed a contract with a private provider, and three years later \$100 million of taxpayer money was wasted when they had to rip up the contract.

We have been left in the lurch because of their obsession with overseas-made assets and with outsourcing. Contrast that with our commitment to local jobs for local people, developing the skills we need to build the trains of the future and to make sure that there are reliable public transport services for our growing city. We want to grow our city and make sure that people, particularly young people, can afford to live here and can have the jobs of the future. That is the absolute contrast between the former Liberal Government and our commitment to building trains here into the future.

#### NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (11:25):** Do you need some cricket bats, Mr Speaker? I have some upstairs if you want to borrow them.

**The SPEAKER:** I am good, thank you.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN:** My question is directed to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC]. Given the circumstances surrounding the Northern Beaches Hospital and the performance audit recently commenced by the New South Wales Audit Office, will the Chair update the House on the PAC's work on accountability measures for major government projects and the impact of the new "follow the dollar" powers to ensure that communities like mine do not pay the price for poor government decision-making?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair of the Public Accounts Committee will be heard in silence.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (11:26):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for my very first question. He is a rockstar member of the Public Accounts Committee and a fierce advocate for his local community, and he is gravely concerned about the situation at the Northern Beaches Hospital. That hospital was a private public partnership [PPP] established by the previous Government in an act of touted financial genius—so much so that members opposite planned to privatise a further five regional hospitals using the same model. Launching the Northern Beaches Hospital in 2018, former Premier Gladys Berejiklian said:

Delivering life-changing infrastructure like this is only possible due to the strong economic management of the Liberals and Nationals  
...

A recent Deloitte audit report found that a material uncertainty exists as to the hospital's ability to continue as a going concern. The operator of the hospital, Healthscope, is also facing financial crisis. An AFR headline in April read, "Healthscope lenders add McGrathNicol to \$1.6 billion debt restructuring". When insolvency and restructuring experts McGrathNicol are called in, that is generally not a sign of strong economic management. That latest blow follows a litany of issues at the hospital, including a 2019 Herald report that hospital staff were being incentivised with \$500 gift vouchers to convert public patients to private so that the hospital could charge the private health insurers more money.

A 2020 parliamentary committee from the other place recommended that that type of PPP never be used again, finding that public patients were receiving a lower standard of care than private patients in the same hospital. The Audit Office has commenced a performance audit on the hospital using the new "follow the dollar" audit. I acknowledge your role, Mr Speaker, as the former Chair of the PAC, in agitating for those powers. As Chair of the PAC, I want to be nonpartisan in this. I am not going to go into the evils of privatisation except to say they are fundamentally opposed by the Minns Government because they create—*[Extension of time]*

They create a structural conflict between the interests of shareholders and their concern about profit, and the public interest. That conflict is particularly acute in the context of the provision of public health care, where the care and wellbeing of patients has to be paramount. The PAC is also engaged in an inquiry into accountability measures for major government projects, including business case assurance. In other words, we are asking: How is it that so many of our business cases and our project assurances get it so wrong? When we thought about which

projects we should look into first, we did not know where to start. Should we start with the Rozelle interchange? Should we start with the intercity train procurement, which is a billion dollars over budget, 35 months delayed and with trains that did not fit through the tunnels?

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

**Mr JASON LI:** We were confronted with a fiasco smorgasbord. We did not know what to choose, and so we started with something bite-sized: the Critical Communications Enhancement Program. That is an important upgrade to the public safety network used by our emergency services organisations. The original business case was \$400 million, and it was meant to be delivered in 2020. The latest cost estimate is \$2 billion, and it is running seven years late. I look forward to the performance report from the Audit Office on the Northern Beaches Hospital. I look forward to the PAC tabling our report so that taxpayer funds are not wasted, so that critical projects are not delayed by years and so that communities like Wakehurst can get the high-quality services that they deserve.

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. The applause is disorderly, although it is very well deserved. The member for Manly will come to order.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:32):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. What is the New South Wales Government's response to the so-called reforms which would worsen the housing crisis across the State?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:33):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for the question. His community should be pleased about their housing targets and the efforts this Government is going to in order to rebalance growth across Sydney. The affordability and availability of housing is the number one cost pressure facing household budgets right now. It is one of the most widely recognised, reported and understood problems we face. Yesterday in the public interest debate this Chamber unanimously agreed that there is a housing crisis. It is good to acknowledge these things. First, we must acknowledge that there is a problem. That debate provided members opposite with an opportunity to outline their plans to address the problem that they largely created—but they did not take up the opportunity to offer solutions. By contrast, the Government has been busily getting on with reforms. We have made it easier to build more social housing—The Greens should be supporting that.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We have made it easier to build more affordable housing, and key workers are applauding that. We have invested in Landcom so that it can build more homes—everyone should love that. Landcom is a great government developer. We have introduced planning reforms focused on 45 train stations that support greater density. Last week we announced housing targets that will start to rebalance Sydney's growth. That has been coupled with a \$200 million commitment to grants for councils that are meeting or exceeding their targets. That is extra money for things like sporting fields, pocket parks, local road maintenance and footpaths to build better communities.

The Government's housing targets are ambitious, but they are realistic. They are aimed at meeting our commitments in the National Housing Accord. Importantly, rather than just asking Western Sydney to do the heavy lifting again and again, our housing targets will rebalance housing growth across Sydney. I will give some statistics on how that will occur. Under the Government's plans, over the next five years, 82 per cent of the housing targets will come from infill development—that is more than four in five homes—and 18 per cent from greenfield locations. More than half of the additional homes we need to meet our target beyond those already in the system will come from eastern Sydney local government areas. That is rebalancing. By contrast, fewer than one in five additional homes will come from Western Sydney local government areas. That is a genuine plan for well-located homes near to jobs, transport, services and amenities. That begs the question: Where does the Opposition stand on this? This morning on Craig Reucassel's program on the ABC— *[Extension of time]*

This morning the Leader of the Opposition again tried to have a bet each way on housing. One really has to think through where Opposition members are on housing, but in the past 24 hours I have managed to work out their position. They say they support more housing. They say they support greater density. They say they support that density being around train stations. And to prove how much they support greater housing density around train stations, today they introduced legislation to outlaw it. The Opposition has introduced legislation to stop exactly what it says it supports.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Usually, one introduces legislation to support one's position, rather than to go against it. There is an old saying: If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it is a duck. In the Opposition's case, if it looks like a goose and behaves like a goose, it is a goose. But there are greater implications to the Opposition's attempt to outlaw housing. The new planning controls have been in place for weeks. Development applications can already be submitted. The Opposition's legislation would not only put the building of new homes at risk but also undermine confidence in investment throughout New South Wales. It is reckless and wrong.

As the advocacy group Housing Now! has said, New South Wales deserves better than political brinkmanship on critical issues like housing. Even the newly minted CEO of the Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW, Stuart Ayres—I am sure Opposition members remember him—has today called on the New South Wales Parliament to support policies that boost housing supply and, more importantly, reject legislation from the Opposition that would allow parts of the Transport Oriented Development scheme to be abolished. The Opposition's legislation is nasty. It is anti-family, anti-young people and anti-old people.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:38):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Mental Health. Why is the Government cutting Pathways to Community Living Initiative funding from \$160 million to \$40 million over four years, which will result in 230 beds being reduced to 20 beds?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:38):** I am delighted to represent the Minister for Mental Health, who is a hardworking advocate for some of the most vulnerable people in the community. I hope that mental health continues to rise above politics. For many members in this place, mental health is a real challenge, either for themselves, their family members, their friends, their loved ones or even their colleagues. I talk about this with the greatest respect for those dealing with mental health challenges, the families that support them and the workers who deliver unparalleled care across our system under difficult circumstances.

Yesterday the Government announced a \$111 million commitment for mental health. It has a range of components, as I outlined to the House yesterday. One of those components is \$40 million for the Pathways to Community Living Initiative. Members in the House and those in the gallery may not know what "pathways to community" means. It is a very bureaucratic term. Having been a Minister for a while now, those kinds of slogans and snappy things come up all the time. It essentially means that the Government is supporting people who have chronic mental illness challenges and are often stuck in our hospitals. The Government is trying to move those people into appropriate care in the community.

All members have people like that in their electorates. I know I certainly do, having had a number of conversations with family members who are in that situation. It is difficult for those people to live alone without wraparound support services. That is a fact. They often find themselves repeatedly coming in and out of the hospital system. One could imagine that the hospital system is probably not the best location for a member of the community to be when facing those challenges. The \$40 million investment will pay for the ongoing provision of 25 staff across the New South Wales mental health system to work with individuals who have complex mental health needs. I underline "ongoing".

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Why is that important? Because the program faced a funding cliff, and the Labor Government is fixing that. The Government takes enormous pride in the fact that it will continue to deliver services for the most vulnerable in the community. [*Time expired.*]

### COMMUNITY SECTOR PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:42):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister update the House on the benefits that essential community service workers can expect from the Government's proposed long service leave reforms?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:42):** That is an excellent question from the member for The Entrance, who is a strong advocate for community sector workers. There are up to 5,000 community sector workers in his electorate who work in the disability space and in neighbourhood centres to look after the most vulnerable. The member for The Entrance has been a champion in making sure that those workers have portable long service leave, which the Government is finally going to introduce in New South Wales. Long service leave is a uniquely Australian employment condition that has its origins in the nineteenth century. It was originally designed to give public sector workers a break from work to allow them to return refreshed. It then gradually expanded into the private sector

and became a way for employers to attract, recruit and retain workers, which is what we are trying to do now. Long service leave has been a workplace right since that time and is now embedded in the National Employment Standards.

The changing nature of work and the fracturing of workplaces in more recent times has made it more difficult for workers in certain industries and sectors to benefit from that important entitlement. They may work in the same industry all their lives. People from my parents' generation worked in the same factory or the same area for 30 to 40 years, but that is changing. That is the changing nature of our work. That is very much the case for community sector workers. I am talking about disability workers, homelessness workers and those who look after women escaping domestic violence—the workers who look after the most vulnerable. There are 250,000 of those workers in New South Wales, of which 75 per cent are women. Those workers, who are mostly female, are at the front line of efforts to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

It does not matter what side of politics a person is on; we all know that those workers struggle. They struggle with overwhelming stress and burnout. They are overworked and dealing with complex situations. Short-term and insecure funding arrangements are also common in the community services sector, and many workers are employed on short-term arrangements. However, our Government is making changes to make sure that there are longer term contractual agreements in this area. It is not uncommon for those workers to frequently change employers through no choice of their own. In some instances, they will be working for three or four non-government organisations. When contracts change, their work changes as well, so they struggle to reach their long service leave entitlements. [*Extension of time*]

Many workers in the community services sector, most of them being women, have worked for 20, 25 or 30 years but have never been able to qualify for long service leave. That is why the Minns Government is introducing the Community Services Sector (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill. It is a great step forward. The bill is important, as it will improve working conditions for important, hardworking community sector workers. In developing the bill, the Government consulted broadly. There is an exposure draft that everyone has seen. The Government consulted with the Opposition as well. It has consulted with business, unions and peak groups, including the NSW Council of Social Service. A working party was established, with government agencies working alongside the non-government sector and unions to make sure the Government gets the bill right. It is an important step in the Government's efforts to improve the conditions of working people.

The Government knows that the change will be effective because it has been done before in the building and construction industry and in the contract cleaning industry. The Government established this for contract cleaning in 2010. There are now many cleaners—low-paid workers, who are mostly women from non-English speaking backgrounds—who are accessing long service leave. It is about making sure that we retain and recruit in the community services sector. It is an important reform for community sector workers across all electorates in New South Wales, including in regional and remote communities, where it is difficult to recruit. It is an important entitlement, so I hope all members support it.

#### **FAMILY, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSES NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:47):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. On 9 May the Minister said in this place, "The Commonwealth approved the New South Wales allocation of workers in September 2023. We expect that those positions will be filled by this September." However, the Government's progress report to the Commonwealth shortly before that stated, "Service providers are anticipated to get the majority of employees recruited and deployed by the end of Q2 2024-25." Did the Minister mislead the House, or did the Minister mislead the Commonwealth?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:48):** I thank the member for her question and for her interest in the detail of the operation of the National Partnership Agreement [NPA] on Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence Responses. The operation of the National Partnership Agreement is complex. The rollout of the 500 workers is complex. I have been open with the Commonwealth in my response in working with them and rolling out those 500 workers—what is achievable within New South Wales. The Commonwealth has been working well with New South Wales to ensure that we provide what we need to provide under that National Partnership Agreement. I stand by my previous answer in this place. As I said, the NPA is complex. We are committed to ensuring that in New South Wales we have the best response to domestic and family violence, that we have the workers on the ground and that we have them where they are needed. I stand by my previous answer.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:49):** My question is addressed to the hardworking Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on how the New South Wales Government is caring for the students, teachers and families of New South Wales by rebuilding public education?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:50):** I am very happy to answer the question from the member for Liverpool about this Government's priority of rebuilding public education in New South Wales. In fact, it is one of our most important priorities as a government and it is what we were elected to do. The truth is—and members have heard me say this time and again in this House—that when we were elected, we inherited a system in decline. We inherited a system in which students were turning up every day to classes with no teachers. There were 10,000 merged or cancelled classes each and every day. That is a record that stands with the Coalition and that the Coalition left for Labor upon coming to government.

We inherited a system in which the previous Government refused to acknowledge that a teacher shortage was crippling our public schools, particularly our hard-to-staff areas in Western Sydney and in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. We also inherited a system in which the Government had not built schools where they were needed, particularly in the growing parts of Western Sydney. But what are we doing as a government? We are getting on with the job of building those schools.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** This Government is building schools where they are needed so that every single child in this State can access free, quality public education in their neighbourhood. That cannot be said of what was on offer when the Liberals and Nationals were in government. We are building schools in areas like Marsden Park, where the enrolment projections were 1,000 per cent off. We are building schools in areas like Marsden Park, Jordan Springs, Gregory Hills, Leppington, Schofields and Tallawong—in growing areas, where they are needed. Funnily enough, it is the law in New South Wales that every child in this State deserves a quality public education, and it is a government's role to deliver that high-class education. That simply cannot be done without two vital factors: the classrooms for the children to be in and the teachers to teach the children. This year we have begun to see vacancies heading in a downward direction. I will have much more to say about this in the months ahead. *[Extension of time]*

Under members opposite, we saw record teacher vacancies, in excess of 3,000. I do not know how any of the members opposite can come into this House and say anything about public education with any type of credibility.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** They oversaw a system with 3,000 teacher vacancies. The work we are doing is building schools; giving teachers the biggest pay rise in a generation, which we are proud to do; and making more of them permanent, along with support staff. We began the year with vacancies dropping by 20 per cent. That means we are starting to see the green shoots of the work that this Government is putting in to ensure that we have teachers in our classrooms to teach our children. We can do all the work with curriculum and we can make sure we build all the schools, but the actual business of a school is a teacher in front of our kids. That is where the life-changing stuff happens, and that is what this Government is focused on.

Members would have seen recent reports put out by the Programme for International Student Assessment—which is across the OECD, so it is no small outfit at all—showing that in 2022, 73 per cent of principals in New South Wales said teaching was being hindered by a lack of staff. That is the Coalition's record and that is what Labor inherited. We are putting teachers in classrooms to teach our children. We are building the classrooms and the schools where they are needed in Western Sydney, and we are committed to building public education and putting it back in its rightful place in this State, as decreed—high-quality education for everyone.

## SCHOOLS AND POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:55):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Ramsgate Public School students were repeatedly welcomed to school by lyrics including "desire to kill, any white devil wanna test my will" and "They say he's a captain of men, but he believe in our law. From the land of the white skins ... a murder without licence." Political indoctrination in schools continues on the Minister's watch. What actions is she personally taking to stop indoctrination in our schools?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the point of order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. I need to hear the Leader of the House.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Standing Order 128 (2) does not permit a question that contains argument, inference, or imputation. Mr Speaker, either the member for Oatley rephrases the question in a quick way, or, alternatively, you call the next member.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The question is out of order.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley will resume his seat. The member knew his question was out of order because of the way it was structured and delivered. The member will not be given a chance to rephrase it.

### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's plan to strengthen the NSW Police Force and ensure that police have the resources to keep communities safe?

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:57):** I thank the member for Coogee for her question. Her advocacy and her dedication to the police in her community are commendable. The relationship she has with her local police is clear; we are certainly with them. I thank her for her hard work. This morning I was at Waverley police station to announce the Labor Government's \$18 million investment in that facility to ensure that the station is modern, fit for purpose and safe for police officers and the public. I always find that a little historical context can highlight the benefits of these announcements. We might take a journey. In March 2015, which was the year I came into this place, members opposite announced a multimillion-dollar rebuild of Waverley station as an election commitment. Did they keep their promise?

**Government members:** No!

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** No, they did not. Then in 2019, which was in my second term, they reannounced the project. This time it was a \$12 million election commitment. Did they keep their promise?

**Government members:** No!

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** No. Now, just over a year into a new Labor Government, we have finalised plans to undertake a major refurbishment of that building, which will give police in that command what they deserve: a modern, fit-for-purpose, safe police station. After spending many hours in that station in the weeks after the horrific Westfield Bondi Junction attack, I can tell the House firsthand that it was built in the '70s, and it looks like it was built in the '70s. It needs a proper renovation. And we are not just delivering in Waverley. In fact, last month I was very pleased to join the member for Heathcote—another great advocate for policing in her local area—to announce the new police station for the community of Helensburgh. That station was forever promised by the Opposition but never delivered. In fact, I remind the House that Lee Evans promised that that station would be built in 2007 as an election commitment. Did the Opposition build it?

**Government members:** No!

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coogee is on her feet. The Minister will direct her remarks through the Chair. I also remind the Minister that it is disorderly to incite Government members to interject.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** That is just another one that we can add to the list of the litany of failures from the unfinished-business mob opposite. Imagine what the Opposition could have done if we had given it 12 years in government! It is unimaginable. We will be delivering that station to the Helensburgh community very soon. In fact, I am advised that demolition of the old building will start this week. Our investment in police is not just about facilities; it is also about the people. Our hardworking police officers in New South Wales are our lifeblood. That is why we are investing in programs that attract more people and a more diverse range of people to policing alongside programs that keep officers in the job. In the short 14 months that Labor members have been in government, we have delivered. We are delivering, even though we were left so many police officers short.



Of course, the unfinished-business mob's policy masterstroke was a program that paid police to leave the force. Guess what? Hundreds of them did. In fact, we have lost almost 1,000 police officers due to that ridiculous scheme. What is the Government's track record? Applications to join have more than doubled since our announcement to pay recruits. We have a full class at the December attestation; no-one can remember when we last saw that. We launched the Professional Mobility Program to attract cops from other jurisdictions. We are pinching them from New Zealand too, and they are excited. Even the New Zealand Prime Minister said they could not match what New South Wales has to offer. We have started a regional recruitment strategy so recruits from regional areas who do not want to live in Sydney can say they want to live close to their town. We are fixing the mess that the Opposition left us.

### WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE ROADS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (12:03):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. I thank the Minister for meeting with me over the past year as we waited for information from Wollondilly Shire Council. Wollondilly has an inconsistency: Roads taken care of by council become State-managed roads at the boundaries of Campbelltown, Camden and Wingecarribee. Council receives over \$2 million to manage those roads but, because of that inconsistency, residents like Zoe Cook cannot apply for noise mitigation, and council claims the costs are spiralling. What will the Minister and the Government do to fix this issue if the roads cannot be transferred?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:04):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for her great question and for her ongoing advocacy for her community. I understand her frustration on behalf of her constituents. She has written to me about this, and the department has been talking about how we will address those inconsistencies. I want the member to know that we are genuinely working on a solution for this because, as every member in this Chamber knows, we are one State. One of the issues we have seen, particularly over the past 12 years, has been everything for metro and nothing for the regions. We are trying to bring it back together in Transport for NSW. We have a big day today, with the State of Origin on tonight, and we have a social media staffer who has offered to sub in for the Blues if required. The Leader of the House is at the gym; he must be training! We are all behind the Blues tonight. Coming back to the serious issue of roads management, we want to have one State. The Wollondilly electorate straddles that regional and State divide, and a number of members in the House have that same issue in their electorates.

Reclassification was an answer put forward by those opposite back in 2019. I remember that we were all so frustrated because they stood by the sides of roads and said that those roads could or would be returned back to the State Government within 12 months. In fact, I remember asking the former Minister for Regional Transport and Roads in May 2021 to tell us when that was going to happen. Two years on it still had not happened. I give some credit to the member for Bathurst because he did manage to squeeze out an interim report showing that, of those 15,000 kilometres that they promised, they did just 391 kilometres for transfer and 353 kilometres for reclassification. That was the first money that we saw on that promise. It was an unfunded promise. It was not a promise made by the member for Bathurst but by the former member for Oxley. The conch was then passed to the former Minister in the other place, who did nothing until we called him out at a budget estimates hearing. So they had a little pot of money under the member for Bathurst. They had \$250 million for that 391 kilometres of road, and they just did not get there. [*Extension of time*]

Given that the former member for Wollondilly and the former member for Camden were Opposition members, we would think the Opposition would be across these issues and that this would have been a priority. Unfortunately, that interim report on priority roads, which I have a copy of, has not one mention of the roads that the member for Wollondilly has raised. Even with its \$250 million, the Opposition had not done it. We know that report sat on the desk of the former Minister in the other place for four months prior to the last election. He never delivered it. There was no money in the Parliamentary Budget Office costing to deliver it. That bells the cat on the fact that the Opposition was never going to deliver it. That leaves communities like Wollondilly with noise abatement available on one house but not on the next because they are treated as two different roads. I give my commitment that we will look at better options, particularly in Wollondilly and those other electorates where those roads are on the threshold.

But we have to move forward on what we are doing. Reclassification was an unfunded failure. In less than 12 months, this Government has rolled out \$390 million on regional roads. The Wollondilly community is a tale of two cities. Wingecarribee Shire Council has 1,220 kilometres of local roads and received just \$2.2 million from the Opposition. Wollondilly shire has 884 kilometres of local roads, two-thirds that of Wingecarribee shire, but it received \$9.5 million because it is part of the city. That mob of National Party roosters opposite, who were strutting up and down their main streets crowing, "We're here, the party of the bush", never delivered. They are feather dusters in Macquarie Street. They should be condemned to the dustbin of history. They are a failure, and we are the party of the bush.

**SOUTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES HEALTH SERVICES**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:09):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's work to deliver improved health outcomes for the communities of southern New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:09):** I congratulate the member for Bega. He recently retired as a medical practitioner after 43 years of service to the people of New South Wales—an outstanding commitment to New South Wales health and particularly to the people of southern New South Wales. The New South Wales Minns Labor Government is committing over one-quarter of a billion dollars to what will be a level 4 hospital at Eurobodalla. It comes off the back of incredible advocacy from the member for Bega and his community and, as a result, construction will begin very soon. It recently went through the planning approval process. We are ready to get that project underway, and I think the people of southern New South Wales cannot wait to see it occur.

It will have a new emergency department. It will be bigger than the combined emergency departments of Moruya and Batemans Bay hospitals put together. I will come back to that in a moment. For the first time, Eurobodalla will have the most significant intensive care unit for the region. It will have scanning, cancer treatment and renal dialysis facilities—all of the things that are expected in a world-class level 4 hospital, for the people of southern New South Wales. I thank the member for Bega for his ongoing advocacy for his community and other communities across regional New South Wales.

Recently it came to my attention that the Leader of the Opposition was putting together a petition. It is always dangerous to do a petition. I have done it myself and probably been whacked a few times. His petition was around keeping an emergency department at Batemans Bay. That is interesting, and I will explain why in a moment. We have things called clinical services plans. They essentially outline what a hospital and its services should look like. Clinical services plans are signed off by governments. Because of my tendency to micromanage, I had a look at the clinical services plan for Batemans Bay that was signed off by the previous Coalition Government. [*Extension of time*]

Under the plan, the former Government agreed that the Batemans Bay emergency department would no longer operate. This may sound unusual to those opposite, but a level 4 hospital has to be appropriately staffed—a minor problem. But there also has to be an appropriate volume of patients using the services. It is a weird concept, hospitals with patients. The former Government signed off on it. The big question that I now have for the bridesmaid of Bega—we know the bridesmaid of Bega, do we not? He was here for a while.

**Mr Paul Scully:** He has run for everything.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Old Constance. There is not a seat or Senate position he has not gone for yet. I can tell members that is popular down there. He has run 22 times; they have knocked him over 21 times. He just keeps going.

**Mr Paul Scully:** He's the Nigel Farage of the South Coast.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Yes, he is the Nigel Farage of the South Coast. That is exactly right. We are going to get the job done and build a level 4 hospital for Eurobodalla, because the people of southern New South Wales deserve it. We will not be doing what the member for Kellyville did—fast-tracking a hospital by not putting in an emergency department. We do not do that. We believe hospitals of this size need an emergency department. I know that is a weird concept to those opposite, but we will build it. The hospital will have an intensive care unit, it will have an emergency department and it will deliver services for the people of southern New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr Mark Coure:** Mr Speaker, I have a question.

**The SPEAKER:** The time for questions has expired.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with a strict application of the standing orders, the time for questions has expired. There is no point of order.

*Documents***INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER****Reports**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I table the report of the Independent Complaints Officer of the New South Wales Parliament to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics, for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 6 June to provide for:

- (1) Business before the House to be interrupted after the conclusion of question time for the Premier to move a motion, of which notice has not been given, for a State apology for the criminalisation of homosexuality.
- (2) The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Attorney General, the shadow Attorney General, the member for Sydney and the member for Newtown to each speak on the motion.
- (3) The question on the motion be put immediately after the contribution from the member for Newtown.
- (4) That a take-note debate on the House's resolution to issue a State apology for the criminalisation of homosexuality be set down as a Government business order of the day for a later time.
- (5) After the moving of the take-note debate on the apology, the routine of business to resume from its point of interruption, including the remainder of the 90 minutes for the general business orders of the day (for bills).
- (6) Any remaining debate time of the allocated 70 minutes for general business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills) not being concluded at 3.40 p.m. will resume at conclusion of the petition debate.
- (7) Followed by community recognition statements and private members' statements, after which the House to adjourn without motion until the next sitting day.

**Motion agreed to.**

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: APPROPRIATION AND COGNATE BILLS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:20):** I move:

- (1) That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Tuesday 18 June 2024 to provide for the following routine of business for that day:
  - (a) at 12.00 noon, Speaker shall take the chair;
  - (b) a Minister, on behalf of the Premier, to introduce the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills;
  - (c) the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, Treasurer, to be immediately admitted to the House for the purpose of giving a speech of unlimited duration in relation to the New South Wales budget 2024-2025;
  - (d) a Minister, on behalf of the Premier, to move: "That these bills be now read a second time", and after the Minister concludes speaking, debate to be immediately adjourned without motion;
  - (e) tabling of the 2024-2025 budget papers, with the Speaker to then leave the chair; and
  - (f) Speaker to resume the chair at 2.30 p.m., for question time and the associated routine of business, followed by giving of general business notices of motions for up to 15 minutes, Government business, the public interest debate at 5.00 p.m., resumption of Government business if required, community recognition statements and then private members' statements, with the House to then adjourn without motion moved.
- (2) That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 20 June 2024 to provide for:
  - (a) at 10.00 a.m., Speaker shall take the chair;
  - (b) the Leader of the Opposition to speak on the appropriation and cognate bills;
  - (c) following the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, the passage through all remaining stages of the appropriation and cognate bills with the questions "That these bills be now read a second and a third time" being put forthwith, without consideration in detail of the bills;
  - (d) a member, immediately following the passage of the Appropriation and cognate bills, to move the motion "That this House take note of the budget estimates and related papers for 2024-2025." After which:
    - (i) the debate is to be adjourned without motion moved; and

- (ii) the resumption of the debate is to be set down as an order of the day for a later time, with the mover able to speak again prior to their right of reply.
  - (e) the House to proceed with the remaining standard routine of business for sitting Thursdays, with the following exceptions that general business orders of the day for bills may proceed up until 1.30 p.m.;
  - (f) notwithstanding any of the above, business will be interrupted at 11.00 a.m. for question time and the associated routine of business; and
  - (g) the House to consider at any time any messages from the Legislative Council regarding the appropriation bills, and; if necessary, to continue to sit after the conclusion of private members' statements, including the option of the Speaker leaving and then resuming the chair on the ringing of a long bell, to receive any such messages.
- (3) That a message be sent to the Legislative Council inviting the Treasurer to attend the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday 18 June 2024.

Members will note that the House will resume the routine of business at 2.30 p.m. at the request of the Opposition, which no doubt needs time to consider the budget provisions. Time on Thursday has been allocated to the Opposition leader at a time convenient to him. I inform the House that the motion is reasonably similar. Members might recall this House having to remain very late on the Thursday night last year because of the time taken by the Legislative Council to return the budget and associated bills to this House. For the convenience of members, I indicate that I do not anticipate that will be the case on the Thursday of budget week, because Friday will be a sitting day when members will be able to deal with that. So hopefully we will not have those extended periods.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Petitions*

#### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **Balranald Pedestrian Safety Crossing**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to urgently improve the pedestrian safety crossing at the Market Street shopping precinct in Balranald, received from **Mrs Helen Dalton**.

#### *Bills*

#### **BAIL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) BILL 2024**

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:24):** Continuing with what I was explaining before question time, currently it is only with respect to serious offences that the Bail Act requires a bail authority to take into account the views of family members and victims as to whether the accused could endanger the victim or other members of the community. The bill will expand that provision to all domestic violence offences against an intimate partner. That will ensure that any available victim views about their safety will be a mandatory matter the court must consider when assessing bail concerns.

The changes to bail put the safety of victims first. But there may be circumstances where a person charged with a serious domestic violence offence meets the show cause requirement and is granted bail. To account for that, and add a layer of protection for victims, the bill inserts a new requirement for a court to impose an electronic monitoring condition for an accused person charged with a serious domestic violence offence. Electronic monitoring must be imposed unless the bail authority considers that there are sufficient reasons, in the interests of justice, not to impose the condition. The Government needs time to set up the necessary infrastructure and processes for the change to electronic monitoring. We expect that to be in place upon the bill coming into effect. It is also important for other agencies, including police and courts, to have appropriate systems in place to account for the changes in the bill.

Significant work has been invested into getting the bill right and strengthening our justice system to work for victims and hold perpetrators to account. The Bail Act Monitoring Group was tasked to review bail arrangements and this Government is taking decisive action. I particularly note the contribution of Dr Hannah Tonkin, the first standalone Women's Safety Commissioner in New South Wales and, indeed, the country. She was appointed to the Bail Act Monitoring Group to add her expertise and ensure that women's safety is at the heart

of this Government's approach. The bill delivers sensible change, informed by experts and in line with community expectations. It sends a clear signal to perpetrators of domestic and family violence that there will be consequences for their actions. Too many lives have been lost and too much trauma inflicted by domestic and family violence. We cannot accept the status quo. The bill in isolation is not enough to resolve the national crisis of gender-based violence. *[Extension of time]*

That crisis is a challenge that requires a multifaceted, whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach. We are putting primary prevention at the heart of the solution. The Government has announced an additional \$230 million over four years to prevent domestic and family violence and expand programs that keep victim-survivors safe. Under those reforms, we will deliver historic change, including the statewide rollout of Staying Home Leaving Violence and implementation of the first dedicated New South Wales primary prevention strategy. There are more measures, including investment to recruit more specialist domestic and family violence workers to support children accompanying mothers to refuges and a pilot of the All In program to prevent violence and teach kids in early childhood settings about healthy relationships. That package, including the justice reforms contained in the bill, do not mark the end point of our work in this space; it is just the start. We will continue to build on the foundation of our work in this space, with a vision of making the generational change required to eliminate domestic and family violence from our communities. This Government is absolutely committed to taking up that challenge. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:29):** In speaking to the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024, I am contributing to a debate on an issue that can no longer be ignored. We all realise that. We all know the shameful statistics. There have been almost 30 deaths this year related to domestic violence, and we have only just made it to June. Those deaths represent more than just a number; they represent family members, loved ones and friends. It is happening in all of our backyards, in the bush and in the city. But half of the domestic violence deaths in Australia occur in regional areas. In the past year in New South Wales the crime rate for domestic violence was 65 per cent higher in the regions than in Greater Sydney. One of the worst affected areas is Walgett in Western New South Wales. Walgett has the highest rate of domestic violence [DV] in this State. In fact, it is eight times higher than the State average. That was followed by Broken Hill, which has a DV rate six times higher than the State average. Coonamble, Muswellbrook, Narromine, Kempsey and Inverell are all in the top 10.

Lately the women I have spoken to have told me it is hard to feel anything but overwhelmed right now. They are overcome by a strong sense of helplessness, fear and anger. Front of mind for regional communities is the senseless death of Molly Ticehurst and, more recently, the two-year-old boy who was killed in Lismore. Molly should not have died. Little Rowan should not have died either. Following these tragedies, we have seen emotions laid bare in protests on the streets and in the outpouring of grief on social media. Our communities are sending a very clear message that enough is enough. When it comes to domestic violence, women and children cannot wait. We need to heed their calls.

Molly's father said, "Every parent would like to see their child change the world, but not at this cost." That is a heartbreaking reminder to us all that her death cannot be in vain. There is a willingness from all sides to do something, and we need to act now. I acknowledge the Government has announced some funding for domestic violence support and prevention, but why has it taken so long to strengthen the current bail laws? On 9 May the Coalition introduced the Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024. Less than a week later, on 15 May, the Government introduced its own very similar bill. Subsequently, the Government voted down the Opposition's motion to push that bill through to support people as quickly as possible. In the two sitting weeks in May, Government members refused to debate either bill, delaying the legislation by three weeks.

On 17 May, the day after those laws should have passed, the Premier told a community cabinet meeting in Orange the legislation could not be rushed through Parliament. The tragic death of two-year-old Rowan in Lismore happened only two days later at the hands of his father, who had a history of domestic violence. Many of us are disappointed that time was wasted. It should not matter who introduces what. We need to get things done. The Opposition made it clear a month ago—and will make it clear again today—that it will work with the Government to make these commonsense changes as soon as possible. It would have been simple to make changes to either one of the bills to make that happen. We cannot afford any more delays.

Changes to bail laws are not the whole solution, but they are a good start, and we need to make an immediate impact. The measures that expand the use of electronic monitoring devices to people charged with serious domestic violence offences who are on bail are crucial to improving safety for victims of family and domestic violence. They ensure that offenders are actually monitored by someone and not just let back out into our communities. When I talk to people in the community about this issue they say, "If Amazon can track a parcel from the other side of the world, surely we can track someone in New South Wales. If you can buy an AirTag and track your baggage in an aeroplane overseas, surely we have the capacity to track offenders." We need to do better.

I encourage the Government to work with all regional members to have those conversations. Every community is different and what might work in one place may not be the right solution for another. Reversing the presumption of bail and expanding the grounds on which bail decisions can be stayed will also make a difference. But the bill is missing measures to prevent local court registrars from making bail decisions for serious personal violence offences. In the country, we do not always have access to magistrates, so this will be crucial. We can utilise the audiovisual capacity in our courthouses so these orders can be made remotely by magistrates and not registrars. It will make a difference, particularly for regional areas, and hopefully help to protect more people like Molly.

We need to properly consider that measure. Creating a better system for the courts in regional New South Wales and ensuring magistrates, not registrars, make those decisions will make it tougher for perpetrators to freely roam our streets. As a father of two daughters, I hope this will help them, and all women, feel safe in their own homes and communities. These measures are a step in the right direction, but we need to work together on a holistic approach. One organisation doing that really well is Western Women's Legal Support. It provides both legal and non-legal support to women and children victim-survivors, including casework, safety planning, referrals and outreach services to rural and remote towns.

Last week I met with the whole team, including Rachael and Jarrah, when I visited them in Dubbo. They told me about a mother who was referred to them by the local primary school. She recently moved to Australia from the Middle East and faced some of the most horrific physical, emotional, mental, sexual, financial and psychological abuse they had ever encountered. She was forced to stay at home, other than taking her two kids to school. She was not allowed to talk to anyone. When she was at home, she was confined to a bedroom with the children. They were not even allowed to use any electricity at the property. There were also language barriers, which made it harder for her to reach out for help. A caseworker and a solicitor met the mother in secret during school drop-off and pick-up times. They were able to connect her with numerous local services, including legal services, casework services, housing providers, DV refuge staff, police and various government agencies.

After a lot of coordination, the mother and her children were ultimately removed from the situation and a strict no-contact apprehended domestic violence order was put in place. Since then, she has secured her own property and a number of casual jobs. She is financially supporting her children. She is also studying at TAFE, has obtained her driver licence and is planning a trip back home for her and her children. This harrowing story has a good ending. It reflects how a holistic approach is the only approach that will work, rather than one service or program working in isolation. Western Women's Legal Support needs ongoing funding support. I urge the Government to provide funding for groups such as Western Women's Legal Support so they can be a conduit. Whether they are approved care organisations or not, we need groups in regional areas that can work with Indigenous corporations to deliver the services in the best possible way. Western Women's Legal Support can help do that.

As part of that holistic approach, we need to look at crisis accommodation. It can be harder for women to leave abusive relationships when they live in a country town, as they often have nowhere else to go. They are left to make the decision to either stay in a dangerous situation or potentially face homelessness. That is where crisis accommodation is crucial, and more needs to be done. The former Liberal-Nationals Government started important work in this space, investing more than \$426 million to build 39 new refuges, 20 of which were located in regional New South Wales. It remains the largest single capital investment in domestic and family violence in New South Wales government history. It would support an additional 2,900 women and children each year and provide them with housing and specialist services. But now we are left wondering where that funding is.

I call on the Government to focus on getting those refuges off the ground now. The money was there. We need to roll it forward. It has the ability to save thousands of lives. The Coalition also proudly made coercive control illegal, carrying a maximum penalty of seven years. Domestic abuse is not only physical violence; it can involve sexual, psychological and financial abuse as well. And we cannot forget the long-term impact domestic violence has on children. Recently a friend opened up to me about his experience growing up in a family affected by DV. He said that aspect is largely missing from the conversation.

As we sit in this Chamber, a national conversation is happening, and we have a chance to make a meaningful change. It is up to us to come together and make the necessary interventions. We need a wideranging solution. That includes some of what the Government has announced, but there are gaps that need to be considered. By strengthening the bail laws, we start to break the cycle and prevent more senseless loss from happening. Our partners, daughters, sisters and mothers are counting on us to get this right. We need to do better. Change cannot wait. We need to do something together now.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:39):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. We have heard from the Attorney General and the Minister that, as part of the Government's commitment to take urgent action to address the unacceptable rate of violence against

women and children particularly, the bill will strengthen the legislative framework in response to high-risk domestic violence offenders. The amendments in the bill form just one part of the Government's response. The Government will also undertake further work on a whole range of reforms to prevent domestic, sexual and family violence in this State. I fear that we lose the impact of the fact that nearly one in four women has experienced violence from an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. It cannot be said enough times. The Government has committed to a whole-of-government response to maintain and ensure community safety in the face of this crisis.

The bill will implement legislative changes to reduce rates of domestic violence, by strengthening the bail framework for those charged with the most serious domestic violence offences. It aims to improve community safety, particularly the safety of women; prevent repeated instances of domestic violence; and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable. The bill appropriately balances the need to keep victims and the community safe with the presumption of innocence and right to liberty.

The Bail Act 2013 governs the bail process for all alleged offenders in New South Wales. Bail authorities, who are police officers, authorised justices or a court, make bail decisions under the Bail Act using a two-step process. We have heard a bit about the show cause test, which applies to adults charged with certain serious offences or offending in certain circumstances. The Attorney outlined the unacceptable-risk test, which is the second test for show cause offences and the first test for other offences. The test requires a bail authority to refuse bail if satisfied that there is an unacceptable risk the accused person will, if released from custody, fail to appear at any proceedings for the offence; commit a serious offence; endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community; or interfere with witnesses or evidence. Those bail concerns, including the threat of serious offences, are all being assessed here.

Whilst the content of the bulk of this bill can be a little dry at times, the list is lengthy and includes the accused person's background, including criminal history and any history of violence and of non-compliance with bail conditions, and the conduct of the accused towards any victim or their family after the offence. An exhaustive list of matters is set out in the Bail Act, and I am pleased that we are focused on what is or is not a serious offence and are actually highlighting the issue of domestic and family violence, which, for many decades, for many families, for many communities, was swept under the carpet.

The Bail Act allows a court to impose electronic monitoring as a condition of bail, provided that it meets minimum standards prescribed in the regulations. Bail conditions can be imposed only if the decision-maker is satisfied the conditions are reasonably necessary and appropriate to address a bail concern, no more onerous than necessary, and reasonably practicable to be complied with by the accused. For certain serious charges, if a prosecutor disagrees with a bail authority's decision to grant or dispense with bail, the accused's release can be stayed while the prosecutor makes an application to the Supreme Court.

The bill expands the list of offences to which the show cause requirement applies. The Attorney has outlined a number of those in detail. I particularly focus on the definition of "serious domestic violence offence", which means an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900 that carries a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or more and is committed against a current or former intimate partner. This includes but is not limited to serious offences such as sexual assault, kidnapping, and choking, suffocating or strangling a person so as to render them unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance. The definition also captures similar offences in other jurisdictions.

Coercive control is a new offence, which will come into effect on 1 July of this year. It will make it a crime for an adult to engage in a course of conduct consisting of abusive behaviour against a current or former intimate partner. The offence will apply if the accused intends for the conduct to coerce or control the other person and if a reasonable person considers that the course of conduct would be likely to cause the victim to fear violence or to have a serious adverse impact on their capacity to go about their day-to-day activities. This offence carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment.

We have heard many members in this place outline the issues, and it is important for the education of communities and individuals that we continue to do this over and over again, till we are sick of the sound of our own voices and sick of those definitions. But for raising children to have healthy relationships and to be able to pinpoint what domestic abuse is, we need to say that it can take forms other than physical violence. "Coercive control" describes domestic abuse that involves patterns of behaviour that have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. This abuse can include physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse.

We need to highlight in this place the research, statistics and evidence. Sadly, coercive controlling behaviour is usually a feature of relationships before intimate partner homicide. The Domestic Violence Death Review Team tells us that. The research between 2008 and 2016 highlighted that 99 per cent of homicides were

preceded by coercive control. I was Deputy Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control a couple of years back. It was harrowing to hear the stories of many victim-survivors. It was personally triggering as well. But we must, in this place, chip away at every piece of legislation, however big or small, to create the changes we want to see.

The bill will require electronic monitoring for people charged with certain domestic violence offences and granted bail. The bill will create a new regime of compulsory electronic monitoring for alleged high-risk domestic violence offenders granted bail. The bill will require any accused who is charged with a serious domestic violence offence and released on bail to be subject to electronic monitoring, unless a bail authority is satisfied sufficient reasons exist, in the interests of justice, to justify not imposing the condition. [*Extension of time*]

I turn to changes to the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 briefly because they have been covered off in quite a bit of detail by the Attorney. Evidence shows that some perpetrators of domestic abuse use tracking devices to maintain control and domination over their victims. Section 9 of the Surveillance Devices Act makes it an offence to knowingly install, use or maintain a tracking device to determine the geographical location of an object or a person without their consent. The offence carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment or a fine of 100 penalty units. The bill will remove the requirement for consent to prosecutions for offences under section 9 of the Surveillance Devices Act where the offence is charged as a domestic violence offence under section 11 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. It is so important that the relevant legislation is amended to acknowledge how serious domestic violence is within our communities.

The bill will commence by proclamation. It will implement new programs and systems for electronic monitoring. It will be complex; it will require new infrastructure and processes to be established. It will not be easy. A taskforce has been established and the electronic monitoring provisions will commence on proclamation once the necessary arrangements have been made. The remainder of the bill is currently anticipated to commence on 1 July 2024 to coincide with the commencement of the coercive control offence in New South Wales. There are plenty of other measures that have been outlined by the New South Wales Government in relation to addressing rates of family, domestic and sexual violence. The Minister recently outlined a number of those as part of the \$230 million emergency package to improve domestic violence prevention and support for victim-survivors.

I acknowledge the good work of the police. I was talking, as I often do, with the police Minister about the many good programs in place and the change in attitude of police in the decades that I have been alive. To know that there are around 150,000 calls for assistance to the New South Wales police for domestic violence-related matters is horrific, as it is to know that over 36,000 domestic violence assaults were recorded in New South Wales in 2023. As more people talk about domestic and family violence, it becomes part of the national conversation and not something swept under the carpet, but to know that domestic violence assaults increase each subsequent year is horrific. It is good to know of the arrests of offenders and the charges that are laid. It is good to know of projects such as Operation Amarok that target the State's most dangerous domestic violence offenders and the arrests that follow.

I told the police Minister of days gone by. When I was a young girl, neighbours would call the police to our family home. The door would open to children cowering, often blood splattered throughout the home and a sobbing woman. The police would identify the perpetrator—my father—and say, "Mate, let's head up to the pub for a couple of drinks until she calms down." That was the response as I grew up, so I feel that it has taken a long time to reach the point where perpetrators are treated in the way they deserve and victim-survivors are provided with the safety measures they deserve. I particularly acknowledge a woman that I worked with in the Women's Coordination Unit in the Premier's Department after leaving university many years ago. Her name was Julie Stewart. She gave me a language and a passion to see through the legislative reforms. I never imagined all those years ago that I would be in this place now speaking about legislation. I am pleased that a number of members across all political parties are committed and dedicated to getting it done. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:53):** On behalf of The Greens I speak in support of the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I note the contribution of my dear friend the member for Blue Mountains. Hearing her experience was a reminder of just how complex this area of crime and law is. I offer my sincere condolences on behalf of my community to the families and loved ones of those who have been murdered recently—women, children and partners. On behalf of my community, I say to anyone who is experiencing family domestic violence that we believe you and we are here to do everything we can to support you. I also acknowledge the work of our portfolio holder, Ms Abigail Boyd, MLC, in the other place, who is a very competent lawyer. She will do a very deep dive on the black letter of the law in this area. The Greens will be moving an amendment to the review provisions of the bill but, ultimately, we will support it because the sector has said that they want us to support it. Even though the ankle bracelet trial on parolees led to only a 7 per cent improvement, we will take it.



Today I talk about some bigger picture things because, for me, it is feminist jurisprudence, the philosophy of law and the lived experience of the law that I am interested in. I have been thinking a lot about my own experiences and I have been talking to people in my community. I acknowledge my local police, particularly my superintendents and area commanders, who have taken a lot of time to explain the impact of some of the recent changes in the criminal law. A lot has changed; it is not nothing. Certainly the ankle bracelets will be an issue. While I was listening to the member for Blue Mountains, I was reflecting on what police face when they are called to a domestic violence incident. It is extremely complex because there are often many things that have happened before that call was made.

While I only have a short time, I want to talk about some things that were raised in my community. In terms of the background of the bill, I understand that there was an Opposition bill as well. This Government bill addresses some of the same issues but also provides for certain domestic violence offences to be show cause offences. The Greens would like to see some changes to the Bail Act based on the 2012 Law Reform Commission review, which I will leave to my colleague in the other place to talk about. Although we have reservations about removing a bail authority's discretion by introducing a presumption of electronic monitoring for those that are released on bail, there is strong stakeholder interest in using the implementation of that requirement as a broader trial. As I said, we will take the 7 per cent.

It is the lived experience of the laws and their complexity that gives The Greens great pause because when reforms to the Bail Act are required, it shows that we, as a society, are at the absolute tragic end. Domestic and family violence are heinous crimes, but society is addressing the wrong end, quite frankly. We find ourselves a society that accepts that, every day, women and children and other family members are being hurt and murdered by people they love or have loved. Any observations that I make about norms of masculinity and the need to teach and engage with boys and men about control, shame and emotional maturity are in no way excusing those heinous acts or suggesting that anyone other than the perpetrator is responsible for that choice.

However, as a society, it is incumbent upon us all to understand and examine the underlying causes and contributing factors that lead to such heinous crimes so that we can implement strategies and interventions that will genuinely make a difference. We must not offer programs that promise safety to women and then fail them. Similarly, I have heard speakers saying that the bill will be a game changer. Well, will it? Yes, we will do all the things, but we cannot end male violence without everyone engaging. Whilst no-one is responsible for someone else's violence, we are all responsible for the society we find ourselves in.

I am particularly grateful to Jess Hill, who spoke to us. I have read a lot of her work, and I am really moved by her observation that we tend to erase and quarantine men's violence against women in the zone of "women's issues". In 2021 she posed a question: How would our perspectives and solutions shift if we put men's violence in the foreground? She went on to give the example of the statement "John beat Mary", to which the response would be to hold a men's violence summit. It ends up being framed as "Mary was beaten; Mary was battered; Mary is a battered woman", and then it is really about women. I am fully aware and The Greens understand that we are talking about complex relationships, and it is not just cisgendered men and cisgendered women; it is also parents being murdered, assaulted and coerced by other family members. We understand that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** It being 1.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for committee reports. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

#### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:01):** As Chair: It is my great privilege and honour to speak to the report of the Committee on Community Services entitled *Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQ+) Bill 2023*. The member for Sydney, who is in the chair, is the author of that bill; he fashioned it and brought it to the Parliament at a timely moment. The Parliament needs to consider all of the many things that are encompassed in the bill. The fact that it amends 20 different existing Acts speaks to how much inequality may well exist in our society right now. I qualify "may well exist" so that I do not do any injustice to the report that the committee has tabled. But as chair and as a person, it became clear in my mind throughout the journey that there is inequality in our society that needs to be addressed. What those solutions will look like is a job for this Parliament, and we cannot shirk that task. We must address it.

The committee heard two really diverse sets of views in the submissions and public hearings. It seemed that people were either entirely for the bill in its current form or entirely against it. Despite the fact that amendments to 20 pieces of legislation were proposed, 95 per cent of the attention focused on just four or five of them. No-one made any real comment on many of the other pieces of legislation. To be fair, I think that the four or five pieces of legislation that were the focus for so many people really came down to an ideology, a framework through which they currently live their lives, a religious belief, a lived experience or their own personal identity. All of that is perfectly fine and okay, because we all come from different backgrounds, places, mindsets and spaces.

But we need to seriously and genuinely recognise and accept that inequality is legislated to be in place in our society today. As Australians, as people from New South Wales and as humans, we fundamentally want to think to ourselves that each person born in this State is born equal. We want their life—whatever that life looks like—to be one of equal opportunity and capacity. If legislation creates inequality then we need to address that, and the bill is an opportunity for us to do exactly that. Stepping away from my role as the chair, I personally think there are a lot of things that we ultimately can agree on in this space. Mr Temporary Speaker is the author of the bill, and the Government made an excellent submission to the inquiry. There is plenty of opportunity for negotiation and conversation about finding the things we can agree on and starting with them, and then taking the time to continue to work through the other stuff.

I did not know one of the realities that came to us during the inquiry, and that concerns the binary nature of a person's sexual identity at birth. It may come as a surprise to people, and it came as a bit of a surprise to me. Many people think that one is clearly, obviously and distinctly born, as a baby, as a male with a penis and XY chromosomes or a female with a vagina and XX chromosomes. For some infants, that simply does not happen. That is science; that is the beauty and wonder of human physiology. We are not all the same. I am speaking specifically about the sexual identity of an infant, which is one of the parts of the legislation. In instances like that, we cannot pretend or legislate that that person does not have a place in our society or does not have a fair and equal place in our society.

That is just one example of what came up during the journey. I commend the bill. I sincerely thank all of my parliamentary colleagues who are part of the committee. Most importantly, I thank the committee secretariat, which did an incredible job. There was so much interest in the debate. Some of it was difficult to process and work through, but we found a way. We worked cohesively, comprehensively, diligently and carefully. I commend every word of the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:08):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House today as the chair of the Legislation Review Committee. The committee tabled *Legislation Review Digest No. 14/58* yesterday. In the digest, the committee examined eight bills that were introduced during the last sitting week. It also reviewed 10 regulations and statutory instruments, which it did not comment on. As members are aware, the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced and all statutory instruments tabled in Parliament. The committee's scrutiny of legislation informs members of both Houses and the community about the potential impact of legislation on personal rights and liberties, and any potential inappropriate exercise of government or legislative power. I draw members' attention to some of the key issues raised in the digest.

The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 seeks to strengthen the legislative framework governing bail for domestic violence offenders by amending the Bail Act 2013. The proposed amendments would make it more difficult for a person accused of a serious domestic violence offence to be granted bail. Where bail has been granted, the bill also requires an electronic monitoring bail condition to be imposed. The committee acknowledged that the proposed amendments are intended to protect survivors of domestic and family violence from accused persons who are released on bail.

However, the committee noted that the bill would impact on rights and liberties by reversing the onus of proof in bail decisions, impacting the right to freedom from arbitrary detention through automatic stays of release, and impacting a person's freedom of movement and privacy through the use of electronic monitoring. The committee also noted that the bill would inappropriately delegate legislative powers to the regulations. The committee generally prefers substantive matters to be dealt with in principal legislation rather than regulations to facilitate an appropriate level of parliamentary oversight. For those reasons, the committee referred those matters to Parliament for further consideration.

Turning to private members' bills, the committee also reported on the Limitation and Civil Liability Amendment (Permanent Stays) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to amend the Limitation Act 1969 and the Civil Liability Act 2002 with regard to the use of permanent stays in civil proceedings for child abuse damages claims. The committee acknowledged that the bill intends to make it easier for victims of child abuse to seek damages in court. However, the committee raised concerns about various elements of the bill, including its proposed limitation on a court's discretion to stay proceedings. That may result in legislative interference with the court's right to protect its processes in accordance with the interests of justice. The bill also seeks to apply retrospectively, such that relevant historic court decisions and settlement agreements between parties could be revisited or set aside. The committee generally comments on the retrospective application of provisions because a person is entitled to have knowledge of the law that applies to them at any given time.

The committee also noted that the proposed amendments are broadly worded, which means they may capture a wide category of historic civil proceedings relating to an allegation of child abuse, and not just proceedings for damages relating to child abuse. For those reasons, the committee has referred each of those issues to Parliament for its consideration. That concludes my remarks on the Legislation Review Committee's fourteenth digest. I encourage everyone to read the digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat for their support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:11):** I contribute to debate on the *Legislation Review Digest No. 14/58* of the Legislation Review Committee. First, I thank the chair for her leadership of the committee. I also thank the secretariat for its incredible support of the committee and for enabling its work. There were eight bills for consideration in the review period, five of which were identified as having issues under section 8A of the Legislation Review Act.

The Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms) Bill 2024 was found to have wide powers of enforcement that may impact on property rights, the right to presumption of innocence and the right to personal integrity. There were issues relating to the absolute liability offences and privacy rights. The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) and Other Legislation Amendment (Knife Crime) Bill 2024 was found to have issues with the expansion of police powers impeding on personal rights and liberties, and the custodial penalty for strict liability offences. Those issues were referred to the Parliament for further comment. The committee also identified the issue that declarations of designated areas are not subject to parliamentary scrutiny but made no further comment.

The Limitation and Civil Liability Amendment (Permanent Stays) Bill 2024 was found to have a number of issues. Issues that were identified regarding limitation of judicial discretion, procedural fairness and inconsistent operation of the bill with existing laws when deciding stay of proceedings decisions were referred to the Parliament for further comment. There were issues with retrospectivity which were also referred to the Parliament for further comment. The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024 was found to have issues with the freedom of contract and property rights, absolute liability offences and, again, retrospectivity and commencement by proclamation. The committee had no further comment.

The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 was found to have a number of issues with the right to the presumption of innocence and the reversal of onus of proof, the right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention, the freedom of movement and privacy, retrospectivity, and matters deferred to the regulations. A number of those issues were referred to the Parliament for further comment. Three bills raised no issues: the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024, the Museums of History NSW Amendment (Chief Executive Officer) Bill 2024, and the National Parks and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. With that, I conclude my comments. I thank the chair and the secretariat once again, and I encourage members to take the time to read this wonderful report.

**Report noted.**

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

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I welcome to the gallery the secretary of the Australian Services Union, Angus McFarland, and delegates and members of the union.

*Bills***COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR (PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE) BILL 2024****First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Sophie Cotsis, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (14:30):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to introduce the Community Services Sector (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill 2024 on behalf of the Minns Labor Government. New South Wales is finally here and making history. I acknowledge the amazing, hardworking, brilliant members of the Australian Services Union [ASU] in the gallery today, led by their wonderful secretary, Angus McFarland. It is a historic occasion. I am going to go a bit off script, even though I am not supposed to during the second reading speech. Those in the gallery represent thousands of community sector workers. The Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion, is in the Chamber. I know that she is proud of the work that the union does in supporting society's most vulnerable.

The union is there at the most difficult time in people's lives. Whether it is supporting people who are homeless, people with disability or people coming to neighbourhood centres, the members of the ASU do incredible and important work. They are professionals. The Minns Labor Government is proud of that work, which is why it has listened to what the ASU has been campaigning for for years and is making sure that there is portable long service leave. The Government made an election commitment, and the ASU ran a tough campaign. All of those in the gallery contributed to that by signing petitions and going to rallies. Today is their day. The Premier made a commitment that the Government would introduce this important legislation. I attended the ASU's conference last year, and we worked together. Today is the beginning of that important work being locked into legislation. Hopefully, the bill will be passed.

The Minns Labor Government is delivering on its core mission to improve the lives and conditions of working people. The bill represents New South Wales finally catching up with the rest of the country, with Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland all having schemes for portable long service leave in operation. South Australia is not far behind. After a decade of industrial stagnation, New South Wales is back to making sure that working people's lives are improved and that it recruits and retains the very best, particularly in the community services sector. We need thousands more people in the sector over the next five to 10 years, and portable long service leave will make a difference.

The community services sector encompasses a wide range of services and employs around 250,000 workers across 7,300 service providers, contributing an estimated \$15.4 billion annually to the New South Wales economy. The sector is set to double by 2049 to meet increasing community demand. Some of the services that make up the important sector include community mental health support—that is number one, and those in the gallery see that and know that—accommodation support services, family and domestic violence services, foster care services, homelessness support services, multicultural services and disability support, all of which play a crucial role in our society. It is also a highly feminised sector, with over 75 per cent of workers being women. I can say that it is about 90 per cent in the gallery today.

When the Labor Party first introduced the Long Service Leave Bill in this House in 1955, the Hon. Abram Landa said that one of the objectives of the bill was to "help the employee to regain his health and strength, which, in many cases, have become impaired after years of constant work in the one industry". The word "burnout" may not have meant the same thing in 1955, and it is notable that the Parliament at the time framed an employee as a man only, but it is clear that the Parliament of the day was aware of its harmful effects and the remedy of extended leave. It is no secret that community services workers struggle with overwhelming stress, burnout and fatigue due to the emotional and physically taxing nature of the work.

Short-term and insecure funding arrangements are common in the community services sector. Many workers are employed on short-term arrangements because employers cannot guarantee their income. That was another election commitment made by the Government. The Minister for Families and Communities was proud to make the announcement with the Premier about having five-year guaranteed service agreements. It provides strategic support and ensures security of employment. Workers in the sector frequently change organisation and often work for more than one employer at a time, which means that workers do the same work for years or decades but do not meet the requirement to access their long service leave entitlement. That was a recurring theme prior

to the election. We have known about it for a long time. I can see that everyone in the gallery is nodding. It has been talked about for a long, long time.

In August the ASU invited the member for Penrith and me to Flintwood Disability Services. We were there to make this announcement and to start the work and consultation. We established a working group, made up of the government department, the ASU, the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS] and a number of other organisations, to consult and do the important, intensive work. The work done by that working group, which has led to the wider public consultation, is here. It has been considered with an open mind and open heart, with consideration and with economic analysis. It is looking to the future. It is great work. I commend everybody who was on the working party for their work. The public consultation opened a few months ago, and the survey response has been overwhelming.

I give an example of one community services worker, who is an ASU member by the name of Christine. She has worked in the community services sector for over 35 years, yet she has never qualified for long service leave benefits. During this time Christine grappled with personal losses, caregiving duties and precarious contracts. While doing this, Christine told us she was also helping other women in refuges, health centres and in a domestic violence support service. Another worker named Sarah shared that she spent 25 years in the community services sector across more than 20 organisations and was never able to access long service leave. Christine and Sarah may not get the full benefit of portable long service leave, but the hope is that, by now being able to access this entitlement, it will help attract and retain the next generation of workers.

When I attended the Australian Services Union conference last year, that was exactly what most of the members said to me. They said, "Sophie, we're not going to get it. We've been in the sector for 20 to 25 years, but this is about the next generation. This is about the other people who are working and coming through—the younger people. We want more people to come in the sector. That is why we're fighting. We've been here for 20 to years and we're not going to get it, but it's for the next generation." How noble, thoughtful and considerate of those workers, who have been advocating for such a long time, knowing that they may not be able to get it but that it is for the next generation. I thank those members for their strong advocacy.

Although well-intentioned, it is clear that existing long service leave entitlements are not fit for purpose. We all know that, especially in the community services sector, because workers struggle to access these entitlements that are intended for them. The bill will bridge that gap to provide community service workers with the break they deserve. As I mentioned earlier, the bill was developed through the working party, through our agency, but also through broad and extensive consultation. The key stakeholders consulted included sector peak organisations, employers, the ASU, as well as other government jurisdictions with established schemes, such as Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. We know that South Australia is currently establishing its scheme.

The working group worked extensively, widely and together to get this legislation right. We need to make sure that we get it right. There were 750 survey responses, 50 submissions, and 60 personal stories shared by workers from across this important sector. Of the 750 surveyed, 96 per cent said, "We have to get this done." That statistic is critical. That figure is astronomical. The time is now. The survey responses were overwhelmingly positive because the majority of workers and providers agreed that community service workers should be eligible for long service leave based on how long they have worked in the sector. Many organisations highlighted that portability of entitlements will help workers to advance their careers and manage personal responsibilities, including caring and wellbeing.

We all know that it is a majority of women who work in this sector. We also know that they still have to do their own caring, their own domestic duties and their own running around. They are not just working in an office; they have to provide a service. That is where our modern work practices are at. The demand for service from the public has changed. The demand for community services has changed and the way we provide those services has changed. We need to make sure that the wellbeing and mental health of the amazing professionals in the community services sector are looked after. We also want to see them develop professionally. Can we help them gain access to higher education and professional development, or some other type of training? We should be able to provide community services workers with that support as well.

The bill is also supported by the Department of Customer Service. I acknowledge our terrific public servants who helped organise, analyse, and work with the working party through the consultations. There were a number of sector round tables that were well attended by the sector's peak organisations, individual workers, employers, and the ASU. The bill was also designed by reviewing best practice in the existing comparable schemes in other States as well as by reviewing existing long service leave schemes in New South Wales. As a result, I hope that community service workers in New South Wales will be able to enjoy access to the best portable long service leave scheme in the country. We want it to be the best in the country. What we have had to do over the last year is bring New South Wales back to best practice so that it can lead the country and not be behind. We

want to be the leader in the portability of long service leave, and not be dragged, kicking and screaming. This is a really important day.

I turn now to the key details of the bill. I show the people in the gallery the extensive work that has gone into formulating this fantastic bill, which will establish portable long service leave. The scheme will apply to eligible full-time, part-time and casual employees. Contractors will have the choice to opt into the scheme. The scheme will provide employees with 6.1 weeks of paid leave after 2,555 days of employment, which is the equivalent of seven years. The entitlement will apply irrespective of whether their service is accrued with one employer or more. Importantly, this will allow part-time and casual employees to reach the entitlement after seven years of employment, just as a full-time worker would, and be paid accordingly. Once an employee has reached their initial entitlement, they will have access to a pro rata amount of leave for each additional 365 days of employment. In practice, this will mean that workers can qualify for and access their leave earlier than under the Long Service Leave Act 1955.

A shorter vesting period will better address the challenges faced by workers in the community services sector. It will also ensure consistency with equivalent schemes for community services in Queensland and Victoria, which provide access after seven years. The amount of long service leave paid to employees will be based on their highest ordinary weekly wage in the most recent two, four, 20 or 28 quarters of employment. In practice, this aims to ensure that payment is at the most beneficial rate, whether that is across the full seven years or the latest five years, one year, or six months. The definition of "ordinary pay" will include shift penalties but not overtime payments. This is aligned with current industry practice. Contractors who opt in will have the same entitlement as employees, with calculations being based on how long they have worked in the sector.

The payment will be based on their contributions to the scheme and the interest earnings on those contributions. Workers will generally have to take at least two weeks of leave to access their entitlement under the scheme. Pro rata payments can be accessed in limited circumstances only, such as permanently leaving the sector after accruing five years of service. This ensures that workers take a much-needed break for their many years of service in the sector. I will clarify "much-needed break". I agree that taking a break is what long service leave should be about, but we all know that in a lot of cases it is not about a break. I hate to say that often it is about fulfilling caring responsibilities, helping out your kids or doing something in your community. We know the intention behind long service leave, but we also know that because of the way we live our lives, sometimes we need this time for other things.

The bill provides a one-off benefit in the form of a 365-day service credit for workers who register within the first six months of commencement. The same benefit was provided in the introduction of the portable long service leave scheme for cleaning in New South Wales. The precedent already has been set. Our work is based on the same precedent established by a former Labor Government when it introduced a portable long service leave scheme for contract cleaners. The scheme will not apply retrospectively, which means that previous service will not be recognised. Accordingly, the bill sets out how it will work alongside the Long Service Leave Act 1955.

Workers will be able to continue to accrue service under that Act to ensure that those who are close to reaching existing long service leave or who have already qualified do not miss out. That is intended to not harm or disadvantage anyone. As a practical example, a worker with nine years of service with a single employer when this new scheme begins would be able to apply for their long service leave through their employer in another year. The employer remains directly responsible for the initial nine years of service and the service is liable for the payment in relation to the service accrued after its commencement. The employer would pay the worker in the usual manner and then apply to the Long Service Corporation for a pro-rata reimbursement for the leave based on the overlap. That approach was taken in the introduction of the cleaning scheme, and I understand that it has been successfully administered. The scheme will be funded through a levy in the same way as the existing contract cleaning scheme and the building and construction industry scheme, and is based on the ordinary wages of the employees. Contractors who opt in will pay the levy based on their personal income.

It should be noted that organisations are already required to provide for long service leave for their workers. That has to happen under the law now. The levy will, effectively, replace the requirement to provide for existing long service leave entitlements and could potentially be financially favourable for employers for that reason. Based on actuarial analysis, the proposed starting levy rate for this scheme is 1.7 per cent of ordinary wages. That is similar to Victoria's starting rate of 1.67 per cent in 2019 and the Australian Capital Territory's 1.6 per cent in 2010. The New South Wales cleaning scheme also began with 1.7 per cent in 2011. Like the cleaning scheme, the bill provides for the levy rate to be set through ministerial order. That approach will provide for timely adjustments while maintaining appropriate public and parliamentary oversight as a disallowable statutory instrument. The levy payments and any other contributions to the scheme will be pooled into a statutory fund with investment earnings managed by the New South Wales Government State-owned provider, TCorp.

Levies will form part of a quarterly return required from employers. Employers will be required to provide information about their workers as part of this return for entitlements to be tracked. I understand that will be an additional administrative process for employers. To ease the burden, I have been reassured that the information required will largely be information that employers are already required to record and report to the Australian Taxation Office. I completely understand the administrative and bureaucratic burden. I know that doing the paperwork et cetera is tough for a lot of non-government organisations, so I have asked the Long Service Corporation to make it as seamless as possible to ensure that we are not overburdening organisations with the same paperwork as the Australian Taxation Office. We will do our part in making sure that we support non-government organisations to streamline. The Long Service Corporation has been directed by me. It is here to help and to ensure that it provides assistance to organisations and, over time, to the workers.

The scheme will be administered by the Long Service Corporation, which currently administers the other two schemes that I mentioned. The Long Service Corporation will be responsible for all scheme administration and compliance—for example, fund management, maintaining worker and employer registration, and managing levy payments and claims processing, among other duties. The bill establishes a sector committee to hear appeals of administrative decisions made by the Long Service Corporation and to provide advice on the scheme, particularly around quality assurance and standards. The committee will consist of nine members—the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service or a delegate as chair and another eight members that I will appoint. Four of those members will be from bodies representing employee interests—from the union—and the other four will be from the employer/non-government organisation interests.

The scope and coverage of the scheme is intentionally broad to recognise the numerous and often overlapping services that make up the sector. Schedule 1 to the bill sets out the services that are captured by the scheme. At a minimum, the scheme will apply to any worker who directly provides a captured service. The services captured by schedule 1 are largely based on the coverage of the Federal social and community services award. This mirrors the approach taken in other jurisdictions. Where an employer's predominant purpose is to provide one or more captured services, the scheme will apply to all of their employees, including support and management staff. The reality of the sector is that there are employers who provide multiple types of services. It is also not uncommon for community service workers to wear multiple hats, often due to limited funding. For example, a worker in a neighbourhood community centre might provide frontline services while also doing the administration and payroll processing. I can see everybody in the gallery nodding. That is exactly what happens.

This approach will ensure that no workers slip through the cracks and miss out on the entitlements intended for them. That is why we have set up the committee to hear appeals. That is what currently happens with both the contract cleaning scheme and the building and construction scheme, where we have the union and employers from both sides who sit and listen to appeals. We are trying to streamline that and make sure it is fair as well. We are making sure that the systems are not being ripped off, that the scheme is well-managed and healthy in terms of its funds, and that workers will get access to their entitlements. The bill intentionally does not define what "predominant purpose" means. Again, that acknowledges that there can be nuances involved in the services provided by employers which require additional discretion. The risk of being overly prescriptive here is unintentionally excluding workers and employers that should be covered. I am assured that the Department of Customer Service has committed to consulting with the sector further to develop and publish guidelines on how "predominant purpose" is to be determined. I acknowledge Victor and Hannah from the Department of Customer Service, two excellent public servants who have done an exceptional job in assisting the department, the union and the sector.

The legislation will commence on proclamation—the intention is that it will begin on 1 July 2025. That will allow time to develop the regulations and for employers, non-government organisations, workers and the corporation to prepare for rollout. It is a big deal, which is why it is going to take 12 months. The bill represents a significant step forward to support our community service workers. It is not just about recognition and thanks; it is about purposeful and meaningful entitlement and making sure that we finally get a portable long service leave scheme. It is important that New South Wales and our Government recognise the vital contribution these excellent professionals provide, not just in metropolitan Sydney and greater Western Sydney, but in rural and remote communities.

Because government services have, over a very long period, moved away from some remote rural communities, non-government organisations have had to come in to provide those critical services in those very remote communities. Again, it is really important that service is recognised. Community service workers face overwhelming stress, burnout and work insecurity. The bill is another building block in the Government's framework to fix these issues for community service workers. The work is demanding and physically taxing. Our community service workers deserve a long service leave entitlement, just like every other worker.

The Government has heard firsthand how workers face the loss of their entitlements overnight when they change employers. We have also heard about the growing challenges faced by employers and providers in meeting our community needs. Through the bill, the Minns Government will ensure that thousands of community sector workers can now access portable long service leave for the first time. Better, more flexible entitlements will improve workers' wellbeing and ultimately benefit the sector through worker retention, improved skill development and greater continuity in care.

On behalf of the Government, I thank all those who contributed to the development of the bill. Public consultation for the bill was excellent. We had an overwhelming response. Over 200 people attended the workshops and information sessions—ranging from peak associations through to providers and workers. There was strong support for portable long service leave among community services sector workers in New South Wales. The contributions from the sector were thoughtful and constructive. Excellent, innovative ideas were put forward about the provision of community services.

Providers' contributions were predominantly centred on how to make the new scheme work as opposed to whether the sector should have a portable long service leave scheme at all. That is fantastic. Providers and unions are coming together, saying, "We're here to make this work. How can we help? How can we make this work? We're going to work together, we're going to be innovative, and we can do some really great things to provide services to the public." That is what we want in New South Wales. I thank the Australian Services Union, the NSW Council of Social Service, Life Without Barriers and Flintwood Disability Services for their contributions. I also thank the service providers who contributed.

Of course, I thank the mighty Australian Services Union and especially its secretary, Angus McFarland, assistant secretary Jan Primrose, the management committee, and all of the activists, members and delegates for their wonderful work over many years. This is a very proud moment for those stakeholders. All of their hard work, their campaigning, has led to today. It is finally happening. I thank them for everything that they do. I also acknowledge the support of Unions NSW and the greater union movement.

I acknowledge my Labor colleagues, and members of The Greens and crossbench who have joined in this campaign. We have briefed the Opposition and the crossbench in relation to the bill. We will continue to do so over the course of the next two weeks, after which we will return to debate the bill. Members of this Parliament can expect to receive an email or a knock on their office door. The Australian Services Union has produced a booklet titled "Portable Long Service Leave" that outlines how important portable long service leave is for community services sector workers in New South Wales. We advocate that all members of Parliament, regardless of political stripe, back this bill for the introduction of portable long service leave for these workers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

### *Budget*

## **ATTENDANCE OF THE TREASURER IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

### **Messages**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the request of the Legislative Assembly in its message dated 5 June 2024 for the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, Treasurer, to attend at the Table of the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 12 noon for the purpose of giving a speech of unlimited duration in relation to the New South Wales Budget 2024-2025.

### *Bills*

## **BAIL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:05):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. We know that family and domestic violence is very often about control and shame. When speaking about the issues which underlie domestic and family violence, I am in no way excusing these heinous crimes and I am certainly not saying that victims need to do anything different, but we are looking at these bail laws through the lens of context. We have heard from police and others that the period of intensity of these acts of violence is within two or three months of the victim-survivor putting in a boundary and seeking an apprehended domestic violence order. It is a very dangerous time. The connection between domestic violence and shame, control and humiliation is in no way the responsibility of the victim-survivor, but it is absolutely at play according to all the theorists I regard highly.



Some members would know of the Stanford University shame project referenced by Brené Brown, which was about norms of femininity and masculinity. There were thousands of participants, and the findings were quite disturbing. Among the young cisgender men and women who participated, ideas of masculinity were all about control, toughness, strength and not showing emotions, and femininity was equated to how much time was spent on one's physical appearance. This study took place in 2019. It was not that long ago. These gender norms are conditioned; they are not innate. Little baby boys are not born to act masculine and suppress their emotions and little baby girls are not born caring about their appearance at the expense of their inner self, yet these norms pervade our society. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jess Hill's essay, "The Reckoning". [*Extension of time*]

Boys learn it is not safe to be emotional, expressive or vulnerable. These are not the codes of masculinity. I am not talking about sexuality. I am talking about societal norms. It is so important to separate those from cisgendered men, cisgendered women and non-binary persons. Norms and conditionings are different to gender or sexuality. There is research that indicates that boys are less expressive at three, four and five years of age. According to family therapist Terry Real:

... it doesn't mean they feel less, but they've already figured out it's not wise to let people know what you feel.

Some of the rites of patriarchal masculinity and experiencing shame for boys in our society can be tools for reinscribing the need to stay in control, because the memory of losing it invokes a feeling that is very painful. Extreme sensitivity leads to shame. As a defence against shame, there is much evidence to suggest that male offenders of family violence are seeking control and power. That certainly has its roots in this cycle. Cisgendered women and girls learn very early in life that intentionally or accidentally humiliating a man can be very dangerous. Jess Hill said:

The deep knowing in so many women that when men express their entitlement to treat you as a sexual object you must conceal the shamefulness of their actions, both from the public eye and from them. We protect them from the sting of humiliation ultimately in order to protect ourselves. Women know in their bones that a humiliated man can be a dangerous one.

We need to go deep into this pervasive issue. Today we have heard some of the statistics of family and domestic violence and intimate partner violence. We know the pattern of heinous murders and then a flare-up in the media cycle. Who can forget Chanel Contos in 2020 receiving 5,000 or more testimonies from students as young as 13 describing sexual assault, coercive control, rape and abuse across public and private schools? It painted a damning picture of male entitlement and a predatory culture steeped in hardcore porn, within which sexual assault had become not the exception but the rule at student parties on weekends. Again, that was just a few years ago.

I am sure most members saw the viral TikTok bear video, which posed the question for women, "Would you rather meet a bear or a man in the woods?" The overwhelming response from women was a bear. Then there was the horrendous backlash from men, shaming and attacking women for having those feelings. Men fear humiliation from women; women fear being killed by men. Ankle bracelets and the proposed laws will save lives—we hope. But we need intervention strategies to truly change the course we are on. As an educator of many years and a scholar, I will say that there is no emotional education in our schools. We need to unpack the notions of living up to these norms and how they work. We need to talk to children and young people about how to have real intimacy with other human beings, how to develop trust and care, and how to feel safe and vulnerably emotional. I am talking about so-called normal households. The intersection of poverty, disability, cultural background and language adds other layers. It is so hard to develop healthy relationships in our society.

Masculinity and toxic behaviours are behaviours, not the biological reality of being a male. We fall into a paradigm. Instead of analysing and digging deep into the issue, we fall into blaming genders. There is so much we can do. I am a big fan of early intervention. There is no time to go into it, but we need programs like PACER—Police, Ambulance, Clinical, Early, Response program—which includes mental health supports for police. I would like to see two qualified domestic violence workers going in with the police to manage these very complex situations. The Greens will move an amendment relating to the review provisions of the bill. We support the bill because the sector has asked us to, but it is certainly not the end of what we need to do.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (15:13):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. From the outset, I place on record that this Parliament mourns Molly Ticehurst, along with the 28 other women who have lost their lives at the hand of an intimate partner since the beginning of this year, together with the tragically long line of women before them. Our hearts break for those they have left behind. Our Government is determined to tackle the pernicious problem that is plaguing communities across our State—the unacceptable and persistently high rates of domestic and family violence. Recent and ongoing events have rocked our State—as they should have—because, on a global level, domestic violence is an epidemic and the most common killer of women.

In Australia, one woman is killed every nine days by her current or former partner. One in three women experience physical violence, one in four experience emotional violence and one in five experience sexual violence by a current or previous partner. Alongside the multiple impacts of the trauma associated with domestic violence, and its lifelong impact on those involved, the estimated economic cost of violence against women and children in Australia stands at \$26 billion annually. That is why the New South Wales Labor Government is taking urgent action, but there is much more to the problem, which I will unpack today.

Before I go to the detail of the bill, as the Minister for Families and Communities, I put on record the deep impact of domestic and family violence on our communities, which can last generations. It is important to understand that violence against women is often also violence against children. Tragically, it takes many forms. Earlier this week, at a forum about people with disability and the intersections with child protection, I heard descriptions of women as doubly punished. Women suffer harm from an abusive partner and are then, as a result of the abusive and violent environment, found to be unable to provide a safe home for their children. The awful consequence of the abuse of the mother can be the removal of her child or children, if they are found to be at risk of significant harm.

Many children entering out-of-home care have experienced domestic violence. Up to 15 per cent of children entering such care had a primary reported issue of domestic violence during the six to 12 months before they entered. But that only includes cases where domestic and family violence is seen as the primary issue. It is safe to say that many, if not most, children who enter the child protection system come from houses of violence. Indeed, it is not often that domestic violence alone sees a child enter the child protection system. Other factors co-occurring with houses of domestic and family violence that increase risks for children include drug and alcohol, mental health, and housing and homelessness issues.

Women already experiencing violence in the home are likely to experience an increased risk of violence during pregnancy. The impact of domestic violence on children can start in utero. There is a higher likelihood of premature births, miscarriages and babies with low birth weight for mothers who are victims of domestic violence. Children who experience domestic violence may live with significant fear for the safety of their mothers, siblings or themselves. They are at increased risk of cognitive and behavioural issues, detrimental impacts on their educational performance and outcomes, and poor physical and mental health. We should be under no illusions about the high prevalence of harm suffered by children and young people due to domestic and family violence.

The recent 2023 Australian Child Maltreatment Study is the first national study in the world to consider the prevalence and associated health and social outcomes of all forms of child abuse. Its findings about the extent of domestic violence and its impact on children in Australia are deeply sobering. The study surveyed over 8,500 randomly selected Australians aged 16 years and over, and found that 39.6 per cent had experienced domestic violence before the age of 18, frequently in combination with other forms of maltreatment. The study also found that in families where children are exposed to domestic violence there is a much higher chance of the child experiencing other forms of maltreatment. As I said, domestic and family violence often occurs alongside a host of other risk factors, such as substance abuse, poverty, family dysfunction, other forms of child abuse and neglect, social isolation and mental ill health. The study also showed the lifelong impacts borne by those who experience abuse or maltreatment in childhood. The social and economic impact of domestic and family violence in all of our communities is deep, entrenched and very difficult to turn around.

That is why our Government is taking urgent action. As the Attorney General said in this place last week, "There is no excuse for domestic abuse." We introduced the bill to save lives and hold perpetrators of violence to account for their actions. But we do not pretend that this is the only solution to the pernicious problem. I think all members in this place understand that there is no silver bullet. A multifaceted response is needed. Indeed, a whole-of-community and whole-of-government response is needed. That is why, last month the Government announced a \$230 million emergency package to enhance support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors, and expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children. The package includes funding for crisis response and to improve the justice system for victims, create strategies for early intervention and primary prevention, strengthen the domestic and family violence [DFV] service sector, and boost research.

Importantly, our emergency package was designed with stakeholders across the DFV sector. Crucially, for the first time in the history of New South Wales, it includes an early intervention and prevention strategy. We need to get in early to change attitudes before the violence starts. The bill before us today complements our emergency package and demonstrates the Government's commitment to take urgent and meaningful action to combat domestic and family violence. The bill includes measures that target high-risk domestic violence offenders and ensures that red flags in domestic violence matters are considered by courts in bail applications. The sector urged us to include those measures, which we hope will keep victim-survivors safer. The bill expands the offences

that the show cause requirement in section 16B of the Bail Act applies to. The offences will now include serious domestic violence offences and the new coercive control offence.

This bill will require a bail authority to take into account additional matters when applying the unacceptable risk test. Firstly, the bail authority will have to consider behaviour engaged in by the accused that may constitute domestic abuse, including but not limited to strangulation, sexual assault, animal abuse and stalking. Secondly, in the case of domestic violence offences against a current or former intimate partner, the bail authority must also consider any views put by the victim or their family members concerning their safety and the safety of others. In the case of serious domestic violence offences, if bail is granted despite the strengthened show cause and unacceptable risk provisions, the bill also requires that an electronic monitoring condition be imposed. This means that the likely outcome of a bail application for a person charged with a serious domestic violence offence will be that the person is either remanded in custody or subject to electronic monitoring.

Further, the bill provides that the decision of a bail authority to grant bail is stayed pending a detention application to the Supreme Court by the prosecution for serious domestic violence offences, the coercive control offence and sexual assault offences under part 3, division 10, subdivision 2 of the Crimes Act 1900. The bill also streamlines the procedures for prosecutions of offences relating to the use of tracking devices under the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 in a domestic violence context. As I have already said, we are not presenting this bill as the only solution to a pernicious problem. We only hope it will save lives, in concert with a significant package of support being provided to the sector.

Today's bill is a critical piece of the puzzle needed to start women and children feeling and being safer in our State. I thank my colleagues the Attorney General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for their considered and careful response to a national crisis. They have listened to those who know the most: victim-survivors, their families, advocates, stakeholders and people who have worked in the area for many years. They have not only listened but also acted. Finally, I thank all of the families and stakeholders who have worked with the Government on this bill and emergency package. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the organisations on the ground in my community in Port Stephens who have been working in this space for decades. I recognise the Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services and the Yacaaba Centre. Both of those organisations are hardworking and do everything they possibly can to pick up the pieces for people who have experienced domestic and family violence—men, women and children—to ensure they have a safe space to talk and find a way forward in their lives.

I put on record my absolute respect for and acknowledgement of the police, particularly those who work closely with me in Port Stephens. Earlier today the member for Blue Mountains mentioned the changing culture within the police force. The police should be credited for the different approach they are now taking to tackle domestic and family violence. I thank my local police for doing everything they can. This bill is just the beginning. We know there is a lot more to do. But for the sake of women and children now and into the future I urge all members to support this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:24):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. Domestic and family violence affects people from all walks of life and, as we all know, includes many forms of abuse and violence that are not always physical. All members and all communities are incredibly concerned and saddened by the growing incidence of domestic violence and violence more generally across our State. I acknowledge Counting Dead Women Australia, which counts every known death due to violence against women in Australia. For 2024, as at 2 June that number was a horrifying 35. In 2023, 64 women were killed by violence, including 17 in New South Wales. In 2021-22, 5,606 women—an average of 15 women every day—were hospitalised due to family and domestic violence. Since the age of 15, one in four women has experienced violence, emotional abuse or economic abuse by a cohabiting partner.

Women are more likely to experience violence from someone they know than from a stranger. Men are more commonly the perpetrators of physical violence, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Women are at increased risk of experiencing violence from an intimate partner during pregnancy. Since the age of 15, one in three women has experienced physical violence and one in five women has experienced sexual violence. In their lifetime, one in two women has experienced sexual harassment. In most incidents of workplace sexual harassment, the harasser was male. Domestic violence assaults recorded by the NSW Police Force have increased by 3.2 per cent per year on average over the past five years. New South Wales police attend a domestic and family violence call approximately every two minutes. It is incumbent on every one of us to do everything possible to change the trajectory of those statistics.

Those alarming and sobering statistics are the reason we are here today to debate changes to the Bail Act. The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 amends the Bail Act 2013 and the

Surveillance Devices Act 2007. The bill makes a number of changes to the Bail Act. It makes certain domestic violence offences show cause offences. It requires a bail authority to consider additional matters when assessing bail concerns. It provides for bail conditions and pre-release requirements for electronic monitoring for certain domestic violence offences. It provides for bail decisions to be stayed for certain domestic violence and sexual assault offences in certain circumstances. Further, the bill amends the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 to remove the requirement for the Attorney General's written consent to institute proceedings for an offence of install, use or maintain a tracking device to determine the geographical location of a person when the offence is charged as a domestic violence offence.

Of course, this Government bill was introduced after the Opposition introduced a similar bill. In fact, in many ways it simply reiterates what the Opposition proposed. I am pleased that the Government has picked up on our ideas, but I do wonder why it did not support the bill introduced by the shadow Attorney General in May. I note the difference in the two bills when it comes to electronic monitoring for bail. The Government bill introduces a presumption of electronic monitoring where bail is granted to a person accused of a serious domestic violence offence against an intimate partner. However, the bill introduced by the shadow Attorney General had a presumption of electronic monitoring where a person is charged with a serious personal violence offence against a person over the age of 18 years with whom the person is in a domestic relationship, thereby making the category of people covered under the Opposition's bill much wider. It is important to note that the Government bill does not have a provision that excludes registrars from making bail decisions. A registrar making a bail decision was a particularly contentious aspect of the Molly Ticehurst case.

In fact, the Hon. Stephen Lawrence, a Labor MLC from Dubbo, questioned whether registrars should be making serious bail decisions. The Independent member for Orange, who is in the Chamber, was a police officer and police prosecutor, and he concurred that registrars should not be deciding bail. As indicated by the shadow Attorney General, the Opposition will seek to amend the bill to ensure that registrars are not able to make these decisions about community safety. I urge crossbench members to support this sensible amendment that prioritises the safety of the community and victim-survivors. I acknowledge the many victim-survivors, the stakeholders and those working on the front line who continue to share their knowledge and expertise with me. They understand that there must be more than changes to the bail laws to keep women safe in New South Wales. Delia Donovan, CEO of Domestic Violence NSW, made this clear in a recent media release. She said:

Real investment is required. We know that domestic and family violence is preventable – there is a clear and immediate need to invest in changing community attitudes and behaviours through community education and early intervention programs. Addressing the drivers of gendered violence is key to stopping it before it starts. ... The number of lives saved depends on the funding the NSW Government is willing to commit to in its upcoming budget.

I acknowledge also Renee Ryan and Therese Faerie, personal friends of Molly Ticehurst. I appreciated the opportunity to speak with Renee and Therese, as did my colleague the shadow Attorney General, to hear their views on changes to the Bail Act. They welcomed the bail reforms proposed by the Opposition and further measures to improve the judicial system for the protection of women and children impacted by domestic violence. My thanks go to Liz Snell, the law reform and policy coordinator at Women's Legal Service NSW, who also provided important insights into the changes to the Bail Act, in particular about electronic monitoring.

The consideration of domestic and family violence in all its contexts is critical for the development of policy and laws in this State. In government, the Liberals and Nationals delivered the single largest funding commitment ever made to the domestic violence sector, of \$787 million. This included \$426.6 million to expand the Core and Cluster initiative, which will support an additional 2,900 women and children to safely escape domestic and family violence each year. In government, we also delivered landmark legal reforms to support women's safety, including nation-leading laws to criminalise coercive control in intimate partner relationships, which is a proven red flag for domestic violence homicide, and significant reforms to New South Wales's sexual consent laws, which introduced a requirement that consent to sexual activity must be affirmatively communicated and clarified and that consent cannot be assumed.

Notably, significant improvements were made to the way domestic and sexual violence offences are handled in the justice system, supporting victim-survivors to give evidence by audiovisual link where possible and ensuring that victim-survivors are not directly cross-examined by alleged perpetrators. The Coalition also delivered over 80 safe rooms and over 150 remote witness rooms in metropolitan and regional courthouses to support victim-survivors to feel safe and give their best evidence in court. The horrible events over the past few months remind us, however, that there is still much more work to be done. We acknowledge the systemic nature of domestic and family violence and will continue to advocate for further measures to prevent these behaviours and reduce reoffending.

I urge the Government to reflect on its pledge to end domestic and family violence in this State with a commitment to more funding for this sector. I urge it also to move with urgency to deliver the 500 frontline

workers as per the national partnership agreement. Continuing to delay the rollout of new workers means that more women will be left without the vital support they need to ensure they and their children are kept safe. In closing, I commend to the House the educational campaign launched by Domestic Violence NSW earlier this year and encourage all members to sign the pledge to work together to end family and domestic violence. All of us can make a difference in creating a culture that is respectful and does not minimise or excuse violence. I urge everyone to sign the pledge at [www.change.org/dvendswithme](http://www.change.org/dvendswithme).

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:33):** I speak in debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill, with great sadness that we are here. Domestic violence has been an issue in our community since time immemorial, it feels. It is something I have worked on since the late 1990s, when I was in the Department of Immigration, working in the access and equity social justice branch, looking at domestic violence provisions and women being forced to live in horrendous conditions on the threat of losing their visas—and so it continues. It is great to be part of a government taking these things seriously, as they should be taken, to make the change we need to see.

I looked at the latest Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics for domestic violence before coming to the Chamber, because Maitland has always figured highly in those statistics. The figures for the Hunter Valley area, which includes your electorate of Cessnock, Mr Temporary Speaker, and mine and those of a number of members in this Chamber now, are 1.5 times the State's average. The two-year trends for the State are quite staggering. There has been a 6.7 per cent increase in the number of domestic assaults of all kinds, an increase of 6.1 per cent in domestic violence intimidation and stalking, and an increase of 7.3 per cent in breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders. That is in just two years. In two years in the Hunter Valley, the rate of violence has increased by a staggering 20 per cent. This is just unacceptable.

I commend the Attorney General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for their work to bring everybody together, in light of the tragic death of Molly Ticehurst. I acknowledge the presence of the member for Orange, who has been a strong advocate on this for many years, as all of us have, really. There are moments that can crystallise support for something we all know to be the right thing to do. There is frustration leading in from 2016 to 2019, when I was the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Labor took to the election campaign a package of \$150 million—massive, for the time—and we did not win government, and we could not do it. Here we are now. So for me there is always a sense of lost time, when this should have been taken more seriously than it has to date.

The New South Wales Government is taking it seriously. On 3 May the Cabinet met with a number of advocates and experts, including Dr Hannah Tonkin, the New South Wales Women's Safety Commissioner; Christine Robinson, CEO of Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre and member of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team; the Hon. Marcia Neave, AO, commissioner of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence; and one of my personal heroes, Rosie Batty, the 2015 Australian of the Year and founder of the Luke Batty Foundation and the Never Alone Campaign. They were able to share with Cabinet some frank insights into the operations of the royal commission. I think the meeting spurred the Government as a whole to embrace the need and the opportunity to make substantial change.

I am proud of the \$230 million emergency package. As the member for Port Stephens has said, it is not the be-all and end-all. This is not the end of the conversation, but it is a significant step forward, and that money will go into expanding crisis responses in New South Wales and frontline services, primary prevention and early intervention, and there is a component for the bail laws and justice response. It is important to understand that these changes to the bail laws, while they will have a significant impact and will change the rights of people accused of crimes, are part of a whole package seeking to get the best outcome for everyone. The best outcome—we must be very clear about it—is that women in New South Wales do not die for being in a relationship, which is, essentially, what happens to too many women every day in this State and in this nation.

The bill implements legislative changes to reduce the rate of domestic violence, really getting to the recidivism issue. When I talk to survivors and hear their fear of telling someone, particularly police, about what has happened to them because they feel there is no capacity for those people to change their behaviour because there is not enough support or education in that recidivism space, I am really staggered. Everyone who is impacted by violence, particularly women, is on a merry-go-round: They put in a complaint, the perpetrator gets another black mark on the apprehended domestic violence order but then they are out again, and they offend again. It is soul destroying for those victim-survivors. The dangerous and violent end of this crime wears women down. It builds on all that early work of abuse, which isolates people from their families and supports, and then gets reinforced by a justice system that cannot act to protect them. We, as legislators, have to think about that.

The Hatzistergos review noted that show cause offences are, by their very nature and circumstances, so serious that the onus shifts from the prosecution to the accused to establish why bail should be granted. It must be made clear that if somebody is violent towards their partner, they need to show cause as to why they should not

be stopped from doing that. It is also important to look at the issue in the context of the coercive control legislation, that new offence that will come into effect on 1 July 2024. That is the other end. That is the beginning of the sly, slight descent into violence and isolation and the removal of supports that make people believe that they have no value, which prevents them from reaching out. I used to describe it as the boiling frog syndrome because by the time someone realises that they are cooked, it is too late. It seemed so nice and warm and safe when they jumped in. These issues need to be addressed.

I am glad that this Government supports victim-survivors and will ensure that there is a legislative framework that criminalises behaviour that leads to the worst outcomes. To the people who are the cause of the worst outcomes, the Government says, "Enough". I will not talk to the detail of the bill because there are so many members far more qualified to do that than I am. I thank the victim-survivors who have shared their stories and their experiences at great cost and continuous re-traumatisation. I also thank the many people who support them. After the Going Home Staying Home reforms of the former Government, which came in when I was shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I saw community workers at the end. I knew that every time I went to a refuge or a centre around the State that often the people working there would not be there the next time I went. The burnout, the stress, the sense of hopelessness and the gag orders that prevented those workers from advocating for real change are examples of the abuse perpetrated by the State when it does not listen to 51 per cent of the population.

Some great people in the sector have been around for a long time. They know who they are. I particularly thank Moo Baulch and Denele Crozier. I also thank my local heroes: everyone at Carrie's Place, Got Your Back Sista and Maitland Against Domestic Abuse. Everything they do is about helping someone. Many of those women and advocates have their own lived experience; others have known someone or just know that domestic and family violence is wrong. They work every day in a constrained funding environment, so the \$230 million that was announced early last month and this legislative change that will commence on 1 July will make their job—the soul-destroying, Sisyphean task of rolling that ball up the hill to save women's lives—just a little bit easier.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:43):** I briefly contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I thank all members who have contributed so far to this debate. It is frustrating for all of us, as legislators, to come into this place time and again to the same vexing issue that governments of all sides have been grappling with for so long. As the member for the Central Coast, I am no different to any other MP in this place. One thing I have noticed is that the further away we get from Sydney, the higher the domestic violence numbers. In regional areas, the numbers, sadly, keep going up, and the Central Coast is a case in point. We have some absolutely fantastic organisations that do everything they can to help provide the support to those women and families escaping domestic violence.

I have said in this place more times than I care to remember that domestic violence is an utter scourge and blight on our society. It is incredibly frustrating for not just MPs but our entire community. Like every other region, the Central Coast has said time and again that it has zero tolerance for domestic violence, yet the numbers are still increasing, and they are so confronting. In the 12 months to December 2023, the number of domestic violence-related issues were 10 per cent higher than the State average. In the two-year period to December 2023, there were 1,771 domestic violence-related assaults and police call-outs on the Central Coast. That is an unacceptable number and it is unacceptable behaviour by people who are perpetrating the most heinous and vile crimes on some of the most innocent and vulnerable people. Not one member in this Chamber feels any pity for the perpetrators. They are disgraceful, cowardly and disgusting.

The member for Orange has said that, as a former police prosecutor, he has seen some of the worst offenders in his area. I have also had some confronting experiences. I spent a night out on patrol with my local police after I first got elected in 2015 and, as I have said before, I recommend that every MP, if they get the opportunity, do the same. It is incredibly confronting. It was clearly evident to me back then—and sadly it has not changed—that the bulk of the call-outs that our police men and women make every night were focused around family and domestic violence assaults. It is really confronting. Time after time on that Friday night I could hear the calls directing officers to go out to yet another potential domestic violence-related incident.

Our frontline workers do the most incredible job under the most confronting and arduous conditions. I may have said this before but my uncle, a retired police officer, was stabbed at a domestic violence incident while on duty. One of police officers' greatest fears is going to domestic violence incidents because they do not know, in a lot of cases, what they will be confronted with. The risk to those men and women, who are trying to keep somebody else safe, is extreme when it comes to domestic violence issues. I acknowledge the incredible work of organisations on the Central Coast: the Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee, the Central Coast Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Coast Shelter as well as the statewide Link2home. Our women and men in blue at the Brisbane Water Police District, ably led by Superintendent Darryl Jobson, and at the Tuggerah Lakes

Police District, led by Detective Superintendent Chad Gillies, do incredible work. Every single day they face what most of us will never experience to keep others safe.

Other members have spoken about the bill in detail, which I will not repeat, but I do note that the numbers provided by the member for Lake Macquarie are very stark. Those numbers represent real human beings whose lives are being destroyed by this insidious behaviour. I welcome the bill from the Government. I note, as others have, that there are a lot of similarities to the bill introduced by the Opposition. But time is of the essence; minutes matter. Members of Parliament are beholden to do everything we can to keep providing resources to those who have to deal with domestic violence.

I note the amendment that will be moved by the shadow Attorney General, which quite rightly excludes registrars from deciding bail in cases that involve extreme domestic violence. Almost every courthouse and police station in this State now has exceptionally good audiovisual conferencing facilities, and a lot of that was put in because of the fear faced by victims of domestic violence who have to face perpetrators time and again. The audiovisual methods enable magistrates to decide those issues remotely. The regions obviously have constraints of distance, with magistrates unable to be physically on site. That can be overcome by utilising the audiovisual technology that has been rolled out to help protect victims of domestic violence from having to face not just the perpetrators but also the families of the perpetrators. They will often try to intimidate victims in courthouses and in the community, all of which is totally unacceptable to modern society.

Opposition members are pleased that the Government has picked up our idea around electronic monitoring, which is so important. We know they are manipulative, recidivist offenders, and we know their form of behaviour. They should know they will be monitored 24/7, and police should know where they will be. I congratulate our Police Force on proactively targeting recidivist offenders' recalcitrant behaviour. Offenders never know when they will get a knock on the door from one of our police officers, finding out that they have breached their apprehended domestic violence order. I congratulate police on the great work that they do all the time targeting those people. Those very sneaky, manipulative individuals often resort to violence against the most innocent and most vulnerable, so to have them being electronically monitored is an excellent outcome. It provides another level of protection to the victims of those offences.

On the Central Coast, I sat in a room full of perpetrators who were being counselled, and it was incredibly confronting to listen to them. One was asked if he would behave that way if he were in a workplace. His response was, "Oh, no, of course not." The simple question was, "Well, why not?" He answered, "Oh, I'd get caught." That was the attitude of those people. The fact that they think that they can go home to a loved one—the person they are supposed to care about the most—and perpetrate that level of violence and manipulation is unacceptable to everybody. The former Government did everything it could and the Labor Government will do everything it can to say to those people that they cannot keep perpetrating those sorts of crimes against innocent people. They will be caught, stopped and punished. We still need to do more. We need to educate young men that it is not acceptable to hit a woman under any circumstances. It is not acceptable to manipulate a woman or a female of any type. That needs to be clearly articulated to every young male in this State.

I had the pleasure of taking part in another walk against domestic violence on the Central Coast, and the turnout was outstanding. I congratulate the member for Gosford. I think the member for The Entrance and the Federal member were there as well. But the feeling amongst the community was palpable frustration—here we are again, hearing stories of the same crimes still being perpetrated against people in our region. It is not good enough. It was good to see the increase in the number of men and young males participating in the walk. Men have to stop this behaviour because, sadly, more often than not, the perpetrators are men. Males in our community have to stand up and say, "No, you will not be doing this. You will not continue this sort of behaviour." Men must be role models of acceptable behaviour in modern society. [*Extension of time*]

I thank members for their indulgence. It was interesting to see the palpable frustration from people at that event. That frustration, quite frankly, was being levelled at both the Federal and State governments. People want more to be done. Throwing money at things is part of the issue, but it is also about an attitudinal change towards that sort of activity. A few members in the Chamber are of a similar age. When we were growing up, if someone was arguing next door, it was not our issue. We did not get involved in it; it was the neighbours' issue. But these days, if someone behaves that way, the neighbours are usually on the phone to the local police saying, "I'm very concerned about our neighbours." We have to continue with that attitude in our communities.

All the money in the world would certainly help to provide resources and support to people, but we have to keep pushing attitudinal change, as legislators, community leaders and individuals. It is not acceptable under any circumstances for a male to behave in that way towards a female—or any other person, for that matter. We have to remember that 30 per cent of domestic violence victims are men, but we must realise that a male escaping domestic violence is usually not in fear for his life. The situation is very different in that regard.

Domestic abuse is a very sinister situation, and coercive control is the most disgusting manifestation of that. That manipulation can occur from a very early stage in a relationship, when the victim is devalued and cut off from all forms of communication and support from family and friends. It is absolutely abhorrent, and I have heard stories from police and service providers about the disgusting nature of coercive control. It is the beginning of that downward spiral of behaviour, so I am really pleased that some of the toughest coercive control laws in the country are coming into play in New South Wales.

I was proud to be part of a government that helped deliver that, but it is not about which side does it; it is about how we work collectively to continue to make it very clear to the disgusting perpetrators of that insidious crime that they are on notice. They will be stopped and punished to the full extent of the law, and we will protect the victims of that cowardly behaviour. We will look after them and do everything we can to provide additional support and protection to organisations and individuals that stand up against that disgusting blight on our society.

The Central Coast community has had a gutful of it, and time and again we say no. We have to keep doing more; we have to keep publicly calling out that behaviour. A simple quip or jibe can sometimes be the beginning of something unacceptable, and the community has to keep saying no. I am very proud to represent a community on the Central Coast that says every day that we have zero tolerance for it. I thank the Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee, the Central Coast Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, the incredible team at Coast Shelter, Link2home—which is provided statewide—and the men and women of the NSW Police Force, who are at the coalface of the issue every day. I thank them for the great work they do and will continue to do to help protect people against the insidious crime that is domestic violence.

I ask members opposite to take on board the amendment to remove registrars from the legislation. Putting the decision into the hands of a magistrate treats it with the importance that it deserves and the respect that it needs to be shown. It is a relatively straightforward amendment. I am sure I will be followed by a contribution from the member for Orange, who will talk about his personal experiences, or the member for Prospect, and we all need to keep working on the issue together. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:57):** Molly Ticehurst, Dannielle Finlay-Jones, Katherine Safranko, Christine Rakic, Mackenzie Anderson and Arnima Hayat are members of our community who were killed by their intimate partners, the perpetrators released on bail. Let those women not become another statistic reflecting our State's failure to protect vulnerable women from domestic violence. Let us learn from their devastating stories and act to prevent the loss of more innocent lives.

Molly Ticehurst was the twenty-fifth woman killed by intimate partner violence in Australia this year. She was a vibrant young soul, a devoted mother, a loving daughter and a committed early childhood education teacher. Molly's life and future were taken. She was killed by her ex-partner while he was on bail for criminal charges that he perpetrated against Molly, including assault, stalking, causing damage to her property and even abusing her family pet. Today, as we consider this bill, we remember Molly, Dannielle, Catherine, Christine, Mackenzie, Arnima and all the victims, survivors and families suffering because of domestic, family and sexual violence.

I support the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. The bill is one of the key measures the Government is taking to reduce the unacceptable risk of violence against women and children. It strengthens legislative frameworks in response to high-risk domestic violence offenders and in turn better protects the New South Wales community. We have reached a crisis of abuse in this country, particularly in New South Wales. One in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of fifteen. That is unacceptable violence. As members of Parliament, we must act to ensure vital protections and support are available for our community.

The Australian Institute of Criminology recorded 112 incidents of intimate partner homicide between June 2000 and July 2018. Coercive controlling behaviour featured in all but one case. That continues today. Last year, 49 per cent of female homicide victims were murdered by an intimate partner. The community in Western Sydney particularly needs these reforms. Over the past five years BOCSAR data has shown an increase in domestic violence-related assaults of 5.7 per cent in Western Sydney. Those are only the reported cases. Approximately 2,500 reports of domestic violence are received by the NSW Police Force each month. The Government believes that only represents 40 per cent of actual instances, due to under-reporting by victims and their families.

In 2022 Arnima Hayat, an aspiring young doctor and expectant mother, was killed by her husband in North Parramatta. Arnima's father had secured an intervention order against Arnima's husband. Whilst Arnima had not reported to police, the concerns of family and friends were evident. In 2022 Dannielle Finlay-Jones was killed in Cranebrook by a serial domestic violence offender on bail for sexually touching and assaulting another woman. In October 2023 Katherine Safranko was allegedly killed by her son just one day after he was granted bail at Parramatta Local Court for another assault against her. In July 2023 Christine Rakic was allegedly killed



by her ex-husband in Rooty Hill after he was released on bail. In Western Sydney, we are reeling from these tragic losses in our community, and women in our community remain scared for their futures.

The bill is one part of the Government's commitment to urgently combat domestic, family and sexual violence. By implementing legislative changes to strengthen the bail framework in relation to those charged with the most serious domestic violence offences, the bill aims to improve community safety, prevent repeated instances of domestic violence and hold domestic violence perpetrators accountable. Amending the Bail Act 2013, the bill implements measures that target high-risk domestic violence offenders and ensures commonly known red flags in domestic violence matters are considered by courts in bail applications.

I will now discuss the key amendments in the bill. Schedule 1 [1] inserts a definition for intimate partner into the Bail Act as someone who is or has been married to them, is or has been their de facto partner within the meaning of section 21C of the Interpretation Act 1987, or who has had an intimate personal relationship with them, whether or not that relationship was of a sexual nature. In New South Wales, bail decisions follow a two-step process. First, a bail authority must refuse bail for a show cause offence unless the accused shows why their detention is not justified. That is a high threshold which reverses the onus so it rests on the accused.

The bill adds two offences to the show cause offences list in section 16B (1) of the Bail Act. Proposed section 16B (1) (c1) adds offences that fall within the definition of a serious domestic violence offence. Examples of offences within that scope include, when committed against an intimate partner, causing grievous bodily harm with intent; sexual intercourse without consent; kidnapping; and choking or strangulation to render a person unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance.

Proposed section 16B (1) (c2) adds the new coercive control offence in section 54D of the Crimes Act 1900 as an offence to which the show cause requirement applies. Coming into force from 1 July 2024, that offence directly criminalises patterns of abusive behaviour which have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. As a result, people charged with serious domestic violence offences will not be granted bail unless they can meet the high threshold of showing their detention is not justified. Then, they must meet the second step for bail decisions in New South Wales—the unacceptable risk test.

The bill also amends the unacceptable risk test in division 2 of part 3 of the Bail Act. That test requires a bail authority to determine if there is an unacceptable risk an accused person will fail to appear; commit a serious offence; endanger victims, individuals or the community; or interfere with witnesses or evidence. If the bail authority determines there is an unacceptable risk on an assessment of bail concerns, then bail must be refused. Section 18 of the Bail Act contains an exhaustive list of matters the court must consider in an assessment of bail concerns. The bill amends section 18 to require explicit consideration of key factors of domestic violence offending, or red flags, as identified by the domestic and family violence service sector and as outlined in the Attorney General's second reading speech. New section 18 (1) (d1) requires consideration of behaviour that may constitute domestic abuse under section 6A (2) of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. *[Extension of time]*

That includes behaviours that are physically or sexually abusive, are economically or financially abusive, include stalking, cause animals injury or death, and isolate someone from family. Behaviours comprising domestic abuse can vary depending on the circumstances and are not limited to conventional notions of physical violence. The amendment ensures those behaviours are mandatorily considered in bail assessments. Currently section 18 (1) (o) requires a bail authority to consider, for serious offences only, any views of victims or family relevant to the safety of victims, individuals or the community. Schedule 1 [4] extends that provision to domestic violence offences against an intimate partner, ensuring that victim views about safety are a mandatory consideration in bail assessments.

The bill inserts section 28B, imposing an electronic monitoring condition on accused persons charged with serious domestic violence offences. The condition must be imposed unless the bail authority considers there are sufficient reasons, in the interests of justice, to justify not imposing the condition. The requirement additionally safeguards victim-survivors and reduces further offending by an accused person who meets the show cause threshold and the unacceptable risk test. The bill balances the urgent need to keep victims and communities safe while upholding the presumption of innocence and the right to liberty.

In the case of *R v Mulhall*, a 2012 Victorian Supreme Court decision that illustrated coercive control, Joy Rowley was murdered by her intimate partner. After three months of dating, the defendant was charged with assault against Joy, and an intervention order was made. The defendant breached the order, was on bail and re-established the relationship. He then strangled Joy to death. Coercive control utilises gradual escalation tactics that vary between reward and punishment to leave victims dependent on and dreading disappointing their partner, as noted by Judge Tilmouth, SC, in the 2021 Australian Criminal Trial Directions. Those methods are often exercised with little respite, narrowing a victim's world view. Often unaware of or helpless against the

manipulation and deception, victim-survivors are emotionally, psychologically and financially entangled by the time they have an opportunity to seek help. Many lose their autonomy and are cut off from the support networks that would have aided their transition.

Leaving an abusive domestic relationship is no easy feat. A 2020 report by the Queensland Mental Health Review Tribunal entitled *'Rape myths' and a 'reasonable belief' of consent R v Lazarus [2017] NSWCCA 279*, which was published in a law review in 2020, recognised that "leaving is the time that poses the greatest risk of homicide to victims of domestic violence". Victim-survivors make the bravest move of their lives when leaving an abusive partnership. The impact of post-separation control is deadly because the abuser has dropped the facade of being a "good partner". If the judicial system is not equipped with better protections for victims of domestic violence, they are left vulnerable to re-exposure at the most dangerous point. Molly Ticehurst was the twenty-fifth of 32 women tragically killed by violence in Australia this year, and it is only the beginning of June.

Molly was courageous. She left impossible circumstances and sought help. Bail laws were not equipped to protect her, but we must make sure that they protect future victims. In *R v Mulhall*, Justice King affirmed that "the law must do all it can to protect women from violent domestic partners". As lawmakers in this place, we must do all we can to protect women and children. The bill is sending a clear message: The safety of victim-survivors is the paramount consideration of the New South Wales criminal justice system. We must ensure that victims of domestic, family and sexual violence are supported and protected. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:12):** I make a contribution in support of the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024, colloquially referred to as Molly's law. I thank the Attorney General for bringing the bill to the House to address this serious issue. This critical piece of legislation is a necessary response to the escalating crisis of domestic violence within our communities. It is born from the heartbreaking and preventable tragedies that have befallen far too many women across the country. The most recent and poignant is the brutal homicide of Forbes mother Molly Ticehurst.

Molly's death has struck a deep chord with her local community of Forbes, which is in my electorate of Orange, and, indeed, with the nation. Molly was the loving mother of Nate, a passionate educator, a cherished daughter and a valued member of the community. Molly's life was tragically cut short by the very person who one would assume cared for and loved her; however, her story is not isolated. It is a distressing echo of countless other women who have suffered under the shadow of domestic violence—that scourge on our society. The bill aims to fortify the protection mechanisms for victims of domestic violence and ensure that perpetrators are held to the highest standards of accountability.

Having several decades of experience in the NSW Police Force and prosecuting criminals for domestic violence offences, I have a unique insight into the relentless challenges faced by victims of domestic violence and the systemic gaps that have allowed perpetrators to exploit the bail system. Time and again, I have witnessed the tragic outcomes when our legal frameworks fail to provide adequate safeguards for the most vulnerable. One of the most significant flaws in the current system is the leniency, inadequacy and inconsistency of bail conditions for those charged with domestic violence offences, and the failure to see and appropriately act on obvious red flags. In Molly's case, there were certainly many red flags, such as the pattern of behaviour of her ex-partner that Molly reported to police before she was killed. Too often, perpetrators are granted bail without sufficient regard for the safety of their victims. The bill addresses that issue head-on by introducing stricter bail conditions and enhanced protective measures.

A key component of the legislation is the introduction of ankle monitoring for individuals granted bail in specific domestic violence cases. It is a measure that I have personally advocated for, having seen firsthand how traditional bail conditions can fall short in protecting victims. Ankle monitors provide real-time location tracking, ensuring that offenders adhere to their bail conditions and providing an added layer of security for victims. The technology acts as both a deterrent and a safeguard, enabling law enforcement to respond swiftly should a violation occur. The tragic death of Molly served as a stark reminder that we must act swiftly and decisively. It has underscored the urgent need for legislative reform to prevent further loss of life. The bill is not just a legal amendment; it is a moral imperative. It is about acknowledging the severity of domestic violence and committing to measures that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of victims above all else.

The bill also introduces a more robust framework for victim support services. We must recognise that the journey to safety and recovery for victims of domestic violence is fraught with emotional, psychological and financial challenges. By strengthening support services, we can offer victims the comprehensive assistance they need to rebuild their lives, free from fear and harm. The bill also proposes enhanced penalties for breaches of bail conditions and stay conditions and reverses the onus of proof for domestic violence offences in relation to bail applications. It is essential to send a clear message that violations will not be tolerated and that consequences will be severe. Deterrence and denunciation are crucial in preventing further harm and reinforcing the seriousness with which we regard domestic violence matters.

I have witnessed the devastating impact of domestic violence on not just individuals but also families and communities. The Forbes community specifically has been impacted by Molly's death. It has rallied around Molly's family. The community has held rallies, which I attended with the member for Granville, the mayor of Forbes, Phyllis Miller, and her council, which has shown great leadership on the issue. The sentiment of the local community has been one of not only anger and outrage but also frustration—frustration with the system and the letting down of that system that led to Molly's death.

The legislation is a significant step forward in that approach. It acknowledges the complex and often cyclical nature of domestic violence and addresses it with a comprehensive suite of measures designed to protect, deter and support. It is incumbent upon us, as lawmakers in this place, to ensure that the legal system reflects the values of justice, protection, community standards and accountability. We owe it to the memory of Molly Ticehurst and all victims of domestic violence to enact laws that provide genuine safety and security. The bill represents a commitment to those values. It is a testament to our dedication to creating a society where no-one lives in fear of their partner or a family member.

Yesterday I spoke with Molly's father, Tony. I have spoken to him a number of times over the past number of weeks to see how he and Molly's son, Nate, are going. He is, as is the rest of their family, still struck with grief. It is taking a very heavy toll on not only the community but the family as well. He still has so many unanswered questions in relation to Molly and how it is that someone charged with serious offences, as the perpetrator in this instance was, could get bail and then commit this most serious offence against Molly. As I have said, this bill derives from and is driven by Molly's passing. It is Molly's law. Let us honour her with this legacy. Let us pass this legislation to enhance protection of other women. I also mention the local police at Forbes, who have done a terrific job in very difficult circumstances. I also acknowledge the Forbes community and the Central West community for their support of Molly's family. Let us all stand united to say, "No more domestic violence." I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:20):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. As stated by the Attorney General in his second reading speech, nearly one in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. According to NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data, in the five years to December 2023, 45 per cent of all New South Wales murders were domestic violence related. About half of those domestic violence murders involved intimate partner violence, and 79 per cent of victims of intimate partner violence were females.

We usually think of murders occurring in public places, unknown places, secluded places or outside homes and mostly by strangers who we do not usually go near. However, those statistics show that many murders occur in people's homes or near their homes—in domestic places that should be safe. The Government is taking urgent action to address the unacceptable and persistently high rates of domestic violence in this State. Necessary and appropriate actions are being taken to keep people safe in their homes and other domestic places. Hopefully, the changes made by the New South Wales Parliament, our Legislature, and enforced by our legal system and courts will in the long term make real and significant changes to our justice system, society and culture.

We all know that addressing domestic and family violence is challenging and requires a multifaceted response. On 6 May this year, our Government announced that it will provide \$230 million over four years as part of an emergency package to enhance support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors and to expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children. The package includes funding for crisis response, justice system improvements for victims, early intervention, primary prevention, measures to strengthen the domestic and family violence service sector, and research.

Schedule 1 to the bill introduces several new requirements into the Bail Act 2013 to strengthen the legislative framework. Schedule 1 [1] inserts three new definitions into section 4 of the Bail Act 2013. Firstly, "domestic violence offence" has the same meaning as in section 11 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. Secondly, an "intimate partner" of a person is someone who is or has been married to them, is or has been their de facto partner within the meaning of section 21C of the Interpretation Act 1987, or who has or has had an intimate personal relationship with them, whether or not that relationship involves or has involved a relationship of a sexual nature. That definition includes current and former intimate partners and will mirror the definition of "intimate partner" in new section 54C of the Crimes Act 1900, which will commence on 1 July 2024 as part of the coercive control reforms.

Thirdly, "serious domestic violence offence" means an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900 that carries a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or more when committed against an intimate partner, or a corresponding offence committed in another jurisdiction. Examples of offences that would fall within the scope of that definition when committed against an intimate partner include causing grievous bodily harm with intent;

sexual intercourse without consent; kidnapping; and choking or strangulation to render a person unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance with the intention of enabling the commission of an indictable offence.

Schedule 1 [2] to the bill expands the show cause requirement in division 1A of part 3 of the Bail Act 2013 to include two new categories of offences. In New South Wales, a bail decision must be made following a two-step process. First, where applicable, a bail authority must refuse bail for a show cause offence unless the accused can show why their detention is not justified. That is a high threshold, and the onus rests on the accused. The show cause test does not apply to people under the age of 18. The bill adds two new categories of offences to the list of show cause offences in section 16B (1) of the Bail Act 2013. Proposed new section 16B (1) (c1) adds offences that fall within the new definition of serious domestic violence offence to the offences to which the show cause requirement applies. Proposed new section 16B (1) (c2) adds the new coercive control offence in new section 54D of the Crimes Act 1900 as an offence to which the show cause requirement applies. The new coercive control offence will come into effect on 1 July 2024.

The second step in all bail decisions, including for show cause offences where the show cause threshold has been met, is the application of the unacceptable risk test in division 2 of part 3 of the Bail Act 2013. The unacceptable risk test requires a bail authority to determine if there is an unacceptable risk that an accused person will fail to appear at any proceedings for the offence; commit a serious offence; endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community; or interfere with witnesses or evidence. If, on an assessment of bail concerns, the bail authority determines there is an unacceptable risk, bail must be refused.

Currently, section 18 (1) (o) of the Bail Act requires a bail authority, for serious offences only, to take into account any available views of the victim or family members relevant to a concern that the accused person could endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community. Schedule 1 [4] to the bill extends that provision to all domestic violence offences against an intimate partner, ensuring that any available views of the victim about their safety will be considered by the bail authority when assessing bail concerns. Schedule 1 [5] inserts new section 28B and requires a court to impose an electronic monitoring condition on an accused person who is charged with a serious domestic violence offence, and therefore subject to a show cause requirement, if they show cause and are then granted bail. The electronic monitoring condition must be imposed unless the bail authority considers that there are sufficient reasons, in the interests of justice, to justify not imposing the condition. That is a final safeguard aimed at improving victim-survivor safety and reducing the risk of further offending.

Schedule 1 [8] amends the definition of serious offence in section 40 (5) of the Bail Act 2013 to include serious domestic violence offences, the new coercive control offence pursuant to section 54D of the Crimes Act 1900, and offences under part 3, division 10, subdivision 2 of the Crimes Act 1900. Subdivision 2 includes very serious adult sexual assault offences, including the offences of sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault. Expanding that category of offences will help to mitigate immediate risks posed to the community and victims by providing an avenue for a detention application to be heard by the Supreme Court while the accused person remains in custody. The transitional provisions in schedule 1 [9] provide that the new bail provisions apply to bail determinations from the date they commence and to accused persons already charged with offences now captured by the provisions if they come before the court again for a bail determination.

The amendment to the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 in schedule 2 to the bill is an important change in relation to the use of tracking devices. Schedule 2 [2] provides an exception to the requirement to obtain the written consent of the Attorney General for prosecution of offences against section 9 of the Surveillance Devices Act. This will facilitate its greater use as one way the criminal justice system can respond to that kind of domestic abuse. I understand that the commencement date of 1 July 2024 is to coincide with the commencement of the new coercive control offence in New South Wales. The Department of Communities and Justice will conduct an administrative review of the provisions 12 months after their commencement. The monitoring will be overseen by the Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce. I thank the New South Wales Government, the Attorney General, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and Minister for Women, and all of the relevant Ministers and their offices for their work on the bill and on these very important issues. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:30):** I speak in debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. The bill before the House follows the Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024 introduced by the Opposition on 7 May. The Opposition considers the safety of our community to be of the utmost importance. That is why the Opposition moved very quickly to protect our community by introducing its own bill. Today we are considering the Government's bill. The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 has been brought to this Parliament in the shadow of some unprecedented violence against women in our society.

One of the tragic cases about which we have heard today and on previous occasions in this House is that of young Molly Ticehurst. Molly was 28 years of age when found dead inside her home in Young Street, Forbes.

Her ex-partner, Daniel Billings, has been charged with her murder and with contravening an apprehended domestic violence order. From all accounts—and we have heard from the member for Orange today—Molly was a naturally gifted childcare educator and mother who worked in the Forbes township. Her ex-partner Daniel Billings had appeared in the Dubbo Local Court on Saturday 6 April 2024, which was prior to her murder, where he was charged with three counts of sexual intercourse without consent, four counts of stalking or intimidation, two counts of property damage and one count of cruelty to an animal, which was Molly's dog.

I must say, as a former police prosecutor, I wonder why he was granted bail in the first place. However, he was granted bail by a registrar. The court attendance day was a Saturday and, at least in regional New South Wales, magistrates do not preside over bail matters on weekends. The registrar granted bail on the condition that he enter into an agreement to forfeit \$5,000 if he failed his undertaking that he would not enter the town of Forbes. He subsequently appeared in court on 18 April. This time he appeared before a magistrate. As I understand the matter, the police did not raise the question of bail. That was no doubt because he was already on bail and the police perhaps did not consider that an application to have him returned to custody would be successful.

A few days following the court appearance on 18 April, the body of Molly was found in her home at Forbes. As I have indicated, he has been charged with her murder. I join with members of this House and extend my sympathy and condolences to Molly's family. I also extend my sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of the far too many victims of domestic violence. As legislators, we need to amend laws to make our community safe. Amendments to the Bail Act, whether brought by the Opposition or the Government, have the objective of making the community safe. The objective of ensuring victims' safety is of paramount consideration, in my view. The Opposition does not oppose amendments to the Bail Act if such amendments will assist in making society safe. As we have heard, the Opposition says that the decision to grant bail to an accused who is appearing in the Local Court should only be considered by magistrates and not by registrars.

I now look at some of the provisions of the bill, including the issue of electronic monitoring and of whether a registrar should be the person who considers bail. The Government's bill provides the circumstances in which a court must make it a condition of bail that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device. The use of electronic monitoring devices is not new. The technology was developed by Dr Ralph Schwitzgebel at Harvard University. In 1964 he developed a one-kilogram radio telemetry device that could be worn by a person. I think we have moved on a little from 1964. The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 contains an important amendment within new section 28B. The provision is that where an accused person is subject to a requirement to show cause pursuant to section 16A for a show cause offence as referred to in section 16B (1) (c1) and is granted bail, the grant must be subject to electronic monitoring. Section 16B (1) (c1) refers to a serious domestic violence offence.

As far back as 2003, in an article as part of its trends and issues publication, the Australian Institute of Criminology referred to electronic monitoring as having three stages at which it can be used. It referred to the pre-trial stage, the sentencing stage and the post-prison stage. The stage being considered by the Government's legislation is the pre-trial stage. The Opposition proposed a similar amendment to that of the Government when it introduced its bill on 7 May 2024. The Opposition is pleased to see that the Government has taken the sensible approach to include electronic monitoring as an appropriate way to achieve a balance between the rights of victims and the rights of the accused.

Those who have appeared in court for bail applications, as I have, know that the decision to grant bail involves an assessment of risks. As was stated by the shadow Attorney General in an earlier speech, we know that it is not enough to tell some offenders to simply stay away. The introduction of electronic monitoring will enable courts to consider whether electronic monitoring will reduce the risk of reoffending. The Opposition supports the inclusion of new section 28B to provide that the granting of bail for a serious domestic violence offence be subject to electronic monitoring. It is hoped that the Attorney General and the Government will provide appropriate funding to ensure there are sufficient electronic monitoring devices and that such devices are monitored.

I now refer to the issue of whether a registrar should be the appropriate authorised officer to grant bail. The Bail Act 2013 currently provides a mechanism for how bail decisions are made. For instance, pursuant to section 17, a bail authority must, before making a bail decision, assess bail concerns. A bail authority is defined to mean a police officer, an authorised justice or a court. An authorised justice means, amongst others, a registrar of the Local Court. We can therefore see that, within the Bail Act, the power to grant bail can be made by registrars of the Local Court. The Opposition's bill that was introduced to this House on 7 May contained proposed new section 70A, which provided that a registrar of the Local Court cannot hear a bail application for a serious personal violence offence.

The Government has not included a restriction on registrars granting bail within its bill. Courts in New South Wales have access to audiovisual link [AVL] technology. AVL technology allows courts to hear bail applications remotely. Every day courts hear bail applications by AVLs. Having regard to the fact that magistrates

do preside over bail applications on weekends, there is absolutely no sensible reason why a person charged in regional New South Wales over a weekend cannot have his or her application dealt with by a magistrate using AVL technology. I note that the Government issued a media release on 14 May 2024 in which it specified reforms to the Bail Act. The media release stated:

Changes to weekend bail courts across NSW to ensure bail laws are made by magistrates (for example using audio visual links) with consultation on the design and rollout of the scheme.

It seems the Government's position changed between 14 May and when it introduced the legislation. We can also look at what some former magistrates and associate professors have said. Former New South Wales magistrate David Heilpern, who previously presided over regional and metropolitan courts, has spoken on the point. David Heilpern is an associate professor at Southern Cross University, and I would assume that he would have some ideas relevant to this issue. He said:

Why registrars are making decisions in such cases as this rather than connecting via audio-visual link (AVL) to actual magistrates who are judicial officers beggars belief.

He further commented:

In this day and age there is no excuse but for it to be dealt with by a judicial officer.

In a bail court on a weekend it's very likely there is a registrar that's not a lawyer, a police prosecutor that's not a lawyer and a lawyer for the defendant, so that's not the best system.

[Extension of time]

University of New South Wales Faculty of Law lecturer Emma Buxton-Namisnyk said registrars were often expected to step in and make "interim case management-type decisions" in "overburdened" local courts. She commented:

There's a lot of exposure to domestic and family violence within the realm of their work, and registrars may not necessarily have that level of expertise, they probably don't have the same breadth of experience around domestic and family violence when they might also not have as much training.

The Commissioner of Police was also asked whether registrars should be granting bail. In an article in *The North West Star*, published on 26 April 2024, it was reported:

Asked on Friday if she'd like to see a change where court registrars don't make decisions on serious matters like sexual assault or stalking, NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb said 'certainly'.

We can do better to protect victims. The legislation presented by the Government is wonderful, but it does have an issue in relation to registrars granting bail. We have seen the problems with that highlighted in the Molly Ticehurst case, and others. Having regard to the fact that audiovisual link [AVL] is available and is being used, it would seem to me, drawing on my experience as a former police prosecutor and a former lawyer, that AVL technology should be used so that bail decisions are being made by appropriately qualified magistrates.

In the Hills area of my electorate, we have a number of wonderful groups that focus their attention on preventing domestic violence and supporting victim-survivors. Specifically, I thank the Hills Domestic Violence Prevention Network, Hills Community Aid, the Harman Foundation, the Lisa Harnum Foundation and the Castle Hill police for their work. Hopefully, one day we will have a situation where community groups in our electorates no longer need to spend time dealing with a plethora of domestic violence cases. Legislation should be strong enough to give victims comfort that they can go about their business with the freedom of the knowledge that their perpetrator will not assault them again. I ask members of this House to support the bill. I ask that they also support the Opposition amendments, which will be introduced by the learned member for Wahroonga.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:42):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. This is an incredibly important piece of legislation which I hope will go some way to addressing the absolutely unacceptable, worsening rates of domestic violence in New South Wales. In Australia this year, on average, one woman is killed by her partner every four days. In recent years the average was one woman killed per week. Women are in far more danger of being murdered by an intimate partner than by anybody else. This needs to change, and we need to do that by addressing domestic violence in a holistic way. I am very pleased that the Government has made a big commitment to address domestic violence in multiple ways. This bill forms part of that commitment.

On 6 May the New South Wales Government announced \$230 million in funding over four years as part of an emergency package to enhance support for domestic family and sexual violence victim-survivors and to expand programs to reduce the rate of violence against women and children. As part of the \$230 million package, \$45 million has been set aside to improve bail laws and the justice system's responses to domestic abuse. This is coupled with funding for crisis responses, including \$48 million to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence program statewide and expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service. In addition to the

\$45 million in funding for changes to the bail framework, \$24 million will fund specialist domestic violence workers within the justice system. Another \$48 million will fund early intervention measures, including the provision of specialist workers who support children accompanying their mothers to refuges, and \$700,000 for the New South Wales Domestic Violence Line.

The package also provides funding for primary prevention measures, including \$38 million to implement the first dedicated primary prevention strategy in New South Wales, \$8.1 million towards the "All in" early childhood pilot which teaches children about healthy relationships, measures to strengthen the domestic violence sector, and research into perpetrators and effective interventions. Research is particularly important because we do not know enough about what drives men to become perpetrators of domestic violence offences. The reforms we are discussing today around bail are particularly important. The need for such reforms was highlighted by the tragic death of Molly Ticehurst, who was allegedly murdered by her partner while he was on bail. He was granted bail despite being charged with three counts of sexual assault against Molly, stalking offences against Molly, and other offences including animal cruelty to her dog.

I visited Forbes and participated in the Mother's Day Walk in memory of Molly. I spoke to a number of her family and friends that day, as did the member for Orange and the Hon. Stephen Lawrence from the other place. We heard about the circumstances under which her former partner was granted bail. He had twice breached an apprehended violence order by returning to Forbes. After he was charged, Molly left Forbes for one week. She returned to Forbes expecting to be safe, to be able to go on with her life. She worked as an early childhood educator, had a very loving family and a large network of friends there. Instead, a few days later, she was murdered. It is an appalling situation that should never have happened. Many other women have been failed by the bail system in circumstances similar to Molly's.

That is why we are considering the changes to the Bail Act proposed in the bill. The bill will extend the show cause test to the coercive control offence under section 54D of the Crimes Act, and to "serious domestic violence offences", defined as offences under part 3 of the Crimes Act with a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or more when committed against an intimate partner. This means that the accused will bear the onus of showing cause why bail should be granted for these offences. This is incredibly important because domestic violence offenders will not necessarily have a history of other criminal offending. Often their violent behaviour will escalate, causing serious injury or resulting in murder, while they are out on bail.

In those cases, we need to use the show cause test to reverse the presumption in favour of granting bail, because there is too much risk and that happens too often. The bill will also require a bail authority, when applying the unacceptable risk test, to consider the behaviour of the accused that may constitute domestic abuse as described in section 6A of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 [the CDPV Act], such as strangulation, sexual assault, animal abuse and stalking, which will better recognise red flags for domestic abuse. In the case of domestic violence offences—as defined in section 11 of the CDPV Act—against an intimate partner, the bail authority must also consider the views of any victim of the offence, or any family member of the victim, relevant to a concern that an accused person could, if released from custody, endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community.

The changes will also allow a decision of the court to grant bail to be stayed pending the making of a detention application to the Supreme Court for a serious domestic violence offence, the coercive control offence and sexual assault offences under part 3, division 10, subdivision 2 of the Crimes Act. That will ensure that, where the prosecution disagrees with a bail decision made in the Local Court and wishes to make a further detention application to the Supreme Court, an accused charged with those offences will remain in custody while awaiting their hearing.

The bill also makes important changes to the Surveillance Devices Act to remove the requirement for the Attorney General's consent for a prosecution for the offence under section 9 of that Act when charged as a domestic violence offence. Section 9 makes it an offence to knowingly install, use or maintain a tracking device without a person's consent. In recent years that has been an increasing problem with domestic violence offenders who have installed tracking devices, particularly on people's phones, and used them to monitor their movements. It is a coercion and control tactic. Removing the requirement for the Attorney General's consent for prosecutions will enable the offence to be more easily prosecuted to combat that form of domestic abuse.

The reforms will go some way to making sure that people are safe from domestic abuse and that they feel safer having gone to the police about domestic violence abuse. Women need to feel that they are safe in reporting domestic violence abuse to the police, not that they are endangering themselves and taking risks. We need to do everything in our powers to ensure that. Lastly, I thank those who do incredible work in my part of Sydney in supporting women who leave domestic or sexual violence. I particularly thank the Parramatta Cumberland Family and Domestic Violence Committee, who recently held a candlelight vigil recognising every woman who has been killed in Australia this year. As part of that network, the Cumberland Women's Health Centre has been doing a

wonderful job supporting those women for decades, as have organisations like the Immigrant Women's SpeakOut Association, Parramatta Women's Shelter and Cumberland City Council, which has established its own domestic violence hub and is doing important work to support women in our community and keep them safe.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:53):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. Domestic violence is a scourge killing dozens of women every year in this country and causing untold terror, trauma, injury, homelessness and disadvantage across the community. Worryingly, domestic violence rates are rising, not declining. According to data published by Domestic Violence NSW, police receive around 2,500 domestic violence reports every month, but that figure represents only 40 per cent of the incidents, with most going unreported. The Australian Bureau of Statistics found that one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence perpetrated by a man since the age of 15. The Counting Dead Women Australia project recorded 64 murders of women by men last year. So far this year, that number is already 28, with 10 in New South Wales.

The recent murder of childcare worker Molly Ticehurst by a former partner on bail for violently assaulting her, the knife attack at Westfield Bondi Junction, which targeted women and left six people dead, and the murder of Luke Davies and Jesse Baird by a police officer who had been stalking Jesse have brought the horror of domestic violence to the forefront of the community. We need to do a lot more to keep people safe, and this bill is an important part of that. Under the bill, anyone charged with a serious domestic violence or coercive control offence must prove that bail should be granted instead of the prosecution needing to prove that it should not. In making the determination and establishing whether bail poses an unacceptable risk, bail authorities will need to consider the victim's and their family's views on safety risks and any red flag behaviours like strangulation, sexual assault, stalking and animal abuse.

If a local court grants bail and the prosecution intends to appeal to the Supreme Court, the decision to grant bail will be stayed until the Supreme Court makes a bail determination. Where bail is granted, released individuals will be required to wear an electronic monitoring device. Bail laws need to reflect the nature of domestic violence, which is based on a desire to exert power and control over someone through physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions and threats. That desire for power and control does not go away when someone is charged, and can have legal consequences. The bill ensures that bail decisions for serious domestic violence offences prioritise victims' safety. But the new bail laws are only one tool, reducing the risks for victims in certain limited circumstances.

Most offenders do not face the criminal justice system until they use lethal force and bail reform is too late. Targeted specialist services including primary prevention, early intervention and crisis support are vital to reducing domestic violence rates and ensuring that victims can leave before it is too late. The State's domestic violence sector is doing that work, responding to domestic violence, keeping victims safe and establishing prevention and early intervention programs. But it is overstretched and under-resourced, receiving almost half the State funding that services in Victoria receive. The domestic violence sector in New South Wales needs a massive funding boost and, together with my Independent colleagues, I have called on the Government to fund the Domestic Violence NSW budget submission. I have also often spoken about the need for funding for Lou's Place, a day refuge that looks after a lot of women in my electorate and others.

Housing needs urgent attention. Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and the threat of homelessness makes leaving an abusive relationship difficult. We need to roll out core and cluster refuges, and better support existing ones. The social housing waiting list is too long. Would need to build 5,000 new social housing homes every year over the next decade just to meet existing demand. We need to better support LGBTIQ people experiencing family and domestic violence. LGBTIQ people are just as likely to experience domestic and family violence as the rest of the community, except for transgender people, who are 2.2 times more likely to be victims of physical intimate partner violence.

I welcome the caution that the Government is taking with bail reform and note that the domestic violence sector supports that approach. Law reform in domestic and family violence should not be rushed. Insensitive changes have the potential to make matters worse. If we do not have the resources to properly monitor electronic bracelets and ensure that they are not removed and conditions are not breached, they could provide a false sense of security for victims. Expanding the remit of laws too widely could see prison populations explode, which will have long-term impacts on community safety and Closing the Gap targets.

New laws need to include significant training for judicial, legal and enforcement officers and the domestic violence support sector. I support the commencement of the laws by proclamation to ensure that the necessary work takes place before the laws are enacted. With coercive control laws, we saw how this Parliament can work well together when it comes to the family and domestic violence space, and I hope that work continues. I now comment on the amendments proposed by The Greens and the Opposition. Both are sensible amendments that make sense to me and many in the sector. They also show why the legislation should not have been rushed without



allowing anyone to see the bill, as the Coalition sought to do. The Opposition has proposed amendments that are sensible, as I said. I hope that we can continue working together to reduce domestic, family and sexual violence. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:59):** I support the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to strengthen the legislative framework in response to domestic violence offenders by amending the Bail Act 2013. The need for reform in this space is unquestionable. The numbers are startling. Nearly one in four women and one and eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. Within the Fairfield local government area, recorded crime statistics reported 927 domestic violence-related assaults during 2023. That was up 5.2 per cent on a 60-month trend. The reality is that many domestic violence incidents do not get reported.

The bill will amend the Bail Act to impose stricter bail requirements. It extends the show cause test to the coercive control offence under section 54D of the Crimes Act 1900 and to serious domestic violence offences defined in part 3 of the Crimes Act. An accused person will have to show cause why bail should be granted for those offences. If a person is granted bail for a serious domestic violence offence, electronic monitoring will be a mandatory condition of their bail. Furthermore, the bill allows a decision of the court to grant bail to be stayed pending a detention application to the Supreme Court for a serious domestic violence offence, coercive control offence or sexual assault offence. This will ensure that when the prosecution disagrees with a bail decision made in a local court and wishes to make a further detention application to the Supreme Court, the accused person charged with the offence will remain in custody while awaiting their hearing.

The changes enacted by this bill will improve the operation of the Bail Act 2013. The bill is in alignment with the New South Wales Government's commitment to strengthen system responses by focusing on high-risk perpetrators and serial offenders to prevent homicides. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** It being 5.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Public Interest Debate*

#### **HEALTH SERVICES FUNDING**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:01):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the New South Wales Minns Labor Government delivered a real cut to health spending in the 2023-24 budget.
- (2) Notes Australian Medical Association (NSW) President Dr Kathryn Austin's comments that "The NSW health system is straining under the weight of increased demand and complexity at a time when budgets are being slashed. The 2023 NSW Budget allocated only a .87 per cent increase to the State's health system, which after health inflation is an effective cut."
- (3) Notes that in the March 2024 quarter, the proportion of patients spending less than four hours in emergency departments is at its lowest level since 2010, the number of patients leaving emergency departments without completing treatment was 16.9 per cent higher than in the same quarter last year, and elective surgeries performed fell 6.6 per cent over the same period.
- (4) Calls on the Premier and the Minister for Health to reverse their real cut to health funding.

Following the release of the latest Bureau of Health Information quarterly report last month, the public can see the facts. They can see through the spin, they can see through Labor's lies, and they can see the hard, brutal and disappointing truth. Labor has taken the New South Wales health system backwards. The Government has bungled the budget and, as a result, has had to cut the health budget to pay for its promises to its union mates. That is the reality. The official figures show the price that patients and the public of New South Wales are paying for Labor's budget mismanagement. Emergency departments are not treating patients on time. Elective surgery backlogs have blown out. Many patients are so frustrated with the health system that they are giving up and walking away without treatment. It is not only me saying that the health system is in crisis, but also the Australian Medical Association [AMA]. The member for Liverpool wants to argue with a peak medical association in New South Wales. The member for Liverpool does not respect our doctors. The AMA is one of the leading medical bodies in New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Hornsby will direct his comments through the Chair. Government members will be placed on calls to order if they continue to incite the member for Hornsby.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Liverpool wants to talk down to doctors, disrespect doctors and deny the cuts and strain doctors are under. I will inform the House of what the AMA has to say about the comments of the member for Liverpool and the disrespect she has shown doctors. In a recent media release the New South

Wales AMA stated, "This is a catastrophe waiting to happen." That is what the doctors said. It is not a political statement. The doctors who work in our healthcare system are saying that. The AMA media release stated that due to Labor's mismanagement it is "becoming increasingly impossible for the doctors and health workers of NSW to deliver the care that the citizens of this State deserve". Again, those are not my words; they are the words of the AMA. The respected AMA New South Wales President Dr Kathryn Austin said, "The NSW health system is straining under the weight of increased demand and complexity at a time when budgets are being slashed."

The people of New South Wales are paying for Labor's budget mismanagement. I will inform the House of the most recent BHI quarterly report for January-March 2024. I will get it all on the record, given that the health Minister, who is present in the Chamber, did not include these points in his own press release, which airbrushed all the facts from reality. The emergency department [ED] crisis has worsened. The percentage of patients leaving hospital within four hours plummeted from 58.1 per cent in the October-December 2023 period to a new low of 55.9 per cent in the January-March 2024 period. That indicates a deepening crisis in emergency care. It gets worse. Under the Government's watch, the elective surgery backlog has grown. While the number of elective surgeries performed on time increased from 83.6 per cent to 86.2 per cent, the overall waitlist grew from 88,618 patients to 93,839 patients.

That clearly shows a resurgence in the backlog of patients waiting for necessary procedures. But hold on, the Minister has set up a taskforce. That will do the job. He said, "There is no money, and we'll cut the budget, but we'll set up a taskforce. That will do the job. We'll look at it." I will put some more facts on record. There is ED overcrowding. ED attendance soared to an all-time high of 810,201 people during the January-March quarter, exacerbating overcrowding and leading to longer wait times for patients seeking emergency care. That problem will not be solved by a taskforce. The time to receive treatment worsened. The percentage of patients starting treatment on time in an ED decreased from 68.3 per cent in October-December 2023 to 66.1 per cent in January to March 2024.

That further highlights the strain Labor's budget cuts have put on our health system. Waiting times for non-urgent elective surgery remain lengthy under Labor's mismanagement and cuts to the health budget and overall budget. Under Labor, one in 10 patients still waited for more than a year for non-urgent elective surgery in the January-March quarter, indicating the ongoing challenges to provide timely care for all patients. The medicos have very clearly said that Labor has delivered an effective cut to the health system. The AMA stated:

NSW has seen a serious decline in elective surgery activity with close to a 14% reduction in the number of elective surgery cases undertaken since the previous quarter (Oct – Dec) when dedicated funding from the previous NSW government ceased.

Labor cut the funding. In the last quarter the Labor Government claimed victory. It said it had reduced wait times. Then it cut the funding and did not restore it and the wait times have gone back up. The Labor Government owns the problem. It has created this mess by cutting the budgets because of budget mismanagement.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (17:09):** I probably need 45 minutes but I will do my best in five minutes. I will address some of the topline issues first, such as the problems the former Government left, and then I will address how this Government is solving them. The first problem is that in a little over three weeks 1,112 nurses would have been sacked under the member for Hornsby's leadership and his stewardship of the Treasury. That is a fact.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Well under your leadership the waiting lists have blown out.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** What else? What would those opposite have done?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind the member for Hornsby that he is on three calls to order. The member for Hornsby will be removed from the Chamber if he continues to interject. I do not want to hear from Government members. If they continue to interject, I will place them on calls to order. The Minister does not need any assistance; he knows what he is doing.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Is 1,112 nurses a small problem? I would say that it is a massive problem, but it obviously was not for the former Government. It would have been happy. I am sure the nurses would have been pleased to have lost their jobs in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. What else? Those opposite attempted to privatise five hospitals across regional, rural and metropolitan New South Wales. The Northern Beaches Hospital is a fantastic example of privatisation. At the moment, that hospital is under the pump financially and it has barely been able to function. That hospital is in a precarious position thanks to the deal done by the former Government, and particularly the member for Hornsby.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I warn the member for Hornsby for the last time.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** But it gets worse. What else did the former Government do? The most significant thing that it established was that a wages gap between healthcare workers in New South Wales, Queensland and

Victoria got larger by the day. The gap was so significant that many paramedics and nurses continued to flee across borders. To address some of those issues, this Government removed the wages cap and gave paramedics the largest wage increase they ever had. For the first time in this State's history this Government is rolling out a ratio-based model for staffing our hospitals. There will be a one to three ratio in emergency departments, which is the largest reform ever made.

This Government is also looking after the bush, which The Nationals never did. Some 500 dedicated paramedics will be sent to regional, rural and remote New South Wales. This Government will oppose this rubbish motion because members opposite have forgotten the damage that they did to the health system. I could not believe it when, in week one, I was told by the secretary that there was a significant staffing problem. When I delved into that issue, I found out that 1,112 nurses were going to be canned on 1 July 2024. Given the pressure our hospitals are under, no-one in this Chamber except the member for Hornsby would think it smart to remove 1,112 nurses from the workforce. No-one except the member for Hornsby would think it smart to privatise five hospitals. No-one except the member for Hornsby would think it smart to put a wages cap in place while there is a staffing crisis in our hospitals.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Matt Kean:** The Minister is deliberately misleading the House. There were no staff being cut and he has not addressed why the position of waiting lists and EDs has deteriorated under his watch.

**Mr Steve Whan:** To the point of order: The member for Hornsby has, once again, deliberately raised an issue that is not under the standing orders as a point of order. I suggest that he is disorderly and should be removed from the House as he is already on three calls to order.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I thank the member for Monaro for his advice. The Minister has the call.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** This Government opposes the motion and every single thing that members opposite have done to the healthcare system, particularly the way in which they staffed it. They should hang their heads in shame. Those 1,112 nurses are needed in our hospital system and this Government will keep them there. This Government will invest in the men and women working in the New South Wales healthcare system because communities across this State need and deserve it. It is a bad motion by a bad opposition that was a bad government.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:14):** I contribute to the public interest debate introduced by the member for Hornsby about real cuts to health funding. Every State Government has a non-negotiable duty to provide the best possible care for its citizens, irrespective of their background, ethnicity, financial standing or where they live. After 12 years of a Liberal-Nationals government that sustained real increases in health expenditure and record funding of health infrastructure, this Government's chaotic budget management has led to a reduction in health spending in real terms. That is a betrayal. This Government does not have a mandate to undermine our public health system. During the Liberal-Nationals period of government, our health system was stronger with 4,751 more doctors, 11,095 more nurses and midwives and 180 new or upgraded hospitals and health facilities, all delivered since 2011. That is undeniable. That was in the good old days. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am trying to speak. I do not like interjections.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Monaro will cease interjecting.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** That was in the good old days of the Liberal-Nationals Government. We offered strong fiscal management, wages discipline and respect for public facilities in the health regime as we rebuilt New South Wales after 16 years of the stagnant, "Bob Carr built nothing" days. I draw members' attention to the Australian Medical Association, which noted that the numbers speak for themselves. Funding is going backwards with a less than inflation increase to the New South Wales public health system.

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

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** The system is facing record demand but the Minns Labor Government's loss of control of the State budget has led to deteriorating capacity to meet that demand. Elective surgery lists that had a boost in funding from the Liberal-Nationals Government are now not getting the resources they need and surgery numbers have dropped by nearly 7 per cent in the past quarter.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Monaro to order for the first time. He has interrupted too many times.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** It is important to put a human and local face on the funding crunch. Just recently a young student reached out to me to tell me about two separate cases in which people have admitted themselves into Nepean Hospital psychiatric ward. It is not funny. Members opposite should listen. Both initially attended the emergency care department in the psychiatric department at Nepean Hospital. One was only 17. He was placed on the admissions list but then proceeded to spend over 30 hours in the waiting room unable to leave for fear of losing his place, which is what he was told would happen by the administration staff. He was not provided care whilst waiting and he was entirely dependent on food and drink from the vending machines in the waiting room.

A more recent example is a person aged in his early 20s. He was told that, due to a COVID-19 outbreak, the ward would not be caring for anyone new for two days. He described seeing people in active crisis being turned away. As far as I am aware, that psychiatric ward, along with many others throughout the State are understaffed and underfunded. We are living in a time where youth and young adults are told that help is available at any time and where to go when in crisis; however, there are numerous accounts of concerning wait times and people being turned away when they seek help. I hope these accounts assist in pursuing more accessible emergency care in the mental health crisis.

Recently I was contacted by a Hawkesbury resident whose 86-year-old mother-in-law had fallen over. She had to wait for two hours before she was taken to Nepean Hospital—and full praise to the ambulance service, which picked her up quite quickly. When she got to the hospital on a Saturday afternoon, she was told that, regrettably, no orthopaedic surgeons are available on weekends. Just in case the Minister for Health missed that, I will repeat it: No orthopaedic surgeons work on weekends in Hawkesbury hospital, so that 86-year-old woman did not get help. NSW Health will take over Hawkesbury hospital from 1 July, and I appeal to the Minister for Health to consider that a metropolitan hospital like Hawkesbury hospital would really appreciate having orthopaedic surgeons operating on weekends.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:20):** I am shocked but not surprised that this motion has come from the member for Hornsby, and shadow Minister for Health. I am not surprised because no-one knows more about cutting health in this State than the New South Wales Liberal Party. When members opposite came to power in 2011, paralysis set in. They took a scalpel to the health system. But do not just believe me; the NSW Commission of Audit final report of 4 May 2012 stated, "Over the last decade"—that is, during the term of the previous Labor Government—"Health current expenditure has almost doubled." It states further:

Current expenditure in NSW Health appears to be adequate at present but demand is increasing with population growth and ageing, technological improvements and rising expectations. Health costs are increasing with demand.

So what did we see from the new Government in 2011? The Grange-sipping Premier at that time, moderate puppetmaster of the New South Wales Liberal Party Barry O'Farrell, took a scalpel and cut \$3 billion out of the health system in September, after that final report of 4 May 2012. The health Minister conceded:

The labour expense cap is \$775 million over four years. Local health districts have been given control over how they achieve these savings.

A further \$2.2 billion would be cut as part of budget measures. But it goes even further. In 2015, under the Baird Government, the health budget had spiralled out of control. As the Minister for Health said, members opposite put a cap on workers. They call them our union mates, but every health worker in this State should be a friend of every member in this place. They turn up to our hospitals, care for our patients and look after local families on the front lines. They carried us through the pandemic, and what did they get from those opposite? They got nothing more than a pay cut and disrespect, which they simply did not deserve. It was an absolute outrage to watch that occur. Any local member could front up to their hospital, hear the workers and see the good work that they were doing, but they were rewarded with nothing but spin.

The Liberal Party is trying to rewrite history yet again, but it cannot, because the facts are in. The Liberal Party carved up the NSW Health budget, and we are still recovering. This motion is nothing more than an attempt to cast a shadow over the reality of the past. Opposition members can put all the spin on it they like; they are the spin doctors of the modern age. But members on this side—as well as everyone else throughout the health system, particularly patients—know that there is no greater enemy of the New South Wales health system than the Liberal Party. They can see what members opposite have done because the proof is there. But not all hope was lost because in the 2023 election, like the second coming, a saviour was born by the name of Ryan John Park. I reiterate what the Minister said about the budget:

The 2023-24 NSW Budget will invest more than \$2.5 billion over four years in the State's frontline healthcare workforce ...

That gave the workers the resourcing and the funding that they needed, and the largest pay increase that they have ever seen. Waiting times have come down, particularly for elective surgery, because of the saviour and the presents that he has bestowed upon us. We now have a health Minister and a government that understand the value of a health system and the importance of what it does. It means that patients are getting the care that they need. We

have been in government just over 12 months and have done so much work, but we know there is so much more to do.

This motion highlights how out of touch the New South Wales Liberal Party is. It is inept and incapable. Whilst so many workers escaped the tyranny of the former Liberal Government for the prosperous shores of Queensland to the north and Victoria to the south, where they got the respect that they need and deserve, the Liberal Party is in its rightful place on the Opposition benches. It is best kept away from the NSW Treasury and the New South Wales health system.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:25):** I speak in support of the motion and acknowledge the important work of our frontline health staff, because our doctors, nurses and other health practitioners are left to navigate a system that is being crushed under Labor's budget cuts. Time and again, the Labor Government strips funding from the regions, deprioritises them and quickly forgets about us altogether. The cuts are not just numbers on a budget spreadsheet; they affect real people in our communities. The Narrabri District Hospital and Gunnedah Hospital were recently told they will lose their essential on-site pathology units, which will lead to a decrease in services. The Premier failed Little Wings when he went back on his promise to fund that vital charity, which helps sick kids in the regions access specialist services. Only after a media inquiry did the Government commit \$400,000—a full \$200,000 short of what is needed to keep up with demand.

In Myall Lakes, locals have reported issues with dangerous staffing levels at Manning Base Hospital, which are affecting patient care. In my electorate of Coffs Harbour, local health professionals have reached out to share the horrifying details of a system in crisis. Beds have been closed without funding. Our hospitals are operating above their capacity. Emergency department presentations are up more than 10 per cent, but fewer beds are funded under the Labor Government. Critically ill patients have been left to suffer in waiting rooms, and our frontline workers are operating in overcrowded, unsafe and compromised conditions.

The Mid North Coast Local Health District is crying out for help, in dire need of funding to keep the beds open and increase staff to manage the demand, yet the cries have gone unattended by the Minns Labor Government for months. It is not uncommon for there to be over 20 inpatients in the emergency department, waiting for a ward bed. That leaves no beds in the emergency department to treat new patients and forces health staff to treat critically ill patients in unmonitored parts of the hospital, where it is not safe. When patients are experiencing medical episodes like cardiac arrest, every second counts. But in our State's hospitals, those seconds are turning into hours spent waiting for monitored beds.

Let me share just some of the instances that have been shared with me, in the hopes that the Government understands the dire situation our system is in. A patient suffering from the horrific side effects of a cancer treatment was treated on a chair in an un-nursed area of the hospital because no beds were available—unsafe and undignified. An elderly person suffering chest pain was left to undergo testing in an un-nursed area when no beds were available in the emergency department, before being returned to the waiting room. The patient was suffering a heart attack in the waiting room of one of our major regional hospitals for hours until a bed was made available. A young man was treated on a blanket on the floor of the triage room when nursing staff were left with no other options. Patients are routinely cannulated in the waiting room, without the dignity of a private space, yet we are still waiting for government intervention.

This Labor Government has made some bold claims about how much it is doing for our frontline workers and the New South Wales health system, yet all we see is Labor cutting the ribbons on services and infrastructure delivered by the former Coalition Government. Labor actively campaigned for years against the new Tweed Valley Hospital. Members opposite did not want the Northern Rivers community to have that service. But once construction was complete and the doors were ready to open, they had no problems lining up their Ministers and trying to take the credit.

It is not just the emergency departments that are bearing the brunt of these cuts; it is the entire health system. I know this city-centric Government still does not understand how the regions work, so I will explain. Out in the regions, people across multiple towns are often reliant on the services of the major hospital in that area. There is no other hospital a few suburbs over when there are no beds available. There have been reports of maternity units across regional New South Wales being severely understaffed and women left to travel hundreds of kilometres to give birth, putting their safety at risk. I ask the Premier and the Minister how they can still be comfortable with their Government's decision to cut the health budget. Ensuring that our hospitals are adequately funded should not be too much to ask for.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:30):** I find it bizarre that the member for Hornsby wants to debate health funding given the record of members opposite, which is why it gives me great pleasure to contribute to this public interest debate. It is amazing that the member has the gall to come into this place to lecture the Government on the healthcare system. I am more than happy to remind him of his record. Those opposite may

speak as if issues in the health system did not exist before 12 months ago and that all was well in the land of milk and honey, but what we actually see is 12 months of very difficult work cleaning up the mess left behind by the former Government.

The Minns Labor Government is delivering on its election commitment to begin the long-term repair and structural reform of the delivery of healthcare services across New South Wales by rebuilding our essential healthcare services, reinvesting in frontline health workers and improving access to care. I will remind the House of the record of those opposite, especially the record of the shadow Minister for Health. He claims to suddenly care about health care. I remind the member for Hornsby that when he was on this side of the Chamber a little over a year ago, he did nothing to address the long wait times for planned surgeries or the stress on our emergency departments or the need for safe staffing ratios. When it comes to the member's credibility on health, it is simple: He has none. Let me remind the House of that.

If members opposite had won the 2023 election, 1,112 nurses would have been sacked in a few weeks time, because when the member for Hornsby was the Treasurer he did not permanently fund them. He chose to fund those nurses only temporarily. That is 1,112 nurses across our State, including almost 120 in south-western Sydney. Thankfully, the Minns Labor Government and this Minister for Health made immediate moves to fix that mess and have already made those nurses permanent. However, that was not the former Government's only blind spot when it comes to health, particularly in my community. When we came to office, one of the first things we found was an inherited planned surgery waitlist of over 14,000 people. I am really happy to report that due to the actions of this Labor Government, we have reduced that list by 85 per cent. We are getting more people the care that they were endlessly waiting for under members opposite.

At Liverpool Hospital, we have done one better. This Government has reduced the elective surgery wait list by 100 per cent. That is zero people waiting longer for the surgery that they need, down from over 800 under those opposite. Many on this side of the Chamber would know the constant stress our healthcare workers are under at work after a long 12 years of Liberal government. Those opposite might know if they bothered to listen. Our nurses have been telling us for years of the need for safe staffing levels. The Government has heard them and it is acting. Liverpool Hospital is one of the first sites to receive a staffing boost as part of the safe staffing trial. It will enable one-to-one care for generally occupied emergency department resuscitation beds and one nurse to three in generally occupied treatment spaces and emergency department short-stay unit beds on all shifts.

We have opened an urgent care service right in the heart of Liverpool to take pressure off our emergency department. That is delivering a real alternative to the emergency department for those who have urgent but non-life-threatening illnesses—people like Shereen and Shane Michael, who the Minister and I met at the Liverpool Urgent Care Centre. Shereen and Shane are parents to four, including a newborn pair of twins. When their new daughter, Eliana, became sick, they were able to use the service at Liverpool and avoid the stress of the emergency room. They said, "It was really reassuring that we could get in to see a doctor urgently and not have to go into the hospital." That is the kind of real change this Government is focused on delivering after the neglect of those like the member for Hornsby. He can try to score all the cheap political points he likes in this place, but we will continue delivering.

Let me further enlighten the member on what the Government is doing. The 2023-24 New South Wales budget invested more than \$2.5 billion over four years into the State's frontline healthcare workforce to recruit and retain more skilled paramedics, nurses, midwives, allied health workers and clinicians. That includes a boost in funding to women's healthcare services, including to the Liverpool Women's Health Centre, which received the first substantive boost to funding in longer than I have been alive. Everyone deserves world-class health care. To deliver better health care in New South Wales, we need to respect and reward nurses, paramedics and healthcare workers. We need the Minns Labor Government. The evidence is in: We are the only ones who will deliver the healthcare services this State needs and deserves.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:35):** I thank the member for Hornsby for bringing this debate before the House because it puts a focus on a very important issue we are facing in our health system in New South Wales. There is no doubt that the health system is under extraordinary pressure at the moment. On top of increasing demand that we are seeing year after year—which, in a way, is the result of the success of our health system—there are issues compounded by cost-of-living pressures and a whole range of issues in terms of primary care. We have incredible demand. At the same time, we have faced a crisis in our workforce. The Government has acted very promptly and actively to address that by lifting the wages cap and, in rural areas, by supporting the previously introduced incentive scheme—in fact, increasing that incentive scheme—and also by introducing ratios for nursing staff.

There will be ongoing negotiations around wage rises. Those are long overdue, and are necessary for us to keep our workforce and to keep our system at the very high quality that it is. I applaud the Government for its activities in that area. I think what it has done is incredibly important. I also applaud the work it has done in the

rural health area, which I have had the opportunity to see firsthand. It has continued the work of the previous Government in that area. But clearly there is pressure on the budget. We have had a reduction in GST funding. We have had levels of debt. We know we are in a tough financial environment and we can see that in areas where there are shortages of services, right now, across the State.

The fact is that with the wage rises there will be incredible pressure on the health system. I have seen that before. I saw that when I was in the health system a couple of decades ago, when wage rises continued year after year. There were productivity gains but that meant cuts in budgets and the pressure became intense. In my view, it was a situation that compromised clinical care. If we do not approach the current situation in a careful manner, then we will have the same risks around clinical care. I have no reason to think that the Government is not being careful. In fact, mutual gains bargaining is an approach that the Government has adopted.

There are other opportunities in our health system. We need to change our approach to primary care. One of the pressures on the New South Wales health system is picking up primary care. Because of a decade of neglect by the Commonwealth, the New South Wales health system is forced to pick that up. I have seen some extraordinary initiatives. NSW Health is actually going into nursing homes to prevent people coming to emergency departments. Those pressures will continue, but the old models of primary care are not going to work. We will need to think about new models of primary care.

For my way of thinking, the motion suggests that we need to be cognisant that we are facing a very significant challenge in our health system. Our health workers do an excellent job and we have great opportunities with technology, particularly virtual care and artificial intelligence—those are real opportunities. But to bring them into account, to make our system more effective, there will need to be a genuine collaboration between management and clinicians, and genuine partnerships in clinical care. I am not quite saying, "A plague on both your houses." I am saying that the motion highlights that our health system is entering a difficult period. I have no reason to think that the Government is not aware of that; I think it is aware. The Government faces enormous challenges in addressing the issue, particularly in rural and regional areas.

Away from the rhetoric and insults being hurled across the Chamber, I make the point that there is a real issue here. The Government's approach to this point has addressed challenges in the system. I congratulate the Government and the Minister for Health on the work that they have done, but we face a challenge. If it is not managed properly, I am afraid that patients' lives may be at risk.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:40):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate, no matter how fictitious their point of view may have been. The Bureau of Health Information [BHI] results do not lie. They demonstrate the consequence of Labor's budget mismanagement. The Government has blown the budget and, as a result, has embarked on a rampage of health cuts that are hitting palliative care and frontline health services. The BHI results show that the cuts are hitting emergency departments. Such is the impact of those brutal and savage budget cuts that the Minister for Health has allowed the Treasurer to impose on him that patients are frustrated, and many are giving up altogether and walking away from receiving treatment in our emergency departments. That is a shame on the Labor Minns Government.

We do not need taskforces or discussions; we need the Government to restore the funding that was cut from the budget. The health Minister must take responsibility for the shocking backslide in one of the most important areas of society—that is, health care. The Government must stop cutting funding and services. It must do what it promised and look after the health of communities. No-one thought that members opposite would ever go so low as to rip money away from dying people. The member for Keira, who is also the Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast and Minister for Health, has allowed a \$9.3 million cut to palliative care in his own backyard. If the people of the Illawarra cannot rely on the health Minister—their member of Parliament—to look after their interests, what chance do the rest of us have? That is part of a \$250 million cut for dying people, who will have to suffer in pain because of the brutal and savage cuts unleashed by the Minns Labor Government. It is shameful and wrong.

The cuts are not just to palliative care. The BHI makes it clear that cuts are being felt across the board, whether it be emergency department wait times, elective surgery backlogs blowing out or patients being forced to walk away from getting treatment altogether because of these shameful cuts. Today the health Minister had the opportunity to commit to restoring the funding that was cut in the budget, but he failed to do so. He talked about everything but the numbers in the BHI report. He is denying reality, but the facts do not lie. These brutal cuts are causing the New South Wales health system to fail, and it is on the Minns Labor Government's watch.

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

**The House divided.**

Noes .....49  
Majority.....16

#### AYES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
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  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Piper, G  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Roberts, A

Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Williams, L  
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  
Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T

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

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

#### PAIRS

Cooke, S  
Cross, M  
Petinos, E  
Speakman, M

Watson, A  
Stuart, M  
Minns, C  
Kamper, S

**Motion negatived.**

#### *Bills*

### **BAIL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) BILL 2024**

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:50):** My contribution to debate in support of the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 will be brief. The bill will introduce reforms that aim to prevent domestic, sexual and family violence in New South Wales. It will target high-risk domestic violence offenders and will ensure that "red flag" behaviour in domestic relationships is considered more seriously in courts and bail applications. The bill will expand upon the Bail Act's show cause requirement to include serious domestic violence offences and the new coercive control offence. It specifies that the bail authority must consider behaviour engaged in by the accused that may constitute domestic abuse.

Serious domestic violence offences are defined in the bill as an offence under the Crimes Act 1900, which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years or more imprisonment when committed against an intimate partner, or a



corresponding offence committed in another jurisdiction. The bill introduces a definition for the term "intimate partner". An intimate partner of a person is someone who is, or has been, married to the offender, is or has been their de facto partner, or has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with them. The bill allows for an electronic monitoring condition to be imposed if bail is granted, despite unacceptable risk and show cause provisions in the case of a serious domestic violence offence. That means a person charged with a serious domestic violence offence is subject to electronic monitoring or being remanded in custody.

Unless the bail authority has sufficient reasoning to believe, in the interests of justice, that the electronic monitoring condition should not be imposed, it must be imposed. This condition will be considered only if the person has met both the show cause and unacceptable risk test requirements. The unacceptable risk test makes the bail authority responsible for determining if there is an unacceptable risk that the accused person will either fail to appear at any proceedings associated with the offence, or commit a serious offence, or endanger the safety of their victims, individuals, or the community, or interfere with witnesses or evidence. If it is the case that the bail authority deems there is an unacceptable risk, bail must be refused on an assessment of bail concerns. The decision to grant bail by the bail authority will be stayed awaiting the making of a detention application to the Supreme Court by the prosecution for a serious domestic violence offence, a coercive control offence and sexual assault offences under the Crimes Act 1900.

Furthermore, the bill streamlines processes under the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 concerning the prosecution of offences related to the use of tracking devices in a domestic violence context. Using a tracking device without a person's knowledge or consent is already a criminal offence that carries a sentence of five years imprisonment or a fine of 100 penalty units, which is the equivalent of \$11,000, or both. Under the Surveillance Devices Act, written consent is required from the Attorney General in order to institute proceedings for any of the offences under the Act. This power has been delegated to the Director of Public Prosecutions by order published in the *Government Gazette* on 31 August 2012. However, this process may present barriers or restrictions in regard to offences of domestic violence. As such, the bill provides an exception to the consent requirement for prosecution of offences that are charged as a domestic violence offence.

The amendments and inclusions in this bill aim to protect victims of domestic violence and prevent repeat offences. Domestic violence, regrettably, is an extremely prevalent issue within our community. It is vital that we work to prevent further occurrences. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:55):** At the outset of my contribution to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024, I convey my condolences to all involved in the tragic death of Molly Ticehurst, and indeed to all victims of domestic violence. I believe that this bill is a good step forward. At the outset, I state my support for the bill. The bill introduces a presumption of electronic monitoring for bail granted in a serious domestic violence offence involving an intimate partner. I have some concerns that the bill does not go far enough to address the issue of non-intimate adults who are within a domestic setting. I acknowledge that the issue has been raised by some of my colleagues. Hopefully, the Attorney General is satisfied with the current wording of the bill.

The bill aims to expand the show cause bail test to persons charged with a serious domestic violence offence. It will place the onus on an accused person in bail proceedings to show why their detention is not justified. The bill aims to change from protecting the rights of the accused offender to protecting the safety of the victims. It is intended to protect survivors of domestic and family violence from accused persons who are released on bail for those alleged offences. The show cause requirement creates a high threshold for an accused person to satisfy when applying for bail. I note that the bill does not address concerns about the role of magistrates in regional areas. It does not remove the power of registrars to determine bail for serious personal violence charges where bail is opposed, but this should be considered, given the widespread audiovisual capacity across our regional courthouses that enables magistrates to make orders from centralised locations, if necessary.

We all agree that domestic violence is a multifaceted issue for our community. Women are being hurt; some are being killed. For every victim there is a family—babies, children and teenagers who are also the victims of the abuse and will experience lifelong consequences. The Upper Hunter is a small community but I am sad to say we have shocking rates of domestic violence. Some examples taken from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research crime mapping tool are that in 2023 the rates of sexual abuse crimes in the Muswellbrook postcode were more than double the State average. In 2023 domestic assault incidents for the Muswellbrook postcode were over three times the State average. For Muswellbrook, those crime figures rated as stable—which means there has not been a significant change in numbers or percentages. A sobering knock-on effect of those numbers is the number of children who are having their lives affected by domestic violence.

A specific example of how this affects the community overall is the number of teachers working with children who come to school to escape their home life and for whom school is not a place to learn, but a place to be safe. The consequences of domestic violence are devastating for all those directly involved and are felt

throughout the community. None of us should feel that it is removed from our lives. Domestic violence reaches throughout all social and economic strata of society. We all need to do more on a practical and political level, and we all need to do more in terms of our own personal awareness and willingness to take a stand. Let me be clear: I fully support the strengthening of our bail laws for offenders accused of domestic violence. I support the extended use of electronic surveillance for accused domestic violence offenders on bail. I support the show cause test for accused offenders so that there is a higher threshold for bail. But there needs to be a whole-of-government approach.

I outline five key initiatives that we in the Upper Hunter believe need to be explored in our area. One is primary prevention and educating our community. We believe there needs to be an increased capacity for domestic violence services to work with schools, primary health providers and community groups on education about what domestic abuse is and what it can look like. That would involve strategies which target male strongholds like workplaces, sports clubs and schools with targeted messages encouraging males to recognise and call out disrespectful behaviours. Localised social media can play a part in capacity-building for domestic violence services, which can utilise social media to promote positive and relevant messages. Two, we believe in early intervention playing a role to target and engage with people at risk, to work with families and people who have been in a refuge or in crisis accommodation to educate them about domestic abuse, and to work with people identified as possible perpetrators, particularly young men. We need to look for partnerships between schools and youth services. I know our local Muswellbrook PCYC plays a very important role in engaging with young males.

Three, we need an effective response in a local context. We need increased funding for locally based sexual assault services, counselling and aftercare and an increased capacity of local domestic violence service providers so that the staff, transport and funds for training are fit for local purposes. The Upper Hunter is a large regional community. However, services such as the local homelessness and domestic violence provider work under a model created for urban areas. The flexibility to create individual service specifications would enable the provider to better service its clients. Rural areas serve fewer clients, but workers cover a large geographical area with a range of communities. The system of staff allocation needs to take better account of those issues. We need increased culturally appropriate supports and, of course, increased temporary accommodation options for the Upper Hunter. At present people seeking assistance for temporary accommodation from Link2home are routinely sent to Cessnock, which is almost impossible to access via public transport late in the day. It also removes people from their community and their local ties to work or school.

Four, we need strategies which promote recovery and healing. Women and their families who have left a situation of domestic abuse require longer-term supports which gradually transition from crisis management to therapy and community engagement. Services need capacity to engage with clients on a timeline which is respectful of those needs. The end result for the client and the community will be a dramatic decrease in people returning to abusive situations, and in the compounding trauma and disadvantage that brings. We also need increased housing for clients leaving refuge and crisis accommodation, and that is certainly something that we have discussed a lot in this place. Five, we need increased support for the people on the front line. In the Upper Hunter there is a shortage of skilled staff, and the community services industry also suffers this problem. Local services need the capacity to train and develop locally based staff. Services need to be given capacity to network and build strong sector ties that result in positive outcomes for clients and a more productive workplace.

Finally, I thank all of our teams that work in the Upper Hunter community services and domestic violence sectors. Mary Spara provides an enormous amount of support to me. Her team from Upper Hunter Homeless Support does amazing work. I thank Louise Clay's team from Upper Hunter Community Services Inc, Sue George's team from the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre, Anna Burley's team from the Bucketts Way Neighbourhood Group, Lee Watts' team from Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre, and Kate Murphy's team from the Dungog Shire Community Centre. They all do an amazing job. They have huge workloads and there is always a demand for their work. I know that many times they feel helpless, but they should know that they make a big difference in our community. We thank them for their tireless efforts. The contribution they make to our society far outweighs what we give them in return. Yet, they work hard, day in and day out. We cannot thank them enough. On that, I conclude my comments on the bill and ask the Attorney General to seriously consider the Opposition's amendment.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (18:05):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I support the bill and the Government's response to protect women and children from the unacceptable rate of domestic violence. There is no acceptable rate of domestic violence. I acknowledge that this is the Government's first step towards reforms to prevent domestic, sexual and family violence in New South Wales. I acknowledge with pride the Government's commitment of \$230 million to enhance support for victim-survivors and programs to reduce the rate of violence against women and their families.

I have spoken of my personal childhood experience of domestic violence and its effect on my family in my inaugural speech and in the subsequent public interest debate introduced by the member for Wakehurst. I do not do so in a cathartic or confessional way. That was some 55 years ago, but fists were as hard, knives were as sharp, and guns were as deadly then as they are now. I have described what it is like to grow up living with domestic violence. As a result of alcohol-induced violence, there was verbal abuse, there was coercive behaviour, there were broken plates and drawn knives in the kitchen, and my mother suffered black eyes. It is only in retrospect that one realises there must have been sexual assault in their childhood home. My older siblings, as teenagers, tried to defend my mother but, ultimately, they left that toxic environment. It led my late brother to alcoholism, mental illness and homelessness, and we lost him prematurely as a result. As a child going to bed I would pull the blankets over my head to muffle the sounds of verbal and physical abuse. One night the threat of death came when we arrived home in the family car to find a shooting target on the garage door.

Exposure to violence like this has a lifelong effect on a victim's response to aggression. It is autonomic and reflexive and is the basis of post-traumatic stress. Some respond with flight and some with fight. Ironically, many victims of these crimes carry a sense of shame. I acknowledge the shared experience of other members of this House on both sides of the Chamber. This is a personal experience which we share with the women and families in our electorates and the State, and it is an experience which we witness daily in our electorate offices. This leads to our duty to provide legislative protection against domestic violence. In my professional role in women's health, I also witnessed the generational effect of domestic violence on women and their families. I saw the effects of physical violence and psychological coercion and trauma on women. It affects their reproductive decisions and options, their general gynaecological care, their pregnancies and their births. It disturbs the future function of the family unit and it impairs the mental health of women and their children.

Domestic violence transcends age, social class and ethnicity. It has the common factors of drug and alcohol misuse and the lack of social determinants of quality education, reliable employment and secure housing. These are factors that the New South Wales Labor Government strives to improve. Figures from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in the Bega electorate are demonstrative of our local problems. In 2023 there were 365 domestic violence incidents, one every day of the year. I am informed by local agencies that this is only the tip of the iceberg. Interestingly, the number of breaches of apprehended violence orders was almost identical at 347. Similarly, there was a high rate of breach of bail offences at 408. As I said, this bill is the first step towards reforms to prevent domestic, sexual and family violence in New South Wales. I have discussed the issue surrounding domestic violence with local police, the South East Women and Children's Services and the Bega Women's Resource Centre in my electorate.

Rural and regional areas have their own issues, including inhibition of reporting due to identification by the bush telegraph and delays in response times because of distance. Agencies have identified further factors to improve prevention and management of domestic violence, through universal screening and use of the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool. Domestic violence services require access to specialist services and the capacity to help women experiencing intimate partner crime. Services also need training to overcome the misidentification of victims as perpetrators. It has been said that there is a multidimensionality of oppression in the lives of women experiencing domestic and family violence. It is recognised that domestic and family violence perpetrators use various means to hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate and dominate their victims over time. These behaviours involve verbally denigrating, threatening, blaming or gaslighting the victim.

I support mandatory conditions on bail, bond or parole for referral to men's behavioural programs such as those run by the NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence. There are overseas examples such as the Caledonian system, which is an established integrated approach to addressing domestic abuse. It combines a program for male offenders with support services for women and children affected by domestic violence abuse either as a victim or a witness who has experienced vicarious trauma. Staying Home Leaving Violence is a specialist domestic and family violence service, covering the Bega Valley shire, to assist women and their children who have separated from a violent partner or family member. The program aims to improve outcomes for women and children by supporting them to live in the home of their choice. Supports include advocacy, emotional support, safety planning, risk assessment, assistance at court, safety equipment and security upgrades.

The Eurobodalla Domestic and Family Violence Service works with women, with or without children, who require refuge and transitional accommodation. The service assists men and women to access early intervention support information, referrals to targeted services, support in securing community and private tenancies, intensive support and holistic planned crisis responses. The 2022 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review investigated intimate partner violence homicides between 2010 and 2018. In the overwhelming majority of cases, domestic and family violence is perpetrated by a man against his current or former female intimate partner. In Australia in 2018-19, intimate partner homicides accounted for 21 per cent of all homicides and for 62 per cent of all domestic homicides.

A significant proportion of domestic homicides occur in a context of domestic and family violence, meaning there is an identifiable history of abuse between the parties that precedes the fatal episode. This research demonstrates the highly gendered nature of intimate partner violence and intimate partner violence homicides, with the male party being identified as the primary domestic violence abuser in the majority of cases where a male homicide offender killed a female victim or where a female homicide offender killed a male partner. In many cases there has been a domestic violence order naming one or both parties as being in need of protection from the other at the time of or prior to the homicide. The vast majority of orders named the female partner as needing protection from her male partner. This demonstrates that in many cases domestic violence had been reported and there had been some level of police or court intervention prior to the homicide.

Turning to the content of the bill, I commend the amendments which strengthen the legislative framework to protect women, children and families from domestic, sexual and family violence. I support the extension of the show cause test to the coercive control offence and to serious domestic violence offences. The onus of showing cause why bail should be granted will be borne by the accused. If an accused is granted bail for serious domestic violence offences, a mandatory condition of bail will be electronic monitoring, which I support. The requirement for a bail authority to consider behaviour such as strangulation, sexual assault, animal abuse and stalking as well as consideration of the victim's or the victim's family's views will further protect victims and their families.

Further, the amendments in the bill allow a decision of the court to grant bail to be stayed pending application to the Supreme Court. This protects women and families by keeping the accused in custody while awaiting their hearing. Finally, it will be an offence to knowingly install, use or maintain a tracking device without a person's consent, removing what is a new technological form of coercive control. I commend the Attorney General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on their work in delivering this protection to the women and families of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:15):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. Domestic and family violence is a despicable, cowardly act that continues to be a scourge on our society. It invokes fear and leaves physical and mental scars. It is an epidemic, especially in regional New South Wales, and it is time that this Government not only pledges to protect our women and children but enforces significant change so that our women and children never have to question their safety again. Last year, a harrowing 1,555 domestic violence related assaults were recorded on the Mid North Coast. That is a 9.6 per cent jump over five years. What does that figure tell us? It tells us that this Government—its laws and its judicial system—is failing our women and children.

In the Kempsey local government area, 350 incidents were reported, a 13.4 per cent jump. In the Bellinger shire, 66 incidents were reported; in the Nambucca Valley, 135 were reported; and across Port Macquarie-Hastings, 466 were reported, an increase of 10.3 per cent. Just one case is bad; why are we staring at thousands, not just in my neighbourhood but across the entire State? These numbers reflect only those incidents which are reported. Let us not forget that there are hundreds, if not thousands, more victims who are too scared to reach out for help and so they remain silent. These women cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel. Last year, 64 women were killed as a result of domestic violence—more than one per week. That is incomprehensible. How is it possible that we, as a society, sit by and allow it to continue?

One in three women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. New South Wales police attend a domestic and family violence call approximately every two minutes. We must do better. We need to make sure our women and children are treated with dignity and respect. We can start by building better laws. Electronic monitoring is one of the best solutions sitting on the table. While I applaud the New South Wales Labor Government for adopting the Opposition's idea, it needs to take the extra step of ensuring that secure electronic monitoring devices are available and funded. Otherwise, what is this bill about?

The bill introduces the presumption of electronic monitoring for bail granted in a serious domestic violence offence with an intimate partner. This is a narrow view of who is impacted by domestic violence. We need to extend electronic monitoring beyond cases involving an intimate partner. It should be introduced to apply to a serious personal violence offence against a person over the age of 18 in a domestic relationship with the person charged. If the Minns Labor Government is serious about introducing electronic monitoring, then we need tangible evidence that it will enact this measure and not just wait until "necessary infrastructure and processes" can be established. The Government has the means to roll out a pathway to ensure safety for domestic violence victims, but these victims cannot wait. We should not ask them to wait. This epidemic has gone on long enough. Once again, we want proactivity and not reactivity.

The Attorney General stated \$230 million dollars of new money would be used in a package to support domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors. With the budget around the corner, has the Government considered what measures it will take to ensure funding for electronic monitoring? What guarantee is there for victim-survivors that monitoring will be included in the allocation? The community is upset with our judicial

system, yet the bill still allows registrars to make important bail decisions about community safety. What is the value in the bill? What is the means test for making bail harder if we allow registrars to hold that power? There needs to be a thorough review into changing weekend bail hearings across all New South Wales courts to ensure that the only person who can adequately deliver a bail decision for serious domestic violence is the magistrate. We have adequate technology to allow magistrates to deliver video outcomes, and now is the time to use it.

It is up to the men, the boys at our schools and everyone in our community to set the example. The standard we walk past is the standard we set. It is high time we seek male role models to teach our boys how to treat women. I challenge our schoolchildren to step up and speak up when they notice poor behaviour. I challenge the men and lads to set the behaviour to a high standard around women. Above all, I challenge our community to speak up and never walk past domestic violence. It is time to protect our women and children. The statistics I mentioned are abhorrent. I know there is no silver bullet, but we need to make the best decisions we can to reduce those numbers, to see zero deaths and to put victims at the heart of decision-making. Stand up; speak up. Set the example and be counted as a leader when addressing domestic violence.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:21):** I support the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. During my time as the member for Newcastle, I have heard far too many horrific stories of women and families who have been victims of domestic, family and sexual violence. Unfortunately, we are seeing an increase in those stories across the State. In the Newcastle local government area, domestic violence assaults have increased by 2.3 per cent on average over the past five years. Across the State it is worse, at an average of 3.5 per cent annually. My colleagues and I are deeply disturbed by the statistics. We are committed to reducing domestic, family and sexual violence, and supporting survivors to be safe and regain control over their lives.

The bill is part of the Government's response to the increasing rates of domestic, family and sexual violence across our community. The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill introduces important legal reforms that will make it harder for serious domestic violence offenders to get bail. By keeping perpetrators off the streets and out of homes, we are reducing the threat of repeated domestic violence assaults for partners and their families. The bill will instil controls in the judicial system to prevent domestic and family violence from occurring. They include requiring those on bail to comply with electronic monitoring, expanding the categories of offences for which an accused person remains in custody, and requiring bail decision-makers to consider the accused's behaviour as well as the views of the victims and their families. The reforms are targeted to strengthen our justice system and better protect women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

The bill also makes changes to the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 to make it easier to prosecute people who use tracking and surveillance devices to monitor and control others. Perpetrators use applications and programs to monitor the movements of their victims, and as tools of control and subjugation. At a recent meeting I had with domestic violence advocates and support workers, they flagged this behaviour as a serious issue in Newcastle. They said it is a common occurrence for women to enter a refuge and find tracking devices among their belongings. Such tactics threaten the freedom of many women and have no place in our society. The bill sends a clear message to perpetrators that the use of such technologies will not be tolerated.

I acknowledge all those who have lost their lives and experienced domestic, family or sexual violence in their lifetimes, including Molly Ticehurst, whose tragic death may have been prevented by the proposed laws. I extend my sincerest sympathies to Molly's family and friends. One in four women have experienced violence by an intimate partner and many people do not report assaults. In 2023 there were 795 incidents of domestic violence and 364 cases of sexual assault in Newcastle. That is too many. The bill will reduce assaults by keeping serious domestic violence offenders in custody.

The increases in domestic and family violence put additional pressure on services for women and children escaping violence. I acknowledge all the workers, advocates and volunteers at those services across Newcastle, who are working well beyond their capacity. I thank the Hunter DFV Consortium and all the services that form the group, including Nova for Women and Children, Got Your Back Sista, Jenny's Place, Family Support Newcastle and the Newcastle Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. I thank them for their persistence and dedication to helping women and children through some of their darkest times. The bill will reduce pressure on local services by increasing the powers of prosecutors to hold perpetrators of serious domestic violence offences in custody.

The bill forms just one part of a package the New South Wales Government has launched to combat domestic, family and sexual violence in the community. The \$230 million package will not only reduce assault rates through law reform but also enhance support for victim-survivors in early intervention, crisis response and preventative measures, and strengthen the sector and workforce. I thank the Attorney General for introducing this much-needed reform and for his commitment to ending the domestic and family violence crisis.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:26):** I call on all members to support the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I hope for the sake of our community that it will pass this Parliament. Molly Ticehurst's story is a terrible one and, among others, serves as a catalyst for the bill. It also happens to be one of the few stories that we know. In addition to Ms Ticehurst, I grieve for those whose stories we do not know. I grieve for those who came and went without any acknowledgement of their suffering; those who continue to suffer silently and remain at risk; and those who, whilst out of immediate harm's way, continue to suffer trauma and after-effects. I do not grieve for the perpetrators but deplore them, knowing their actions are still known only by themselves and their victims.

The bill is not a complete solution to the great moral, societal and criminal challenges of domestic violence, but it is a positive step in the right direction, which should and must be built upon. The bill introduces a presumption of electronic monitoring for those granted bail in cases of serious domestic violence offences against an intimate partner. That is valuable but, in my view, should go further to encapsulate any serious personal violence offences committed by a person over the age of 18 against any domestic partners, be they parents, children, siblings or otherwise. Unfortunately, personal violence offences are not unique to intimate partners, and that is an area where the bill could go further. I know of too many cases of abuse committed against other members of a household. Such perpetrators can be as bad as those who target intimate partners, but under this legislation there is no presumption for electronic monitoring. While monitoring could be sought under different legal provisions, I would be more comfortable knowing the cases were treated equally and that the presumption applied more broadly. I ask the Minister to address why this approach is not worthy of consideration under the proposed legislation.

I note the bill introduced by the member for Wahroonga did incorporate such circumstances. I believe they are still worthy of inclusion and will support amendments to this bill, which is similar to the bill introduced by the member for Wahroonga. It also includes the test to do away with the presumption. However, this bill goes further by extending the cases where a stay can be granted pending an appeal of a grant of bail to include coercive control and sexual assault. I am comfortable with this extension and believe it reflects an appropriate response to acts of coercive abuse, which are committed far too often and have historically flown under the radar. The bill also introduces a new consideration to the grant or refusal of bail generally. Courts must consider whether there has been behaviour that may constitute domestic abuse. I am also comfortable with the introduction of that consideration.

This bill again differs from the Opposition's bill in that it does not exclude registrars from deciding bail. I am concerned with that omission. When I first considered the Opposition's bill, which did exclude registrars from deciding bail, my one contention was that the change could lead to a resourcing problem for magistrates and the broader criminal justice system. Registrars no doubt alleviate the overall burden of work on magistrates by deciding upon matters in certain cases. However, on balance I do believe this is outweighed by the need to apply higher levels of scrutiny to bail for serious personal violence offences. I further believe that audiovisual tools make the magistrate's role more accessible and efficient across the State.

My rationale for supporting the amendments that exclude registrars from determining bail is two-fold. First, it is an appropriate response to the innumerable reports of offences that occur while people are on bail. While the factors leading to the increase in incidents cannot be linked directly to the role of the registrar, it similarly cannot be argued their role is having a net positive impact. Secondly, personal violence offences represent a particularly egregious display of entitlement. It is a difficult concept to understand entitlement in another person and it is often built up over many years, experiences and generations. I believe it requires an elevated level of legal expertise to confidently determine bail in cases of entitlement-driven crimes. Magistrates represent the most appropriate solution to this problem.

If an amended bill is passed, it will implement important and immediate steps to address what local police tell me is a 45 per cent year-on-year increase in domestic violence rates. I hope that while there is national attention on this issue, we continue to work towards reforms that address concerns before they result in the bail of a perpetrator. We know help is needed to escape immediate harm, but we also need to acknowledge the often under-recognised role of wraparound support such as emergency housing and financial assistance. Without adequate resourcing, victims—who are overwhelmingly women—are not able to stay away from violent or coercive relationships. From there, the cycle continues. On average it takes a woman seven attempts to leave. Each attempt increases the level of risk of personal violence and, in turn, the likelihood of bail and electronic monitoring becoming a necessary consideration.

Ryde is not immune to these challenges. In an area where multicultural diversity requires a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed response to domestic violence, services like The Northern Centre in West Ryde are needed more than ever. At its own expense, The Northern Centre runs a program that helps women who get away to stay away. The centre focuses on breaking the cycle and has been oversubscribed with demand. I previously

called on the Government to support The Northern Centre's SafeT program. It is the best example I can find of a long-term solution that is culturally sensitive, broad in focus and evidence based. The program was based on a study by Macquarie University and founded in part by the City of Ryde council.

While the safety and confidence of women should always be our priority, there are other reasons to enable groups such as The Northern Centre to reduce the incidence and impact of gender-based violence. The Federal Government estimates that domestic violence costs Australia \$26 billion a year and gendered financial abuse costs approximately \$10.9 billion a year. That is evidence of the poison of these terrible crimes. It is potent at its core and pervasive in its reach. While recent funding announcements by the Federal and State governments indicate progress, there is still a long way to go to help women escape the cycle of abuse.

Domestic violence does not discriminate, and while we have a wonderful community in Ryde, we are sadly not immune. We should strive for a society where the laws we are debating today are never enacted. I support the bill, knowing it is a small piece of a bigger puzzle. I urge the Government to support the Opposition's proposed amendment. It would be the first significant occasion during this Parliament where the Government embraced bipartisan collaboration that moves the needle in the right direction. I can think of few worthier causes to bestow that honour. I commend the bill and the foreshadowed amendment to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:34):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I thank the Government for its considered response to an unfolding and urgent crisis in our State. I pay tribute to the Attorney General and the Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, their staff and the departments for taking action to protect the most vulnerable in our State. The deaths of Molly Ticehurst and dozens of other women this year alone drove home the need for swift action to end domestic violence. Just a fortnight before she was killed, Ms Ticehurst's alleged killer was placed on bail while awaiting trial for other violent offences he allegedly perpetrated against her. Molly's tragic death at the hands of a man she once thought loved her put domestic and family violence at the centre of public consciousness and discourse. However, this is not a new or isolated issue.

Nearly one in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner. There are many victims whose names we have not seen on our television screens or in our newspapers. This bill is for Molly and every other victim. However, behind the headlines and names is a series of processes, people and services that work to try to keep people safe. An ABC article by Maani Truu entitled "A day on the frontline of Australia's domestic violence crisis", dated 25 May 2024, covers the events of a single Tuesday at Liverpool Court House to highlight what happens behind the scenes. Tuesday is apprehended violence order [AVO] day for the team at Liverpool Court House. Every time a domestic violence incident in the local area is attended by police, a referral is made to the local court.

Maria, an assistant manager at the Justice Support Centre South West Sydney, estimates that Liverpool court receives approximately 60 to 70 referrals per week. She estimates similar volumes of referrals at Fairfield and Bankstown local courts. That number includes only referrals from police. The number continues to increase when other avenues of referral are included, such as hospitals and other services. The details of some of the cases heard at Liverpool Court House depict the difficulties many women in my electorate face when trying to leave violent home environments. On the Tuesday depicted in the ABC article, Maani describes a woman being asked to leave her family home so her partner, whom she has an AVO against, can be bailed to that address. Another woman requires help to obtain a temporary pause on her mortgage repayments because her daughter, whom she has an AVO against, was a vital contributor to paying off the mortgage.

This is not uncommon. The lives of victim-survivors are often intertwined with their abusers so intimately that the prospect of leaving poses significant risks to their financial, housing or family situations. The team at the Justice Support Centre assist women who have decided that enough is enough. This bill will start the process of change. In addition to the bill, the Government has announced a \$230 million package. It includes implementation of this State's first primary prevention strategy, early intervention measures and research into perpetrators and effective interventions. That research will inform us on what to support in communities across New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government has the safety of victim-survivors at the centre of its approach to this issue.

The bill will implement legislative changes to reduce rates of domestic violence and improve community safety, particularly for women, by strengthening the bail framework in relation to those charged with serious domestic violence offences and by expanding the number of offences to which the show cause test applies, adding a serious domestic violence offence and a new coercive control offence to that list. The bill will require those accused and charged with such offences to be refused bail unless they can show cause to the bail authority as to why their detention is not justified. This is a high threshold and not easily satisfied. It will keep those charged with these offences behind bars, thereby keeping victims and survivors safe. In the event that an alleged offender is granted bail on these charges, the bill expands the offences for which that decision can be stayed to include the aforementioned offences. That will mean that if police or a prosecutor disagree with a decision to dispense with

bail for these offences, the accused will remain in custody while the prosecution makes an application to the Supreme Court.

In addition, the bill will amend the unacceptable risk test to explicitly consider relevant factors in alleged domestic violence offences. Firstly, in making an assessment of unacceptable risk, authorities will be directed to consider any behaviour of the accused that may constitute domestic abuse. Secondly, in cases of domestic violence against an intimate partner, authorities must consider the views of the victim and their family in regard to their safety. This will ensure bail authorities are centring their focus on the risks that offenders pose to victims. It also acknowledges and incorporates the specific factors that may be relevant in circumstances where domestic violence is involved, thereby integrating decades of research and understanding of the dynamics at play in such situations.

If an unacceptable risk to the person or the community is identified, the alleged offender must not be let out on bail. For those out on bail, the bill will create a new regime of compulsory electronic monitoring. It will require the electronic monitoring of those charged with a serious domestic violence offence unless a bail authority is satisfied that sufficient reasons exist, in the interest of justice, to justify otherwise. This will cover those offenders who meet the show cause and unacceptable risk tests. It is the crucial final safeguard to ensure the close monitoring of those accused perpetrators within our community.

Whilst the bill broadens the use of electronic monitoring for alleged offenders, it also amends the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 to remove the requirement for the Attorney General's consent, which is currently delegated to the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP], to prosecute perpetrators who use tracking devices as a tactic to maintain control and domination over their victims. Section 9 of the Act makes it an offence to knowingly install, use or maintain a tracking device to determine the geographical location of a person without their consent or an object without the consent of its lawful possessor. The requirement of consent in these matters is a longstanding feature of this legislation, which had an original intent in regulating the use of intrusive devices by law enforcement officers when such use becomes necessary in investigative contexts. However, this requirement is not well suited to the use of tracking devices by those perpetrating domestic and family violence offences.

Because the DPP is delegated this power by the Attorney General, the power is only exercisable by herself and cannot be delegated to any other officer within her office. Evidence shows that some perpetrators use tracking devices to continue to intimidate victims. Given the urgency of this crisis, the Government is acting to remove that barrier to prosecution. It will allow for this offence to be more easily prosecuted to combat this very specific form of domestic violence. If passed, the bill will remove the requirement for consent for offences under section 9 of the Surveillance Devices Act where the offence is a domestic violence offence under section 11 of the Crimes (Domestic and Parental Violence) Act 2007.

As I conclude my contribution, I pay tribute to the team at Liverpool Court House assisting those fleeing environments in which domestic, family and sexual violence exists. Their work assisting our most vulnerable may often go unnoticed by the broader community, but they make a material difference in the lives of people when they most need help, and that cannot be underestimated. It is often difficult to undertake these important roles and not take on some of the weight of what they hear every day. I am sure I speak for all members in extending my thanks to them all. Finally, to those grappling with domestic violence in their home, I say: This Government sees you, we hear you and we are committed to doing all that we can to help you get the support that you need and to create a justice system in this State that puts the safety of you and your family at the centre of what it does.

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:44):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to address a critical issue in our communities and across New South Wales: domestic and family violence. This scourge has plagued our community for far too long, impacting countless individuals, families and pets. I take a moment to briefly place on record some statistics that have been released by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] relating to domestic and family violence within our community. One woman dies at the hands of her intimate partner every four days, and women are overwhelmingly represented in the statistics.

As reported in the quarterly update on domestic and family violence by the NSW Police Force, in data from December 2023 for the South West Metropolitan Region, in which Burwood Police Area Command is contained, 2,263 cases of domestic violence [DV] were reported in 2023. That is an average 7.1 per cent increase per year in DV assault cases over the past five years and a 15.6 per cent increase in DV assault cases in the past two years. The South West Metropolitan Region—in which Assistant Speaker Li's electorate also falls—is the only area in Greater Sydney to see an increase across both the two- and five-year averages of DV cases. Whilst greater reporting of domestic and family violence is absolutely vital to ensure that victims are not suffering in silence and that they can receive support, it is a reminder to all of us that we must do better. In the City of Canada Bay council area, there was a 13 per cent annual increase in recorded DV assault cases within the local government area.



As lawmakers, it is our collective responsibility to work together to combat this crisis and to foster conditions that keep people safe. I am grateful that this legislation is something that all members of this House can work together on, put aside our differences and unite for justice and protection for victims, families and innocent children. The reforms enshrined in the bill include electronic monitoring for bail, which is a crucial step forward. These reforms will help to ensure that those who pose a threat to others are held accountable and that victims receive the support that they need.

The bill that was put forward by the shadow Attorney General in the last sitting fortnight meant that a wider category of offenders would have been captured for electronic monitoring provisions to reduce the risk of reoffending. However, I note the Attorney General's comments in his second reading speech that new section 28B and new section 29 insert regulation-making powers to provide for the making of regulations to matters relating to the supervision, monitoring and enforcement of electronic monitoring imposed under the amendments to support the implementation of those provisions.

We must continue to listen to the voices of survivors, to learn from their experiences and to draft solutions that address the complex web of issues surrounding domestic and family violence. I note that the Opposition bill as introduced by the shadow Attorney General sought to exclude registrars from deciding bail. The bill that we are debating today allows registrars to make decisions about community safety. I support sensible amendments that exclude registrars from deciding bail, in the interests of victims' safety.

I was in the Chamber earlier today during the contribution of the member for Orange to debate on this bill. He called the bill "Molly's law" in honour of Molly Ticehurst, whose murder was a tragedy that rocked our State. Her story was a heart-wrenching example of a system that failed her. Stories like Molly's are a real reminder for all of us that behind those sad statistics are real people and real lives shattered by violence. I support Molly's law to empower survivors, hold perpetrators accountable and ensure that no-one is left behind. May she rest in peace.

I know that this is an extremely important issue for my community. I have spoken to many who believe that support services in our community need to be improved. There is still a long way to go. I reiterate in this Chamber my firm commitment to working with all members to create a better future where every individual and every woman can live in safety and dignity. The bill takes an important step towards that future. Together we can make a difference and stop the scourge of domestic and family violence. I thank the House.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:49):** I speak in debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. The bill reiterates the New South Wales Government's commitment to urgently addressing the unacceptable rates of violence against women and children, and mitigating against the risks of high-risk domestic violence offenders. I acknowledge that this bill comes at a high price. We in Parliament send our love to the family, friends and community of Molly Ticehurst, and everybody who was involved in her life. I also acknowledge the decision-making that ended in her losing her life.

Five women in New South Wales have been killed by men released on bail this year. We know that the justice system has a long way to go in preventing domestic violence. The bill forms one component of the Government's whole-of-government response to tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence in our community. It is a national crisis. The Government is committed to strengthening accountability and consequences for perpetrators, strengthening and building upon prevention work, and maintaining a focus on domestic and family violence in First Nations communities. There is more to be done. This is the first step, but it is by no means the last.

The electorate of Gosford lies on the edge of the beautiful Central Coast of New South Wales. The Central Coast consistently records some of the highest figures of domestic and family violence in our State. From June 2022 to June 2023, the Central Coast had the third highest number of domestic violence related incidences in New South Wales. That is nothing to be proud of. It is also consistently over-represented in statistics for breach of apprehended violence orders. However, it is not simply a Central Coast issue. With nearly one in four women and one in eight men in Australia having experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15, there is no time but now for action. We simply cannot wait to act.

Three months after I was elected to this place, a beautiful and much-loved member of our community, beautician Blair Dalton—who was a mother, sister, daughter and granddaughter—was killed by her partner. Thirteen months and two days before that man killed Blair Dalton, he was charged in an incidence of violence against his stepfather. Later that year he was also involved in another violent incident concerning his ex-partner, which resulted in him being charged and subsequently refused bail. He was later, obviously, provided bail and released from custody at the beginning of January 2017. Blair was killed in September 2017. Refusing bail is a difficult decision for people working in the justice system but, realistically, it is something that we have to consider, because Blair is no longer there to be loved by her family. It is a tough move, and this legislation is a start.

By strengthening the bail framework in relation to those charged with the most serious domestic violence offences, the bill aims to prevent repeated instances of domestic violence. Holding perpetrators accountable will make communities safer. By expanding the list of offences to which the show cause requirement applies, the Government has considered that certain domestic violence related offences are so serious that they warrant inclusion in the Bail Act as show cause offences. While some instances of domestic, family or sexual violence are already captured by such provisions, including where the accused has committed the offence while already on bail, the bill will expand the number of offences to which the show cause test applies. That includes the serious domestic violence offence and coercive control offence categories.

It is accepted that the show cause requirement is a high threshold and not easily satisfied and, as such, there is expected to be a rise in alleged offenders held on remand. That rise is necessary and in line with community expectations to keep victim-survivors safe. Further, the bill will amend unacceptable risk tests to explicitly require the consideration of factors in alleged domestic violence offending. In particular, the bill will require bail authorities to consider the presence of any behaviour of the accused that may constitute domestic abuse while also considering the views of the victim and their family concerning their safety and the safety of the community. I wonder if, had Blair and her family been considered, she would be alive at the moment.

The bill also increases the safety of victim-survivors and their families by requiring electronic monitoring for accused charged with certain domestic violence offences and granted bail. By legislating the requirement for anyone charged with serious violence offences to be subject to electronic monitoring, the bill requires a bail authority to be satisfied that sufficient reasons exist to justify not imposing that condition. That measure is considered to be a safeguard for that small category of high-risk offenders who satisfy the show cause and unacceptable risk tests. In addition to the \$230 million emergency package to improve domestic violence prevention and support for victim-survivors, the bill's amendments form one part of the Government's response. It is not the end, and the New South Wales Government will continue to act on this national crisis.

I thank everybody who works in the domestic violence sector on the Central Coast. Our Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee is an amazing group of activists who are keen to protect women and stop domestic violence on the Central Coast. They are doing great work. They have worked alongside our domestic violence court advisory service. I also thank the people who work there. We have a new survivors hub and I thank Bec Owen for the work she is doing leading victim-survivors in that space. I thank Natasha McDowell from Peninsula Lighthouse and Ian Lynch from Pacific Link for the housing they provide for women escaping domestic violence. I also thank the domestic violence officer at Central Coast Council, Leah Hayden. I particularly thank our women's health centres, led by Theresa Mason, in Wyong, Woy Woy and Wyoming. The work Theresa is doing is absolutely amazing. We appreciate her.

I also thank our police: Darryl Jobson at the Brisbane Water command and Chad Gillies at the Tuggerah Lakes command, as well as everybody in the Police Force. They are on the front line. Just this week a woman reported to me that, when she reported to the police, she was not happy with the outcome. I know that the police are doing the best that they can, but we really hope that they can do a little better, because protecting women is crucially important. I thank the Attorney General and his team, and the Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and her team, for the comprehensive package that has been delivered across New South Wales to help prevent domestic violence against women and children.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (18:56):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I stand with my parliamentary colleagues in this place to absolutely and categorically denounce domestic violence in every form. It is not okay. It has never been and never will be okay. I also stand with every victim of domestic violence in my electorate of Clarence. I have done so before, but this is the first time that I have had the opportunity to pledge to do more in the New South Wales Parliament. I pledge to do more in that space and I pledge to do more to be a part of the solution. I have previously done that in my role as mayor of Clarence Valley Council, and I pledge to do so again as the member for Clarence.

In this place I offer to my electorate my commitment to do more to protect every person—each child, woman and mother—against domestic violence. I have listened intently to debate on the bill. I will reflect on some of the contributions made by other members. I think and hope that the best of the Parliament will be on display as we debate this issue and, not only that, that we will eventually come to a conclusion and the legislation will be passed. I agree with the member for Gosford. This is, indeed, a national crisis. It will need not only the State's attention—and I believe that this issue is getting the State's attention—but national attention as well. I am not particularly proud to say that across my electorate in 2023 there were 548 domestic violence assaults and incidences recorded, 173 in the Richmond Valley and 375 in the Clarence Valley. Sadly, that is a 36.4 per cent increase in domestic violence related assaults in 12 months. It is not a statistic I am proud of, and nor are the clear majority of my residents.

I fully support electronic monitoring—in fact, the sooner, the better. Any added protection that can be offered is something I will support. But I do have a question for the Attorney General: Does the electronic monitoring require mobile telephone coverage? In many areas of my electorate—and, dare I say, many areas of regional New South Wales—there are black spots and poor telephone coverage. I would be interested to know what the plan is for those areas and how it will work across all areas of New South Wales, particularly in those black spots. I also support the removal of registrars from the bail decision-making process. I believe that would strengthen the decision-making process, but I note that at this stage the Government's bill does not provide that extra protection. Again, I urge the Government to seriously consider the Opposition's proposed amendment. I hope the best of this place is on display to offer the maximum protection possible.

I fully support the introduction of the presumption against bail for serious violent offences against an intimate partner, with respect to coercive control offences. I see this as a very positive step. I also congratulate the workers and volunteers in my electorate of Clarence who do tireless work in the domestic violence space. They are all unsung heroes. I congratulate the Government for bringing this most important bill to the House. I want to see all women and children in New South Wales be safe, feel safe and feel supported by their Parliament.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (19:01):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. Like the previous speaker, the member for Clarence, I thank all members for their contributions. Our society has continued to grapple with how to eliminate family and domestic violence. While ever there is one victim of domestic violence, it will be one too many. In the northern beaches community the five-year trend has been a decrease in instances of domestic violence. However, that was for 2023. My sense on the ground is that this year, at least to date, there has been an increase, which is unacceptable, as was the status quo before it.

Eliminating domestic and family violence is an elephant that we must chip away at, one step at a time. Our role as lawmakers is multifaceted, and there are steps that we can take to help end this scourge. Setting the tone of public debate and helping to shape public views on this matter is one thing we can do. Creating policy, such as improved education in schools around domestic and family violence—what it looks like and how it should be addressed—is another. We can create new laws to cover violence in all its forms, such as coercive control. That said, legislation on that particular topic will be difficult to enforce, owing to evidentiary challenges. However, it will play an important educative role in helping communities to understand this scourge, and, armed with that understanding, to combat it.

We can help better enforce current laws so that offenders do not get away with it. We can better support and fund services for people, women being the overwhelming majority, who are escaping violence, helping such women back onto their feet. In that regard, I pay tribute to local services, such as the Women's Resilience Centre, which is in dire need of funding, and the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, which does a wonderful job. Finally, we also need to ensure that victims—again, overwhelmingly women—are kept safe from offenders or suspected offenders.

Many members in this place have different contexts and approaches to this topic. All of them are equally valuable and add to the melting pot of solutions for ending this scourge in our society. I arrive in this place in the context of my experience as a family and divorce lawyer. People come to you at their most broken and their worst during their most difficult moments in life. However, one of the roles of that profession is helping those people get back on their feet, out the door and on the way to a better tomorrow. All too often, both in my past career and my current service to the people of Pittwater, I hear and read about harrowing domestic violence ordeals.

This bill will take some small steps in addressing this scourge in several ways. Judges will be required to make certain bail decisions instead of registrars, providing greater rigour. The legislation will reverse the presumption of bail for those accused of serious domestic violence offences, requiring them to show cause as to why they should not be detained, rather than the prosecution needing to prove why they should. Currently, only those accused of the most serious offences—including murder, the sexual assault of a child and commercial-scale drug production—have to meet such a high threshold to get bail. Serious domestic violence offences will be those committed by an intimate partner that carry maximum sentences of 14 years or more, including sexual assault and strangulation with intent to commit a further offence, as well as kidnapping.

The bill will require electronic monitoring of people charged with serious domestic violence offences who are on bail. It will expand the categories of offences for which bail decisions can be stayed—that is, the accused person remains in custody while prosecutors challenge their release in the Supreme Court. That will act as an additional safeguard to prevent the release of dangerous domestic violence offenders, or suspected offenders. There are additional welcome changes. But, as welcome as they are, they will not end domestic and family violence. It will continue, and it will be as horrendous and horrifying as ever. However, the changes will save lives. They will make a difference. They can only make women, children and all victims of domestic and family violence safer. That is why I support the bill. However, this cannot be the end of the conversation. To me, the

promised land is in education. The Government must continue to increase resources to educate young people about the scourge of domestic and family violence, because those young people will make the difference tomorrow.

As a family and divorce lawyer, too often I saw female clients blaming themselves for the abuse they suffered. That is wrong and it is tragic. As an elected representative, I have also seen young men who have done nothing wrong either feel that they are being typecast as part of the problem or compelled to apologise to a cohort, on behalf of all men, because of the actions of an evil few. This issue cannot devolve into a conversation about identity, or male versus female. It must remain a conversation about what is right and what is wrong—about decency and what is expected in a civilised society.

The key is education. We must educate our young people in a way that is inclusive and does not victim-blame young women, who might feel like they are to blame for their present or future abuse. That is entirely wrong and outrageous. Equally, we cannot educate young men in a way that ostracises them and makes them feel that all men are the problem, and that they are wholly or in part to blame for the evil acts of others. We are all part of the solution. We all must be educated to help solve it.

So often we see that change starts with our young people coming through the education system. We have seen so many social changes come through them. It will not be the older generations that lead and implement this change. We must instil within our young people, through education, that domestic and family violence is not acceptable and enable them to understand what it looks like in all its forms. We must instil within them that there is a proper and appropriate way to treat people, talk about people and conduct yourself towards people, be they of the same sex or another gender. To me, that will be the start of the journey towards ensuring that we do not just talk about the number of people who have been killed by an intimate partner but about the other of issues the day.

We must continue to think deeply about what policies and reforms can improve outcomes and ensure that this will be an issue of the past and not of the future. What a legacy it would be if this Parliament could start the elimination of this scourge; by the time our terms in this place are over, each of us might feel a sense of pride that we did all that we could. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:09):** I support the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 and thank the Attorney General for introducing it. National Cabinet gathered on 1 May 2024 to discuss gender-based violence. The statistics are shocking and staggering: Nearly one in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. Unfortunately Blacktown is overrepresented in those statistics, and I have spoken about that on numerous occasions in this House.

National Cabinet agreed on a number of priorities for all governments. Those priorities include strengthening accountability and consequences for perpetrators, strengthening and building upon prevention work and maintaining a focus on domestic and family violence in First Nations communities. The bill strengthens the bail framework in relation to those charged with the most serious domestic violence offences. It aims to improve community safety, particularly the safety of women; prevent repeated instances of domestic violence; and hold domestic violence perpetrators accountable.

Recently I met with Kylie Druett, Monique Walker, Hayley Rhodes, Alice Smith and Amellia Timms. The women shared their personal stories about their journeys in life as they grapple with the after-effects of domestic violence. They are so resilient that, despite the challenges and traumas in their lives, they wish to make a tangible difference in everyone else's lives and make a difference in our society in the future. I will not go into their personal stories, but they have connected with Full Stop Australia and met with Minister Jodie Harrison. They identified several key recommendations to government. The first recommendation is to provide access to financial support to manage the consequences of a domestic violence homicide. The second is to recognise that trauma affects all children, regardless of age, and that children should be eligible for financial support payments because the deceased victim could have been the major financial earner or the younger children may now have to live with an older sibling.

The third is to support a pilot of specialist teams that will support families bereaved by domestic violence homicide to navigate the care system and receive psychological support. The final key recommendation is the need to prevent public reporting by media and police for up to 48 hours after an incident to allow family and close friends to be notified. Too often there is instant reporting on social media and television; news media are out the front of the house within a few hours of the incident, when most of the family has not been notified. The women raised incidents where a death was caused by a violent outbreak at midnight, and by three or four o'clock in the morning it is all over social media and the news. Family members who have yet to be notified are waking up to text messages from family and friends trying to clarify whether someone in the family has just been murdered.

I can only imagine the heart-wrenching situation that those families face while the media is prying into their personal lives.

The women made many other recommendations, but hopefully today we can pick up on their suggestion that the apprehended violence order [AVO] system must change. Many feel that AVOs are not keeping women safe. Whilst the bill may not revise the AVO system, it strengthens bail conditions with the introduction of two tests. Firstly, bail is refused unless the accused charged with certain serious offences can show cause as to why their detention is not justified. Secondly, the unacceptable risk test determines that bail will be refused if the person is likely to fail to appear at any proceedings for the offence; commit a serious offence; endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community; or interfere with witnesses or evidence. In assessing the two tests for bail, issues such as coercive control in its various forms will become an important element in assessing the accused.

I thank the many organisations in my electorate that undertake valuable work in supporting women suffering the scourge of domestic or family violence. Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre is a professional, affordable and holistic gender-informed service, promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment for women and delivering its services in a caring, non-judgemental, respectful and safe environment. North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service assists women and children experiencing domestic violence to obtain legal protection through an apprehended domestic violence order. The Harman Foundation delivers open and empathic support, guidance and reassurance to all multicultural community members. It offers a 24/7 telephone help line, support group meetings and case management services, and provides temporary accommodation for vulnerable women and children. Relationships Australia provides access to marriage and family counselling, mental health services, family dispute resolution and group workshops.

SydWest Multicultural Services has specialist domestic and family violence officers to assist with individual case work. It also runs the Cross Roads, a six-week multicultural men's support program to help men build better and more respectful relationships. MacKillop Family Services, operating from Blacktown, offers youth services to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Many are impacted because of family breakdown or violence at home. Adventist Development and Relief Agency in Blacktown provides counselling services, case management and "breaking the cycle" programs. Grace's Place, a world-first residential trauma recovery centre for children, has a brand-new home that provides a unique place of healing and restoration for children who have lost a loved one from homicide. Reach Services is a small, not-for-profit charity that organises immediate emergency accommodation. They have assisted me and my staff on numerous occasions when all other avenues were closed.

Australian Childhood Foundation focuses on creating an environment dedicated to the recovery and healing of children traumatised by abuse, neglect and family violence. Joining Families Support Services provides a range of services, including counselling and support to assist in resolving family conflict and hardship. I thank the Blacktown police for designing an app to document abuse and provide access to services to support victims of domestic violence. I urge people to download that app. Whilst all these services undertake wonderful work, in some way I wish they did not need to exist because we had eradicated the scourge of domestic violence. I thank each and every person that works, volunteers, sponsors or is on the management committees of those support organisations for their love, support and understanding for people impacted by domestic and family violence. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (19:18):** I speak in relation to the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. The domestic violence situation in New South Wales feels like an epidemic. It is an unacceptable situation. Our police have to deal with around 140,000 domestic violence calls each and every year. That is about 400 calls a day. It is totally unacceptable. The days of what happens behind closed doors staying behind closed doors are over. This should no longer be a place where we do not talk about those things. We cannot accept that anymore. Victims are suffering in silence; they feel a high level of desperation and are unable to see their way out. Many suffer for decades, living in the hope that one day it will stop. A large number of people sacrifice their own safety and stay in abusive relationships for their children. They stay there because of financial security, with many perpetrators using money as a weapon to both control and to punish those victims.

The one problem that remains constant right across the spectrum of domestic violence cases is a lack of support and access to services. For so long, domestic violence cases were minimised because of the nature of the offences. While the law and public opinion have caught up with that, there remains a shortage of help, especially in rural and regional areas. Emergency accommodation remains stretched, especially for families, and financial security continues to be a problem. While some strides have been made in adjusting the laws to provide safety for victims and more severe punishment for perpetrators, there are gaps. I acknowledge that the bill is a first step in the right direction towards addressing that evil. I note that the Government is taking action to address the unacceptably high rates of domestic violence in the State.

Horrific events have occurred recently. The tragic death of Molly Ticehurst in Forbes has understandably shocked people in the Forbes community, in the Central West, in New South Wales, around the country and across the globe. I send my sympathies to not only the Ticehurst family but also every family that has been impacted in any way by this insidious crime. Communities have said that we need to do more, and we know that we all need to take more action. Nearly one in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence from an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. Nobody can imagine the pain that they have to live with. It should never happen to them or to people like them. There is no excuse for domestic abuse, and governments need to take the politics out of it and ensure that urgent action is taken to improve outcomes for those people and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

I note that the Government has announced it will provide \$230 million in new spending over the next four years as part of an emergency package to enhance support for victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence, and to expand programs that reduce the rates of violence against women and children. I would like the Attorney General to explain how that investment will help regional and rural communities. We heard from the member for Clarence about black spots in mobile coverage. How will that be addressed? How will we address emergency accommodation in communities that have no support? How will we address the services that are lacking in many regional and rural communities? It not good enough to say that the Government will introduce services but then tell people that they have to travel 100 or 200 kilometres away to actually get the help that they need. I ask the Attorney General to show that there will be an equitable package to ensure that wherever people live in this State, they will have access to the services that they need.

I acknowledge and welcome the provisions for electronic monitoring. They will operate by subjecting a person on bail to geographical restrictions. If they breach those, the monitoring personnel will notify the person on bail that they are in breach of their conditions. If they do not rectify that breach, the police and the participating victims will be immediately notified that there is a breach of the bail conditions and the geographical restrictions. That will provide the participating victim with an opportunity to enact their personal safety action plan. It will provide forewarning in circumstances where, under the current system, victims have no forewarning at all. That may be of particular benefit in regional areas of New South Wales, where police are more thinly deployed than those in urban areas. It will give participating victims in those localities a degree of warning.

I acknowledge the work that the shadow Attorney General has done in this space, and I note that he is in the Chamber tonight. He wanted to bring the bill on earlier, and a number of the measures that he put forward are in the Government's bill. Whilst his work and his drive have ensured that the bill is before the House today, he will also move one notable amendment. The bill does not have a provision that excludes registrars from making valid decisions. Registrars do not need to be legally qualified. In the judicial hierarchy, they are at a level below magistrates. A recent focus has been on bail decisions made by registrars on weekends and the unsatisfactory fact that magistrates are not deciding those important bail decisions. In some courts in New South Wales, registrars are making those decisions on weekends; in other courts, magistrates are making those decisions.

I thank all those who work to support people dealing with domestic violence—those who work on the hotlines, those who provide support around emergency accommodation, the organisations that provide financial support, the organisations that help children and those who ensure that the services are reaching the people who need them. When that phone rings and someone is on the line, the operators know that it will not be an easy conversation. But at the end of that conversation, they may have saved someone's life. Our frontline domestic violence operators take those calls, mostly from women who have nowhere else to turn.

One of the hardest steps for women is to call those hotlines and say, "I need help and I need it now". There is often a feeling of shame because the woman has been degraded by her partner saying that she is the problem. In some cultural situations, a lot of women suffer in silence because of not wanting to bring shame to their family. Some women say, "I don't know what's happening; I just want to talk to you for a little bit." Some might also get a call where a woman immediately knows what she wants and says, "I want to get out. He's been beating me. I'm scared. I'm frightened."

Some women might say, "He's punched me and I was holding my baby," or, "He strangled me and I blacked out and hit the floor." Then the conversation would start very seriously. The operator would say, "He's tried to murder you, and we need to have a conversation right now about your safety." The women on the phone do the work of putting safety plans together and providing the services for those women who really need them. Domestic violence is an evil epidemic. No system is perfect, but significant improvement is needed. I welcome the Government's bill, but also encourage the Government to go harder and support the amendment that the Opposition will put forward.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (19:28):** I contribute to debate on this very important subject. Like you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have been in this place for some time and we have seen various attempts to deal with this over that time. In talking about the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024,

I will not reiterate the many good contributions from members on either side of this Chamber. I think we are all on the same page in this debate. I want to talk about a few things. We have made some progress over time. As many people in this Chamber know, I live in a border community. Some time ago there was an issue with domestic violence AVOs being issued in New South Wales but not being valid in Queensland, which is just across the road from the Tweed. Those laws have been changed and now there is a national register to give greater protection to women against domestic violence offences.

I was the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services some time ago, and we allowed footage taken from lapel cameras worn by the police to be used in court. I bring that up because I have had the privilege of spending a Friday or Saturday night from 6.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. with the local police. When you grow up in a town, you get a feeling for it, but until you go out with the police on a Friday or a Saturday night, you really do not know what goes on. I have attended numerous domestic violence cases at two o'clock, three o'clock or four o'clock in the morning. Some of the cases were fairly horrific, where the victim—which in all cases was female—was bloodied, bruised and crying.

In one particular case a three-year-old was knocked out of the cradle during the incident and cracked his skull on the floor of the kitchen. Blood was everywhere. At that time, I was doing a shift with the local ambulance service. The paramedics said, "In this case, Geoff, we pick up the baby and just go to hospital. We just go." I was horrified to find out that in my town there are 40-odd houses where, if an ambulance is called, they will wait around the corner for the police to attend because there is a history of violence, usually fuelled by alcohol. In recent times I have had to deal with a constituent being murdered in a domestic violence incident, even though there was an AVO. It was quite depressing because she was looking after her mother, who was a ward of the State in Queensland. I applaud the Attorney General's office here. I approached the office to receive funding so she could be buried, and that was forthcoming. I am really appreciative of the Attorney General's office.

I support the member for Clarence in bringing up the issues with electronic bracelets. What happens in black spots? I know they work on geographical things, but what if the offender goes over the border? Will they work in another jurisdiction? Is there cooperation between the New South Wales and Queensland governments or not? Those are really important things, particularly in the regions. It is a cross-border issue. I know other members are concerned about cross-border issues as well. I am fortunate that one of our ex-employees now works for Full Stop Australia, which is a group that looks after rape and domestic violence victims. The member for Port Stephens and the member for Maitland also came to an event where we listened to a number of victims of domestic violence. It was pretty horrific. It is really disappointing to listen to those stories. I, for one, would also like to see some of the funding go to that great organisation because of what I have seen and heard.

It is important to understand that domestic and family violence is not a new thing. It has been around for a long time, but it has been swept under the table. Unfortunately, over my time here I have found it usually takes a really big disaster to make change. It also takes a lot of victims to make change. Talking to Legal Aid in my area, I was horrified to find out that 70 per cent of the current offenders actually experienced domestic violence as a child. That is horrific. Those people are 20 or 30 years old now and they witnessed domestic violence when they were three or four years old. Can we do more? Of course we can do more. We have great organisations. We are a great State. We often stand in the Chamber and speak about how great New South Wales is. But this is a real scourge on our State. All 93 members of this Chamber are fortunate that we can make change. Is it going to be enough? I do not think so; there is no silver bullet.

I have had the experience of going to a male offender program to sit through a two-hour course. There were 25 offenders in the program who had been convicted of domestic violence offences, some of which were pretty horrific. On the night I attended, their victims were asked to come along—their partners, wives, girlfriends and so on. I was amazed that nearly 80 per cent of the victims came along to the offender course. I have seen cases in my area involving blood and so on, and yet the victims attend to support the offenders.

The Attorney General has done a great job. There are registrars and a part-time courthouse. I obviously agree with the Opposition's foreshadowed amendment. I support the comments from the member for Bathurst. I feel for the poor people who work at Lifeline and Full Stop Australia and take those phone calls. I have had those calls to my office. I think all members have had victims come to our offices to complain about the lack of services or that they just need somebody to talk to. Half the time they do not even want me to talk to the police. They just need somebody to talk to. This legislation is a good step. I support the Government's bill, but I support the Opposition's foreshadowed amendment as well.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (19:36):** In reply: I thank the following members for participating in this wideranging and very respectful debate: the shadow Attorney General and member for Wahroonga, and members representing the electorates of Charleston, Dubbo, Blue Mountains, Ballina, Port Stephens, Port Macquarie, Maitland, Terrigal, Prospect, Orange, Cabramatta, Castle Hill, Granville,

Sydney, Fairfield, Mount Druitt, Upper Hunter, Bega, Oxley, Newcastle, Ryde, Liverpool, Drummoyne, Clarence, Gosford, Bathurst, Blacktown and Tweed.

As each member has highlighted in this debate, domestic and family violence is an urgent and devastating issue impacting communities across New South Wales. An issue as complex and entrenched as this one, with such far-reaching and tragic consequences, demands a multifaceted and long-term response. That is what the New South Wales Government is doing. As I said in my second reading speech, this bill is not the entirety of the Government's response to domestic and family violence. Rather, it is an important step to take urgent action to ensure that our criminal justice system and, in particular, our bail laws appropriately respond to the threat of domestic and family violence and offer adequate protection for victim-survivors.

I take this opportunity to address some of the matters raised by members in the debate. The member for Wahroonga and the member for Dubbo questioned why the bill was not introduced earlier. The members for Wahroonga, Port Macquarie, Terrigal and Castle Hill also queried why the Government has only now included electronic monitoring in the bill. The matters covered in the bill, including electronic monitoring, are complex. Time was required to ensure that issues were properly considered in consultation with the domestic and family violence sector, instead of taking a rushed approach that may result in unintended consequences. As to the decision to include electronic monitoring in these reforms, the Government agrees that electronic monitoring has an important role to play in ensuring the safety of victim-survivors of alleged serious domestic violence offending, but it is not the only answer to that complex problem. Domestic and family violence groups tell us that often.

Under the Government's bill, electronic monitoring is an important but discrete element of the reform that complements the strengthened show cause and unacceptable risk tests. By including serious domestic violence offences and the new coercive control offence in show cause and strengthening the unacceptable risk test to ensure that domestic violence risk factors are given sufficient weight, the bill will result in more accused persons charged with serious domestic violence offences being refused bail in the first place. If an accused is granted bail despite the strengthened show cause and unacceptable risk tests, the bill provides a final safeguard by requiring that the accused must be subject to an electronic monitoring bail condition, unless the bail authority is satisfied that sufficient reasons exist in the interests of justice to justify otherwise.

Another issue that was raised by the member for Wahroonga, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Ryde is that electronic monitoring would apply to a narrower cohort than the Opposition's bill. Under the Opposition's bill, electronic monitoring would be mandatory for people accused of serious violence offences committed in any domestic relationship. Importantly, under the Government's bill, I expect that a significant cohort of people who would be subject to electronic monitoring under the Opposition's bill will instead be remanded in custody. The member for Ballina raised an issue that domestic and family violence also occurs in relationships other than intimate partner relationships, such as against parents. The core purpose of the Government's bill is to strengthen responses to the unacceptably high rate of intimate partner violence.

As we have seen too often recently, violence can escalate, often with fatal consequences. On average, one woman was killed by an intimate partner every 11 days in Australia in 2022-23. Intimate partner homicide is the most common form of domestic and family homicide, with the majority involving a female victim. As of December 2023, intimate partner domestic violence assault was the most common form of domestic violence assault in New South Wales, and it has been trending upwards by an average of 2.6 per cent annually over the previous five years. In financial year 2021-22, 23 per cent of Australian women reported having experienced violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15. That is astounding. Targeting intimate partner violence in the show cause and electronic monitoring provisions is the most appropriate way to achieve that balance. It is not clear that applying stringent show cause and electronic monitoring requirements is justified for some other relationship types, such as offending between housemates or former housemates.

The Government's approach appropriately addresses non-intimate partner violence through the proposed expansion of the unacceptable risk considerations. The reforms would require a bail authority to consider, as part of the matters in section 18 of the Bail Act 2013, behaviour engaged in by the accused that may constitute domestic abuse, including but not limited to strangulation, sexual assault, animal abuse and stalking. The Government's changes to the stay provision in the Bail Act also extend beyond intimate partner relationships to all serious sexual offending under subdivision 2 of division 10 of part 3 of the Crimes Act.

The member for Ballina raised concerns that the requirement for electronic monitoring would remove judicial discretion. Judicial discretion is an important feature of the criminal justice system. Courts are best placed to consider all of the individual circumstances of a case before making a decision, including bail decisions. Requiring the court to impose an electronic monitoring condition where a person is accused of a serious domestic violence offence does not inappropriately fetter judicial discretion. The bail authority is not required to impose an electronic monitoring condition if it is satisfied that reasons exist in the interests of justice to justify not imposing such a condition. That ensures that bail authorities retain appropriate discretion over those matters, while also



making it clear that the expectation is that serious alleged offenders are subject to electronic monitoring if granted bail, unless there are very good reasons for them not to be.

The member for Wahroonga and the member for Oxley queried how electronic monitoring might work in practice. The Government does not currently fund electronic monitoring for people on bail. There are a number of complex steps required to set up an effective regime. The Government has established an implementation taskforce, led by the Cabinet Office, to oversee the development of the electronic monitoring framework. Alongside development of the necessary infrastructure, that work includes determining the most appropriate and effective approach to electronic monitoring, including how compliance and alerts will be monitored. The electronic monitoring provisions in the bill will commence on proclamation once suitable infrastructure and relevant processes have been established.

The member for Wahroonga, the member for Dubbo, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Terrigal, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Oxley and the member for Ryde raised that the bill does not currently include amendments to prevent registrars from making bail decisions. The member for Wahroonga noted that the Opposition will move an amendment proposing that registrars cannot make bail decisions for "serious personal violence offences". I advise the House that, following discussions with the shadow Attorney General, the Government will move its own amendment to enshrine in the bill that bail decisions will be made by magistrates, and not registrars, in all matters—not only those involving serious personal violence offences. I will address that issue further during consideration of the bill in detail.

The member for Ballina also noted that The Greens will move an amendment proposing a statutory review. I will address that during consideration in detail, but I indicate that the Government will support the amendment. The member for Dubbo, the member for Sydney and the member for Upper Hunter highlighted the need to take a holistic approach to supporting victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. The bill is an immediate response that is required to address the known critical gaps in the bail framework, as it deals with high-risk alleged domestic violence offenders. It forms part of an ongoing package of reforms aimed at reducing rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in New South Wales.

On 6 May 2024, the Government announced a \$230 million emergency package to improve domestic violence prevention and support victim-survivors. The package includes funding for crisis responses, including \$48 million to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence program statewide and expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program; justice responses, including \$45 million to make necessary changes to the bail framework and \$24 million for specialist domestic violence workers within the justice system; early intervention measures, including \$48 million to fund specialist workers who support children accompanying their mothers to refuges and \$700,000 for the New South Wales domestic violence line; primary prevention measures, including \$38 million to implement New South Wales's first dedicated primary prevention strategy and \$8.1 million towards the All In early childhood pilot, which teaches children about healthy relationships; measures to strengthen the domestic violence sector; and research into perpetrators and effective interventions.

I thank the Legislation Review Committee for *Legislation Review Digest No. 14/58*. I take this opportunity to respond to matters that the committee referred to the Parliament for consideration in relation to the bill. First, the committee noted that the expansion of show cause offences extends the circumstances in which an accused person can be denied bail and creates a presumption that bail will be refused for those offences. The committee raised concerns that it reverses the onus of proof in criminal proceedings and may undermine an individual's right to the presumption of innocence.

Bail decisions, with some exceptions, are ordinarily made prior to any finding of guilt and do not have any bearing on a person's eventual acquittal or conviction. The reversal of the onus of proof in the show cause test, requiring the accused to show cause as to why their detention is not justified, does not reverse the presumption of innocence. It is an established test that is applied to charges of serious offending or charges that carry a higher risk of offending while on bail. Extending the show cause test to serious domestic violence offences and coercive control is reflective of the seriousness of those offences and the potentially devastating consequences if an accused commits related or escalated offences while on bail.

Second, the committee expressed concern that amending section 40 of the Bail Act would lead to the arbitrary detention of accused persons by broadening the circumstances in which a bail decision is automatically stayed. The amendments to section 40 of the Bail Act simply expand an existing provision that operates to protect the safety of individuals and the community. The stay provision will only be enlivened in circumstances where a person is charged with one of the relevant offences, meets both the show cause test and the unacceptable risk test, bail is granted and police or prosecutors elect to make a further detention application in the Supreme Court. It is an important safeguard where there is such a concern about the grant of bail that a decision is made by the prosecutor that a stay is warranted.

A person held on remand as a result of a stay can only be held for a maximum of three business days. After that time, either a new bail decision will have been made by the Supreme Court—either granting or refusing bail—or the detention application will have been withdrawn. If neither of these has occurred after three days, the person is nonetheless released on bail. This time limit is an appropriate and necessary safeguard to prevent a person being held on long-term remand inappropriately. Third, the committee referred to Parliament an issue regarding the requirement for electronic monitoring. The committee noted a concern that an accused person would be subject to continued monitoring and surveillance prior to having their matter heard and determined, and that this may adversely impact on an accused's right to privacy and freedom of movement.

By its nature, electronic monitoring does involve a limitation being placed upon a person's right to privacy. However, the right to privacy is not absolute. It does not override the rights of others to live free from violence. From time to time, appropriate limitations to the right to privacy may be prescribed by law, as is the case in this bill. Any limitation on the right to privacy that will be created by the imposition of electronic monitoring is reasonable and proportionate. It has the proper purposes of enhancing community safety and protecting victim-survivors. The bill contains appropriate safeguards to protect the rights of individuals, where appropriate. As I previously noted, courts retain a discretion not to impose electronic monitoring, if satisfied that sufficient reasons exist in the interest of justice to not do so.

Fourth, the committee raised a concern about the retrospective application of the bail amendments in the bill. The amendments apply only to future bail applications made after their commencement. They do not retrospectively apply to past bail applications. The amendments do apply to future bail applications in relation to offences already alleged to have been committed, or charged, before the commencement of these provisions. The amendments do not retrospectively change the outcomes of any past bail applications but will apply to any future consideration of bail for offences already charged that are covered by the amendments. This is consistent with recognition by the courts that legislation which prescribes future operation based on past events is not retrospective. The amendments do not include any new offences with retrospective effect, nor do they retrospectively alter any applicable penalties. Ensuring that the bail amendments apply to offending that allegedly occurred before the introduction of the reforms is necessary to ensure victim safety, which is the primary purpose of the reforms.

The committee noted a concern that certain important matters in relation to electronic monitoring are deferred to the regulations. The Bail Regulation 2021 is already where the minimum standards for electronic monitoring conditions are set out. It is therefore appropriate that any additional matters concerning electronic monitoring arising as a result of this new legislation be included alongside those standards in the regulations. Prescribing some matters by regulation, rather than in an Act, will allow for flexibility in the implementation of the electronic monitoring framework, and ensures that it can be updated to incorporate any developments as required. As members are aware, the infrastructure and framework for this increase in electronic monitoring is currently being developed in consultation with affected agencies.

In conclusion, I say that there is no single quick-fix solution, legislative or otherwise, that will eradicate domestic violence. However, in tightening bail laws for those accused of the most serious domestic violence offences and incorporating red flags into all domestic violence bail considerations, this bill is an important step in the right direction. I take this opportunity to thank all those in the community, especially victim-survivors and their families and those in the domestic and family violence sector, for engaging with the Government and indeed with all members of Parliament—members of all political persuasions—who have taken the time to research, consult and share their wisdom and experience as the Government continues to respond to this important issue. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (19:54):** I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-087E:

No. 1      **Registrar must not make bail decision**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 28—

**[8A] Section 70A**

Insert after section 70—

**70A Registrar must not make bail decision**

An authorised justice who is a registrar must not make a bail decision.

The Government has taken urgent action to address the unacceptable rates of domestic violence in this State by introducing the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. When we announced the measures to be introduced by this bill on 14 May 2024, we also announced that our Government would make changes to ensure that weekend bail decisions are made by magistrates, with consultation to occur on the design and rollout of the scheme.

Work is already underway, and has been for some weeks, on implementing those changes to ensure that bail decisions across the board are made only by magistrates, which does not require any legislative amendment and can be achieved through operational and resourcing changes that we are working on with the Department of Communities and Justice and the Local Court. We have already had those discussions with the Chief Magistrate. But that said, in recent days we have heard comments from other members in this place and have had discussions about those concerns. They expressed to me and to my office that they would like some further security in relation to the Government's commitment. We therefore are happy to give it.

I also acknowledge that this afternoon I had discussions with the shadow Attorney, who discussed with me his amendment to remove registrars from hearing certain bail applications in relation to serious personal violence offences. We agreed during that discussion that the Government's amendment, which I have just moved, will subsume the Opposition's amendment. The Government's amendment will mean not only that registrars will no longer make bail decisions in relation to serious personal violence offences, but they will not make bail decisions at all. I thank the shadow Attorney for agreeing to this sensible course of action and for his constructive approach on this important issue.

I also acknowledge and respect the hard work that all of our registrars do and will continue to do across the State. I lay no blame or criticism at all for any decisions that have been made, and I have to say there have been some unfair things said. We acknowledge that particularly in the light of recent tragic events, there is now a community expectation that magistrates should make bail decisions in what are often very challenging and complex matters. Domestic and family violence matters are very, very complex. I am pleased to move the amendment today to enshrine in this bill that bail decisions will be made by magistrates alone in the Local Court, not registrars. The amendment is consistent with what we said we would do. I hope that some members will support it.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:57):** My contribution to debate will be brief and only to confirm what the Attorney General has said about our discussions in respect of this amendment. It will be unnecessary for me to move my foreshadowed amendment, which was narrower than the Government's amendment. Without access to the administrative information of the Attorney General, I certainly thought that that was at least the minimum from an administrative point of view that should be done. The Attorney has now indicated that more can be done than just serious personal violence offences. The Opposition is very happy with that outcome and his indication. I indicate to the House that the Government's amendment will subsume my proposed amendment. I will not need to move my amendment.

The Attorney General's amendment will mean that section 8 bail decisions—which are decisions to release a person without bail for an offence, or decisions to dispense with bail for an offence, or decisions to grant bail for an offence, or decisions to refuse bail for an offence—will no longer be able to be decided by a registrar and must be decided by magistrates. I agree with the comments the Attorney General has made with regard to registrars performing very important tasks. This is by no means an attack on registrars. It is simply an acknowledgement that, because of the complexity of domestic violence offences, it is desirable from a community confidence point of view to have magistrates—full judicial officers—deciding these matters. Having regard to the totality of the circumstances, it is appropriate that that be the case. We called for those measures within our bail bill—my private member's bill—and I am glad to see that is now being included in the Government bill, which the Opposition supports.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (20:00):** The Greens support the Government amendment and recognise the sensible compromise of the Opposition. We acknowledge the work of registrars in my electorate and across the State. Indeed, they are in every way closer to the community than magistrates but, because of the gravity of this, we support the amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-087E be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (20:01):** I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-086A:

No. 1      **Review**

Page 4. Insert after line 28—

**[8A] Section 102**

Insert after section 101—

**102 Review of certain provisions**

- (1) The Minister must conduct a review of the reviewable provisions to identify if—
  - (a) the policy objectives of the reviewable provisions remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of the reviewable provisions remain appropriate for achieving the objectives.
- (2) The review must be commenced within 6 months after the period of 3 years after the commencement of the reviewable provisions.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 1 year after the last day by which the review must commence.
- (4) In this section—

*reviewable provisions* means the provisions of this Act amended or inserted by the *Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024*.

This amendment is about the review of the provisions. I know the Attorney General will be tracking this very closely to see what the statistics tell us, as we all will. This provision needs to be in the bill so that the review commences six months after the period of three years after the commencement of the reviewable provisions, and that a report be tabled in each House of Parliament within one year after the last day by which the review must commence. This provision is really important. As I said today, whatever we are communicating to survivor-victims and perpetrators, we must ensure that the laws are doing what we say they will do and that the programs that we are putting in place in communities do what they say they will do. The Greens think the tracking of that is absolutely essential. We are grateful to the Opposition for its support and to the Government for working so productively with us on this amendment.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (20:02):** The Government agrees to The Greens amendment. In my second reading speech I committed to ask the Department of Communities and Justice to conduct an administrative review of the provisions 12 months after commencement. We also said that I would request the chairperson of the coercive control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce to include consideration of the provisions in the bill relevant to the coercive control offence in its first annual report, which will be delivered 12 months after the commencement of the relevant provisions later this year.

I had a conversation with the member for Ballina while we were waiting for the amendments to come on. I indicated to her, and I am happy to advise the House, that I will track these personally on a month-by-month basis. Prior to the commencement of the provisions in July, we want to see what behavioural change, if any, there has been amongst judicial officers in respect to bail following the tragedy of Molly Ticehurst's death. We also want to see what effect it is having on the remand population. These are far-reaching and very significant amendments, so we will be looking at them actively. The two things I just mentioned can still occur and, with this amendment, they will be supplemented by a statutory review to commence after the provisions have been in place for three years. This is a sensible amendment and the Government supports it.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:04):** The Opposition also supports the amendment. Because of the importance of the amendment being made, it is critical that there is full public disclosure of the review of these measures. It is entirely appropriate that these measures be given three years to operate before that review is undertaken but that the review then be tabled in the House so it is fully publicly available. In respect to the administrative reviews, I encourage the Attorney General to consider whether he might also table those, if appropriate, because this is an area where public confidence in the administration of justice is incredibly important. I thank both sides for their cooperation.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (20:05):** There has been enormous community interest in all that has attended bringing these amendments to the House. I will be reporting to the House in question time, whether I have been asked a question by members on the other side of the House or Government members. There will be plenty of information to share about these amendments.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-086A be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended agreed to.****Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.****RESIDENTIAL (LAND LEASE) COMMUNITIES AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 14 May 2024.**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:06):** On behalf of the Opposition, I speak in support of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. This is excellent legislation and I acknowledge the great work that was done by so many people. The review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act has been a long time coming. I acknowledge all of the residents in my electorate who have been affected by the loopholes in that legislation. I have had the privilege and pleasure of meeting with so many of them over a number of years. It is interesting to see the stark contrast between those who do the right thing for their residential tenancies and those who do not. By way of history, the original legislation was introduced in 2013 to improve governance of residential land leases and to establish a framework, which did not exist, for the relationship between community operators and home owners.

Like all legislation, it is not perfect. Sadly, over time we have seen unscrupulous operators utilising loopholes in the legislation. That has led us to now amending the Act to close those loopholes for the many people who have been affected by them. In 2021 a review of the legislation was conducted and 48 recommendations were put forward as part of that deep review. It should be made clear that 95 per cent of land leases are located in regional New South Wales. As a regional member I have a very large number of those housing estates in my electorate. The majority of the operators do a fantastic job of looking after people who cannot necessarily afford their own homes.

I acknowledge the outstanding work that is being done by my local residents in bringing forward feedback on this piece of legislation. In particular, I highlight the great work done by Bob Morris, one of the residents of Kincumber Nautical Village. Bob is a true superstar. He and I spoke a few minutes ago. He is watching us tonight on one screen and at the same time watching an event that is almost as important as this bill on a second screen. Bob has been working on this bill tirelessly. He has wanted these changes and amendments since 2019. Bob and I have spent a lot of time together, along with other residents at Kincumber Nautical Village, discussing the proposals.

The land lease communities in the Terrigal electorate include Broadlands at Green Point, Greenlife Erina, Pine Needles Village, Terrigal Sands Lifestyle and Retirement Village, Karalta Court Erina, and Kincumber Nautical Village, where Bob lives. These are just some of the many land lease communities in New South Wales. I note the member for Tweed is in the Chamber. He has similar villages in his electorate. I believe the member for Ballina will be making a contribution to this debate. She also has these types of housing estates in her electorate.

The statutory review found that over 50 per cent of occupants had a positive experience living in these communities, 35 per cent had a negative experience and 11 per cent had a neutral experience. Sadly, it is the 35 per cent who have had to live with a negative experience who have been the most severely impacted by the acts of rogue operators who take advantage of the most vulnerable in our community. I have sat down on many occasions with Bob and other residents of Kincumber Nautical Village going through areas where they have been consistently extorted. These people are in the later years of their lives. They should be looked after and provided with a hassle-free, easy lifestyle to enjoy. The statutory review concluded that the Act, in general, was doing a good job. But some unscrupulous operators have obviously spent time looking for loopholes in the legislation. We have seen this with many other Acts of Parliament.

It is unfortunate that people look for ways to get around a piece of legislation that is supposed to help people who are struggling with the cost of living and who need to be protected and provided with a safe, affordable housing option. The bill implements 21 of the 48 recommendations from the statutory review into the Act. Entry and exit fees will be prohibited in site agreements. Operators will be required to test emergency evacuation

procedures at least once a year. I am reliably informed that residents of Kincumber Nautical Village have never had an evacuation procedure carried out before—another example of how the operators were not doing the right thing to protect the people they are supposed to look after. The bill limits the circumstances under which the operator can enter a home on a residential site to when the home owner has given consent, in an emergency to avert danger to life, or in accordance with an order of the tribunal.

The proposed reforms will allow home owners to make mild alterations or additions to their homes without requiring the operator's approval. Most home owners would consider that to be relatively standard. The bill restricts the circumstances under which operators can issue home owners notices to fix dilapidation. The bill mandates that operators inform potentially affected residents before submitting a development application or planning proposal that could impact the community or residential sites. That will give comfort to residents who live in these facilities. The bill restricts fixed method site fee increases to once per 12-month period and stipulates that the calculation of these increases can rely on only one fact. The importance of this proviso was raised by the residents of Kincumber Nautical Village, Pine Needles Village and other villages.

I note that the member for Lake Macquarie is in the Chamber. I understand that he will be moving an eminently sensible amendment to the bill that will require operators to review site fee increases within one year after the commencement of the amended Act. The Opposition is fully supportive of that proposed amendment. It was outlined in the statutory review that it should have been a three-year period, but we know that time duration is not necessary. These are people who need protection now. I am pleased that amendment will be moved. I look forward to hearing the member for Lake Macquarie speak to it.

In addition, the bill makes changes to the billing and charging procedures for utilities, particularly electricity. It requires operators of communities and third-party suppliers who operate embedded networks to give home owners and tenants written notices of the charges payable for the supply of electricity. Also, the selling entity for a community must be reviewed at least once per year. The bill extends the notice period for vacating a residential site and increases the home owner's compensation entitlement if a termination notice is issued due to the site being lawfully unusable for residential purposes. It also prevents the termination of a site agreement based on the residential site not being used as a place of residence for three or more years.

As I said earlier, one of the best parts of the bill is that it requires operators to review site increases within one year after the commencement of the amended Act. This is a key amendment to the Act. It will provide comfort and protection to people like Bob Morris and the hundreds of residents at Kincumber Nautical Village. Over many years, I have met with them to discuss their concerns. They have faced numerous site fee increases due to loopholes in the Act which have been utilised by the operator. The stories are harrowing. These people should be enjoying their twilight years and not having to stress about the actions of an unscrupulous operator. The average site fees for land lease communities range from approximately \$170 to \$200 per week. At Kincumber Nautical Village, site fees have been increased to up to \$371 per week. On 2 April 2023, not long after having received a pension increase of \$37 per week, 190 residents received notification that site fees would increase by \$26 per week on 8 June 2023. Almost all of their pension increase was swallowed up by a site fee increase.

Despite fees being raised every year, some of the most basic infrastructure of this village is in a state of disrepair. I have been there multiple times. There are potholes in the roads within Kincumber Nautical Village and the swimming pool is cracked. The most basic facilities are not being looked after by the operator. This bill sends a very clear message to those people that their behaviour will have to stop. They are being called out. I am pleased that the amendments to the Act, while they might have been a long time coming, are being considered tonight. It is important. The contrast between the good operators and those who try to dodge their responsibilities is stark. A good example is the contrast between the operators of Pine Needles Village and Kincumber Nautical Village. The two facilities are run in a similar fashion to provide housing, but by different operators. The difference is like chalk and cheese.

The operator of Pine Needles Village respects the residents, treats them with care and dignity, looks after them and works with them, and does the right thing to ensure they receive the appropriate level of care. In stark contrast, we have heard about what has gone on for years at Kincumber Nautical Village. The story has been made public and played out in the media, but no level of public embarrassment has been enough to pull the operator into line. I am really pleased that tonight we are helping to right that wrong. It is cold comfort, of course, to the hundreds of residents of Kincumber Nautical Village. I have sat with them and listened to their stories. To say that they are emotional is an understatement. The lack of respect being shown to the residents is galling. I am very pleased that we are bringing these proposed changes to the Act to the House tonight, because they have been a long time coming.

The importance of the statutory review was to bring the bill introduced in 2013 up to date. We amend bills in this place all the time. It is part of what we do as legislators. I am pleased that we are able to close the loopholes. The objects of the Act are still relevant to land lease communities: to improve governance; to set out particular

rights and obligations of operators of the communities and home owners; to enable prospective home owners to make informed choices—and they should be able to make those choices freely, clearly and concisely; to establish procedures for resolving disputes between operators and home owners; to protect home owners from bullying, intimidation and unfair business practices; and to encourage continued growth and viability of residential communities in New South Wales.

The bill cleans up the legislation, so I will be pleased to see it go through. I say to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading that there is more to be done. There is a great opportunity to continue to revise and streamline the legislation. One thing I strongly suggest to the Minister is that where a fixed method currently allows for more than two variables, a new agreement between affected home owners and the operator must be in place before the next site fee increase. The Minister should consider that as part of the review. It would continue to strengthen the Act to provide additional protection to home owners, whether it be at Kincumber Nautical Village, Pine Needles Village or any of the other estates across regional New South Wales. I could stand here all night and relay stories of how residents have been poorly treated. It is an absolute disgrace. I know that the member for Ballina joins with me. She has had similar issues in her part of New South Wales. The stories are true. They are real and consistent.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** The Liberal Government did nothing to fix it. A Labor government was needed to make the changes to protect those people.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I note the interjection by the member for Gosford. We have the ability to upgrade, update and change the issues, as there is a statutory review.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** The Liberal Government has had the ability since 2021 and did not do a thing.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I note the continued interjections from the member for Gosford. She will have her turn to speak and I am sure she will be listened to in silence, which is the courteous way we conduct debate in this Chamber. Whether it be Helena Conway, Bob Morris, Kristy Lee, Trevor, Peter, Janelle, Nina or Troy, those people deserve to have this legislation cleaned up and improved. I note that people were called to sit in the gallery yesterday and then had to make the trip back home because the bill was delayed. I was heartened to see the submissions made to the statutory review by those residents and others—I think the member for Ballina made her own submission—because that is how we do legislation. It is frustratingly slow at times. I say to Government members that they have an opportunity to continue this.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** You should have done it.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The member for Gosford continues to interject. She can take this up with her Minister.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member for Gosford will cease interjecting.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Where a fixed method currently allows for more than two variables, a new agreement between affected home owners and the operator must be in place before the next site fee increase. If the member for Gosford is so gung-ho about doing everything straight away, she can bring that up with her Minister and see if he would like to introduce it. It could provide extra protection to residents. Even the amendment does not close every loophole. If the member for Gosford spent time with people, she would understand that. Rather than throw spears across the Chamber, the member for Gosford could do more too. One option is to talk to her Minister about going further. She has every opportunity to do it.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** The hypocrisy. Opposition members had three years.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** To be frank, it has been an arduous process for everybody involved, not just on the Central Coast but also in Ballina, the Tweed and Lake Macquarie. All members in this place have seen the frustration and are doing everything we can to make sure that the loopholes are now closed. It is incumbent upon us to continue to modify and amend legislation to protect vulnerable people who need our support from the rogue, predatory behaviour of those who seek to wrong them. I am pleased to see the review brought forward. Government members have had 12 months since the election. They could have introduced the bill in that time. They cannot lecture me about doing things quickly. They had 12 months since coming into government and they could have introduced it earlier. I wrote to their Minister multiple times, as I did to mine, asking for it to be introduced. They should not lecture me about timing. They have sat on this issue for 12 months, despite my multiple representations to their Minister and to the previous two Ministers. That was before a review.

The Government has an opportunity to go further if it wishes, and if it can, regarding what I have highlighted. I strongly suggest that the Minister consider it as an improvement to the bill. Members know that no legislation is perfect, and the bill is far from it. People up and down the coast have been taken advantage of, and it is absolutely disgusting. I am pleased that the changes are being introduced and people will get the additional

protection they need. I will stand with them every single day, as I have done and will continue to do. The way those people have been treated is appalling. I have not wavered once in supporting them and approaching the previous two Ministers and the current Minister to highlight the same issues. The bill is a good step forward, but there is more to be done to give additional protections to those people.

I acknowledge the Minister for introducing the bill 12 months after the election. I acknowledge the fact that we have had incredible consultation with many local stakeholders up and down the east coast who have been affected by this issue. We need to ensure that this sort of behaviour to the most vulnerable in our society is never allowed to continue anywhere. I suspect that we will continue to amend the legislation because people spend a lot of time looking for loopholes, and that is not in the spirit of why we legislate. I am pleased to support the bill and the amendment being moved. Let us be serious: A Government amendment is being moved by the member for Lake Macquarie because it still did not get it right. Government members cannot lecture me. They had 12 months and they still needed to move an amendment to cover the fact that they did not get it right. They should not lecture me. They talk about hypocrisy; that is hypocrisy. The main thing is that we are getting this done for the thousands of people who live in residential land lease residencies, to make sure it never happens again.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** We are getting it done. Opposition members did nothing.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The member for Gosford says that, but the Government has had 12 months as well. She cannot lecture me.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** Members will come to order.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I thank Bob for all the time he has spent working with residents and coming up with the suggested amendments and changes. I thank the residents tenancy council. We must continue to stamp out recalcitrant behaviour. I am proud to stand with my residents on this issue. It has been disgusting to see and the sooner we can stop this behaviour anywhere in New South Wales, the better. We must continue to monitor the legislation, because as long as we make legislation, people will try to find loopholes. We must make sure that if a loophole opens up, we make another amendment and shut that one down as well. I commend the bill to the House. I commend the Minister for bringing it to the House. I commend the member for Lake Macquarie for the amendment that he will move, albeit on behalf of the Government.

The fact is the amendment is being moved. I again thank Bob Morris and the residents of Kincumber Nautical Village and Pine Needles Village who have come to see me. I thank all the residents who live in residential tenancy communities on the Central Coast for coming forward with their stories. Those stories have been incredibly confronting. We need to ensure we never allow this to happen to anyone else.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (20:29):** I contribute to debate on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. This bill is a long-awaited, incredibly important piece of legislation. The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 regulates the relationship between operators and people who live in residential land lease communities. These communities include residents who usually own the homes they live in but lease the land on which the homes sit from a community operator. Traditionally, these were caravan parks, and many have been operating for decades. More than 34,000 people across New South Wales live in 518 residential land lease communities. They are mainly in coastal areas, but 23 of these communities exist in Sydney. Some residents of these communities are also tenants who rent their homes from home owners. The communities are distinguished from holiday parks, where occupancy is limited to 180 days per year. Residential land lease communities represent an important facet of our housing landscape, offering an alternative for those seeking lower cost housing or who want to live in a community.

A statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act was completed in 2021, with the review report tabled in Parliament in November 2021. The report was based on responses to a discussion paper published in late 2020. When that discussion paper was published, I was the responsible shadow Minister. I spoke with many residents and operators about the issues raised in the discussion paper. The review found that the Act generally remains valid and fit for purpose but also made 48 recommendations to improve the Act's effectiveness. Notably, 35 per cent of respondents to the discussion paper said they had negative or extremely negative experiences of living in residential land lease communities. The Government hopes to address those issues. The former Government failed to introduce any legislation to implement the recommendations of the review, despite residents and stakeholders calling for change for years.

The New South Wales Labor Government has listened and acted. The bill before the House implements 21 of the 48 recommendations of the statutory review. It is the first stage of the Government's plan to improve residential land lease community laws in New South Wales. At its heart, the bill seeks to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of our residential land lease community laws, ensuring they remain fit for purpose and support vibrant and sustainable residential land lease communities across New South Wales. The bill also demonstrates



the New South Wales Labor Government's commitment to help people across the State with cost-of-living pressures.

The bill will introduce a range of reforms that will significantly benefit operators and residents. Firstly, the bill will make fixed method site fee increases clearer and easier to understand for residents. It limits operators to use a single element to calculate a site fee increase under the fixed method. Operators will need to review and update any existing agreements that do not comply with these new requirements. This is important because home owners now face convoluted and confusing fixed method calculations for site fee increases. In fact, it is only by talking to neighbours that residents find out how divergent the mechanisms for site increases are, as they change over time with new entry contracts. Increases are often calculated by multiple different methods across a community.

Second, the bill will mandate that when an operator issues a by-notice site fee increase, they must set out more information about the reasons for the increase. This will foster transparency and accountability between operators and residents. Third, the bill enhances the enjoyment of home owners of their homes by granting them greater autonomy and allows for certain minor changes to their homes without the need for operator consent. Fourth, and crucially, the bill introduces a price cap for electricity charges in the 40 per cent of communities with embedded networks. This is an important reform that stakeholders have strongly advocated for over several years. Residents have been subjected to price gouging, unmetered supply and no options to shop around for cheaper energy suppliers.

The bill will also make utility billing in residential land lease communities consistent with the requirements under national energy rules. This will ensure that residents in communities have the same transparency and clarity about their utility bills as everyone else. The bill also brings more transparency to communities by requiring operators to disclose information about proposed developments that may impact residents. This will foster a culture of informed decision-making and community engagement. Additionally, the bill improves the voluntary sharing arrangement provisions, striking a balance between flexibility and protection for vulnerable homebuyers. This supports fair and equitable transactions. The bill also safeguards the rights of home owners facing termination due to circumstances beyond their control, ensuring that they are treated justly. The bill includes other minor amendments to modernise and clarify the laws.

One of the main concerns that stakeholders brought up during the statutory review of the Act was operators' use of complex calculations when increasing site fees under the fixed method for site fee increases. There are known cases where convoluted formulas were used to determine increases in site fees. This has made it difficult for home owners to anticipate and budget for future fee increases, leading to uncertainty and financial strain. Multiple submissions to the review referred to *Kincumber Nautical Village Pty Ltd v Morris & Ors*, where a group of residents disputed a very convoluted mechanism for site fee increases. The fixed method used by the Kincumber community provider at the time of the dispute included any positive change in the CPI, plus 3.75 per cent; plus a proportional share of any increase in costs incurred by the operator since the calculation of the last site fee increase; plus a calculation for electricity and water; plus gas; plus communications; plus insurance; plus rates; plus any other government charges or taxes other than company tax; plus the effect of any change in the rate of GST or a similar tax that is included in the site fees. It was a long and very complicated list of possible reasons for fee increases.

On 14 September 2021 the appeal panel of the tribunal set aside the original decision made in *Kincumber Nautical Village Pty Ltd v Morris & Ors* that the fixed fee method breached the Act. The tribunal found that it is irrelevant if a fixed fee method has multiple components as long as the increase in any given year can be calculated or ascertained definitely and is a "fixed calculation". Submissions to the review argued that such complex calculations do not enable certainty for many home owners and have led to compounding increases that make sites unaffordable as the increases vastly exceed inflation. Moreover, a number of home owner submissions claimed that most site agreements are offered on a take it or leave it basis, with little or no opportunity for the home owner to negotiate its terms.

The bill will limit operators to use a single element to calculate fee increases under the fixed method for site fee increases. This will enhance clarity and predictability for home owners, allowing them to accurately forecast and plan for future expenses. Furthermore, the bill requires operators to review and update existing site agreements that use multiple elements for fee calculations. The bill will also limit the number of times that site fees can increase under the fixed method to once per year, aligned to the existing 12-month limit for by-notice site fee increases. This limit does not extend to increases tied to the age pension, which will be limited to twice per year.

Electricity charging in communities with electricity embedded networks has been a complex problem for decades and has posed significant challenges for residents and operators. In 2018, the New South Wales Court of Appeal held in the case of *Silva Portfolios Pty Ltd trading as Ballina Waterfront Village & Tourist Park v Reckless*

that an operator cannot charge a home owner more than the operator has been charged for electricity that the home owner consumes. This was an important decision that should have triggered immediate action from the former Government. Instead, we had a series of perverse outcomes that failed to address the underlying issues with embedded networks. This has resulted in complex electricity charging that is hard for residents to understand and budget for. Operators are not able to recover justifiable business costs to administer and maintain their embedded networks, and third-party suppliers have taken over the running of electricity embedded networks. They are able to charge residents any prices that they want.

It is imperative that we tackle this issue now to ensure fairness and better outcomes for all stakeholders involved. By introducing a new price cap for what operators and third-party suppliers can charge for electricity in communities with embedded networks, this bill will finally resolve the longstanding electricity-charging issues that the sector has battled with. The cap will be set at the median market price and end price gouging. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal will set this price for each relevant distribution area in New South Wales. The NSW Fair Trading Commissioner will publish this information online, so all operators and residents are made aware of the prices. The IPART has recently considered reforms to the regulation of embedded networks as a whole. The electricity charging reforms in this bill are an interim measure while the Government considers how best to address recommendations from IPART's review. This will benefit all residents who rely on embedded networks for their energy needs. [*Extension of time*]

It is vital that residents have enough information to support them to advocate for their interests and enable them to make the best decisions. More transparency between home owners and operators fosters cooperative relationships and reduces the frequency of disputes. In line with the statutory review recommendations, the bill introduces small changes to require operators to share more information with residents. For example, an operator will have to give written notice to potentially affected residents where an operator seeks to lodge a development application or planning proposal that may affect the community. That means that an operator may need to advise residents about a proposal that could result in residents no longer having access to certain facilities or that could impact day-to-day living in the community.

The Government acknowledges that the new information-sharing obligations on operators, although likely to increase their administrative work, are important. When I discussed the 2020 discussion paper with residents of land lease communities, many raised concerns about not knowing about development applications for their communities. I was alarmed to hear of residents who, in one instance, had been sold homes and leased sites where there was no development application in place, which resulted in council ordering that the homes be removed because they presented a flood risk. The bill aims to ensure any administrative burden is limited as much as possible. The Government wants to support operators to get on with the day-to-day business of ensuring that their communities are running well so that residents can enjoy their time living there.

The proposed reforms in the bill represent a significant step towards enhancing the rights of and protections for residents in residential land lease communities. However, the bill recognises the important role of operators and also takes into account operators' needs so that they can continue to provide that important housing option in New South Wales. By improving transparency, promoting clarity and safeguarding fairness in those communities, the Government upholds its commitment to ensuring thriving and equitable communities across New South Wales. The Government looks forward to continuing to engage with stakeholders on the remaining recommendations of the statutory review so it can continue to support both operators and residents.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (20:41):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024 and I thank the Minister and his team for the work that they have put into the bill. Residential land lease communities are found mostly, although certainly not exclusively, on the coastal strip of New South Wales. In my electorate of Lake Macquarie there are many, but I recognise that there are many on the Central Coast and the North Coast. Along with the member for Wyong and the member for Gosford, I am well versed in the situation and familiar with the frustration and despair that we find when we talk to the residents of some of those communities. The bill will be well received and much appreciated by many of those towns. The electorate of Lake Macquarie has been grappling with the issue for some time. I have been dealing with a number of people who understand it, but they are getting older. It is so frustrating that they should have to do this. They do not have the energy anymore. It is heartbreaking for them to have to go through this year after year, so this bill is a great outcome.

Residential land lease communities have historically provided an affordable housing option, particularly for those over 55 years of age, in rural and regional areas. They can play a significant role in assisting with the housing crisis in this State, but reform is needed to encourage the growth and viability of this housing option and to ensure that home owners and residents, many of whom are elderly and reliant on government support payments, are protected from unfair business practices. The statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act was undertaken in 2021, nearly three years ago. The review made 48 recommendations to ensure that the Act

provides better and fairer outcomes for home owners, residents and operators. The almost 41,000 residents of land lease communities in New South Wales have now been waiting for nearly three years to see the reforms implemented. I congratulate this Government on doing the work to implement the reforms since it was elected last year.

Land lease communities have changed over the past 10 years. Many large multinational corporations are moving into the sector and the communities are increasingly profitable for operators. On the flip side, many residents and landowners are on fixed incomes, reliant on statutory increases. Site fee increases in many communities are set by the operators and are non-negotiable. Many are also tied, in part, to the consumer price index [CPI]. With significant CPI increases in recent years outpacing increases in statutory income rates, my constituents are telling me that site fees are becoming increasingly unaffordable.

While the proposed amendments in the bill will not address all the recommendations of the statutory review, they do address significant issues, which will, I hope, ease some cost-of-living pressures for vulnerable residents. Those include introducing a price cap for electricity charges in communities with embedded networks for electricity. That will provide greater certainty for residents and operators. The bill also aims to reduce complexity and uncertainty around site fee increases by limiting operators to using a single element to calculate site fees under the fixed method and requiring operators to provide more information about reasons for increases, where increases occur by notice. As has been mentioned by the member for Terrigal in his wideranging contribution, I foreshadow that I will move an amendment relating to the proposed transitional period for operators to enter into compliant agreements, noting that operators have been on notice of the proposed changes for almost three years. The amendment will set the transitional period for entering into compliant site agreements from three years to 12 months.

I understand that the proposed reforms in the bill are just the first step in the reform process, which will implement further recommendations made in the 2021 statutory review. I accept that some of the reforms are complex and it will take time to ensure that they strike the right balance and do not lead to unintended consequences. The bill is a good start but there is more work to be done. However, I am confident that the Government recognises the importance of housing reform in this State. I encourage the Government to press on to ensure that the next tranche of residential land lease community reforms occur in this term of government.

I acknowledge the contributions from the member for Terrigal and the member for Granville. It is heartening to see the understanding of the members, and I can assume that that will be a continuing trend as members speak tonight. I know that the member for Gosford in particular and the member for Wyong are very well versed on this issue. It is so pleasing that we can come together, although there was a little bit of argy-bargy across the table from the member for Gosford and the member for Terrigal. We are all on a unity ticket in this. It will be a great outcome for many people living in residential land lease communities.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:47):** It gives me great pride to speak on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. The bill represents a significant step forward in improving transparency and safeguarding fairness for residential land lease communities across New South Wales. I acknowledge that there are many members in the Chamber tonight who believe this matter is important for our communities. We have heard about the problems in those communities for some time, at least since the legislation of the Carr Labor Government was—in the words of one the residents of a land lease village in my community—murdered by the Liberal Government. It is time to get things right again. I am glad to be part of a government that is righting a wrong that has impacted so many vulnerable people across our communities.

I acknowledge Kevin and Rodney, who came down from the Kincumber Nautical Village yesterday to watch the bill be debated. I am sad for them because they were in the gallery, waiting and waiting. I thank them for being here last night. The member for Terrigal mentioned Bob Morris, who has been a real champion for change and the voice of residential land lease community residents across New South Wales. He is an amazing man who went into the tedium, the nitty-gritty and the fine print of the previous legislation—or the lack of fine print of the previous legislation that allowed the absolute exploitation of poor residents living in the land lease villages. The Kincumber Nautical Village in the Terrigal electorate is possibly the most exploited community among the land lease communities across New South Wales.

I am sad to have to say such things in Parliament on behalf of the people in that Terrigal village, but it takes a Labor Government to make the changes. There was a statutory review in 2021, but that review sat on the desks of Coalition Ministers and nothing was done. I am glad to be part of a Labor government that is making changes that are supported by Liberal and Nationals members. The Greens members and the member for Lake Macquarie also support the changes. Bring it on and let's put things in place. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for pushing the amendment to bring those changes forward and put further protections in place to make sure the residents are protected as early as they possibly can be.

The bill implements 21 of the 48 recommendations of the statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013, and there is more to come to provide as much support as we can for people living in affordable housing across New South Wales. This is a really important component, with approximately 40,000 people living in that sort of legislated space in our State. The bill follows the inaction of the previous Government. While the residents of the Kincumber Nautical Village may have been visited by the member for Terrigal, he did nothing to make any changes. The former Liberal Government listened but did nothing, so it is important that changes are being made on behalf of the people living in residential land lease communities across New South Wales.

In 2020 I used parliamentary privilege to speak against the owner of the Kincumber Nautical Village, Theo Whitmont, who has abused his power and has shown the utmost disrespect to the residents of that village. He has also disrespected the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. I said that in 2020 and I back it up. The owner's father, the owner of a mobile home park, hosted a fundraiser for Liberal MP Chris Hartcher. An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2014 speaks of the owner's father sitting in the gallery whilst the member for Lane Cove, who was the Minister at the time—in the words of a resident of the village—"murdered" the good legislation that had been put in place by the Carr Labor Government so that the owner of the land lease village in Kincumber could exploit the residents by charging them more than he needed to for living in their own homes. Those people bought into their homes in good faith.

Nothing has changed since that review in 2021. Despite numerous visits to NCAT and even the Supreme Court, the owner continues to exploit vulnerable residents with absolutely unfair price hikes using the supposed fixed method of price increases. It includes a number of variables that lead to very high price increases and very inconsistent practices. That was enabled by poorly written legislation that was introduced by the Liberal Party, to which the park owner's father donated. It is almost a tragedy in corruption.

I thank the Kincumber Nautical Village Residents Committee, led by Bob Morris and Terry Davidson, who have fought tirelessly for changes and were ignored by the previous Government. I also thank the Tenants' Union of NSW for its work supporting tenants of land lease communities across New South Wales, particularly Bob and the residents of Kincumber Nautical Village in their numerous journeys to NCAT and the Supreme Court of New South Wales. The Kincumber Nautical Village is home to approximately 500 residents. Those wonderful human beings include some of the Central Coast's most vulnerable community members—seniors, people with disabilities and single-parent families living on very low fixed incomes, supported by the government. The village is in a beautiful location and it is their home, their dream, their retirement luxury and possibly their final destination. It is their piece of paradise.

Whilst the owner makes a considerable profit—with \$4.2 million collected from residents and a total cost of only \$1.1 million—the roads are left potholed, the tennis court has weeds growing out of it and the swimming pool is full of cracks. There is a deep unhappiness because of the financial actions of owner and Liberal Party donor Theo Whitmont. Approximately 40,000 people live in land lease villages across New South Wales. They are an important part of our affordable housing jigsaw, especially for our seniors. But these days, more and more young people who cannot afford to get into the housing market are moving into residential land lease villages, so anything we can do in this place to protect those families and individuals is really important.

The bill will implement 21 recommendations of the statutory review, making fixed method site fee increases clearer and easier to understand while limiting operators like Theo Whitmont—who exploited poor legislation implemented by the previous Liberal Government—to a single element to calculate site fee increases. The bill will also require operators to review and update existing agreements that do not comply with that requirement. It will also require that information be provided about the reasons for the increase when an operator issues a site fee increase by notice. I encourage all interpreters of the legislation to be very precise when overseeing the dodgy Theo Whitmont, given his previous hopeless effort to justify increasing prices. If members look into that case in further detail, they will see his financial exploitation of those residents.

The implementation of the amendments to the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 will make a huge difference to the lives of the many residents across New South Wales—including the Kincumber Nautical Village—who are currently on a fixed method of site fee increase which involves the aggregation of 10 separate elements. Limiting fixed method increases to one element only will fundamentally improve the predictability of cost-of-living increases in the lives of residents.

The impact of a bill such as this is sometimes lost in complex detail, so I will share some personal stories of the residents of Kincumber Nautical Village to illustrate what the changes will mean for them. Daryl Rowe is a proud Wiradjuri man who moved into the village in February 2016, and I thank Daryl for sharing his story. After purchasing his house, Daryl was faced with two separate increases, meaning that he was paying over \$26 a week more in site fees by November 2016. That is an increase of more than 15 per cent for the smallest site in the village. Daryl is on a disability pension and half his pension goes to site fees, leaving him to make difficult

decisions about food, medicine, heating, home maintenance and insurance. There is not enough money for everything. In November 2023, Daryl faced another site fee increase of \$25 per week. Abolishing the multi-element method will give Daryl a glimmer of hope for the future. [*Extension of time*]

Colleen Butcher moved into the village in March 2018 with her husband, Barry. After Barry unfortunately passed away early last year, Colleen found herself on a single pension income and not able to cope financially. She is now facing difficult decisions about her future living arrangements. The majority of residents in the village are single welfare recipients like Colleen. I have previously spoken in this place about Leni, a single mum with two kids who receives a carer's pension. Her seven-year-old daughter has Down syndrome and significant medical concerns. She is a fantastic mother and a qualified social worker, and yet still only has \$40 per week left to feed her family of three. If the site fees had not increased then she would have had, in her words, plenty to feed the family.

Finally, Noleen Smith retired to Kincumber Nautical Village and received a letter saying she was on a notice method. Last year she received an increase of \$53 a fortnight, taking her site fees to half her pension. It becomes very clear to me when I am out and about in my community and going to places where food banks operate. No matter where I am across my electorate—which is not even the Terrigal electorate, where the Kincumber Nautical Village is located—I often see people from the village collecting food because they cannot afford to pay for food as well as the site fee increases on their own homes.

The bill addresses the concerns of residents about operators' use of complex calculations when increasing site fees under the fixed method and will limit operators using a single element to calculate fee increases under that method, thereby enhancing clarity and predictability for home owners. Under the bill, site fees will only be increased once per year, further increasing financial predictability. The bill will grant greater autonomy, allowing for minor changes to residents' homes without the need for operator consent. Finally, the bill introduces a price cap for electricity charges in communities with embedded networks.

The Minns Labor Government has delivered on what the former Coalition Government failed to do. A resident of the Kincumber Nautical Village described the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024 as "a lifeline of hope for some of the most vulnerable in the community". The bill addresses 21 of the 48 recommendations and the Government will work with the residents of the Kincumber Nautical Village, the Tenants' Union and other stakeholder groups across New South Wales to further improve the lives of people living in residential land lease villages.

Once again, I thank the Minister and his team—some of whom live on the Central Coast. The New South Wales Government will deliver for the community, providing certainty to residents and an opportunity to live out their years free from the burden of unsustainable and unfair business practices. By improving transparency, promoting clarity and safeguarding fairness, the Government is committed to ensuring thriving and equitable communities across New South Wales. In closing, I also thank those very good, reputable land lease village owners who really look after their residents.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (20:59):** I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. At the outset it must be noted that 95 per cent of land leases are in regional New South Wales. In the Tweed there are a large number of residential land lease communities. Importantly, the bill will enhance the rights and protection of home owners in those communities. In a residential land lease community, you own the home you live in but you lease the land from the community operator. The bill implements 21 of the 48 recommendations made by the 2021 statutory review of the Act initiated in 2020 by former Minister Kevin Anderson. I note that the current Minister in his second reading speech indicated that the Government will continue to engage with stakeholders on the remaining 27 recommendations not included in this bill.

One of the key issues addressed in the bill is the way in which electricity charges are applied within communities with electricity embedded networks. Embedded networks are private energy networks for services such as electricity, heated and chilled water and gas. I served on the Committee on Law and Safety with the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Kellyville. The way a lot of the residents were being ripped off by unscrupulous dealers was quite disgusting. Many residential land lease communities use an embedded network for their electricity needs. The community operator is usually responsible for the supply of electricity through the network. Residents generally cannot choose to get their electricity from someone else. Given that lack of consumer choice, I completely agree with the Minister that it is critical that those consumers are protected from excessive prices and can understand the pricing in a clear and transparent manner.

Electricity charging in communities with embedded networks is complex, time-consuming and uncertain for operators and home owners. As a result, some operators have outsourced to third-party electricity retailers. Due to a gap in the law, third-party providers can charge residents as much as they want for electricity. The bill

implements a price cap to ensure that residents in communities with embedded networks are not paying excessive electricity charges compared with residents in communities without an embedded network. The bill will also reduce the complexity of billing for operators, allow operators to recover the costs of maintaining their embedded networks and give residents much-needed clarity and certainty about how much they can expect to pay for their electricity.

Importantly, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] will set the median market price in New South Wales. The supporting regulation will require IPART to determine that price every 12 months and give notice of that to the Fair Trading Commissioner. The commissioner will then have to publish the required information on a publicly available website, making it accessible for operators and third parties. At least once a year, the electricity supplier for the community must give written notice of the charges they pay for the electricity supply to residents. At least once every two years, the electricity supplier will need to review and compare their electricity supply contract with at least one other comparable offer from another electricity retailer. If the contract is more than two years, then the supplier will need to review the contract after its expiry before a new one is entered into. The supplier will also need to give each resident written notice of their review. Those changes are commonsense and improve transparency between home owners and operators.

Another issue raised by residents of land lease communities in my electorate concerns site fees and methods of increase. I note the bill restricts fixed method site fee increases to once per 12-month period and stipulates that the calculation for those increases can rely on only one factor. The single factor could be, for example, a percentage of the aged pension, a fixed percentage amount or an increase in proportion to variations in the consumer price index. That will increase certainty and clarity on how the fee was derived. The bill will also require operators to review and update all existing agreements that use more than one factor to calculate a fixed method site fee increase within three years of the commencement of the amendments. The Coalition broadly supports those changes to the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 and the positive impact the amendments will have on the safety and privacy of home owners, particularly in the Tweed. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (21:04):** I make a brief contribution to debate in support of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. The bill introduces amendments to the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 for the purpose of improving the legislative framework and regulatory framework for residential land lease communities and to provide clarity on the rights and obligations of the people who live in and the operators of those communities. The bill permits operators to increase site fees by using either the "by-notice" method or "fixed" method. The "fixed" method makes the increases easier to understand and more predictable for the home owners, while the "by-notice" method provides more information to the home owners about the reason for the increase of the site fees.

When entering into a site agreement, the operator and the home owner will be required to agree to the use of one of those methods. The purpose of that change is to eliminate confusion. It is the case that some operators use complex calculations to increase their site fees. Under the "fixed" method, operators will be restricted to using a single element when calculating a site fee increase. The bill requires operators to review and update all existing agreements that use more than one element to calculate a "fixed method" site fee increase within three years of the commencement of the amendments. That means that home owners and operators need to agree on a new way to increase the site fees.

If an agreement is not entered into within three years, the "by-notice" method will become the default method. Site fee increases made by the "by-notice" method must provide more information to the home owner about the reasons for the increase. If fees increase due to a higher cost for specific items, the operator must provide the relevant information to the home owner, such as the item details, how much those costs have gone up since the last fee increase and the details of how the operator has calculated those costs in relation to the increase.

The bill addresses issues with electricity charging in communities with electricity embedded networks. Embedded networks are privately owned energy networks that provide services such as electricity, heated and chilled water and gas. Residents of that community do not usually have a choice as to where they get their electricity from. As such, it is important that consumers are protected from excessive prices and that they understand the pricing. The bill introduces a new price cap that operators and third parties can charge residents for the use and supply of electricity in communities with embedded networks. That change will ensure that residents are not paying extreme electricity prices compared with those in communities without embedded networks. It will also allow the operators to recover the costs of maintaining their embedded networks.

Currently the Act does not specify requirements about what information an operator is required to include on a resident's utility bill or how often those bills can be issued. The bill outlines the minimum information required to be set out in utility bills. It requires that utility bills be issued to the home owners and tenants at least once every three months. That is consistent with the requirements that apply to gas and electricity bills. In order

to create a separation between home owner rights and the rights of the community and operators, the bill allows for home owners to make minor changes to the property without the consent of the operator.

Further, the bill states that operators are only allowed to enter a home in certain situations, being when a resident consents or in an emergency situation where it is necessary to avoid danger to life. The bill requires an operator to give written notice to all potentially affected residents when they are seeking to lodge a development application or planning proposal that may affect the residential land lease community. They must give notice at least 30 days before they lodge the proposal and are required to include a summary of the proposal. The bill makes changes to the voluntary sharing arrangement provisions of the Act. It requires operators to provide prospective home owners with written information regarding the costs of a voluntary sharing arrangement and the costs of a rent-only agreement.

The bill mandates that operators must test a community's emergency evacuation procedures at least once a year and keep a record of those tests. If a site is not allowed to be used as a residential site under relevant laws, the operator could terminate a site agreement. However, the operator must pay the home owner compensation if they did not know that the site was not to be used for residential purposes at the time they signed the site agreement. Further, the bill increases the time to vacate a residential site from 90 days to 120 days after the home owner receives a termination notice. The amendments in the bill aim to protect both residents and operators of residential land lease communities. It supports the growth of those communities in New South Wales by providing balance to the legislative framework. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (21:11):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. I indicate the Coalition's support of the bill. The Liberals and Nationals acknowledge Labor's support of aspects of the Coalition's reform work that was aimed at maintaining the regulatory standards for land lease communities and operators. The reforms are aimed at enhancing the rights and protections of home owners in residential land lease communities. The bill originates from the statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 that was initiated in 2020 under the leadership of then Minister Kevin Anderson.

I put a few clear facts on record. The review aimed to ensure that the Act's objectives continued to meet contemporary standards. A 47-page discussion paper was released, and the review generated 350 submissions and 100 survey responses over two rounds of public consultation. The final report of the statutory review was published in November 2021. It was a 54-page report containing 48 recommendations. The review confirmed that the legislation was functioning effectively, with over half of the residents reporting a positive living experience in those communities. However, 48 recommendations were made to further enhance the legislation's impact on those communities.

Much was said by the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading and those opposite about the previous Government's urgency or, they might submit, lack thereof in implementing the findings of the statutory review. I say once again that there were 48 recommendations, hundreds of submissions and a lot of work to get through. The Government has now taken well over a year when the work had already been done. The Government has opted for the easy approach and left out 27 of the 48 recommendations. When the Minister speaks of taking action, I assume that he means delayed, lazy Labor policymaking. It should be noted that at no stage over the course of 12 years did those opposite seek to amend or update the legislation.

**Mr David Harris:** I will give you a history lesson about 1998.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** I will not be lectured to by those opposite when it comes to taking action on these matters. There are another 27 recommendations. My helpful advice to those opposite is to get on with it. They are doing less than half of the job.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Why didn't you do it when you were in government?

**Mr TIM JAMES:** You are in government. You have had over 12 months.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** You had 12 years.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** We did the homework. The hard work has been done. Members opposite should now get on with the job.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** I urge the Government to proceed with the remaining recommendations because they reflect the wishes of the land lease communities. With more than 500 communities across Australia, and over 40,000 individuals occupying homes, residential land lease communities play a crucial role in housing diversity in New South Wales. As house prices continue to soar and the cost-of-living and housing crises worsen under

Labor, an increasing number of individuals are seeking accommodation in land lease communities. Some 95 per cent of those communities are located in regional and rural New South Wales, and the bill significantly impacts areas such as the Central Coast and the Shoalhaven.

The bill proposes to make a variety of amendments that include 21 of the 48 recommendations made by the review. It proposes to make changes to voluntary sharing arrangements in site agreements whereby home owners will no longer have to pay entry and exit fees to the operator. Operators must also first offer a rent-only site agreement to new residents before offering an agreement that includes a voluntary sharing arrangement. Operators must also provide information to new residents about the cost of both the rent-only option and the voluntary sharing arrangement.

The bill mandates that community operators must test emergency evacuation procedures at least once per year and maintain a record of those tests, ensuring enhanced safety and preparedness for all residents. Entry to a home on a residential site is now restricted to three specific conditions: with the home owner's consent, in life-threatening emergencies or under an order from the tribunal. The Coalition agrees that the provisions enhance the privacy and security protections for residents. Home owners now have more freedom to make minor modifications to their homes without needing the operator's consent. Although, it is the Coalition's view that the alterations must not invade the privacy of neighbouring homes.

Issues have been raised by various stakeholders regarding the site fee increase being reduced to a single factor. The Caravan and Camping Industry Association NSW [CCIA] has highlighted the importance of a two-factor site fee increase to allow operators to be fairly compensated for community upgrades. In addition to the site fee increases, it was recommended by the statutory review that operators have a transition period of three years from the commencement of the proposed amendments to identify and modify all existing site agreements that employ multiple elements in calculating fee increases. The amendment to have a 12-month, not three-year, transition period is accepted by the Coalition. It should be noted that it is not supported by all stakeholders. As my colleague the member for Terrigal eloquently explained, the Opposition understands and supports the amendment in the circumstances and given the broad consumer support.

Further, some of the amendments in the bill focus on ensuring fair electricity charges for home owners and tenants in residential communities with embedded networks. The bill establishes guidelines to prevent excessive charges, requiring operators to provide written notice of electricity fees and periodically review contracts. Additionally, it sets limits on late payment fees and mandates compliance with billing regulations. Provisions for a review within three years have been included for those measures to ensure that they remain effective and relevant.

The Coalition is in broad support of the amendments that relate to utility charges in land lease communities, as they attempt to improve transparency between home owners and operators. Both the Affiliated Residential Park Residents Association and the CCIA raised concerns about the omission of the "principal place of residence" test from the bill. Understandably, there is a concern that land banking is happening with respect to those precious sites. I encourage the Minister to tackle and address that concern in the second tranche of reforms to come. I thank the Minister for the conversations that we have constructively engaged in.

The Coalition broadly supports the amendments to the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 that emphasise increased safety and privacy for home owners. I thank the various stakeholders for their engagement and advice during the consultation process, including the Affiliated Residential Park Residents Association, in particular Gary Martin; the Caravan and Camping Industry Association NSW, in particular Bob Browne; and the Tenants' Union of NSW. As others have, I acknowledge the significant, tireless work of Bob Morris from Kincumber Nautical Village. I spoke to Bob the other day. I commend and thank him for his hard work over a long period. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (21:19):** I support the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. I commend the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading for his work in this space. The bill seeks to amend the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 to implement various recommendations arising from the statutory review of the Act. According to data from Fair Trading NSW, close to 500 land lease communities in New South Wales accommodate about 34,000 residents, from permanent home owners and tourists to long-term casual occupants. All land lease communities are covered by the Act.

A statutory review report of the Act was tabled in Parliament in November 2021 and identified 48 recommendations for improvement of the Act. The bill implements 21 of those recommendations and will implement numerous changes, including the requirement of site fee increases to be made by notice that includes reasons for the increase, allowing home owners to make certain minor changes to their homes without operator consent, requiring operators to test their emergency procedures at least once a year to ensure they are prepared to



respond to emergencies, and changes to termination provisions requiring operators to give home owners 120 days' notice rather than 90 days' notice of the end of their agreements.

Electricity reforms are also included in the bill as a temporary measure until the recommendations of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal have been considered by Government and implemented. These much-needed changes balance the rights and responsibilities of home owners and operators, and provide fairer outcomes for all parties. The changes enacted by the bill improve the operation of the Act so it better balances the interests of residents and operators, and supports land lease communities as a viable housing option in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (21:20):** I support the member for Lake Macquarie's sensible amendment to the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. I am very supportive of the bill, which covers 21 of the 48 recommendations from the five-year statutory review of the Act. However, I note the review was tabled in Parliament in November 2021 and since then inflation has trended higher. I understand extensive stakeholder consultation has taken place. However, I cannot support giving operators three years to phase in the very sensible pricing reform of restricting fixed method site increases to one element. I believe one year is more than sufficient.

Some land lease agreements are currently determined by multiple elements, one of which is often the rate of inflation. Since the statutory review report was tabled in 2021, domestic inflation is up 13 per cent and the Reserve Bank currently forecasts inflation to rise another 11 per cent over the three years to 2027. I do not need to go on about the cost-of-living and housing crises. Giving operators three years to transition to a fairer model is just not the right thing to do. The residential land lease industry has changed a great deal over the past decade, with large multinationals moving into the sector, buying up communities across the State and developing new communities.

Just last week Stockland announced a \$1 billion capital partnership with United States player, Invesco Real Estate, to pursue growth in what *The Australian Financial Review* called "the red hot land lease communities sub-sector". On the other side of the coin are the home owners, who are primarily over 55. Many are on fixed incomes and site fees are becoming increasingly unaffordable, impacting their ability to pay for other essentials. Three years is too long to transition from the fixed method with multiple variables to a fixed method with a single variable. I simply support the member for Lake Macquarie's amendment.

**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) (21:22):** I support the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. I have a number of villages in my electorate, in particular the Heritage village, Palm Springs, Central Coast Mobile Village, Meander Village, and the Oasis Caravan Park. I have been a supporter of reform in this area for a long time. I remember visiting Heritage Caravan Park with former Premier Kristina Keneally and Minister Virginia Judge before the 2011 election to make some commitments about reform. Unfortunately, we did not win government at that stage, so we have waited a very long time for these reforms to come through.

I know that some members opposite who have spoken in the debate have not been in the Parliament for very long, so I will talk a little bit about history so that they understand what has happened in this case. They may or may not know that in 1998 the Carr Labor Government introduced legislation that protected tens of thousands of park residents, mostly pensioners, from sharp increases in rents through a consumer tribunal. At that time the Liberal Party opposed that bill. The parliamentary records show that some of the people who had ownership in Kincumber Village included my grandparents. After my grandmother and grandfather passed away, my mother and her sister sold the house. I know that village very well.

Mr Whitmont sat in the public gallery on 12 November 1998 as the lower House debated Labor's law and the then member for Gosford, Chris Hartcher, spoke against the bill. At the time, the then member for Wyong, Paul Crittenden, who is my esteemed predecessor, commented:

The CCIA is calling the tune of the opposition and has the ... honourable member for Gosford [Mr Hartcher] dangling on a string.

We then moved on to the 2011 election and found out afterwards through an ICAC investigation called Operation Spicer, which looked into donations to the Liberal Party on the Central Coast and resulted in 11 members of Parliament resigning and not recontesting, that Norton Whitmont hosted a fundraiser in his Darling Point home for Mr Hartcher and donated to Mr Hartcher's 2011 election campaign. He stood to gain from a law change introduced in 2013 by the then new Liberal Government, which critics said gave landowners the upper hand in raising rents.

In 1998 Labor put protections in place. The Liberal Party was elected in 2011 and brought in laws that put residents at a huge disadvantage. The record shows that—and this is no reflection on then Minister Anthony

Roberts because he was not involved in this—other members took donations and influenced that change in policy. The then Liberal Party members, in particular the Liberal member for The Entrance, spoke in support of the Liberal bill. That member talked about all the parks in his electorate, so obviously was not interested in his constituents. Mr Darren Webber, who defeated me in the election by using a whole lot of money that was improperly gained in terms of running his election campaign, also voted in favour of that legislation. It turns out that Theo Whitmont heavily influenced the new law, and is quoted in all press releases about it.

Mr Whitmont's submission, which was released under freedom of information law, criticised the tribunal reviewing rent increases and called for park owners to be allowed to share in the sale price of residents' homes. That just goes to show that the introduction of the bill has taken the re-election of a Labor government. It has upset me that members opposite are saying it has taken the Government 12 months to bring forward this legislation whereas this issue goes back as far as 1998. The Liberal Party changed the rules to affect residents negatively and now criticises this Government for putting the balance of power back with residents. I suggest Opposition members learn the history and understand that they conducted a review in 2021 and did nothing. Opposition members should not lecture the Government about how long things have taken, because the Liberals not only changed the law to benefit those residents but also left those laws in place for many years. Finally, they conducted a statutory review but still did not put any legislation before Parliament. Yet Liberal members come into this House and criticise the Government because we have acted within 12 months.

**Mr Tim James:** No, not within 12 months.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Members opposite are a disgrace. I have to say that Government members do what is right for people. We do not take donations that influence policy. What happened in Operation Spicer and the way those people I mentioned took donations—not just from them but from other developers—was an absolute disgrace. Members of this House should never forget that. ICAC now has such a strong presence because of all those things that happened. We now have a government that wants to do the good things. I hope that members opposite have learnt their lesson from those donations. They should not come in here and lecture us on right and wrong when their history on this issue is so tarnished.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (21:29):** The Greens support the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. I have learnt a lot this evening. As the member for Ballina, many of my constituents have come to me over the past nine years with horror stories of what has happened to them and of the treatment of vulnerable people by unscrupulous operators. I thank them. I am not going to name them—I am not judging anyone who is—because, unfortunately, their fear of retribution from those operators is so high that I want to protect them. Recently, one of the operators anonymously defamed me quite significantly and distributed that to hundreds of residents. If they are watching, I am stewing on that. But this is not about me, and it is certainly not about a contest of what has or has not been done.

For eight years I watched the Coalition's glacial pace on this issue. I made a submission to the review in 2021, and I know that my constituents are very happy to see this legislation before us. I commend Labor for getting on with this immediately. Even though many of the review's recommendations have not been implemented yet, I am persuaded by the Minister that a second tranche is coming. The Greens will certainly be monitoring that, but we did not want to do anything that would delay the immediate implementation of this bill. There are 29 residential land lease communities in the Ballina electorate. That is a lot. There is an estimated population of 750 in my electorate who reside in those villages and are affected by the operation of this Act. Since I was elected in 2015 I have met with dozens of constituents who have invested their superannuation in dream locations with like-minded people and who tell me that what should be a period of joy and peace for them in retirement has instead become a time of financial stress and anxiety due to the behaviour of some of the people and organisations that manage residential land lease communities.

It was interesting to hear from the member for Gosford and others how insipid this is and about the capture by former Ministers and governments in setting up a system that has so failed vulnerable people. I thank everyone who has spoken to me. There is a particular champion in Lennox Head who has, at huge personal expense and stress, taken on so many cases and supported so many residents going to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Each resident has had to do that every single time. Not only are they intimidated by the operator and not only are they frightened to raise any issues because they may face recrimination, but they also have had to take each matter to the tribunal off their own bat. Add to that the fact that a number of these residential land lease communities in my electorate were severely flood-impacted. I give a shout-out to Craig Copeland, because he was an extraordinary citizen who, off his own bat, went in to look after some of the residents of Cedars Caravan Park in particular. I saw an absence of leadership from some operators, not all. Add to that mix a severe flood in West Ballina, and it has been horrendous for people.

Members would know that, in our area, due to lack of availability, the cost of rental properties is astronomical for a regional area. Once people have been dispossessed or displaced from those communities, it is

very grim indeed. The Greens raised the issue of unreasonable and unjustifiable site fee increases and that residents were not protected by the legislation as it stood. We are glad to see that this legislation sets out particular rights and obligations of operators, including increasing site fees, and that it is simpler and more certain for them. I also give a shout-out to the Tenants' Union and to The Greens spokesperson in the other place, Cate Faehrmann. We had a detailed briefing with the union. We said, "Do you want us to push harder?" They said, "We are basically satisfied that, at this stage, the changes the bill makes are so important that we want to see it happen as quickly as possible."

One of the big issues was the lack of transparency: the fact that operators do not have to share the financial state of their affairs in terms of the managing of these sites, and the fact that residents do not have any oversight of what is being done with the finances. Any changes that will improve transparency are welcome. As we have heard, the bill implements 21 of the 48 recommendations. The Greens will continue to watch. I thank the Tenants' Union and the residents in my community. We have spoken with Douglas McCloskey from Public Interest Advocacy Centre Ltd, who has said that their concerns were the energy-charging measures. We have heard about the changes to the embedded networks. I had to go in to bat recently for a couple of tenants who wanted to have solar energy; you would think they were asking for the moon. It is absurd that people who are so vulnerable and who do not have any wriggle room are being charged. These people are on pensions or they are self-funded retirees, and there is no buffer zone for many people in these communities. I also hear from retirement villages that what happens to many of those people is homelessness. The genesis of residential land lease communities was affordable housing.

We cannot keep moving the goalposts. I would argue that there is a minority of unscrupulous operators. We have heard about some of them today. I say to the residents in all of my communities that we believe them and hear them, and we are not giving up on this issue. Well done to them for all of their advocacy. I say to that minority of unscrupulous operators that their days are numbered, because once we finish this process we will be attracting more genuine community members who understand the custodianship they have of the people in these communities. The Greens commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (21:39):** I make a contribution to debate on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024 because residential park residents are a very important constituency of mine in Port Stephens. They are a large cohort of good people, many of whom have experienced challenges where they live due to insecure, unclear and complex laws regulating their lives. Too many of them have experienced exploitation at the hands of unscrupulous park operators. In Port Stephens we have more than 13 residential parks—places that more than 1,300 locals call home. Most of these residents own their home and lease the land on which the home sits from the owner of the site.

Residential parks are a very important part of our community in Port Stephens and an important part of our State's housing mix. It was once the domain of more affordable housing, like Banksia Grove in Williamstown or Sea Winds at Anna Bay. But in recent years we have seen an increase in other housing models operating under the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013, the legislation that we are seeking to amend. The housing provided under these newer models can hardly be described as affordable. Relatively new, resort-style local developments like Latitude One by Ingenia Lifestyle and Sunrise by Hometown are also land lease communities, meaning the laws governing ownership of residents' homes in Latitude One by Ingenia Lifestyle and Emerald Tiki Village are one and the same.

To be clear, the laws that apply to home ownership in these land lease communities are not the same laws that apply to people buying homes where they have full ownership of the house and land. By virtue of this different type of home ownership and land lease, the relationship between residents and the owners of the parks has to be regulated carefully and respectfully. Unfortunately, care and respect have been sorely lacking in the past regulation of this relationship. It is the laws governing residential park residents, who are vulnerable to the actions of owners and operators, that we are seeking to amend today to restore the balance in favour of the residents.

That vulnerability gave rise to an important organisation in Port Stephens that advocates for residential park residents. It gives advice to residents on their rights and represents them when legal proceedings need to be pursued. I am so grateful to the hardworking team at the Port Stephens and Affiliated Park Residents Association Incorporated who voluntarily give residential park residents a voice. I place on record my thanks to the association's president, Trevor Sullivan; treasurer Phillip Haslem; secretary Anne Haslem; advocate Gary Warfield; and the current committee members, Leon Fitzgerald, Chelsea McMahon, Lois Uebergang and Lorraine Samuels. Over the years, Trevor, Phillip and Anne have been raising issues with me about residential parks and their residents, some of which relate to the laws governing residents' rights and protections, some of which today's legislation will address and some of which we will continue to work on. After years of hearing local

residents' horrible, harrowing stories of exploitation by owners or operators of parks, neglect of common facilities and denial of residents' rights, it is time to act.

The former Government failed to care for the residents of these villages and to protect their rights. Instead, it sprouted platitudes and unfulfilled promises, which left residents vulnerable instead of protecting their rights. I recall going to a meeting of the Port Stephens Park Residents Association with the former Liberal member for Port Stephens in the lead-up to the 2011 election. He stood there and told the meeting, "We will introduce laws that restore the balance of power and give residents rights." The former Government then introduced the Act that we are seeking to amend, and it does exactly the opposite. Hearing the member for Gosford and the member for Wyong today give a bit of the background to the introduction of the 2013 Act, where we landed starts to make a whole lot of sense. Quite frankly, what has been revealed today in this House has shone a light on the legislation that I did not really appreciate, but in Port Stephens the residents of the residential parks felt the impacts immediately.

The contributions by the member for Wyong and the member for Gosford have reminded me of something I have said often in this place—corruption is not just a headline in a paper; corruption affects people on the ground. It has a serious impact on people's lives, and to hear that what happened in the Central Coast area may have led to the laws that have ruled and governed these people's lives for a number of years, courtesy of a former Coalition Government that did not care about their rights in the most fundamental way, is most disturbing. But I am pleased that the New South Wales Labor Government is taking action, because we do care. We are acting on a statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013. The review was completed in 2021 and the report tabled in Parliament in November 2021.

The statutory review made 48 recommendations to improve the Act's effectiveness, which the former Government failed to implement despite residents and stakeholders calling for change for years. The bill before the House implements 21 of the 48 recommendations of the statutory review. It is the first stage of the Government's plan to improve residential land lease community laws in New South Wales. At its heart, this bill seeks to ensure that residents living in residential parks have clarity and certainty as to their rights, fostering vibrant and sustainable residential land lease communities across New South Wales.

The bill also demonstrates the New South Wales Labor Government's commitment to helping people across the State manage cost-of-living pressures, which is impossible when there is so little certainty about what fees and costs residents may be hit with from one week to the next. The bill introduces a range of reforms that will significantly benefit residents and operators. Firstly, the bill will make fixed method site fee increases clearer and easier to understand for residents. Home owners who currently face convoluted and confusing fixed method calculations for site fee increases will benefit from the bill's reforms. Secondly, the bill will mandate that when an operator issues a "by-notice" site fee increase they must set out more information about the reasons for the increase. This will foster transparency and accountability between operators and residents.

Thirdly, the bill enhances home owners' enjoyment of their homes by granting them greater autonomy, allowing for certain minor changes to their homes without the need for operator consent. Fourthly, and crucially, the bill introduces a price cap for electricity charges in communities with embedded networks. This has been a significant issue across many of the residential park communities in Port Stephens. It is an important reform that stakeholders have been strongly advocating for over several years. The bill also makes utility billing in residential land lease communities consistent with the requirements under the National Energy Rules. This will ensure that residents in land lease communities have the same transparency and clarity about their utility bills as others who do not live in such communities. The bill also brings more transparency to communities by requiring operators to disclose information about proposed developments that may impact residents. It will foster a culture of informed decision-making and community engagement—unlike the stories I have heard from many park residents in the past.

Additionally, the bill improves the voluntary sharing arrangement provisions, striking a balance between flexibility and protection for vulnerable homebuyers. It supports fair and equitable transactions. The bill also safeguards the rights of home owners facing termination due to circumstances beyond their control, ensuring that they are treated justly. There are other minor amendments that the bill makes to modernise and clarify the laws. For greater detail on the reforms, I defer to the second reading speech of my hardworking colleague, the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. I thank him for listening and for acting to improve the lives of people living in land lease communities.

The reforms in this bill represent a significant step towards enhancing the rights and protections for residents in residential land lease communities, whilst also taking into account operators' needs so they can continue to provide this important housing option in New South Wales. This Government is getting on with the job of rebalancing the rights between residents and owners and operators—an issue that I heard former Liberal

Government members speak of but never act on. By improving transparency, promoting clarity and safeguarding fairness in these communities, we will improve people's lives. *[Extension of time]*

We also reduce anxiety and stress. We increase dignity and respect for those who have worked hard for a roof over their head and we support thriving and equitable communities that have a big footprint in communities like mine. Finally, once again, I thank the impressive Port Stephens and Affiliated Park Residents Association for its many years of advocacy and support for people who felt afraid, exploited, frustrated and disrespected—all of which the former Government ignored and in many ways facilitated by the laws it oversaw.

**Mr Tim James:** That's not a fair comment.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** The truth hurts. Regardless of where people live, they ought to be treated with respect and dignity, allowing them peaceful enjoyment of their homes. The bill is a big step towards achieving that for people who have not felt heard by their government for a long time. Our Government is acting. Our Government is listening and our Government cares. The Labor Government members respect and value residential park residents; we always will. We look forward to continuing to work with residents and stakeholders on the remaining recommendations of the statutory review. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (21:50):** I contribute to debate on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024 and acknowledge the contribution of my Greens colleague, the member for Ballina, on behalf of The Greens and her community. The Greens support the bill, which implements 21 of the 48 recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013. We understand that the bill will be followed by a second tranche of reforms that will implement the remaining recommendations of that review. We look forward to considering those reforms closely in due course.

The bill makes a series of amendments that will improve clarity and certainty for the roughly 40,000 people who live in land lease communities across New South Wales. The amendments include clarifying the rights of home owners to make certain minor changes to their homes, such as installing door locks or window screens, without a site operator's consent, and setting clear limits on the method and frequency with which site operators can increase site fees. The bill also sets out a clear framework for how electricity charges are calculated and applied to all parties in a land lease community—being the operator, the home owner and the tenant if applicable—where electricity is supplied through an embedded network. The Greens know that embedded networks are a source of confusion for residents whether they are in strata schemes or land lease communities and welcome reforms that improve transparency and certainty in that space.

We certainly enthusiastically welcome the bill's introduction of a cap on how often and by how much a site operator can increase site fees. The bill makes clear that site fees can only be increased using one of two fixed methods—the consumer price index [CPI] or variation in the age pension. Where the CPI is used to calculate an increase, only one increase is allowed in a 12-month period; where a variation in the age pension is used, two increases in a 12-month period are permitted. As the cost of housing continues to climb and more people turn to residential land lease communities as an alternative to the overheated private rental market, that is a sensible step that will provide certainty for land lease community residents and protect them from excessive hikes in their housing costs.

The Greens welcome the sensible step of the New South Wales Labor Government in introducing a cap on fees based on the consumer price index and ensuring that there can only be up to two increases every 12 months. But we ask the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, who is also responsible for the Residential Tenancies Act in New South Wales, why stop at land lease communities? If the Labor Government can accept that it is appropriate to restrict increases to housing costs in certain situations, then why not act to regulate runaway private rental increases, which are plaguing communities across the State? There are 40,000 residents living in land lease communities in the State. The Minister has prioritised and made changes to address the cost-of-living pressures on them. The Greens and I support that bill. Over one-third of the population in New South Wales lives in private rental homes, and yet we do not see the same commitment to capping rents in line with CPI or limiting rent increases to once every 12 months or aligning them with age pensions, given that the cost of living for older women and the increase of older women in rental properties continues.

Currently, landlords in New South Wales are empowered to increase rents by whatever amount they choose, with no regulation—something that undoubtedly contributed to rents rising by up to 7 per cent in some parts of the State over the past year. Nearly 60 percent of very low to moderate income rental households across the State are in housing stress, and renters desperately need protection from further excessive rent increases. In the Australian Capital Territory, the Labor-Greens Government has implemented rent control mechanisms that are not dissimilar to the provisions in this bill being offered to land lease communities. Landlords in the Australian Capital Territory can only increase rents by 110 per cent of the rent component of CPI, which sounds very similar to this bill that only applies to land lease communities, not people in the private rental market. In the Australian

Capital Territory if, for example, the CPI is 8 per cent, landlords can only raise the rent by 8.8 per cent. For anything larger they must go to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which allows some check on rent increases.

Since that mechanism was implemented in late 2019, the sky has not fallen in in the Australian Capital Territory. We have not seen mass disinvestment of landlords from the Australian Capital Territory rental market. All that has happened is that tenants have been insulated from the worst of skyrocketing rents, while the cost of renting has risen sharply across the country. The Greens hope that the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill is the start of the New South Wales Labor Government recognising that regulating the cost of housing is not some crazy, unworkable idea, but something we need to do to protect vulnerable communities and people suffering with housing insecurity and cost-of-living pressures. Accordingly, we urge the New South Wales Labor Government, particularly the Minister introducing the bill who recognises the need for protection for land lease communities, to extend that protection, certainty and housing security to private rental tenants in this State.

I understand that the member for Lake Macquarie will move an amendment to reduce the transitional period within which operators must become compliant with the bill from three years to 12 months. At this point, I offer The Greens support for that amendment. I share the eagerness of the member for Lake Macquarie, stakeholders within the sector and community members for operators to improve their practices as soon as possible, given this has been a long time coming. I commend the bill to the House, and I look forward to a similar bill on private rental regulation in the future.

**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) (21:57):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Amendment Bill 2024. In particular, I thank the members representing the electorates of Terrigal, Granville, Lake Macquarie, Gosford, Tweed, Mount Druitt, Willoughby, Fairfield, Wakehurst, Wyong, Ballina, Port Stephens and Newtown. I acknowledge the comments of my ministerial colleague, Minister Harris, about the history of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act and all of the changes that have been made since Labor first introduced it in the late '90s.

I also acknowledge the comments of the member for Newtown and clarify a misunderstanding. This is not a price cap as such. It is a mechanism by which an operator can choose an element that will determine the site fees. It is important to note that and clarify a potential misunderstanding by the member for Newtown. I also make the point that a residential land lease community is very different to a broader residential market, given that the community only has the one operator and one owner. That is unlike the residential market, which has mum-and-dad owners making their way through life.

This bill marks a crucial first step in the long journey to improve residential land lease community laws in New South Wales. For too long, residential land lease communities and industry stakeholders have been calling out for action, only to be met with inaction by the former Government. Residential land lease communities represent a unique and vital component of our housing landscape, providing affordable housing options for many people in our community. Achieving a harmonious balance between the interests of operators and residents within these communities is paramount to ensure their long-term viability. This bill seeks to achieve that balance by implementing sensible measures that promote transparency, fairness and accountability.

By enhancing the regulatory framework governing residential land lease communities, we aim to safeguard the rights of residents while also recognising the legitimate business interests of operators. The introduction of this bill demonstrates the Government's unwavering commitment to balancing the rights and obligations of the operators of these communities and the people who live in them. I will now respond briefly to points made by other members. The political spear-throwing from the Opposition is unbecoming and unfortunate. The Government is focused on delivering affordable housing options for the people of New South Wales. I am somewhat surprised the member for Terrigal lectured the Government about the timing of the bill. I recall that the member for Terrigal told the ABC that the former Government "went into caretaker mode" before they were able to update the legislation, despite the statutory review being completed in 2021. Last time I checked, caretaker mode does not go on for nearly 18 months.

I am also somewhat disappointed by the tone of some Opposition members. The shadow Minister, the member for Willoughby, chose to continue the baffling criticism of the Government for taking action to support residential land lease communities. My Opposition colleagues want to claim work they could not and did not deliver. This Government is delivering for affected residential land lease communities. Members opposite can deliver their political insider mansplaining, but I will deliver on the mandate to improve housing arrangements for everyone in our community, regardless of where they live. The member for Willoughby also raised concerns from the Caravan and Camping Industry Association that the bill only allows operators to use one component—not two—under the fixed method for site fee increases. The Government understands that a key concern with calculations for fixed method site fee increases that use more than one element is that they can be very complex.

This complexity created confusion for home owners about what a site fee increase would be, and it meant they were unable to budget for them going forward.

Recommendation 10 of the statutory review was to limit the number of elements that can be used to a single variable. The bill implements this recommendation. First, simple and predictable methods for calculating increases in site fees that are not likely to result in a compounding effect are preferred, especially for residents who are on low fixed incomes. Secondly, operators who are concerned that a single component will not cover their costs can choose a percentage increase instead or use the by-notice site fee increase method. As other members have already indicated, the member for Lake Macquarie has proposed an amendment to reduce the transition period from three years to 12 months. I will address that amendment during the consideration in detail stage.

This bill is a testament to the Government's commitment to address the challenges faced by residential land lease communities. By passing this bill, we are sending a clear message that the voices of residents and operators have been heard, and we are taking meaningful action to respond. This bill will start to build a brighter, more equitable future for operators and residents in residential land lease communities. I again thank the key stakeholders who have worked so closely with the Government on this bill. The bill would not be possible without their input.

I thank the Caravan and Camping Industry Association, the Affiliated Residential Parks Residents Association, the Tenants' Union of NSW, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, the Independent Park Residents Action Group, and the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW. I thank also the wonderful team at NSW Fair Trading for their hard work to bring this bill to fruition and help so many people in our community. I especially want to thank Katerina Pavlidis, Diana Holy, Corena Sloper, Hooma Mishra, Gunneet Mangat, Ellen Temby, Jaque Owens, Leslie Barraclough, Susan Kim and Jasmin Chin. I thank my staff members, Alicia and Ivy, who are in the Speaker's gallery. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Greg Piper.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

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

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (22:05):** I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-072A:

No. 1      **Transitional period for entering into compliant site agreements**

Page 14, Schedule 1[33], proposed clause 21, definition of transition day, line 18. Omit "3 years". Insert instead "12 months".

This amendment reduces the current transitional period for entering into compliant site agreements in schedule 1 [33] to the bill from three years to 12 months. The proposed amendment will require operators to review and update all existing site agreements that provide for increases in site fees by a fixed calculation that uses more than one element and to vary agreements so only a single element is used in the calculation within 12 months. It will also require operators to review and update all site agreements containing fixed method site increases to ensure site fees can only be increased under the fixed method once per year or, where increases are tied to the aged pension, twice a year.

I note that the statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act was finalised in November 2021. That is more than three years ago. Operators have been on notice for the proposed reforms for almost three years. I understand anecdotally that only approximately 5 per cent of operators use a fixed method of site fee increases with multiple components. With approximately 41,000 people permanently living in residential land lease communities, fewer than 1,000 agreements will need to be reviewed and amended. I believe an additional 12 months is more than sufficient time to ensure agreements are compliant with the new provisions.

Fixed fee methods of site fee increases with multiple variables can be complex and create uncertainty for often vulnerable residents. The Government has agreed that reform is needed. Home owners and residents have been waiting for this reform for long enough—indeed, too long. They should not have to wait a further three years for the reform to take effect. Without being presumptuous, I understand that the Government intends to support this amendment. I thank the Minister and his excellent team for listening to my concerns and those of my constituents and for their willingness to consider and support this proposed amendment.

**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) (22:08):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for moving this amendment and acknowledge the collaborative approach the crossbench has taken on this bill. I appreciate the willingness of the member for Lake Macquarie to engage with the Government in a constructive manner. The Government is committed to improving the lives of residents in residential land lease communities, while supporting operators to ensure their businesses are sustainable and can grow. We will always seek to consult with and listen to the people who will be affected by the changes to the law to ensure that they are balanced and sensible. That is why the Government will support the proposed amendment of item 33 of schedule 1 to the bill.

The bill will limit operators to using a single element to calculate a site fee increase under the "fixed" method. Currently the bill gives operators three years to review and update all existing agreements to comply with the new requirement. The proposed amendment will reduce the statutory transition period to 12 months, which means that operators will have 12 months to review and update all existing agreements to ensure they do not use a "fixed" method for site fee increases that uses more than one component.

The bill will continue to provide that if a variation agreement or new compliant agreement is not entered into within the 12 months, then the "by-notice" method of site fee increase will become the default method. I thank the Speaker and all members of the House for collaborating on the bill. I know what a difference the changes in the bill will make for residents and operators in New South Wales.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (22:10):** As I indicated in my earlier remarks, I confirm that the Coalition supports the amendment brought by the Speaker and notes the Government's willingness to amend its own bill. Once again, it has our support for the reasons that I have outlined.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that amendment No. 1 of the member for Lake Macquarie on sheet c2024-072A be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

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

### **Third Reading**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **MUSEUMS OF HISTORY NSW AMENDMENT (CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (22:12):** On behalf of Ms Jo Haylen: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Museums of History NSW Amendment (Chief Executive Officer) Bill 2024. The bill presents a straightforward legislative change to amend the Museums of History Act 2022 with the effect that the chief executive officer of Museums of History NSW and any person acting in that role will not be a statutory appointment but instead a person employed in the public service under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 in alignment with our other cultural institutions. The CEO of Museums of History NSW is responsible for an organisation which manages and cares for the State's archives collection, valued at over a billion dollars, and also for other key historical institutions in New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of the former Government in the creation of the Museums of History NSW to be the State's history-focused cultural institution. Mary Darwell was appointed CEO under existing legislation and has done a commendable and excellent job in acting as custodian of New South Wales history and its stories. I thank her for her contribution in the role to date.

Museums of History NSW was formed in 2022 as an umbrella cultural institution that cares for the history of New South Wales, encompassing the State's beloved historical places including the Hyde Park Barracks, Museum of Sydney, Justice and Police Museum and many more that the people of New South Wales know and love. Since its creation, the Museums of History has continued the legacy of Sydney Living Museums and the State Archives and Records NSW as a trusted custodian, preserving and sharing the stories of the State through its places, collections and archives in connection with the exercise of the State's Records Act 1998.



In establishing the Museums of History NSW, the Act establishes its main functions as collecting, managing and preserving the State's archives, significant buildings and sites, and objects and materials related to the significant building and sites; increasing public knowledge, access and enjoyment of the collection; and promoting knowledge and appreciation of history and the stories that shape the social, historical, political and cultural identity of New South Wales. The Museums of History CEO plays a vital role in the delivery of those functions and establishes priorities, delivers on the strategic vision set by the board and engages the wide and varied stakeholders of the Museums of History, from its philanthropic community to the heads of public offices.

The New South Wales Government believes that culture is how we communicate who we are, how we feel, what matters, where we have come from and where we are going. Our culture nourishes communities and provides a space for diversity and empathy to coexist. It inspires future generations and is an empowering force for change. A flourishing culture delivers benefits locally and internationally and strengthens social cohesion, connection and wellbeing. Culture ties us together. The State's cultural institutions manage significant cultural heritage collections and provide services and programs supporting art and culture in New South Wales. Together, they provide a unique and irreplaceable archive of our history and contemporary culture.

The Museums of History sits within the context of a new cultural policy that the New South Wales Government introduced in 2023. The New South Wales Government met an election commitment by releasing Creative Communities, the first whole-of-government arts, culture and creative industries policy. A key objective of that policy is a provision of strong and effective networks of equitable and sustainable services, resources and spaces for creative development, expression, practice and engagement across New South Wales. Our cultural institutions such as the Museums of History NSW are a crucial component of the network, leading their sectors and supporting creative activities in the State. Creative Communities commits the New South Wales Government to fostering growth of the arts, culture and creative industries.

In terms of where we are at with setting a vision for the Museums of History, the strategic plan was published in June last year and approved by the board. The strategic plan outlined the vision, mission and values of the institution as well as a number of key priorities and deliverables that demonstrate the Museums of History's commitment to care for the collections, significant buildings and landscapes and the State's archive collection. The board, chaired by Dr Mary O'Kane, will commence the process for setting the next strategic plan to align with the conclusion of the first strategic plan. The next strategic plan will, subject to the passing of the bill, be ably led by the successful candidate from the planned CEO recruitment and will align with the New South Wales arts, culture and creative industries policy.

The three-year plan will see Museums of History NSW continue its work to reveal and share new perspectives on our past and care for its important collections, places and archives on behalf of the people of New South Wales. I now turn to the detail of the bill. As I previously noted, the bill seeks to amend the Museums of History NSW Act 2022 and the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to provide for the CEO of Museums of History to be a person employed in public service under the Government Sector Employment Act rather than a statutory appointment under the Museums of History NSW Act. The schedules of the bill give effect to that intention.

Schedule 1 amends the Museums of History NSW Act to remove reference to the office of CEO being a statutory office and to ensure consistency with the provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act. Schedule 1 also provides for transitional arrangements for any person employed in the office of CEO at the time of passage of this legislation. The effect of this is to allow the Minister for the Arts, as the Minister responsible for the Museums of History NSW Act, to appoint a person employed under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to the office of CEO. The amendments retain the requirement that the Minister consult with the MHNSW board in so doing.

The issue with the existing arrangements is, first, that the statutory appointment of the CEO under the Museums of History NSW Act is not aligned with the processes of appointment for any other cultural institution. It is important that we fix this for consistency across our cultural sector and to clarify the process. Secondly, it ensures that the appointment of the CEO occurs with input from the Minister but is not a direct statutory appointment, as is currently the case. The proposed change ensures that there is transparency and due process, consistent with other cultural institutions across New South Wales.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes consequential changes to the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to update part 2 of schedule 1 to the Act to note the new employment arrangement for the CEO. This aligns with the employment arrangements for the Sydney Opera House, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Australian Museum, State Records NSW and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. The bill will allow the New South Wales Government to appoint a public service head of Museums of History NSW to provide leadership to the museum in parity with our other cultural institutions. It will enable the museum to fulfil its role as a trusted

custodian, preserving and sharing the stories of the State through its places, collections and archives. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (22:21):** I contribute to debate on the Museums of History NSW Amendment (Chief Executive Officer) Bill 2024. The Opposition will not be opposing the bill. The bill will amend the Museums of History NSW Act 2022 and the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 [GSE Act] to provide for the chief executive officer of Museums of History NSW to be a person employed in the public service under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, rather than a statutory office established by the Museums of History NSW Act 2022. The bill will bring the appointment process in line with the State's other cultural institutions. When the Museums of History NSW Act 2022 commenced in December 2022, it was identified that the appointment process was inconsistent with other cultural institutions. The bill removes reference to the office of the CEO being a statutory office.

Schedule 1 provides for transitional arrangements for any person holding the office of the CEO of Museums of History NSW. That will allow the Minister for the Arts, as the Minister responsible for the Museums of History Act NSW 2022, to appoint a person employed under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to the office of the CEO. The amendments retain the requirement to consult with the Museums of History NSW Board in doing that. Schedule 2 to the bill makes consequential changes to the GSE Act to update schedule 1 to the GSE Act to note the new employment arrangement for the CEO of Museums of History NSW, aligning the wording with that used for the other heads of New South Wales's cultural institutions. The intent from the previous Coalition Government was to amend the appointment process consistent with the bill before the House.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (22:23):** I support the Museums of History NSW Amendment (Chief Executive Officer) Bill 2024. I commend the Minister for the Arts for his work in that space. The bill amends the Museums of History NSW Act 2022, hereon referred to as the MHNSW Act, and the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, hereon referred to as the GSE Act, to make the office of chief executive officer of Museums of History NSW an office in the public service rather than a statutory office.

Following the commencement of the MHNSW Act in December 2022, Museums of History NSW assumed responsibility for collecting, managing, preserving and providing public access to government archives, objects, buildings and places of historical, social, cultural or architectural interest to the people of New South Wales. Schedule 1 to the bill amends various sections of the MHNSW Act to remove reference to the office of CEO being a statutory office, and includes transitional arrangements for the CEO in office at the time of passage of the bill. That amendment will allow the Minister for the Arts to appoint a person employed under the GSE Act to the office of CEO. However, the amendments will maintain the requirement to consult with the MHNSW Board in doing that.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes consequential changes to the GSE Act to cater for the new employment arrangements for the CEO of MHNSW, aligning the wording with that used for the other heads of New South Wales's cultural institutions. A key objective of the Creative Communities policy, launched in December 2023, is the provision of a strong and effective network of equitable and sustainable services, resources and spaces for creative development and engagement across New South Wales. New South Wales's cultural institutions, such as the Museums of History NSW, are a crucial part of that network, leading creative activity in the State. The bill will allow the Government to appoint a public service head of Museums of History NSW, providing leadership to the museum in parity with the State's other cultural institutions. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (22:25):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Museums of History NSW Amendment (Chief Executive Officer) Bill 2024. This straightforward amendment aligns the appointment of the chief executive officer of Museums of History NSW with the rest of the cultural institutions CEO appointments in New South Wales under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, so that the appointment is not a statutory appointment. As was noted in the second reading speech for the bill, Museums of History is entrusted with the administration and oversight of the important heritage buildings and organisations making up our Sydney Living Museums, including Hyde Park Barracks, the Mint, the State archives, the Museum of Sydney and Elizabeth Farm, to name a few. The amendment will enable the smooth administration of the Museums of History NSW organisations and enable the CEO to further their remit to collect, manage and preserve our State's history.

The bill will support a smooth transition to align the appointment of the CEO of Museums of History to reflect the current arrangements for New South Wales's cultural institutions and, in doing so, will enable Museums of History to support the management and custodianship of its properties as well as allowing access to important historical institutions within New South Wales, now and into the future. This straightforward administrative amendment will result in benefits to the State of New South Wales within a broader historical and cultural context.

In particular, I draw attention to new part 3 in schedule 3 to the existing legislation. New section 7 (1) notes that the bill does not intend to disrupt to the term of the existing legislation. The current CEO, Mary Darwell, therefore continues to the end of her term, ensuring that there is sufficient certainty of administration for Museums of History going forward. The bill also requires that the Minister consult with the board of Museums of History prior to appointing a person to the office of the CEO. I refer to the Government's Creative Communities policy, which aims to activate spaces for public and commercial use, including the venues operated by Museums of History.

I am keen to take the House through some of the venues operated by Museums of History NSW. In the metropolitan area, it operates, with free admission to the public, Elizabeth Bay House, Vacluse House in the Eastern Suburbs, Rose Seidler House in Sydney's North Shore, the Justice and Police Museum in the Sydney CBD, Hyde Park Barracks in the Sydney CBD, the Museum of Sydney on the site of the first Government House in the Sydney CBD, and the Mint, just down the street. In Western Sydney and the regions, Museums of History NSW also operates Elizabeth Farm, Throsby House and Rouse Hill Estate.

Elizabeth Farm is on the site of what was originally the Elizabeth Farm Estate, established in 1793 after Major Grose received permission to grant land to military and civil officers, and John Macarthur was granted 100 acres. Everyone in this place can recount the story of John Macarthur, the first man to use a plough in the colony. As S Macarthur Onslow recounted, Macarthur "showed at Elizabeth Farm what could be accomplished by a man of means and ambition, perhaps helped by his official position at Parramatta. He was, of course, unusual but not unique." Hence, we note the significance of Elizabeth Farm to the establishment of the colony, to the agricultural and economic success of New South Wales and, eventually, the nation.

Elizabeth Farm and the neighbouring properties of Hambledon Cottage and Experiment Farm are physically connected by Clay Cliff Creek and historically by their significance to our nation's story. That connection and contribution is one of the reasons the community has been advocating for their inclusion on Australia's National Heritage List. The point of that brief digression is to highlight the importance of including Elizabeth Farm in the portfolio of the Museums of History house museums, allowing for the maintenance and provision of free public access to the stories of not only Parramatta's past, but also that of our State and nation.

Venues such as Elizabeth Farm, operated by Museums of History, provide a unique opportunity to see our history in action. Similarly, many of those venues operate as house museums accessible by the public free of charge. Others are run as commercial venues available for the purpose of weddings, filming and commercial ventures. The venues operated by Museums of History represent a huge insight into our State's history and the amendment to the Museums of History's enacting legislation is a way of continuing to tell that story through our history for current and future generations. The stories in buildings and sites across New South Wales are essential to our State's history in all of its complexity. We are privileged to have the Museums of History preserving those stories. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (22:31):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Museums of History NSW Amendment (Chief Executive Officer) Bill 2024. The primary purpose of the bill is to transfer the employment of the CEO to the Government Sector Employment Act. I noted from the Minister's speech that there is \$1 billion worth of archival material being kept. Museums of History NSW looks after the Hyde Park Barracks, the Justice and Police Museum and the State archives. As the Minister said, public knowledge and appreciation of history is so important because if we do not learn from the past, we are condemned to repeat it into the future.

If the State archivists are looking for material, I might have some at my place. I have a book about the 1904 plague in Sydney, which was the fourth outbreak of plague in Sydney. It was interesting that, throughout COVID, we said it was the first plague that ever hit. Yet I have a detailed report from 1904 by Dr Thompson, the chief medical officer at the time. It includes maps and locations and numbers. It is not too dissimilar to when Premier Berejiklian got up in front of the media to talk about it all. I actually have that book. It is amazing, to a certain extent, how today we ignore all of the plagues. We already had the fourth plague by 1904, so maybe we should have had a look at that book.

The member for Strathfield and I have looked together at a book I have from 1906, which is a New South Wales guide for immigrants and settlers. It was amazing to look at all of the advertisements and see what it meant to settle in and work to the people coming to Sydney at the time. I have a few other books up my sleeve—it is amazing what one can buy at auctions. I hope, for the Minister's sake, that the State is not selling off the archives. There is so much that I can buy, especially when there is \$1 billion of material out there. I also have the meteorological report of 1857. In this modern era, we are worried about climate change and trying to find a benchmark of what the climate was like yesterday. People ask, "How can they work this out?" If Opposition members or any other members of Parliament want to find out what the weather patterns in this place were like in 1857, I am quite happy to provide that material. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (22:34):** On behalf of Ms Jo Haylen: In reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate. As I outlined in my opening remarks, this is a straightforward bill seeking to harmonise arrangements across the State's cultural institutions. In seeking to amend the Museums of History Act 2022 so the CEO of the Museums of History NSW will not be a statutory appointment, but instead a person employed in the public service under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, we will enable the appointment of a permanent public service head of the Museums of History to provide parity with our other cultural institutions.

I acknowledge the contributions from the members representing the electorates of Tamworth, Fairfield, Parramatta and Blacktown. I am significantly encouraged by the contribution from the member for Blacktown and his interest in history. Both he and I are former mayors. We are an integral part of history. Some would think, in local government, that we are history. The Government recognises the unique place that arts, culture and the creative industries play in New South Wales. The bill is one of a number of steps the Government is taking to implement its vision for a strong and effective network of equitable and sustainable services that support artists, creatives, cultural organisations and the State's rapidly growing creative industries. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Ms Jo Haylen: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY AMENDMENT (LAND CLASSIFICATION) BILL 2024

### Second Reading Speech

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (22:36):** On behalf of Mr Paul Scully: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Emergency Services Levy Amendment (Land Classification) Bill 2024, on behalf of the Treasurer, into the House of Government. The object of the bill is to amend the Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 to:

- (a) require local councils, for the purposes of evaluating and implementing reforms to the way in which emergency services are funded, to—
  - (i) perform a preliminary classification of all parcels of land in the area of the local council, and
  - (ii) identify if the parcel of land is owned by a person belonging to a class of persons specified in guidelines issued by the Treasurer, and
  - (iii) give the information to the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue (the Chief Commissioner), and
- (b) require the Chief Commissioner to keep a register of the information, and
- (c) enable the information to be given to certain persons and used for the purposes of evaluating and implementing reforms to the way in which emergency services are funded, and
- (d) enable the Chief Commissioner to monitor local councils' compliance with the new requirements, and
- (e) enable the Treasurer to issue guidelines for the purposes of the new requirements. The bill comes to us from the other place. I start by noting that emergency services protect the lives and property of everybody in this State. Fire and Rescue NSW, the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and the New South Wales State Emergency Service provide critical services to protect and serve the people of New South Wales in what is often their greatest time of need. NSW Treasury projects that the total cost of flood and bushfire to the economy will increase from \$7 billion in 2020-21 to up to \$24 billion by 2070-71 in today's dollars. Funding our emergency services is always important, and particularly so in this light. The cost of those emergency services in the budget year just gone was \$23 billion. It is a large amount of money that the State needs to find.

The funding needed for the State's emergency services currently comes from insurance companies, which contribute 73.7 per cent; local councils, which contribute 11.7 per cent; and the New South Wales Government, which contributes 14.6 per cent. The Government has stated its intention to remove the emergency services levy currently imposed on insurance and, instead, distribute the levy across a broad base of property owners. The Government believes that funding for emergency services in New South Wales can be made fairer, simpler, more efficient and more sustainable. On 16 November 2023 the Premier announced the Government's commitment to reform the State's emergency services funding with three key objectives: one, to reduce insurance costs for households by spreading the levy across all property owners; two, to protect pensioners and vulnerable members

of the community; and three, to ensure a revenue-neutral model that sustainably funds the State's emergency services agencies.

To ensure the reform's designed goals are achieved, which include a fairer and more sustainable funding system, the replacement levy may need to be designed with different levy rates applying to different categories of land use. Different levy rates across different categories of land use would enable the distribution of levy burdens across property owners to be adjusted. Requiring councils to undertake land classifications, in accordance with rules to be set out in guidelines to be issued by the Treasurer, will enable the Government to design a replacement levy that is not constrained by existing available land classifications, such as the land zoning classifications or those classifications used for council rates. The legislation complements the Emergency Services Levy Amendment Bill 2024, which this House passed on 15 May. That bill amended the Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 to permit the Treasurer to require an insurer to provide information for the purposes of evaluating and implementing reforms to the way in which emergency services are funded. The purpose of that bill was to help develop a new funding system for the State.

I turn to the detail of the bill. The bill makes further amendments to the Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 and establishes a new part 9 that deals with the Government's emergency services funding reform. The bill will insert new section 47A into the Act, which requires councils to perform a one-off classification of each parcel of land in their area and to identify if land is owned by a person belonging to a class of persons specified in the guidelines issued by the Treasurer. Councils will be reimbursed for the reasonable costs incurred in undertaking that work, which is at section 47F. An initial land classification framework is required to be put in place so that the Government may have the relevant current land classifications data to model options such as differential levy rates, fixed charges, discounts and caps. Under new section 47E, the Treasurer will be able to publish detailed guidelines for this exercise, including the classification categories and classification process for councils to follow. As a matter of good process, the Treasurer will consult with councils prior to the issuance of these guidelines. *[Quorum called for.]*

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

Under new section 47E, the Treasurer will be able to publish detailed guidelines for this exercise, including the classification categories and the classification process for councils to follow. As a matter of good process, the Treasurer will consult with councils prior to the issuing of those guidelines. The Chief Commissioner of State Revenue will also have an important role in the classification process of land. Once local councils complete their classification obligations, new section 47B requires that this information is provided to the chief commissioner. The chief commissioner will also have the responsibility of monitoring the activities of councils to ensure that their obligations are satisfactorily met under the new section 47D. This will include the role of reviewing the information for accuracy and completeness and conducting audits where necessary.

Local councils will need to cooperate with the chief commissioner in the exercise of the chief commissioner's compliance functions. To this end, the chief commissioner will have the power to impose an administrative penalty on a local council that fails to comply. The chief commissioner will be responsible for maintaining a register of the information received from councils under the new section 47C. To assist the process of designing the replacement levy and take preparatory steps for implementation, the chief commissioner will be able to share information on the register, including personal information, with Treasury, a local council and the NSW Valuer General and their employees. The Legislation Review Committee examined the bill and reported its finding in the thirteenth digest, dated 14 May 2024. It noted that the new section 47E empowers the Treasurer to issue guidelines that local councils would be required to follow during the land classification exercise and commented as follows:

The Bill may therefore incorporate extrinsic guidelines into legislation. The Committee generally comments on any legislative provisions that permit the incorporation of external materials like guidelines and give those materials legal force. It also prefers substantive matters to be set out in legislation or to be published in the Gazette and tabled in Parliament as regulations, where they can be subject to disallowance and therefore to appropriate parliamentary scrutiny.

Having made this observation, the committee concluded as follows:

However, the Committee notes that prescribing such information in guidelines may enable greater flexibility and responsiveness to the changing practices. The Committee also acknowledges that the proposed amendments are intended to facilitate policy reform of the emergency services funding framework. In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment.

I note that the digest, in explaining how it describes its conclusions, makes the following statement:

Where the Committee concludes to **make no further comment** on an identified issue in the report, the Committee considers that the issue may technically engage with the criteria under section 8A or 9 of the Act but, given counterbalancing considerations (e.g. legislated safeguards), it is unlikely in practice to raise the issues under the relevant section. The Committee invites but does not otherwise require the Member with carriage (for Bill reports) or the responsible Minister (for regulation reports) to comment on these identified issues.

In relation to the committee's comments, I refer to the Treasurer's undertaking to consult with councils widely prior to issuing any guidelines. I hope this addresses the committee's concerns. The bill enables what the Treasurer has described as "an initial one-off land classification framework that is a critical piece to progressing the State's emergency services funding reform". The bill requires local councils to classify all parcels of land in the area to enable important policy design, including to model options for the new levy to be introduced under these reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (22:49):** The Opposition supports the Emergency Services Levy (Land Classification) Amendment Bill 2024, which amends the Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 to require every local council to perform a one-off classification of each parcel of land in their area using classifications and sub-classifications to be specified in guidelines to be issued by the Treasurer. Councils also will be required to identify if land is owned by a person belonging to a class of persons specified in those guidelines. While the Treasurer suggested in the second reading speech that local councils would be reimbursed for the reasonable costs incurred in undertaking this work, there was originally no provision in the bill relating to the costs of the Treasurer's land classification exercise.

I am pleased to report that the Opposition succeeded in the other place, despite Government resistance, in having the bill amended to include a provision that Parliament recommends the appropriation of funds out of the Consolidated Fund to reimburse local councils for the reasonable costs of exercising functions under this part. Unfortunately, the bill still contains an explicit provision threatening councils with a punitive fine for any perceived failure to comply with their mandated role as the Treasurer's property tax classifiers. The Treasurer says this land classification data is needed to model options such as differential levy rates, fixed charges, discounts and caps. The Government released a consultation paper on 10 April 2024 with comments due by 22 May 2024. The consultation paper canvasses four options for a new funding system for the emergency services to replace the emergency services levy on insurance policies with a new property tax.

The bill could be seen as pre-empting the result of the consultation on the four options for replacing the emergency services levy on insurance policies as the new land classification data would be required for only one of the four options. The Treasurer has suggested that there will be consultation with the local government sector before the guidelines are made, but the consultation would seem to concern only the practicalities of the classification exercise. However, as the classifications will be the basis for a new universal property tax, the guidelines establishing the classifications ought to be subject to significant community consultation. We call on the Government to put any proposed guidelines out for public comment prior to issuing them. The Opposition's support for this bill does not necessarily indicate its position on the specific proposal the Government finally adopts to replace the emergency services levy, which it will assess on its merits when the details are made public.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (22:52):** My contribution to debate on the Emergency Services Levy Amendment (Land Classification) Bill 2024 will be brief. I understand that later tonight there will be a discussion of another bill that further reforms the emergency services levy fund process. I understand these bills are necessary to enable the Government to collect the information and data it requires to reform the emergency services levy in our State. The emergency services levy has concerned me since I was elected. It has been a matter of significant concern to me because of its impact on local government and property owners who fully insure their homes or businesses. It has basically meant that the burden of funding emergency services has been carried by fewer and fewer people over the years.

The previous Government undertook to reform this malfunctioning system when it was first elected but, despite making a start, the reform was shelved. This was because it appeared too hard—too hard, the former Government argued, because it could not accurately estimate the difference in liability faced by different property owners. The former Treasurer wrote to me, noting that the Government did take steps to introduce a property-based funding levy and stated that, prior to the implementation, "it became clear that change would result in an unacceptable redistribution of the levy burden across the community". In the Government's own submission to the 2017 inquiry into the fire and emergency services levy, it argued the change would "violate the primary policy objective of making the funding of fire and emergency services more equitable". Here we are, seven years later, and inequity is greater than ever, more climate-caused disasters loom, and only now are we taking action. But at least action is now being taken.

The inequity continues to grow because of the lack of action taken, and New South Wales remains the last State to undertake these important reforms. A lack of action fuelled the problem that inaction was meant to solve. Under the current model, the cost of residential insurance has risen by an average of about 18 per cent for homes and 34 per cent on commercial properties. It also means that New South Wales has the lowest rate of home and contents insurance in Australia, with 35 per cent of households not having contents insurance and 5 per cent not having building insurance. Several of my constituents have raised this issue with me, including one insurance

broker who pointed out that while some owners took out insurance, their neighbour who decided to forgo that insurance would still rely on the fire brigade to turn up in the event of an emergency. It created an unsustainable situation for councils and those who take out insurance. It was clearly unfair, but, thankfully, it is not too late.

I welcome the current Government's steps in the bill to ease the one-sided load carried by the insured. Of course, it is essential that we properly fund our emergency services so that they can continue their outstanding work in serving and protecting our community, but we need to do that in a way that equitably shares the cost. Community consultation was the first step on the road towards ending this inequity, and I applaud the Government for taking that step as we work towards ensuring that everyone pays an equitable share of the costs involved in providing emergency services. For those reasons, I am pleased to support the bill.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (22:55):** On behalf of Mr Paul Scully: In reply: I thank the member for Goulburn, speaking on behalf of the Opposition, and the member for Wagga Wagga for their contributions. I support the observations made by the member for Wagga Wagga. The member for Goulburn talked about consultation. The Treasurer has indicated many times in the other place that the Government will move carefully and consult widely in the development of these reforms. We are determined to deliver a funding model for emergency services that is fairer, more efficient, simpler and sustainable.

I note the comments made by the member for Wagga Wagga. For seven years, we lost the opportunity to get this done. We are doing it now in a careful and fair way to make sure that we get a good outcome for New South Wales. The Treasurer is consulting widely. There is a stakeholder reference group made up of a whole bunch of people from industry, business, the insurance industry, representatives of councils—including Tweed Shire Council—the president of Local Government NSW and representatives of employees of emergency services organisations, as well as the heads of those emergency services organisations. We are super serious about consulting widely so that we get this right. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** On behalf of Mr Paul Scully: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY INSURANCE MONITOR BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (22:57):** On behalf of Mr Paul Scully: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of my colleague the Treasurer, I am pleased to introduce the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Bill 2024. The object of the bill is to create a new Act to provide for the establishment of an emergency services levy insurance monitor, which I will call "the monitor", to oversee the transition of insurance prices and to appoint the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] as the monitor. I note that the bill was introduced by the Treasurer in the other place and was passed in the Legislative Council on 9 May. This is the third bill introduced by the Government to underpin the reform of the emergency services levy. The first and second bill that we introduced amended the Emergency Services Levy Act to allow the Government to collect certain information that will be critical in the design of a broad-based property levy, which will replace the current funding arrangements.

I refer members to my comments on those bills for a fuller description of the current funding arrangements. The Government believes that funding for emergency services in New South Wales can be made fairer, simpler, more efficient and more sustainable. In November 2023 the Premier announced at the Bradfield Oration the Government's commitment to reforming the way in which New South Wales emergency services are funded by replacing the emergency services levy with a levy spread across property owners the State. The Government issued a consultation paper on the reforms in April and has established a stakeholder reference group of 12 members drawn from our emergency services and unions representing emergency services workers, business, insurance, property and local government to inform the design of the new funding arrangements.

The new levy will seek to create a fairer, simpler, more efficient and more sustainable system to fund our emergency services. The need for critical reform is now more pressing than ever with climate change and the

growing instances of natural disaster. An insurance monitor is required to ensure that insurers pass on savings from the removal of the emergency services levy from insurance policies to consumers in the form of lower insurance premiums during the transition period between the current emergency services levy on insurers and a replacement levy that is to be spread across property owners.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Under part 2 of this bill, the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor is established to be responsible for overseeing the transition from the emergency services levy to the replacement levy. The Government has selected IPART to be appointed as the insurance monitor. IPART will have the key responsibility of ensuring that insurers pass on the savings from the removal of the emergency services levy. IPART is an independent, well-regarded government agency that has core price-monitoring functions and executives with extensive insurance industry experience. The bill will empower IPART to monitor the insurance industry for a range of prohibited conduct and the overcharging of insurance premiums. These monitoring and enforcement powers are based on the powers given to the previous monitor under the now repealed Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Act 2016.

The Government is yet to commit to a transitional path or timing for the removal of the emergency services levy and IPART, as the insurance monitor, will begin with determining an insurance premium baseline for future comparison. The bill provides the insurance monitor the power to collect data from the insurance industry, including personal information, on regulated insurance contracts in relation to property. Under the proposed section 20, the bill also empowers the insurance monitor to issue guidelines in relation to prohibited conduct of insurance companies. Specifically, insurers will be prohibited from engaging in "price exploitation" or "false and misleading conduct" in relation to the emergency services funding reform. In those guidelines, the insurance monitor will be able to inform the insurance industry of its intended approach to monitoring their conduct and how it may undertake enforcement action where necessary.

Once the Government has decided on the transition path to a replacement levy, the insurance monitor will be well positioned to investigate and take enforcement action to make sure insurance companies are passing on the savings from the reform to their customers. The insurance monitor will carefully monitor compliance by insurers and will be able to seek court order penalties of up to \$10 million for prohibited conduct. The insurance monitor will also be able to issue penalty notices for specific breaches of insurers' obligations under legislation. The insurance monitor may also hold public inquiries and publish statements identifying insurers engaging in prohibited conduct or overcharging amounts from customers in relation to the emergency services levy. Importantly, to support consumers and businesses, the monitor will also be able to deal with complaints that may be made by a person regarding any alleged prohibited conduct by an insurance company.

As a transparency measure, the insurance monitor will provide to the Government and publicly issue quarterly reports on the performance of its functions under proposed section 10 of the bill. The enactment of this legislation before the eventual removal of the emergency services levy and introduction of a replacement levy is important to ensuring the insurance monitor is adequately equipped for its responsibilities. I now turn to the matters raised by the Legislation Review Committee in its scrutiny of the bill as detailed in *Legislation Review Digest No. 13/58*, dated 14 May. The committee plays a vital role in our legislative process, and I thank the committee for its careful consideration of the bill and for providing the Government with the opportunity to address the matters raised. The Government understands the concerns the committee has raised and acknowledges that personal rights and liberties should be protected.

The committee has raised concerns about the potentially wide powers granted to the insurance monitor, including the insurance monitor's investigation, enforcement and other incidental powers. Those powers, and the provisions giving rise to them, are consistent with those granted to the insurance monitor in the previous fire and emergency services levy reform as set out in the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Act 2016. Notwithstanding, as the persons to be subject to the regulation of the insurance monitor are insurance companies, it is considered appropriate from a regulatory impact and consumer protection perspective to enable wider and more intrusive powers.

The committee has also raised the matter of the wide delegation power to the chief commissioner in clause 84 of the bill. That provision seeks to replicate the same delegation power of the chief commissioner granted in the Tax Administration Act 1996 in respect of the aforementioned Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Act 2016. That will ensure that the chief commissioner may carry out their responsibilities in a practical manner. The committee also raised the wideranging regulation-making power and the ability to incorporate extrinsic guidelines to the legislation, which the committee was concerned could limit parliamentary oversight.

Subordinated legislation is a mainstay of our legislative system, and the ability granted by this bill to make regulations and publish guidelines forms a critical pillar of the insurance monitor's effective operation. As the emergency services funding reform continues to progress and develop, there will be a need to enable regulation and guidelines to flexibly respond and adapt to the insurance monitor's needs to ensure that the intended savings



of the reform are passed on to policyholders. The Government believes that the reporting requirements of the insurance monitor will enable appropriate public scrutiny of those powers.

I note that, under section 88, any regulation that is made must be necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to the bill. Those regulations will need to be tabled in Parliament before coming into force, which will ensure that any regulation is subject to parliamentary oversight during the disallowance period of 15 sitting days before coming into force. With respect to the guidelines that will be issued by the insurance monitor, while the guidelines are not intended to require tabling in Parliament, to alleviate concerns, the Treasurer has undertaken to consult widely before the guidelines are issued. As I indicated, the monitor will be issuing quarterly reports for public scrutiny. The bill establishes a critical consumer protection framework, which will be fundamental to the success of our reforms. It will establish an insurance monitor to oversee the transition from the existing emergency services levy to a fairer and more sustainable new funding system for our emergency services. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (23:07):** The Opposition supports the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Bill 2024, which amends the Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 to appoint the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] as the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor. The purpose of the insurance monitor is to ensure that, as the emergency services levy [ESL] on insurance policies is phased out and replaced by a new, yet-to-be-determined scheme for funding emergency services, insurers do not engage in price exploitation. The Government has declared its policy of removing the ESL from insurance contracts. That commitment is independent from the replacement sources of emergency services funding that will be finally adopted. Setting up the insurance monitor as soon as possible would enable data to be gathered on insurance costs before the ESL is removed so that that data can be used as a baseline to monitor changes to insurance prices once the ESL is removed.

As there are multiple drivers of insurance costs, there will be an inherent difficulty in determining whether or not any increase in insurance costs is unreasonably high and is related to the removal of ESL. IPART operates independently of government and is respected and well placed to carry out that challenging task. The Opposition's support for the bill does not necessarily indicate our position on the specific proposal that the Government will finally adopt to replace the emergency services levy. Any specific proposal will be assessed on its merits and in light of our duty as the Opposition to hold the Government to its election commitment of no new taxes on the people of New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (23:08):** On behalf of Mr Paul Scully: In reply: I thank the member for Hornsby for his comments and I acknowledge the Opposition's support of the bill. As I have said previously, it is important that we approach this reform in a careful and considered manner, consulting as widely as possible. The Government believes that the insurance monitor, which I am pleased to hear is supported by the Opposition in this House, will be a mechanism to ensure that consumers in this State get the best possible outcome from these reforms. I look forward to working with all members on both sides of this House to achieve a set of reforms that produce a fairer, simpler and more sustainable system of funding our emergency services, and also make insurance products more affordable for the people of this State. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** On behalf of Mr Paul Scully: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Budget

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

**Debate resumed from 16 May 2024.**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (23:10):** In reply: I thank those members who commented on the first budget in this period of the Minns Labor Government. I thank the member for Leppington, the member for Auburn, and the member for Lismore for their contributions, and I look forward to the next budget.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** The question is that the House take note of Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2023-2024.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Community Recognition Statements*

**HEART FOUNDATION**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (23:12):** As part of National Heart Health Week, I was happy to see the Heart Foundation in Parliament a few weeks ago. Our heart health is vital. Our heart is a natural pump responsible for circulating blood and oxygen around our body, which is why we must look after ourselves and should receive regular heart checks. I met the CEO of the Heart Foundation Australia, David Lloyd, who spoke to me about the importance of taking care of yourself before a heart condition presents itself. I even pulled out a skipping rope and competed against a far younger and fitter Heart Foundation staff member. The member for Coffs Harbour and The Nationals Whip gave me a run for my money as well. The Heart Foundation runs Jump Rope for Heart, which is a skipping and fundraising program, in Australian schools throughout the year. I was delighted to hear that Pymble Public School in my electorate was the top fundraiser in New South Wales, raising a cumulative total of \$250,000 for the Heart Foundation in 2023, with 550 students skipping for a healthy heart. I congratulate the Heart Foundation on everything it does, and I encourage everyone in the Wahroonga electorate and elsewhere to look after their heart.

**CRAIG DONARSKI**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (23:13):** I acknowledge the great contribution Craig Donarski made to the arts in south-west Sydney during his tenure as the Director of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre from 2016 to 2023. Craig's approach involved integrating diverse programming into a holistic platform for culture. The Casula Powerhouse is surrounded by residents from over 150 countries, speaking more than 140 languages, where no single group dominates in numbers, making it the ideal environment for fostering this approach. By attracting major festivals and exhibitions such as the Archibald, Sydney Festival, Sydney Writers' Festival, the Biennale of Sydney, and the Sydney Film Festival, Craig has made high-quality cultural experiences accessible locally. His legacy has provided a multidimensional arts space that is inclusive for individuals of all ages, from children to adults. Most importantly, in my appetite's opinion, it includes the revamped Bellbird Dining and Bar, which offers local, sustainable, seasonal and affordable fine dining to all. I wish Craig all the best in his future endeavours.

**TWEED ELECTORATE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (23:14):** Recently it was my great pleasure to award three members of the Tweed community commemorative certificates to celebrate their 50 remarkable years of service as justices of the peace [JPs]. Ron Ford of Tweed Heads, David Miller of Terranora and Laurence Gillespie of Kingscliff have all served as justices of the peace for 50 years, a wonderful accomplishment worthy of recognition. Justices of the peace provide an integral, unpaid volunteer service to their communities. JPs must always uphold their oath of office and are trusted to be honest and impartial when performing their duties. Fifty years of service is an outstanding achievement and one to be very proud of. I thank Ron, David and Laurence for their service to their community. Their dedication to their roles as justices of the peace and the service they provide to their community is greatly appreciated.

**DR ALI SARFRAZ**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (23:15):** Today I recognise Dr Ali Sarfraz, who has actively worked in and contributed to my electorate of Cabramatta. He has received multiple community awards for his outstanding contributions, notably his impactful media campaign, especially in the 1990s, against the drug problems in Cabramatta, which assisted in the significant improvement in the area's cleanliness and safety. Over the span of approximately 54 years Dr Sarfraz has dedicated himself to serving both in the medical field and within disadvantaged communities. His ongoing commitment to the people of Cabramatta is exemplary, as he continues to provide free medical treatment to those who lack financial coverage. Dr Sarfraz's noble endeavours stem from his belief that his profession carries with it a moral obligation to help those in need. By tirelessly working to satisfy his conscience through aiding the most vulnerable members of society, he embodies the true spirit of compassion and selflessness. His legacy of selfless service will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the community of Cabramatta.

**EARLYED TOY LIBRARY**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (23:16):** Today I recognise and commend the local organisation EarlyEd. Its toy library initiative provides toys for children of all abilities to borrow, offering families a more

sustainable and affordable alternative to buying toys firsthand. Not only does the toy library keep preloved toys out of landfill but gives them a second life in helping other children's development and skill building. Operating three branches within Wakehurst, the toy libraries are not just fun and games. They also provide an important space for parents and carers to meet in the community, as well as a source of valuable information needed to support their child's learning. I give a massive shout-out to the toy library workers and volunteers who keep the doors open and toys available to locals. Their dedication and hard work make this incredible initiative possible. I commend them wholeheartedly for their great work.

#### **CATE MORRISON**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (23:17):** I formally recognise Cate Morrison of Ulladulla, who has worked tirelessly for the wellbeing of beloved animals in our South Coast community. In 2016, at just 10 years of age, Cate learnt that an injured dog required surgery yet sadly the dog's owners could not afford the expense. Concerned over the dog's welfare and the anguish of the owners, Cate organised a fundraising event to cover the veterinary bills. This was the beginning of Cate's charity, FatCat Community Animal Service. Fast forward to 2024 and Cate is now 17 years of age, with the FatCat Community Animal Service still going strong. A partnership with the Ulladulla Veterinary Hospital facilitates surgery on companion animals of senior citizens on a case-by-case basis. With the assistance of her father, John, Cate holds a regular stall at the Ulladulla Marine Rescue wharf markets, selling an array of donated items to ensure that FatCat Community Animal Service can continue to assist people and pets within the Ulladulla region. I congratulate Cate.

#### **SIMON MCNAMARA**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (23:18):** I ask the House to join me in congratulating the City of Ryde Volunteer of the Year, Simon McNamara. With an exceptional volunteer CV, Simon has selflessly dedicated nearly 30 years to the NSW State Emergency Service Ryde unit. His roles have ranged from team leader to rescue officer. He has received 11 SES awards, notably the NSW Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation and the NSW SES Commissioner's Commendation for Service. Beyond his SES duties, Simon is on call 24/7, assisting various emergency services across Sydney and regional New South Wales. Simon's contributions have had a profound impact, extending to training and assessing up to 60 SES volunteers annually as well as participating in community events such as the Granny Smith Festival and Clean Up Australia Day. His dedication often requires significant personal sacrifice, spending up to a week away from his family and business during natural disasters. Through his tireless efforts, Simon has made Ryde a safer place and inspired many young minds in our local community. I congratulate Simon on his outstanding contribution to Ryde.

#### **SERVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR PROGRAM**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (23:19):** I was honoured last week to attend the tenth annual fundraiser held by the Baptist church for the Serve Your Neighbour program. The Burmese Christian Church in Sydney established Serve Your Neighbour Australia in 2015 to uplift the welfare of various communities in Myanmar through education and health initiatives. Their fundraising efforts have been instrumental in setting up free medical clinics in areas with the greatest need. The clinics operate year-round and have successfully treated over 100,000 patients, providing crucial healthcare services to underserved populations in Myanmar. In addition to supporting health care, the church's fundraising has supported the High School Student Support Program, which addresses the significant educational barriers faced by children in Myanmar. Since 2016 the program has enabled 20 to 30 students each year to access high school education, with five students now progressing to university. Those initiatives highlight the impactful work of the dedicated fundraising efforts of the Serve Your Neighbour Australia group, which is making a tangible difference in the health and education sectors of Myanmar.

#### **HUNTER REGION BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (23:20):** Congratulations to the Upper Hunter businesses at the Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards, recently announced at Ben Ean Winery, Pokolbin. Balanced Beans business services was crowned a winner of the customer service award and highly commended in the professional services category. Earth and Elm Studio and Wellness Services of Dungog won the personal services category for its alternative and holistic health service. Dungog District Chamber of Commerce was highly commended in the award for not-for-profit organisations. Well done to Balanced Beans, Earth and Elm and Dungog chamber. It is great to see Upper Hunter businesses being recognised for their efforts. The awards recognise outstanding businesses for commitment to providing excellent service, innovative products and outstanding customer experiences that truly embody the spirit of the community.

#### **ROBERT FITZGERALD**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (23:21):** Chief Inspector Robert "Bob" Fitzgerald recently retired from the NSW Police Force after 38 years of service. He has achieved many community and policing awards

during his career. The respect for the man and his dedicated service was evidenced by his march out parade, which I witnessed. It involved many senior police officers, including formers commanders; Parliamentary Secretaries Edmond Atalla, MP, and Dr Hugh McDermott, MP; many councillors; community leaders; and a mum and her daughter, who Bob helped deliver as a baby 25 years ago. Bob is a strong family man. Seeing his wife, Kate, his children—two of whom are serving in the Police Force—and his grandchildren was an emotional and inspirational event. The honour guard stretched out onto the road with police officers and community representatives. I thank Chief Inspector Robert Fitzgerald for his wonderful service to the community and for making a real difference to the people of Blacktown.

#### KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL COMMUNITY BATTERY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (23:22):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama Municipal Council for going live with its community battery. Endeavour Energy, Origin Energy and Kiama Municipal Council launched the battery on Friday 24 May 2024. Residents with solar are encouraged to sign up and save on their bills. The battery works by storing excess solar not used at home during the day. The energy is then available for users during the evening. I acknowledge and thank Mayor Neil Reilly and Endeavour Energy's General Manager, Future Grid and Asset Management, Mr Colin Crisafulli, for leading the way in reducing emissions and providing Kiama and Minnamurra residents the option to save on household electricity costs. The battery looks great, too, thanks to the incredible work of Wulbunja woman and Aboriginal Elder, Jodie Stewart. The work is titled *On Country—Where the Mountains Meet the Sea*, and features the Birri Birri totem, representing Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong, and the black cockatoo, the totem of the Shoalhaven. Well done and thanks to Aunty Jodie and all involved.

#### MAITLAND FOOTBALL CLUB WOMEN'S FIRST GRADE TEAM

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (23:23):** Congratulations to Maitland Football Club's National Premier League women's first grade team on its recent victory in the Northern NSW Football Women's League Cup. The final was played between this season's current top two performing teams, Maitland Magpies—of course—and Broadmeadow Magic. The mighty Magpies were playing in their second League Cup final after going down in a penalty shootout last year. The match tested the Maitland supporters' nerves. Despite captain Sophie Stapleford's goal, the team trailed 3-1 at the break. The score remained the same until there were 10 minutes to go, before Bronte Peel scored in the eighty-second minute and Sophie Stapleford's shot went in off a Magic player in the eighty-third minute to tie it up. With six minutes of stoppage time allocated, it was fitting that the winning goal saw Bronte and Sophie combine again to claim the cup. I congratulate coach Keelan Hamilton and all the team on their cup victory, and wish them good luck for the rest of the season.

#### STREET INDUSTRIES YOUTH CHARITY

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (23:24):** I recognise the incredible contributions of Street Industries to the local community. Recently I had the opportunity to join the launch of its Friday Night Football program alongside the Western Sydney Wanderers at Phillips Park, Lurnea. Street Industries, led by Samey Minkara, is a youth charity dedicated to supporting and empowering underprivileged youth across south-west Sydney. Samey has launched initiatives including the Street Sports program, mentoring through the Real8 Program, and outreach program Street Smart, which are all designed to keep youth off the streets. Street Industries has gone from strength to strength. The Street Sports program expanded to include the young residents of Lurnea, who were given the opportunity to play in a casual football competition, which built a platform for mentorship, camaraderie and personal growth. I look forward to the continued success and expansion of the Friday Night Football program. Initiatives like these strengthen our community bonds and provide our youth with the opportunities they deserve.

#### TAYLAH COWLEY

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (23:25):** I share the words of Taylah Cowley, a work experience student from St Columba's Catholic College. She said:

I was fortunate enough to spend a week doing work experience at Trish Doyle's office. Whilst working there, I never felt less than valued. My friends asked, "Do you just get coffee all day?" and I am pleased to say that's far from the truth. I was given the chance to really learn, hands on, what it's like to work in an electorate office. I even drafted a letter to the Treasurer!

I was given the incredible opportunity to spend a day in NSW Parliament. From a heated Question Time, to meeting inspiring politicians, like Prue Car, Kate Washington and Marjorie O'Neill, I was given so many opportunities to be heard and feel empowered.

I must also take the time to acknowledge and express my gratitude to everyone who took time out of their day to stop and have a chat. It's not lost on me how hard that time is to make.

I cannot thank Trish and her team enough for this week and the unique skills I was fortunate enough to experience and learn.

### REDDING'S MOTOR REPAIRS

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (23:26):** I am pleased to be able to formally thank the father and son team who operate Redding's Motor Repairs, which has been serving the local community for many decades. I especially congratulate George Sr and George Jr on the honour bestowed upon them at the recent Chifley Police District awards ceremony in Bathurst. They were presented with a certificate of appreciation for 50 years of service to the NSW Police Force, providing mechanical service and repair excellence to the fleet of vehicles based in the Lithgow command. That is a wonderful achievement for a family-owned business. It is made even more notable as Redding's Motor Repairs is the longest running mechanical service provider to the NSW Police Force in the State. The team run a successful business. George Sr is now in his ninety-seventh year and George Jr works full-time. They also employ two full-time office staff and two full-time and three part-time mechanics. I thank George Sr and George Jr for all they do for our community.

### CARE4COAST

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (23:27):** Care4Coast deserves a massive cheer for its unwavering dedication to assisting the most vulnerable community members across the Central Coast and Northern Rivers communities during hardship, crisis and natural disasters. Serving as a beacon of hope and resilience, Care4Coast empowers the community in need and grants them well-deserved dignity. Care4Coast volunteers come together every Monday night at Kibble Park in Gosford to provide hot meals and free washing and drying facilities to our community. There is also a clothing trailer, which offers brand-new clothing, socks, underwear, blankets and sleeping bags. On top of that, community members can also access free haircuts from the beautiful volunteer hairdressers, accompanied by a DJ and music. What a gorgeous community we have. I give a special shout-out to Carly Pal, the heart and soul behind the Care4Coast army, as well as all the volunteers who have supported that important charity. Care4Coast stands out as a shining example of how communities can come together to serve our most vulnerable members. They are absolute shining stars. I thank everyone at Care4Coast.

### STEVE RUSSELL

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (23:28):** I recognise local legend and dear friend Steve Russell. Many in the Chamber will know Steve for his service to the Liberal Party and Hornsby shire. Steve is a Liberal legend, having been a member in the Hornsby district Liberal Party for over 30 years. Steve has served the Liberal Party at all levels, including as the Galston branch president, Hills State executive committee president, Mitchell Federal executive committee president and my own Hornsby State executive committee president—a job he did with distinction and for which I am eternally grateful. In addition to his longstanding service to the Liberal Party, Steve served our community on Hornsby shire for over 13 years as a councillor representing A ward and as popularly elected mayor from 2012 to 2017. During that time he turned around the council's financial position by reducing costs, focusing on essential services and cutting rates. He served our community with distinction. What is not well known about Steve is that he is a distinguished published author. His first book, *Don't Cry for Me, Aunt Tina*, is the story of an orphaned girl's journey and is a terrific read. After great reviews, Steve embarked on writing another book, *Night Train to Aswan*, a thriller about a young American who disappears while travelling throughout the Middle East. If his second book is as good as his first, it will be a cracking read. I congratulate Steve on his literary success and thank him for his service to the Liberal Party and our community.

### "IT'S IN THE BAG"

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (23:29):** The Parramatta Women's Grade Cricket Club is celebrating the completion of its tenth season in the Sydney Premier grade cricket competition. During that time the club has worked hard with its players and families to support two worthy charities, the Trish Foundation, which raises money for multiple sclerosis research, and Share the Dignity. Each year the club, and in the earlier years opposition clubs, would donate hygiene products and handbags at Parramatta's home games to be combined as a contribution to the Share the Dignity's annual "It's in the Bag" drive. In more recent years players have donated over 300 handbags full of hygiene and personal care products for women in need for drop off during the charity's annual drive. The club has also fundraised via team lunches at home games and raffles and given donations to the Trish Foundation to help it continue vital research into a cure for multiple sclerosis. Each year the club matches moneys raised through fundraising, with donations totalling close to \$8,000. I congratulate the players, volunteers and families involved in the club on their 10-year milestone and for your generous contributions to the broader community.

### TRIBUTE TO WARREN JOHN TOZER, OAM

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (23:30):** I pay tribute to the late Warren John Tozer, OAM. Warren sadly passed away on 20 May. Tonight in the New South Wales Parliament I pay tribute to that fine man. Warren was born in Sydney but moved to Grafton to manage the Grafton Brewery in the late 1970s. Warren and

his wife Rhondda quickly called Grafton their home. Warren's contribution to my community was pronounced and covered many decades. He was the chairman of the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter northern region for over 20 years, former chairman and life member of the Clarence River Jockey Club and former chairman and life member of the Grafton District Services Club. There are many people in Grafton and the Northern Rivers who stand tall because of Warren's sound, solid and well-considered advice. He was a true gentleman and a true statesman. Warren is survived by his wife, Rhondda, son Bradley, daughter-in-law Belinda, daughter Joanne, son-in-law Chris, and his grandchildren. May he rest in peace.

#### **VERA JONES AND MARY COLLINGS**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (23:31):** I acknowledge the centenarian milestones of Ms Vera Jones and Ms Mary Collings, both remarkable ladies who reside in my electorate of The Entrance. They are also sisters-in-law. Ms Jones and Ms Collings both recently celebrated their 100th birthdays. I had the pleasure of attending two special lunches held separately for both of them at The Lakes Hotel where family and friends gathered to celebrate. I am advised that both frequent The Lakes Hotel every Saturday for lunch and regularly on a Wednesday for lunch. It has been claimed that they are the oldest and possibly the longest-frequenting customers of The Lakes Hotel, and that their Saturday lunch of fish and chips has paid for the new carpet in the hotel's recent renovations. I am sure the House will join me in congratulating both ladies on their major milestone and wish them continued health, happiness and more trips to The Lakes Hotel.

#### **CITY OF RYDE VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (23:32):** I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Presbyterian Aged Care social support group volunteers, who were named the 2024 City of Ryde Volunteer Group of the Year. The group has dedicated over 20 years to organising various social and cultural activities for seniors, including morning teas, lunches, social outings, digital seminars, craft sessions and exercise classes. The volunteers, approximately 12 in number, have shown immense commitment by contributing around 18 hours each week to prevent senior isolation and loneliness. Their strength and balance classes help seniors with weight management and physical strength, while digital classes boost confidence in using online tools and apps, crucial for staying connected and safe from scams. In addition to those services, volunteers also serve food and clean up after events, showcasing a genuine care for the wellbeing of local seniors. The group's efforts in reuniting old friends and fostering new friendships have greatly enhanced the social lives of many. We thank the volunteers for their invaluable contributions to our community and congratulate them on their well-deserved award.

#### **HECKENBERG PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (23:33):** Public Education Day celebrates the extraordinary impact that our public schools make on individual lives, families and communities. Nowhere was that more apparent than where I spent the day, Heckenberg Public School. I joined their assembly and handed awards to students. I explored the school grounds, met the student leadership team and joined some spirited kindergarten students for a language activity. Heckenberg Public School is also host to an embedded community hub. Those hubs provide invaluable links between families of diverse cultural backgrounds and the broader community, offering vital support in health, education and settlement. I joined a practical English class where local mums developed their knowledge of healthcare terms while improving their social connection with each other. Heckenberg parents give back to others in the community, including by providing martial arts classes at reduced costs. The impact of those hubs extends far beyond statistics, and yet the figures speak volumes. I extend my deepest appreciation to Principal Tracie Carruthers and the dedicated teachers and support staff, who serve as the cornerstone of public education.

#### **WAMBERAL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (23:35):** I congratulate the amazing Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club, which recently celebrated its awards presentation on Saturday 4 May 2024. I congratulate the amazing award recipients. The Humby Award went to Marty Campbell. Cadet of the Year was Seamus Meares. Junior Patrol Person of the Year was Eden Pearson. Senior Patrol Person of the Year was Brad Evans. Junior Club Person of the Year was Matilda Lisle. Rookie Patrol Person of the Year was Dale Lenard. Rookie Competitor of the Year was Dylan Pike. Senior-Opens Competitor of the Year was Keenan White. Patrol of the Year was Patrol 9. Master Competitor of the Year was Ken Bloomfield. Most Improved Competitor of the Year was the ladies boat crew. The Rower of the Year was Helen Paver. The Associates of the Year were Doug and Di Patterson. The President's Award went to the amazing Lisa Shailer. Senior Club Person of the Year was Jason Vineburg. The Coaches of the Year were Peter Noble and Colleen Harrison. Those wonderful volunteers put up their hands every year. I say a huge thank you to all of them for the amazing volunteering they do to keep Wamberal Beach safe for another season and look after swimmers on the beach.

### COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION GEORGES RIVER BRANCH

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (23:36):** I was blown away recently by the goodwill and generosity of the Georges River Branch of the Country Women's Association after it donated a range of handmade winter goods to local shelters. Queen of craft Joan Howland made the beanies and scarves on a loom and hand-delivered them to my office. While the Country Women's Association has enjoyed a long history of more than 100 years in Australia, the Georges River Branch is in its ninth year this year. Although it is a young branch, founding member Cath Sloan has been a member of CWA since 1977 and has recently been awarded her life membership. They support many great organisations in and around Georges River. I thank handicraft officer Joan, president Judy Egan and lifetime member Cath Sloan. I am grateful to our local Country Women's Association and am sure residents of our local shelters will appreciate that gift to help keep them warm this winter.

### DION BIASUTTI CONDACK

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (23:37):** I recognise the life-saving actions of constituent Dion Biasutti Condack on 6 April 2024. CPR is a skill we all hope we will never have to use, but Dion's training saved a life. Heading home on a normal Saturday afternoon, Dion saw a man who had collapsed and was unresponsive on the ground near the door of his car in Rose Bay. After calling an ambulance, Dion commenced CPR on the gentleman. He continued until the local Community Health Support and Hatzolah emergency service arrived, which was equipped with a defibrillator, and the paramedics took over. The patient, Darrell Allardice, was taken to hospital, and I can confirm that he has made a full recovery. I can even confirm they have caught up for a whisky to celebrate. Darrell and his wife, Arlene, believe without a shadow of a doubt—and confirmed by doctors—that Dion's actions saved Darrell's life. Dion had done a CPR refresher course only a month earlier. It is a reminder to all of us to take the time to learn first aid and CPR. It saves lives.

### MCDONALD'S VILLAWOOD

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (23:38):** I recently had the pleasure of celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of McDonald's Villawood. The restaurant has been employing hundreds of local community members since opening its doors in 1999. The current franchisee, Daniel Zammit, is a testament to the Australian dream of working hard and achieving goals. He started his career at McDonald's as a crew member, working his way up to become a restaurant manager before exploring corporate roles outside of the business. He returned to McDonald's as a licensee and is now the owner and operator of five restaurants, including McDonald's Villawood since 2022. I thank Daniel Zammit and the Villawood McDonald's team, made up of the front and back crew, baristas, maintenance and management team. I thank them for their service to the Villawood community.

### TRIBUTE TO NOEL REIDY, OAM

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (23:39):** I pay tribute to the life of Noel Reidy, OAM, a great community leader of Willoughby who died on 15 May 2024 at the age of 91. Born in July 1932, Noel trained as a telecommunications engineer and worked with the Postmaster-General's Department. In 1964 Noel settled in Castle Cove with his family where he joined the Castle Cove Progress Association. Through his involvement in local government, Noel was elected as a councillor of Willoughby City Council in 1971 and Mayor of Willoughby from 1975 to 1991, elected for a record 15 times. As mayor, Noel presided over a period of rapid growth in Willoughby as the Chatswood commercial centre boomed into the largest retail centre outside of the Sydney CBD. Noel has left behind a remarkable legacy for our community. I offer my condolences to his loving wife, Mary, and his four sons, Michael, John, Paul and Geoff, and their families. Vale, Noel Reidy, a true great and enduring son of Willoughby. Rest in peace and thank you for your remarkable life, leadership and legacy.

### TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL PARLIAMENT

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (23:40):** Every year a very special event takes place in my electorate of Port Stephens. It is the opening of the school parliament at Tea Gardens Public School. I was more than a bit upset that a lurgy meant that I could not get there this year but the real stars did, including Prime Minister Kora Constantino and Deputy Prime Minister Ebony Hestelow, and their capable Ministers, Asher Gimbert, Ivy-Pearl Carter-Hughes, Danyelle Fitzgerald, Hannah Price, Ali Partridge and Stella Jacobsen. They were not to be outdone by the Leader of the Opposition, Grace Charbel, and her capable shadow cabinet of Christine O'Brien, Emily Selby, Harley Wolfenden, Lucas Edwards, Cruz Carter, Memphis De Haas and Gypsy Thompson. The Usher of the Black Rod, Riley Booth, started the proceedings that were then kept under control by the Speaker of the House, Alicia Mitchell, the Deputy Speaker, Scarlett McDonald, and the Serjeants-at-Arms, Arleah Hutcherson, Jayden Phillips, Chaisse D'hyon and Riley Harris. Perfect records were kept by the Hansard team of Raven Clarke, Emily Watson and Ruby Wood. I congratulate the wonderful students and staff of Tea Gardens Public School on the

opening of their thirty-fifth Parliament, ensuring that the voices of children remain at the heart of everything this beautiful school does.

#### NUNE HOVIVIAN

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (23:41):** I ask the House to join me in congratulating Nune Hovivian, the City of Ryde's 2024 Young Volunteer of the Year winner. Nune has devoted up to seven hours a week to the 1st Denistone East (Ararat) Scout Group, which caters to Armenians aged four to 19. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, she transitioned the group to online activities and continued to provide support and guidance. Thanks to her innovative programs and commitment, the number of scouts increased from four to 18. As a History student at the Australian Catholic University, Nune has introduced engaging activities such as Timezone, tenpin bowling, laser tag and trampoline world, significantly impacting children's self-confidence and sense of belonging. Even without a car, Nune consistently attends every activity and meeting, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the scout group. Her efforts have revitalised the scout group and fostered a welcoming environment for new members. Nune's dedication and passion for volunteering are truly commendable. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to her for this well-deserved recognition. I thank Nune for her invaluable contribution to our community and congratulate her on her recognition.

#### SANDY POINT DRAGONS

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (23:42):** My electorate is surrounded by the Georges River. Many of my constituents use the river for pleasure and sport, including members of our local dragon boat team, the Sandy Point Dragons. It was great to get out on the water with the Dragons last month as they welcomed locals interested in trying out dragon boating. It was my first time in a dragon boat. Anyone involved in the sport or who has just attended the Dragon Boats Festival in Sydney as a spectator would know that it is a demanding activity that requires skill and a great deal of teamwork. With Dave at the helm, I gave it a go and really enjoyed it. I am pleased that the Dragons will soon be moving across to the other side of the river into my electorate of East Hills. I thank the Sandy Point Dragons for letting me get a taste of the dragon boating life. I wish them and their members fun out on the water and best wishes for any future events and competitions.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (23:43):** Make no mistake, our State is confronting a housing crisis. I hear from people in my electorate who live through this every day, whether it be on the waiting list for social housing, the perilous private rental market or the deep cynicism our young people feel when it comes to their prospects for home ownership. I represent one of our State's youngest electorates, with the fourth highest number of constituents aged between 15 and 24 in the State. As my constituents look to buy their first home or rent, they are met with a market that is increasingly hostile. When it comes to addressing the housing shortage in this State, it is clear to me and to my constituents that the previous Liberal-Nationals Government was asleep at the wheel.

An absolute overreliance on greenfield developments in our outer suburbs, where there is a complete lack of infrastructure and services, has not produced enough homes but has added to congestion on our roads and overcrowding in our schools. We may as well have learned nothing from the lessons of the 1960s and 1970s. When the Opposition was in power, areas like mine in south-west Sydney were forced to shoulder the burden of housing without the necessary infrastructure to build communities. Let us be clear. It was community anger at the lack of infrastructure that led to the washing out of the Liberal Party across the outer suburbs last year. After 12 years of neglect, we are still playing catch-up with infrastructure in our outer suburbs. I know this Government is committed to building the roads, schools and services our communities need to accommodate our growth.

The election of a new government with a fresh perspective comes with the opportunity to carve out a new way to address our State's housing crisis. When we came to power, there was a clear need to rebalance our housing targets. In our rewrite of Sydney's housing targets, we have done exactly that. Under the Government's plan, local councils will no longer be able to drag their feet on delivering medium- and high-density housing for our communities. Councils like Ku-ring-gai, Woollahra, the Northern Beaches, Canada Bay, Mosman, the Inner West, and Hornsby have all seen increases in their housing targets. Those targets are designed to shift focus away from greenfield development and toward infill housing. The Government is focused on putting housing where the necessary essential services already exist. The west will take its share, but that will give us the breathing room we will need to deliver the necessary infrastructure for the residents who already live there.

When it comes to housing and development, the Minns Labor Government presents a united front. We speak with a single voice. If only those opposite could decide what their position is. Since the Government announced its new housing targets, we have seen the typical alarmism from the usual suspects opposite. Of course,



I am talking about the two nimbys-in-chief, the member for Vacluse and the member for Pittwater. The member for Pittwater has gone to great lengths to drum up feelings of impending doom in his electorate. I remind the House of his experiments with AI last year. He even went so far as to start a petition to stop the changes with photoshopped images of what they could potentially look like under a doomsday scenario—the lengths one goes to shore up a 606-vote margin.

The member for Vacluse has cried foul over some 4,300 homes that are set to be delivered in the Woollahra and Waverley local government areas over the next five years. Contrast the scare campaigns of those two members with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, who takes the complete opposite view. Despite what the member for Vacluse and the member for Pittwater would have us believe, the Leader of the Opposition has said openly that those housing targets are still not hard enough on the east. At a press conference just last Thursday he said, "There hasn't been much of a recalibration from west to east." On 2GB with Clinton Maynard he doubled down and said, "The eastern half of the city's share of new housing is only going to go up two percentage points, so it's a very minor recalibration."

Evidently, the Leader of the Opposition would like to see even larger housing targets for the eastern suburbs. Someone should let the member for Pittwater and the member for Vacluse know—they might need to inform the signatories of their petitions. I note that the Leader of the Opposition has anointed the member for Pittwater his shadow Assistant Minister for Planning and shadow Assistant Minister for Housing. Is the member's nimbyism, reeking of cynicism and political opportunism, what the Leader of the Opposition endorses as a planning policy?

Ultimately, the Minns Labor Government's approach to housing is a sensible approach to densifying our inner-ring suburbs and stopping our city's over-reliance on greenfield development in our outer suburbs without the necessary infrastructure to ensure that the residents who are moving into those suburbs have the quality of life that is required. Transport oriented development will create new hubs for high-density housing around train stations with commutes into the city of around 30 minutes. The Government is committed to addressing this crisis. The question is whether the Opposition can say the same.

#### **WEST PENNANT HILLS KOALA PARK**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (23:48):** Up until the 1880s the Hornsby area had a large population of koalas living in the local bushland. However, as more land was cleared for farms to be established and more people settled in the district, the koala numbers quickly diminished. Sadly, the iconic animal was also relentlessly hunted for its fur, which was highly sought after, particularly in foreign markets. In 1880, four million koala furs were exported to London and two million were sold to the Canadian market alone. By the late 1920s the dwindling number of koalas along the east coast of Australia was very concerning but the State governments were not interested in doing anything to address it. At that time, Eastwood resident Noel Burnett began to take in and protect stray koalas on his property. This practice quickly meant that he required a larger area and regular access to specific gum trees for the marsupials' diet.

Around 1927 a former dairy was acquired on Castle Hill Road for Noel Burnett to establish his koala sanctuary, with the specific intention to provide a safe area for koalas to live naturally. In addition, studies were undertaken on koalas, and the Koala Park Sanctuary at West Pennant Hills became the first to successfully breed the animal in captivity, a practice that continues today. Many of the animals that were brought to the sanctuary were injured, and an elaborate koala hospital was set up to assist their recovery. Initially, it had over 50 koalas in its care, and each one was given an Aboriginal name. That practice continues today. Burnett's koala park was opened to the public for educational purposes, with the additional benefit of creating an income to help fund the operation of the facility. The koala park made nationwide news when it received a royal visit. On Tuesday 28 November 1934 the Duke of Gloucester came to the park, and huge crowds lined Pennant Hills Road and Castle Hill Road in the hope that they would catch a glimpse of the royal.

A large nursery was established on the grounds in 1937, which propagated the various trees that the sanctuary required. They were planted throughout the park, and many still stand today. The koala park was attractively laid out, with kangaroos, wallabies, emus and peacocks wandering through the park in their natural environment, whilst koalas lived in the treetops. The park became a popular tourist attraction, especially during the war. Along with Luna Park, Manly Beach and Kings Cross, visiting the koala park in West Pennant Hills was popular with both Australian and American servicemen on leave. An added attraction was the demonstration of boomerang throwing and lessons provided for visitors by an Aboriginal showman, Bill Onus, who lived in nearby Beecroft. All of that was complemented by a spectacular panoramic view stretching all the way out to the Blue Mountains.

By 1938 the number of koalas in the sanctuary had peaked at 80. Some of the marsupials were passed on to other institutions, and others were released into the wild in remote bushland areas. As a result, by 1946 the

number of koalas at the park had settled at a total of 30. Around that time, the koala park was closed to the public, although the koala hospital and sanctuary continued to operate. The founder's daughter, Noela, together with her husband, John McNamara, reopened the koala park to the public in February 1954. A new refreshment kiosk and souvenir shop were established, and they still operate today. Noela's sons, David and Garry, became involved in the business and eventually inherited it.

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of people went through the park every weekend. Today the Koala Park Sanctuary at West Pennant Hills still cares for koalas, along with a wide variety of other native Australian animals, from reptiles and birds to marsupials and some farm animals for young visitors to interact with. After the retirement of his brother, Garry McNamara took over as the sole manager of the park, which he continues to run today as the third generation of his family to own and operate the koala park. The sanctuary's staff of around 20 is supplemented by volunteers, and visiting the koala park remains a popular family day out. It hosts regular school excursions, and tourist buses bring overseas tour groups to the park daily.

Noel Burnett is credited with being the first person to do anything constructive in the way of protecting koalas at a time when they were racing towards extinction. Noel's love of animals runs in his family. His great-grandfather, Walter Bradley, was responsible for the establishment of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW. The society built a zoo in a section of Moore Park and managed it from 1881 until 1916, when the animal collection and staff were all transferred to the new Taronga Zoo. The koala park is a great local and family story, and it is an asset to my electorate of Hornsby and the State. Koalas can still be found in their natural environment in the Hornsby shire, including in remote bushland on the western side of Berowra Creek, in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and in the suburb of Maroota. In recent years, several koalas have appeared near the Hawkesbury River in the Brooklyn area.

The Koala Park Sanctuary at West Pennant Hills is still going strong. It is still run by Garry McNamara, who does an incredible job servicing, looking after, researching and supporting the iconic animal and ensuring that it is accessible to all across the community. My own family has enjoyed going to the park, like many families from across the Hornsby electorate and New South Wales. The park is a great asset to the Hornsby shire and to the State of New South Wales. I thank the team at the Koala Park Sanctuary for its great service to our community and country.

#### **PORT STEPHENS COMMUNITY WOODWORKERS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (23:53):** On the last day of autumn, Port Stephens Community Woodworkers officially opened its newly converted morning tea area. The conversion was made possible by a State Government grant and a bequest from the estate of one of its founding members, Ray Belcher, who sadly passed away in September 2021 at the age of 94. Port Stephens Community Woodworkers was established in 1995. Ray joined the club in August 2000, becoming one of its earliest members. He was a member for over 21 years and progressed to become a committee member, secretary and president, finally being awarded life membership. The early club meetings were held in members' sheds and in the local schools of Nelson Bay High and the Tomaree Education Centre, which is now the Tomaree High School.

Ray was a driving force behind the building of the club's own workshop in its current home behind the arts centre, which was opened in August 2007. Ray was untiring in his efforts to raise funds and find grants for the project, much of which came from the then Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program and the Community Arts Centre. Ray was the instigator in the setting up of the club's schools program. This involved club members making items such as toolboxes, bird feeders, nesting boxes and barbeque caddies in kit form for primary students to assemble with nails and glue, as part of their school extracurricular activities. It is pleasing to know that it is still a very popular program today. Members of the club still visit schools, such as Bobs Farm Public School, Soldiers Point Public School, Tomaree High School and St Phillip's Christian College. The program has now been expanded to preschools, disability care services and aged-care centres.

Ray's life membership was awarded in 2011 in recognition of his services to the club and the club set up the Ray Belcher Award at St Phillip's Christian College in his honour. The award continues on as the Ray Belcher Memorial Award, recognising the school's woodwork of the year in the year 12 cohort. Now, we have heard about the man himself, let me talk about the morning tea area, which is equally impressive. When Ray passed away, he left the club \$10,000 to establish a legacy that would reflect his involvement with the club and his passion for woodworking. It was not prescriptive, and the members decided on a tearoom. Club members designed the enclosure and, with the help of the arts centre, put in a development application to council. Their first quote for the enclosure came in at \$33,000. To make matters more difficult, the club is located in what the council calls a flame zone because of the native garden on its doorstep. The expenses kept going up.

Plan B was for the club members to build it themselves at a projected cost of \$16,500. I was pleased to be able to secure the club a grant under the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program to fund the extra \$6,500. Just as the Port Stephens Community Woodworkers managed to lovingly and skilfully transform a piece of timber into a bespoke work of art, they also managed to convert a concrete slab boarded by railing into a tearoom fit for a queen. Of course, the old tables and benches were not a good look in the new tearoom, so the club members went to work on their networks. A benchtop donation from Bunnings was secured and the club members did what they do best, transforming it into a stunning new table. Then the table needed chairs. As it happened, another club member heard that the local Salamander shopping centre was about to upgrade its chairs and managed to secure a donation from the centre manager, Charter Hall, and there are just enough chairs to fit around the new table from Bunnings.

With the members putting all their skills and connections to work, of course the project came in on budget and in style. At the opening of the new tearoom last week, there were over 60 people including 45 woodworkers and Community Arts Centre members, together with 15 members of the Belcher family, who travelled from Armidale and Canberra to be there to celebrate Ray's legacy: the new tearoom and the many friendships he formed. I am really sorry I was not able to make the opening, which I am told was a beautiful, uplifting sharing of stories over a cuppa surrounded by the skills of club members. But the last thing I wanted to do was share my lurgy with the club's wonderful members. I cannot wait to drop in for a cuppa and see the new space created with a great deal of care and devotion to a much-loved former member for all current and future members to enjoy.

I thank the current president of the Port Stephens Community Woodworkers, Roger Delaney, and each of the committee members for their leadership and stewardship of this impressive club, which builds skills whilst forging friendships, making a difference to the lives of many. Port Stephens is so lucky to have such an impressive club that makes connections across our community in so many ways and gives back to our school students as well. I thank all the club members and executive, and I cannot wait to catch up with the Woodies soon.

#### NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (23:58):** I recognise an outstanding community-based charity within the Myall Lakes electorate, Great Lakes Palliative Care Support. Last month we celebrated both National Palliative Care Week and National Volunteer Week. National Palliative Care Week is a campaign dedicated to raising awareness about palliative care, its benefits and the importance of making quality palliative care accessible for everyone when and where they need it. National Volunteer Week provides an opportunity to highlight the key role volunteers play in our community. Great Lakes Palliative Care Support is integral to both national celebrations. For over 35 years this not-for-profit organisation, run by incredible volunteers, has focused on supporting palliative care services and filling in the gaps in care that are needed initially until service provision can be implemented. Although they have no direct patient contact, referrals for assistance come through local nursing and social work teams. They educate our community on end-of-life issues, ensuring that care and comfort are available for bereaved members within the community.

Given that the Myall Lakes electorate has the oldest demographic in the State, there is a significant need for palliative care and the support it provides. As one could imagine, a diagnosis of a life-limiting illness and the need for extensive treatment often leave individuals and their caregivers financially strained. Many are unable to work or must reduce their hours, making it difficult to afford rent, mortgage payments and other essential living expenses. Those relying on benefits frequently struggle to cover additional expenses, such as transportation to appointments, extra medications, supplements and the everyday challenges associated with illness. Since the middle of last year requests for assistance in the Myall Lakes region have risen considerably. This puts pressure on Great Lakes Palliative Care Support to provide more assistance that is not readily available. As a charity, they rely on voluntary fundraising and community donations to assist palliative care patients, carers and families in our area.

Great Lakes Palliative Care Support assists with the costs of medications, dietary supplements, utility bills, rate payments, green slips, car repairs, respite care, domestic assistance, food and petrol vouchers, hospital bills and more. They are open to accommodating the individual needs of each person. One example is a student in my electorate who recently lost her father, putting financial strain on the family. The student's mother could not afford school fees. Great Lakes Palliative Care Support paid for them, enabling the student to finish year 12. Great Lakes Palliative Care Support stores specialised equipment in a local rented factory and loans it out to those in need at no cost. One volunteer delivers, maintains and cleans the equipment. Since the beginning of this year Great Lakes Palliative Care Support has provided over \$40,000 in support to patients in need. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis is only escalating the need for such support. During Palliative Care Week, Great Lakes Palliative Care Support held a remembrance service to honour both those we have loved and lost and those who cared for them.

The demand for palliative care services is increasing, particularly in regions like Myall Lakes. The Government must recognise the importance of adequately funding these services. Palliative care patients deserve

dignity, respect and support during their final days. I thank our community palliative care nurses and the palliative care and oncology teams at Forster and Manning Base hospitals for their ongoing care of people experiencing life-limiting illnesses. I acknowledge also the wonderful contributions of those who work in the palliative care field: our nurses, doctors, specialists, allied health staff, aged-care staff, pharmacists and, of course, our wonderful volunteers. I thank Great Lakes Palliative Care Support volunteers, for the exceptional assistance they provide to our palliative care patients and their families during such challenging times.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I also acknowledge Great Lakes Palliative Care.

### NATIONAL SORRY DAY

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (00:02):** On Sorry Day 2024 Aunty Julie Jones gave a compelling speech at Old Government House in Parramatta. With her permission, I am reading an abridged version in this place because it deserves a wider audience. She said:

Warami ... I offer my respect, thanks and love to the Stolen Generation and to all First Nations people who have experienced the trauma of stolen children.

The Apology offered by the Rudd Government was an important step in truth telling and a much-needed acknowledgement of the traumas and abuses caused by the abhorrent practices of removing children from their families, communities, country and culture.

We are a proud people whose existence and belonging were intricately, innately and directly linked to removal. The indignities and suffering many stolen children endured cannot be allowed to be a part of the, "it was for their own good" narrative. That is shamefully perpetuating yet another lie.

The entire intent of ... policies and laws around child removal by alleged God-fearing Christian people were no more than a mechanism of abuse, genocide and race eradication that their God must surely have been ashamed of.

I also want to remind you that the apology was for a specific group of First Nations people ... A wider apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the injustices, desecration, dispossession and continued state of racial disadvantage over 236 years has yet to be offered ...

What does sorry mean?

Media loves to allow comments of division on articles on First Nations issues ... and I always remind myself, "Julie—do not read the comments, don't do that to yourself again."

But Julie ignores inner knowledge and reads the comments like:

- What do I have to apologise for, I didn't do it.
- They are never satisfied and always want more.
- We didn't take their kids.
- The stolen generation never really happened.
- It happened 200 years ago, get over it.
- I have nothing to say sorry for.

Sorry only matters if you learn from it ... if I hear of a death in someone's family, I say sorry and offer my condolences.

If I visit someone in hospital, I say sorry they are going through this ... sincerely and genuinely.

Does it mean it is my fault?

Does it mean I caused it?

Does it mean I am solely accountable?

Does it mean I'm guilty?

No, it means I am a human being capable of acknowledging pain ...

The second thing I want to share with you is this. Where to from here?

What does sorry mean today to Dharug people. First and foremost, I am a freshwater saltwater woman of the Dharug peoples, and I would not change that for a single thing. Our land is our heartbeat and stretches from the mountains to the sea, from the Hawkesbury to the back of Appin and parts of Campbelltown.

We are here gathered on the lands of the Baramada clan, the place where the eels lie, the yura of the burra badu, the people of the eel waters. Behind us is a beautiful house on Baramdagal land which was taken, not paid for, and which housed a number of people over its lifetime whilst my people suffered and were living on the fringes, starving.

This included Lachlan Macquarie, who was responsible for establishing the native schools that truly embedded the taking of children from our families, lands, cultures and communities in an effort to Christianise and whitify them not for elevation or equity but to be good slaves, farmers, housemaids etc.

I bet he never thought he would encounter Maria Locke. But encounter her he did, and she was in her own way formidable, and for that her descendants will never say sorry.

Stolen children started here on Dharug Ngurra in the year 1788.

Genocide, rapes, abuses, dispossession residence wars, theft and biological warfare all started here on Dharug Ngurra.

Someone needs to say sorry to Dharug people for the appalling practices inflicted on our people and country.

Recognition needs to be given to Dharug people and their resilience strength and wisdom.

Today I am sorry ... to all stolen generations, all of them. I honour you, your strength bravery and courage as you relive your enormously difficult stories and journeys so Australia can learn and stop this ever happening again. I am sorry we even have to have a sorry day. Think on that.

I thank Auntie Julie for her powerful words. She is a brave Dharug woman and a truth teller.

### BIOELEKTRA AUSTRALIA

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (00:07):** On 28 June 2023 I presented evidence to the House of the abject failure by Shoalhaven City Council in the bungled waste project involving the shelf company, Bioelektra Australia. I was compelled to name Bioelektra Australia's then managing director, Mr Fred Itaoui. I read out a statement by Bioelektra Group in Poland to Shoalhaven City Council. Bioelektra Poland felt it had been cheated and their reputation damaged as a result of Mr Itaoui's conduct. That was compounded by a breathtaking lack of due diligence by the council, which engaged the wrong company. Ratepayers picked up the tab.

Under significant public pressure, Shoalhaven City Council released documents concerning the botched Bioelektra deal. Put simply, the documents raise more questions than answers. One of the most telling documents released was a letter from the Office of Local Government to the council, dated 19 January 2024. It states:

A delivery phase bank guarantee of \$2 million from Bioelektra required under the terms of the contract was never provided to Council.

A second milestone payment of \$1 million was paid to Bioelektra by Council in October 2022; however, the specific conditions under the contract necessary for this payment were not met.

An independent certifier was required to be appointed to assess milestone payments—the appointment of an independent certifier appears not to have been compliant with the contract and the appointed independent certifier does not appear to have been involved in any assessment of the two milestone payment claims.

This Government has decided not to order an independent investigation. That is disappointing. It smacks of a Government covering up for its Labor-Green mates on the council. However, the consolation prize is that the Government has put the council on notice for two matters. I appreciate that. First, council must provide regular updates on its reorganisation of project management operations. Second, the Government has left the door open for potential further investigations should additional information arise in relation to the resource recovery project. The Minister has taken the softer option, and I respectfully request that he consider tougher action. The council may be trying to bury the lead by releasing these documents, but the issues I raise do not just go to waste. They go to a lack of leadership, judgement and the most basic understanding of due diligence.

What ratepayers in the Shoalhaven still do not know is how a multimillion-dollar contract was awarded to a shelf company that had no capacity to deliver the project. It had no identifiable track record of delivering a single waste services contract for any other council anywhere. What ratepayers do know is that this Greens-Labor council has failed the residents of the Shoalhaven. It has failed to maintain our roads. It has failed to properly manage its budget. It has failed to adequately deliver waste services, leaving Shoalhaven city residents with one of the most backward and archaic waste services in the State. These are all the core responsibilities of a local government authority.

I thank the members of the community who have followed this matter with interest. I thank independent councillors who have continued to ask reasonable and sensible questions about this project and who do their job of engaging in appropriate scrutiny of the decisions the majority of the councillors and council senior staff. I extend my thanks to members of the media who have continued to ask the hard questions of both corporate and civic leadership. We were certainly up against it. I note with interest that the council media spin team has nine people running communications at a time when the council has been flogging off public car parks in a property fire sale to plug budget black holes from reckless spending.

By way of comparison, I point out that, when I was the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, I had a media team of just two. In my view, this mad media spin team should go, and these funds should go back into building roads and delivering core ratepayer services. Only recently, this crack team of spinners crafted a media release concerning a park upgrade in my electorate. The release from the council quoted the neighbouring Labor MP and the Labor deputy mayor, who had nothing to do with the funding. It was just more dirty politics at ratepayers' expense. In September, the residents of the city of Shoalhaven will have the opportunity to institute the real change that Shoalhaven needs and this change could not come soon enough.

### AUBURN POST OFFICE CLOSURE

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (00:11):** I am greatly concerned at recent reports that suggest that the Auburn post office, a vital hub in our community, may be facing closure. This news is not just disappointing; it is deeply distressing for everyone who relies on its services in the Auburn community. The Auburn post office is more than just a mailing facility. It is a place where residents can bank a cheque, obtain a passport, pay a bill and, of course, send and receive mail. These services are indispensable, especially in a community with so many people from diverse backgrounds, people who live on struggle street and newly arrived residents. The impact of this closure on our most vulnerable residents would be significant. For many people who do not have access to a computer or the internet, the post office is not just a convenience, it is a necessity. It is their lifeline for managing financial transactions and staying connected with the world.

For our newly arrived residents, the post office serves as a crucial banking substitute, providing services that help them establish their new lives in Australia. For our homeless population, it offers a fixed address for receiving mail, an essential service that helps them connect with support systems and opportunities. The distress that the closure of the Auburn post office would cause cannot be overstated. It is not just about losing a place to post letters. It is stripping a community of its ability to function effectively, pay bills, receive information and remain connected both locally and globally, particularly where those connectivities are not available in the home.

I share the concerns expressed by my Federal colleague the member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, who has already taken significant steps by speaking directly to the Federal Minister for Communications about solutions to maintaining this important facility in Auburn. I understand he has requested a direct meeting with Australia Post to discuss the future of our local post office and to emphasise the important role the post office plays in our community. I note that Australia Post, whilst owned by the Federal Government, operates as a commercial enterprise. However, its role in serving the community must not be overlooked. I remind Australia Post of its charter that reads:

We're committed to providing trusted, relevant and reliable services that connect all Australians. We aim to help communities work better for everyone by connecting people and business, and this remains constant as the needs of our customers continue to change.

Whether they are in communities as ethnically diverse as Auburn or as remote and isolated as many parts of regional Australia, an Australia Post outlet is more than a service. It is a certainty and a staple of community life that must be preserved. It is essential that Australia Post recognises the unique needs of the communities it serves and considers not just the financial metrics but also the human impact of any decision to close an outlet.

Therefore, I urge Australia Post to reconsider this decision. Think about the broader implications, the real people affected and the essential services provided. I join my Federal colleague the Hon. Jason Clare and the Mayor of Cumberland City Council, Lisa Lake, calling on Australia Post to engage with our community, to understand our needs and to find a way to keep our Auburn post office open. It is crucial they remember that the proposed closure of the Auburn post office will disproportionately affect those among us who struggle the most—our elderly, the disabled, individuals with limited literacy skills and the disenfranchised. These community members rely on the post office not merely as a convenience but as an essential service that supports their daily lives and fundamental needs. It is to these vulnerable groups that Australia Post should demonstrate the greatest care and commitment. I urge Australia Post to fulfill its responsibility as a community-centric organisation by reconsidering the closure and maintaining the Auburn post office, which is a critical resource for all, especially for those who rely on it the most.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (00:16):** Mental health care in New South Wales is broken. The New South Wales Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 2, ably chaired by Dr Amanda Cohn, has released its report confirming that the mental healthcare system has wide reaching failures and needs a root and branch reorganisation and a significant funding increase to do its work. It is failing its patients and their families, carers and friends, our broader society and even our economy. The inquiry into equity, accessibility and appropriate delivery of outpatient and community mental health care in New South Wales sat for 11 months, and I congratulate the committee members on their thorough work. The report includes 17 findings and makes 39 recommendations.

The inquiry found a system in crisis. Community mental health care cannot get secure funding to build sustainable organisations. The cost of running these organisations is outstripping funding and there is a lack of information sharing. Mental health care for regional and remote communities is particularly poor. Disadvantaged groups are regularly overlooked when planning mental health programs. The public and community workforce is underpaid, burnt out, unable to provide the care to their patients that they want to give and are leaving the profession.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Point of order—

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** I ask that the clock be stopped.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I will hear the point of order first.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** There has been no reference to the member's electorate in this private member's statement.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** It is important that the member for Hawkesbury mention her electorate as a part of her private member's statement.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** This week in the Hawkesbury I was present at the St John of God Richmond Hospital where a \$64.7 million healthcare and wellness centre has been opened focusing on the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and first responders. This report leads into the work that they will be doing and the funding that they will be needing for mental health care. In particular, I talk about the needs of that organisation and the wider needs around New South Wales as well. When the report was released this week, we heard from Judy, the mother of a man shot by New South Wales police when he was having an acute psychotic episode. The mother pleaded for a different approach, one led by mental health professionals. Some of those professionals are based in the Hawkesbury at the new centre that I referred to. The message from the committee and the mental health professionals is that the time for reviews is over.

This week the NSW Mental Health Alliance held the New South Wales Government to account for its inertia. The alliance includes the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, the Australian Society for Psychological Medicine, BEING Mental Health Consumers, the Black Dog Institute, Mental Health Carers NSW, the Mental Health Coordinating Council, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and WayAhead Mental Health Association. The alliance has demanded that the Minns Government "stop playing politics and start real reform" in mental health. It calls for an immediate increase in funding, a whole-of-government approach, an expansion of the Safe Haven program to be available 24/7, an expansion of supported living services, mandatory training for police officers and a new approach to responding to mental health crises.

This week the Minister for Health announced a further \$111 million for mental health services. As the alliance points out, the funding increase barely keeps up with inflation. It will not address the 58,000 people in New South Wales—some of whom are in the Hawkesbury electorate—with severe and complex mental health challenges. The announcement masks a cut to the Pathways to Community Living Initiative. The original tenders from community health services were \$40 million annually, providing 230 beds for those with long-term mental healthcare needs.

The Minister acknowledges that the program will now only have \$10 million annual funding, and that provides a maximum of 20 beds. This is a reduction of critical mental health care by stealth. There have been 50 reviews into mental health in the past decade. It is now time for action from this Government. Our youth need the tools and assistance to manage acute mental health episodes. They need a public and community mental health system that can help them manage addiction, depression and other health conditions before they become a lifetime liability, holding them back from being the very best that they can be.

#### **MAITLAND GAOL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (00:21):** On 20 March this year Maitland City Council announced the immediate closure of Maitland Gaol. This shocking closure followed an independent safety review of the site, including fire and electrical. In fact, I probably only had half a day's notice of this closure. Maitland Gaol was the longest continuously operating correctional institution in Australia, opening in 1848 and closing its gates 150 years later on 29 January 1998. In 1999, following the closure of the jail, Maitland City Council entered negotiations with the State regarding the long-term use of the site. As a former tourism operator, I was interested in this; I moved to Maitland the same year that the heritage-listed site was unveiled as a tourism attraction in 2000.

The site is one of Maitland's premier locations for locals, visitors and events. Throughout the time that I have been a tourism operator and the local member in Maitland, the Maitland City Council had argued that it was constrained from any real opportunity to develop the site, largely due to a lack of long-term tenure. Following negotiations with the former Government, in February 2017 the long-term tenure of the jail was resolved through the establishment of a reserve trust, with council appointed as the corporation to manage the trust. Subsequently, with the implementation of the Crown Land Management Act in July 2018, council has been appointed as the Crown land manager and is required to manage the land as public land under the Local Government Act. This is all a lot of bureaucratic bunkum for those of us who just like to go to the jail to experience what is an iconic tourism destination. However, it is important detail to note when we look at the management of the site.

In 2020 Maitland council commissioned a comprehensive master plan for the site and adopted a development plan in September 2020. Under that plan, Maitland City Council has total control of the Maitland Gaol site. On 20 March this year when council made the decision to close the jail until further notice while an assessment is carried out on the electrical and other safety works, we all thought, "Wow! This is four years after they have taken total control of this site that they have been managing for 24 years since 2000." All tours and planned events were cancelled. In fact, I went to the Maitland and Beyond Family History's conference which was held at the Maitland local school because it could not get into the jail site. The jail's work with businesses is closed, community groups have been refused access and school user groups have been unable to use facilities. Groups are unable to meet at the site. So council committed to assisting to find alternatives. The new general manager, Jeff Smith, said:

... this decision was not taken lightly but the safety of Council staff, visitors and the Maitland community is of the utmost importance.

I agree with all of that. He further said:

As a 170 year old heritage site, Maitland Gaol has always required ongoing specialist maintenance but it has now become clear that the site's safety issues pose a risk to staff and visitors, leaving me no choice but to close the site.

At the time that this was announced, the mayor made no public statement. Maitland City Council committed to providing regular public updates about the status of repair work and ongoing communication but, two months later, the mayor popped up on his Facebook page—his major way of communicating with our council and community—and said they had contracted a team of specialist consultants as a first step in determining what is needed to allow the New South Wales Government-owned Maitland Gaol to safely reopen to the public. Reports that will allow us to develop both the time frame and budget required for reopening the site are expected back in July.

We need to note that in 2022 the council and the jail were working together under a management agreement with no reference to me as the local member. The mayor welcomed the former Government's \$10 million investment to extend the tourism development of the site. Did they go into the safety aspects? Did they go into the electricity? No. But now, with less than a day's notice, the mayor has put this all on the New South Wales Government. They have shut the site. It is one of six public spaces in our community that have been closed under the tenure of this mayor. I ask the people of Maitland to ask why our mayor is shutting down everything in Maitland.

## KOALA POPULATIONS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (00:26):** Some truths are hard to swallow. I stand before the House today to give voice to the truth of a groundbreaking piece of information that the Minns Labor Government, the Minister for the Environment and The Greens have conveniently ignored in their crusade to abolish our native hardwood timber industry. That truth is that koala population numbers have not been counted. No-one can confirm the numbers. The truth already proven is that koala occupancy rates of our terrain are high and remain stable on the North Coast, even in regulated timber harvesting zones. I understand that might be hard for the Labor Government to come to terms with. After all, it has spent years weaponising the koala as an enemy to our \$2.9 billion hardwood timber industry. Labor has spent years constructing a narrow-minded narrative to trick the Australian public into believing that our highly regulated industry is destroying koala populations.

It must be easier for Government members to sleep at night believing their own mistruths rather than acknowledging that they are putting thousands of jobs on the line when selective harvesting operations and healthy koalas can coexist. It will please the House to know that a comprehensive seven-year research program led by Dr Bradley Law from the NSW Department of Primary Industries was released last month. Using acoustic monitoring devices, researchers demonstrated that New South Wales koala populations are more prevalent than previously thought, and the study provided pivotal data contradicting previous concerns about the impact of forestry. The study covered over 224 sites and 8.5 million hectares, including those proposed for the Great Koala National Park, and contained more than 25,000 hours of monitoring data.

Importantly, the study focused its efforts on the land west of the highway and categorically proved that megafires are a risk to koalas but that modest fires, forestry, drought and flooding are not. It also highlighted that we have the technology to actively monitor our koala populations. Dr Law dubs it "exceptionally effective". The acoustic monitoring, combined with heat-finding drones, enables the capture of those accurate snapshots. It is a pity the Minns Government still does not want to hear about data-informed decisions, even after the technology was demonstrated to the Premier and the environment Minister when they attended Coffs Harbour this year to announce the advisory panels.

Most importantly, Dr Law's research highlighted that regulated timber harvesting in State forests had no effect on the trend of koala populations via any metric and nor did land tenure. In fact, his research shows that the health outcomes of koalas in national parks are no different to those in State forests. So why the rush to lock up



the land? That is not the only study confirming similar results of stable koala populations. Members should look into Goldingay et al. 2022 and Lunney 2016 if they are feeling hungry for the truth. I find it interesting and frustrating that that groundbreaking research performed on the Mid North Coast—the largest at-scale study led by experts within the Department of Primary Industries, which could alter the way we approach conservation and our core industries—is being disregarded by the Minns Government. It still has not acknowledged those findings.

I invite the Premier and the Minister for the Environment to share their thoughts. If the hardwood timber industry—one of the most regulated industries of its kind across the world—is now proving not to impact koalas, especially within the proposed Great Koala National Park, what reason does the Premier and the environment Minister have for axing a billion-dollar contributor to our economy and our crucial timber jobs? The industry, if axed, would push Australia to source offshore, where ethical standards do not exist. If The Greens and the Labor Government truly cared about biodiversity, they would consider the flora, fauna and orangutans in South-East Asia jeopardised by its unregulated, unruly industry. They are always so quick to wipe their hands clean.

It is time for Labor to swallow the hard truth. I strongly encourage it to delve deeper into the findings and improve its own understanding of the nature of conservation and forestry. I am calling on the New South Wales Labor Government to do a complete count of koala populations in State forests, in national parks and across any proposed area of the Great Koala National Park prior to its declaration. I challenge Minister Sharpe to prove me wrong. If she proves that koala populations are declining in State forests west of the highway and that they are in danger from timber industries, I will support that park to the hilt. The debate is not about whether the Great Koala National Park should be given the green light or not; it is about acknowledging that we can have conservation and timber. Our elite conservationists say we can have both. The Minister should stop putting a divide in my community and our State with her mistruths about koalas on the Mid North Coast.

### **BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (00:31):** It has been almost five years since New South Wales was devastated by the Black Summer bushfires. Many communities across the State, including the Blue Mountains electorate, which I represent, faced months of intense fires and then a prolonged period of recovery. For some, that journey continues today. I remember waking up day after day to a sky filled with smoke and ash, charred leaves falling from above carried on the wind from the fires that were burning to the north, south and west. The heat never seemed to subside even as the days gave way to night. Sirens wailed constantly, with all of us living on high alert.

It was unrelenting, sobering and a stark reminder of the vulnerability of our species when faced with a force of nature that evokes in us a profound sense of fear, trepidation and helplessness. And I am only touching the surface of the human experience. It is difficult to sum up the trauma that so often accompanies catastrophic events like bushfires or floods and how lives are ever changed in those moments and beyond. There is a silver lining, though, and I mention that not to trivialise or attempt to downplay the scars left behind but rather because sometimes, after such crises, we see the best version of humanity rise to the fore as we support one another through the healing process.

When I reflect on that blackest of summers, I also think about the wildlife that suffered. An estimated three billion animals perished. What does recovery look like for those creatures? For the ones that survived, how do they cope when, in some cases, their entire habitat has been destroyed? Displacement is not unique to human beings. When we lose lives or homes, we justifiably acknowledge the enormity of that, how it unsettles us, how it defines our experience in this life moving forward and how we grieve. But do we truly give that same acknowledgement to other species when they suffer? Something remarkable happened as the news of the Black Summer fires spread across the world. People reached into their pockets and gave generously for our wildlife. Stories of habitat destruction and loss reached the farthest corners of the globe, and collectively our hearts broke as we saw footage of terrified, weary animals seeking refuge. From that great tragedy came a renewed glimpse of a global community and a recognition that, ultimately, we are all in it together.

I cannot talk about the impacts of bushfires on our wildlife without referencing the specific impacts on biodiversity. In simple terms, biodiversity is the variety of all living things. It is essential for the processes that support all life on this planet, not just humans. Bushfires are a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they assist in vegetation regeneration, with many plants and animals having evolved to survive fire, developing a specialised relationship with it; but on the other hand, the fires we see today that have increased in frequency and ferocity are disrupting the balance that nature intended. Human activity is a major, if not the major, contributor to that increase.

There are the impacts of our existence on accelerating climate-change-induced fire events. But additionally, bushfire arson plays a major role. The Australian Institute of Criminology's analysis of vegetation fires attended by our fire agencies—whilst, thus far, sparse and focused on isolated areas or the collection of specific data—is shaping up to be incredibly damning, showing that over 90 per cent of vegetation fires are the

result of the action of people, and half of those fires are deliberately lit. I highlight that to emphasise that the scale of the impacts of human-induced fire events on our wildlife and their habitats is not in alignment with nature's cycles or the natural law of things. We all need to take some responsibility for that.

I want to finish on a positive note, as a reminder that there is hope, so this is a good moment to segue into talking about a place that is doing wonderful things for our wildlife. The Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, tucked away in Dural, is a haven for recovering native species. I visited there recently and met with Ben Dessen, the director and sanctuary manager. Ben showed me around the place, speaking ardently and compassionately about the animals in the sanctuary's care, the vision for the future of the facility, and wildlife rescue and rehabilitation more broadly across the State. I met three gentle kookaburras named Kooky, Casper and Reggie; Marlin and Beau, two affectionate and welcoming black cockatoos; Moo, Emmet and Larry, some very inquisitive emus; and Oliver and Olivia, the olive pythons who were content to sleepily observe me from their respective enclosures. I will have the great privilege of travelling around the State in the next 12 months in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and engaging with those working in the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation space to learn more.

### ORANGE ELECTORATE RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (00:36):** I reiterate the critical need for improved rail services for the communities of Orange and the greater Central West of New South Wales. For the past seven years, I have advocated tirelessly for enhanced passenger rail services, a cause championed by the dedicated members of the Orange Rail Action Group, better known as ORAG. Their unwavering commitment has been instrumental in keeping the issue a key priority for my community. The ORAG's successful petition of over 10,000 signatures demonstrates the overwhelming community support for better rail connectivity. The petition called for the implementation of an early morning express passenger train from Orange to Sydney Central, returning the same afternoon, alongside the necessary infrastructure upgrades to the Main Western Line to support faster and more efficient passenger and freight services.

In June 2019, I debated the petition in this Chamber. Despite the passionate and reasoned arguments presented, the previous Government did not act on these requests. The fast rail strategy prepared by Professor McNaughton remains confidential, depriving us of valuable insights into the future of our regional rail services. Unsurprisingly, the former Government refused to publish the expert-written and taxpayer-funded report. Nonetheless, ORAG has remained undeterred and continues to build momentum, securing support from local councils including Blayney Shire Council, Orange City Council, Cabonne Council and Parkes Shire Council. The importance of improved rail services cannot be overstated. Firstly, they are pivotal for economic prosperity. Enhanced rail connections will reduce logistical hurdles for businesses, enabling them to reach major markets in Sydney more efficiently. That will spur investment, create jobs and contribute to the economic wellbeing of Orange and its surrounding areas.

Improved rail services will also enhance connectivity, significantly reducing travel times and making it easier for residents to access health care, educational institutions and a wider range of services in Sydney. This is not merely a convenience; it is about ensuring equal access to opportunities for all. Traffic congestion is another pressing issue that improved rail services can address. As our population grows, so does the strain on our roads. By investing in better rail services, we can encourage more people to choose public transportation, reducing the number of cars on our roads and subsequently decreasing traffic congestion and improving road safety. Tourism is a vital component of our regional economy and stands to gain significantly from improved rail connectivity. Our region boasts stunning landscapes, rich heritage and a vibrant cultural scene. Enhanced rail services will attract more tourists, boosting local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and attractions, thereby strengthening our local economy.

Access to health care is another critical area where improved rail services will make a difference. Many residents of Orange and the Central West require specialist health services based in Sydney. Improved rail services will make those journeys more accessible and affordable, helping to close the city-country health service divide and reduce the life expectancy gap between rural and urban populations. I am pleased to report that both the Premier and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads recently visited the Orange railway station and viewed the area identified suitable to enhance for stabling of a passenger train. Their visit signals a promising development and a recognition of the importance of the issue.

I acknowledge Minister Aitchison, who on several occasions has engaged positively with me and the members of the Orange Rail Action Group regarding this proposal. We are encouraged by her active consideration of our request to stable the bullet passenger train at Orange, providing a daily service to Sydney and return. A daily bullet train service in Orange would not only provide a reliable and efficient transport option for our community but also position Orange as a key regional hub. The service would attract investment, create jobs, drive innovation and place our region firmly on the map. Connecting Orange to Sydney with a seamless rail service is a vision that promises immense potential for growth and prosperity. To realise the benefits, we must focus on the necessary

infrastructure upgrades. The Main Western Line requires investment to support fast passenger rail and freight services. Upgrading the line will enhance efficiency, reduce travel times and ensure New South Wales capitalises on the full benefits of the Inland Rail project.

This project is crucial for facilitating safe and efficient freight movements to and from the Parkes rail hub, which in turn will bolster the State's economic prospects. The case for improved rail services in Orange and the Central West is compelling. It is a matter of economic growth, enhanced connectivity, reduced congestion, boosted tourism and improved access to health care. I urge the Government to seize this opportunity and invest in our region's future. I look forward to continuing to work alongside the Minns Government to deliver this rail service for the people of Orange and the Central West.

### GRACE VILLAGE EARLY LEARNING

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (00:41):** Quality early education provides the foundations for learning and social skill development of young children, allowing them to flourish and thrive in future educational and social settings. Early education centres like Grace Village Early Learning in Huntingwood in my electorate, which in 2023 was rated as exceeding the National Quality Standard, enable our children to grow, learn and develop in a supportive, enriching and stimulating setting. An overall rating of "exceeding" is given to services that go above and beyond the requirements of the National Quality Standard in at least four of the seven quality areas. It is a spectacular achievement for a local service provider that prides itself on fostering a sense of community and belonging to the staff, families and the wider community involved with the service.

Even more impressive is that Grace Village was the first centre in Western Sydney to undergo the new assessment system, whereby the Department of Education reduced the notice provided for an assessment from 90 days down to three to five days. Grace Village Early Learning was commended for its careful planning, reflective practice and willingness to collaborate with families and other community organisations to enhance children's learning and wellbeing. Grace Village Early Learning has been in operation for six years, welcoming families into its community since 1 January 2018.

Two familiar faces making up the leadership team of the Grace Village tribe are Amanda Harris and Chantel Grace. Amanda and Chantel are both founding members of the early education teaching team and actively champion the needs of both the children and families in their care. Both Amanda and Chantel regularly go above and beyond the expectations of their role to support children, families and other staff members at Grace Village. It would be impossible for the centre to arrange key educational and community events—such as an annual Christmas market which attracts over 300 community members, family first aid workshops, child car restraint checks, donations to the children's hospital and nappy collections for vulnerable families—without the hard work, long hours and dedication of Chantel and Amanda.

The children who attend Grace Village are fortunate to take advantage of the exclusive partnership the centre holds with Sydney Zoo, offering opportunities to attend the zoo and have a host of lizards, snakes and marsupials visit, allowing children to learn from a young age about the importance of wildlife conservation. The partnership is available, in part, because managing director of Sydney Zoo Jake Burgess's commitment to animal conservation, the environment and community participation. His passion was to develop a world-class zoo in Blacktown, in the heart of Western Sydney, and the zoo's ongoing partnerships with local groups such as Grace Village Early Learning demonstrate the blooming partnerships that exist between like-minded businesses with a community focus. Beyond the Sydney Zoo partnership, the children enrolled at Grace Village are provided opportunities to visit performing arts events. They recently attended *The Gruffalo's Child* at Riverside Theatre in Parramatta.

A love of movement is also fostered for the children at the centre, with service providers offering gymnastics, soccer and karate. My senior electorate officer Elizabeth's daughter, Cordy, was delighted recently to be presented with a yellow belt for achieving the rank of bumble bee by Sensei Mark of GKR Karate. She packs a sting. Access to early opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity is vital in encouraging a lifelong love of movement and exercise, essential to combating the rising health costs of obesity and associated illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease, particularly in Western Sydney. This all-encompassing approach to growth and development in an early education setting sets Grace Village Early Learning apart as an industry leader, enabling it to achieve the overall ranking of exceeding the National Quality Standards. Congratulations once again to the entire team at Grace Village Early Learning in Huntingwood.

### HILLS RELAY FOR LIFE

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (00:46):** The Hills Relay For Life was held this year over a very cold and windy weekend on 18 and 19 May 2024 at the fabulous Castle Hill Showground. Relay For Life began in Australia in 1999. There are now Relay For Life events all over Australia. There are nine Relay For Life events

in New South Wales. We also had a dog relay. This year was the twenty-third time the Hills Relay For Life has been held. I am reliably informed by the chairman of the Hills relay that the Hills is the best Relay For Life in Australia. Relay is a fun and moving experience that raises vital funds for the Cancer Council's research, prevention and support services. It is a chance for the community to recognise and celebrate local cancer survivors, to support those going through a cancer experience and their carers, to honour and remember loved ones lost and to raise money to help save more lives.

This year there were 854 registered relayers and 101 registered teams. I am pleased to say that my electoral office registered a team, and we had a marquee proudly supporting the Hills relay. We raised \$1,381 for the Cancer Council. With other relay teams, we spent all day Saturday at the event. We walked laps and attended the candlelight vigil. I returned on Sunday morning to join weary students and relayers for the final laps. We will register a team again for next year's Hills relay. Some important and hard facts concerning cancer explain why we relay. One Australian is diagnosed with cancer every four minutes. The statistics tell us that in New South Wales in 2021, almost one in two Australians were diagnosed with cancer before the age of 85. Further, in 2021, 15,459 people died from cancer by the age of 85. That equates to a mortality rate of one in six based on the age-specific mortality rate sample of 100,000 persons.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has provided an estimate that in 2023 there were around 165,000 diagnoses of cancer on an Australia-wide basis. The institute estimates that by 2033, with increasing population rates, there will be over 200,000 cases of cancer diagnosed in Australia. There are over one million people in Australia who are currently living with or have lived with cancer. However, survival rates have improved. Cancer survival rates vary, but about 70 per cent of all people diagnosed with cancer will survive. That is up from 51 per cent about 30 years ago. Every dollar raised goes towards funding Cancer Council's vital research programs for our community.

I recognise and thank the teams that were involved in this year's Cancer Council Relay For Life. The major fundraising teams included Castle Towers, which raised \$36,417; Team Gala, which raised \$25,657; Castle Hill High School students, who raised \$22,866; Glenwood High School, which raised \$22,748; Castle Hill RSL Group, which raised \$17,066; Rouse Hill Anglican College Community, which raised \$16,139; Kellyville High School, which raised \$10,586; and Crestwood High School, which raised \$3,601. It was fantastic to see so many students spending their weekend contributing to such a worthy cause.

I make special mention of a few other students and their schools. The team captain for Castle Hill High School is Zac Dankert. He is also one of the school captains. There were 136 Castle Hill High School team members. Levi Cannock raised \$2,466 and Elyssa Tedesco raised \$1,280. The team captain for Glenwood High School was Kiel Moore. There were 99 Glenwood High School team members. Tommy—who did not provide his surname—raised \$2,066 and Diti Joshee raised \$1,148. The team captain for Kellyville High School was Denise Maloney. There were 43 Kellyville High School team members. Shriya Wellington raised \$3,000 and Aidan McEnally raised \$1,071.

I mentioned those schools because it is so important that students continue to raise money for vital causes. I thank all schools and students who participated in this year's event. Over the past 23 years the Hills Relay For Life has raised over \$5 million to support the fight against cancer. This year the Hills relay raised \$304,151, meeting its funding target of \$300,000. The Hills relay will hold further events this year, including a morning tea on 15 June, a disco in August and a golf day. Finally, I recognise Hills relay chairperson Lisa Carruthers and the entire Hills relay committee for a wonderful relay this year. I thank everyone who was involved.

### CENTRAL COAST MARINERS

**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) (00:51):** It is difficult to effectively put into words—especially at 12.50 a.m.—the outstanding achievements of the mighty Central Coast Mariners this season. The distance the team travelled this season across different competitions was equivalent to going around the world 2½ times. They travelled 99,838 kilometres in the Asian Football Confederation [AFC] Cup alone. Often they would have only a three- or four-day break between games: They would play on Saturday or Sunday, then on Wednesday and then again the following Saturday or Sunday.

They travelled to exotic locations including the Philippines, India, Oman and the unlikely destination of Kyrgyzstan. Our Mariners created history this season by winning the treble, a history-making first: the A-League premiership, the AFC Cup and the A-League championship. That was achieved despite losing our former championship-winning coach just before the start of the season and a number of key players in the off-season. The team also had a brand-new coach and backroom staff and lost its first four games of the season. Owner Richard Peil is a really great guy. He had faith that new coach Mark Jackson was the right person to lead the Mariners, and his fervent belief was rewarded. At the Mariners the mantra has always been #Believe. Mark

moulded the team to his football style and saw results on the field. As the season went on the mantra changed to #TakeUsToTheTop, and as the positive results started to flow, belief grew and the football team became a victory machine across domestic and cup competitions.

The Central Coast Mariners have been described as the model of best practice for a successful A-League club, with a combination of local youth through the academy program and experience with an eye to players who were given the opportunity to revive their careers. That has played out over several seasons, right back to the beginning of the A-League. The Mariners have played in six grand finals, winning three titles, including back-to-back titles over the past two seasons. The latest grand final was the first ever played in a regional area and was a sellout. The scenes at the conclusion of the 2023-24 grand final were emotional and inspirational. This little club with few resources had won back-to-back titles and achieved the treble. Our iconic stadium, with its distinctive characteristics of the views onto Brisbane Water and the palm trees, became a scene of tears, smiles, relief and exhaustion after such a schedule where the players continually turned up and achieved.

I particularly acknowledge the feat of goalkeeper and captain Danny Vukovic, who has since announced his retirement. Vukovic made his A-League debut for the Central Coast Mariners in September 2005. Danny played 163 games for the Mariners across two stints, 2005 to 2010 and 2022 to 2024. He played at a number of other clubs in Australia and internationally, and he was also a player for the Socceroos. Danny will remain at the club as goalkeeper coach. Danny is a great leader and motivator and, along with Matt Simon, will be forever legends of our club. I pay tribute to every player and every member of the coaching staff, particularly the former CEO, Shaun Mielekamp, plus his backroom staff. Coach Mark Jackson has now joined Lawrie McKinna, Graham Arnold and Nick Montgomery as our revered gaffers.

The playing roster included Nisbet, Kaltak, Hall, Farrell, Roux, Doka, Ballard, Tapp, Steele, Brandtman, Balard, Di Pizio, Kuol, Theoharous, Edmondson, Reec, Barcellos, Wilson, Smith and Paull, and other young players who made important cameos. They were a machine that produced quality across so many matches. Their "never say die" attitude, which was again displayed in the grand final. Four minutes into five minutes of injury time in the grand final, the Mariners trailed 1-0, but the equaliser came, causing scenes of mayhem in the stands, and was followed by two goals in extra time, resulting in a 3-1 victory. After an exhaustive season, the players kept giving until the final seconds—never say die, never out of the game. Our Central Coast Mariners are arguably the most successful team in A-League history and have a great group of supporters, owners and sponsors who understand what it is to be a coastie. For the second year in a row, we sing for yellow.

### O'CONNELL ANZAC MEMORIAL AVENUE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (00:56):** I speak in relation to the O'Connell war memorial. To provide some context, a war memorial is any physical object that is created, erected or installed to commemorate those involved in or affected by wars or conflicts. Generally, war memorials are erected by local communities or groups associated with that local area. The war memorials that we see across this country are a tribute to the nation's 103,000 Australian men and women who have died serving our country and to all those who served overseas as well. There are between 4,000 and 5,000 war memorials. Many of them are in small towns across the country and some of them form a permanent structure, usually with a list of the names of those who have died as part of the design.

The Anzac memorial avenue at O'Connell was planned to commemorate those who served in World War I. It is an avenue of 120 desert ash trees that were planted between 1925 to 1927 as a World War I memorial to local residents. Anyone who travels to the village of O'Connell will see that the trees form an archway so it is like a living, breathing memorial for that community. At that time, the local people held dances and musical events to raise funds so the project could take place. But here we are, almost 100 years later, and those trees are threatened by the transportation of wind turbines produced by overseas companies. There are concerns that irreparable damage may be caused to the avenue of the 100-year-old Anzac memorial trees as massive turbines are hauled through O'Connell on the way to a proposed wind farm further south.

The company behind the proposed wind farm at Paling Yards says that, while contact is expected, no material damage will occur. That is completely unacceptable and completely un-Australian. There are worries about the effect on the trees if the 47 wind turbines with 240-metre-tall blades are transported through the village of O'Connell from Newcastle to the wind farm site between Oberon and Taralga. The company behind the proposed Paling Yards Wind Farm is a Spanish-owned energy company called Global Power Generation Australia. Any move to trim the trees to allow the blades to pass through would be un-Australian. To touch those memorial trees would be devastating. The trees are a living, breathing memorial.

It again sends a message to the community that these foreign-owned companies will do anything at any cost to any community to try to get their projects up. They are concerned more about making money than about looking after the history of those communities. They do not care about the community or our veterans. They are

more in it to make a buck, and it is not good enough. They need to find somewhere else to put those projects in and leave the memorials alone. The outrage is shared by Oberon RSL Sub-Branch president, Bill Wilcox, who has referred to a possible desecration of the Anzac memorial site. He said:

If you start cutting branches and trimming them down, they're not going to recover, it's going to kill them. In years to come, there's going to be nothing.

If this was happening in Sydney and we were talking about knocking down Hyde Park, or if this was in Canberra and we were talking about knocking down the memorial there, there would be outrage from the community. The trees were put there for a reason, and they need to stay as they are. These wind farms need to go someplace where putting them in will not cause grief or anxiety to communities. The Oberon Against Wind Towers group has also put recommendations to Oberon Council to have the trees that were planted in 1925 placed on the State Heritage register. Following a recent council meeting, Oberon Council said that it is reviewing documents prior to making a decision or putting an interim heritage order in place. The protection would mean that any proponent who wishes to undertake development within or through the area would need to demonstrate what they are proposing will have minimal impact on the trees.

A representative from Oberon Against Wind Towers, Frank O'Connor, said, "Our community got together and paid to engage a heritage consultant to prepare a report, which has been delivered to council." The group is hoping that the council will act on it because, if they do, they can place an interim heritage order immediately. That would give the community, the O'Connell residents—the descendants of Anzacs who live locally—confidence that there is a fair balance. The Forestry Corporation of NSW also wants to now look at towers. Again, our communities have said, "No, this will impact tourism and the economy." We need to send a strong message to them that they are not wanted and they need to bugger off. The community is not going to give up. We will continue to fight against them because they are not renewable projects; they are ruinous projects that are destroying communities.

### NSW GROWING REGIONS OF WELCOME

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (01:01):** A rich thread that runs through Albury-Wodonga is the story of the Bonegilla migrant camp. The Bonegilla story began in the years following World War II. When millions departed for Australia seeking peace, an army camp at Bonegilla was transformed into a migrant reception and training centre where new arrivals lived while they were processed and allocated jobs. Bonegilla became the largest and longest-operating reception centre in the post-war era, with over 300,000 migrants passing through its doors between 1947 and 1971. Many remember arriving lonely and confused, unsure of their future. Others saw Bonegilla as a place of hope, symbolic of a new start.

It is through the prism of that experience that I reflect on the achievements of the NSW Growing Regions of Welcome [GROW] pilot program in our Murray and Riverina communities. GROW is an innovative initiative designed to foster community integration and regional development. Launched in June 2021 by Multicultural NSW, GROW is a resettlement program connecting individuals from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Western Sydney with regional opportunities to find a job, help settle children at school, build social networks, and achieve their dreams and thrive.

Since its inception, GROW has delivered the communities of Albury, Holbrook, Leeton and Temora the benefits of global perspectives, cultural richness and entrepreneurial drive that these newcomers bring. Its funding is due to end in November. The program is based on extensive consultation, drawing on research from Australian and international initiatives. Multicultural NSW has tested that approach by working closely with several regional communities and supporting secondary migration. Speaking about GROW, the NSW Coordinator General for Settlement, Professor Peter Shergold, said:

We've known for a long time that migrants and refugees are determined to embrace all the opportunities afforded them in our beautiful State.

This pilot is demonstrating that regional NSW is capable of providing everyone with homes, jobs and communities where everyone can belong.

By trialling new programs and working with communities we help cement our reputation as one of the most successful multicultural States in the world.

One of our successful GROW families is that of Elim Humphries and his wife, Ezy, who have settled in the town of Holbrook. Elim is a road maintenance apprentice with Transport for NSW and an on-call firefighter with Holbrook Fire and Rescue, while Ezy works in the town's medical centre. When reflecting on his family's 2022 shift away from the city, Elim said:

In a comparison here versus Sydney, I'd take here... on the worst possible day, it is 10 times better than Sydney.

Once the locals see you want to be a part of their community, they will take you and make you a part of their community faster than you can shake a stick.

At the heart of the GROW model is the belief that a sense of welcome is essential for thriving communities. In a recent meeting with the NSW GROW Murray taskforce co-chairs, Andrew Kotzur and Kristie Ivone, the pair shared with me that the passion, heart and sense of social justice to help those less fortunate powers through our regional communities and has helped in the pilot program's success. Right now, there is debate on levels of immigration. Paul Kelly writes:

Australia has an economic model that depends on high immigration – and it is past time the flaws in this system were confronted as the Albanese government desperately tries to wind back our unsustainably record high migrant intakes in the post-Covid period.

The magnitude of Labor's immigration misjudgment is alarming. Australia is a remarkably tolerant nation but its tolerance is being pushed to the limit.

...

You can be a strong supporter of immigration but still grasp the current intake is untenable given the many downsides ...

That debate is an important one, but it is distinct from how we welcome and support migrants and refugees who have the opportunity to live in our community. Janet Albrechtsen writes:

We are, and have been for at least half a century, a country of migrants. Not just any old country of migrants – one of the world's most generous, open and welcoming homes to migrants of all backgrounds.

The NSW GROW pilot program is a beacon of hope and opportunity. Given that government is willing to provide appropriate wraparound support, our community, with its rich migrant heritage, has played and continues to play an important role in providing a fresh start for migrants and refugees, whilst invigorating our regional communities with new talent and fresh perspectives.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 01:06 on Thursday 6 June 2024 until 10:00 the same day.**

*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 level 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's 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.

#### **BLACKOUT THEATRE, GHOST THE MUSICAL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Blackout Theatre Company has been performing shows the Pioneer Theatre in Castle Hill for many years. The most recent shows include Chicago, Legally Blonde The Musical; The Hunchback of Notre Dame and Heathers The Musical. I recently attended the Blackout Theatre Company production of 'Ghost The Musical'. The Musical is an adaption of the 1990 Romantic Fantasy Film. The Blackout Theatre Company creative team including Director Ciewen Newell, Assistant Director Ruth Newell, Music Director Koren Beale, and Choreographer Daniel Lavercombe combined to ensure that production was nothing short of spectacular. The main cast members on the night I attended the performance each managed to bring their characters to life which ensured the audience was spellbound by the exceptional performances. I commend the cast members, Luke Harris as Sam Wheat, Melanie Sestic as Molly Jensen; Robe Hale as Carl Bruner; Jaque Peres as Oda Mae Brown; Lucy Giles as Clara Brown; Kate Simmons as Louise Brown; Matthew Mey as Willie Lopez; Liam Vicari as the Subway Ghost; Tristan Foon as the Hospital Ghost and Brooke Rose as Mrs Santiago. Congratulations to the entire cast and crew of the Blackout Theatre Company on another great production.

#### **ZEST AWARDS, HARMAN FOUNDATION, THE THRIFT FACTORY**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to recognise and commend the work of the Harman Foundation. Founded in 2013 by Harinder Kaur and Maninder Singh, after their own tragic loss, the Harman Foundation provides support services to the community. The Harman Foundation recently won the Outstanding Project, Climate and Environmental Resilience Award at the Zest Awards held on 30 May 2024. The Harman Foundation won the Award for 'The Thrift Factory – Save our Planet Project.' I am pleased to say that on 28 October 2023, I attended the Dress to Thrive Event at the Rex Money Room, Rouse Hill. The Dress to Thrive event was part of The Thrift Factory Project. Thrift Factory Project aims to raise awareness about sustainability by promoting pre-loved clothing. The Thrift Factory raises funds for the Harman Foundation, 'Her House' women and children refuge. Thank you, Harinder Kaur, and Maninder Singh for your continuing work supporting the community through projects such as The Thrift Factory and Her House.

#### **HILLS COMMUNITY AID, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FUNDRAISING**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise the generous Hills community. On 16 May 2024 I attended the 2nd Annual Hills Domestic Violence Fundraiser, held at Rydges, Norwest. The Fundraiser was proudly organised and supported by Hills Community Aid, a not-for-profit community organisation. The importance of fundraising in our community to assist community organisations such as Hills Transitional Housing and Hills Community Aid cannot be underestimated. The Executive Officers of Hills Community Aid, Mici Beer informed those in attendance that "in the past year alone, Hills Community Aid has witnessed a staggering 28% rise in clients seeking support for Domestic and Family Violence." Community Organisations such as Hills Community Aid have an urgent need for funding and as such fundraising is important in all communities. The total raised from ticket sales, auction items, raffles, and donations amounted to \$24,084.44. Whilst the amount raised this year was less than last year, the funds will help The Hills Transitional Housing and Hills Community Aid to directly aid those who have been affected by domestic violence and abuse. I am grateful to the generous community who dug deep to help those in need. Thank you to everyone who attended the Fundraiser.

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - AMY LEE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Amy Lee a joyous 50th birthday! Her friend and mentee, Brandon Lim, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Amy's exemplary dedication to her profession and her unwavering commitment to mentoring future leaders have left an indelible mark on all who have had the privilege to know her. May this special day be filled with joy, love, and the recognition of the countless lives you have touched and inspired. Your contributions to the fields of finance, management, and education are truly commendable and deserving of the highest praise. On behalf of all your friends, colleagues, and admirers, I extend heartfelt birthday wishes to Amy Lee. May you continue to inspire and lead with the same grace and passion that have defined your remarkable journey. Happy Birthday, Amy!" I am



humbled to be able to play a small role in making Amy's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Amy!

#### **ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE - JAISREE & LAKSHMI (LAKI) LYENGAR**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I am delighted to congratulate Jaisree and Lakshmi (Laki) Lyengar who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary this year. There is something to be said for 40 years of marriage. It is a symbol of love, loyalty and, no doubt, triumph over the inevitable adversity that one would encounter in over a decade of partnership. Throughout life's journey they would have seen significant change. We know that communities evolve, technology develops and people come and go from within our respective orbits. To have the steady presence of a life partner—in Jaisree's case, Laki, and in Laki's case, Jaisree—is to experience that journey to its fullest. Along the way they have built an important foundation for future generations, exemplified by their children, including Shruti who asked to share these heartfelt words in Parliament: "Happy 40th Wedding Anniversary. From the hardships of migration, you both have created success through your love and determination." Jaisree and Laki's example is one that we can all aspire to—a lifetime of partnership and the building of an enriching legacy. I ask the House to join me in congratulating them on their 40th wedding anniversary.

#### **VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR NOMINEE - AASHA AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION LTD**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Ryde Group Volunteer of the Year Nominee, AASHA Australia Foundation Limited, who was recognised at the 2024 Volunteer Recognition Awards. AASHA Australia Foundation stands out for its remarkable contributions, particularly in running monthly seniors' groups in Top Ryde and West Ryde. Their activities for seniors from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and South Asian communities include social hubs, group exercises, health forums, and information sessions. By doing so, AASHA provides essential support to help seniors combat isolation and engage with one another both during and outside these events. Moreover, AASHA has embraced digital technology, ensuring that even those unable to attend sessions can benefit through Facebook Live. The word "AASHA" means hope in Sanskrit, and indeed, the Foundation has brought hope and connection to many. I commend the AASHA Australia Foundation for their outstanding service and for making a significant difference in the lives of our senior citizens. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to our community.

#### **LEADERSHIP BY THE BAY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—It was my privilege to be part of the annual Leadership by the Bay program last month. The event has become a key part of the transition from year six to high school for public school students in the Shire and it is a great initiative of Woollooware High School to provide leadership skills and mentoring to student leaders. This year 154 students from 16 schools were part of the launch day, the biggest turnout in the program's nine-year history. The students came together to brainstorm projects that they could implement in their schools to leave a legacy that improves the school experience of those who follow them. The students will come together again in November to present their finished projects to each other. I commend the senior students from Woollooware, Kirrawee and Cronulla High Schools who were there as mentors as each school's team planned its positive change initiative. I also recognise the hard work of the teachers who brought the day together, particularly my fellow speakers Woollooware High principal Mardi Benson, Kirrawee High deputy principal Leah Moon, Cronulla Sharks star Emma Tonegato and coordinator of the day, Woollooware High's deputy principal Mark Mitchell.

#### **CHELSEA SUTTON**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Cronulla's Chelsea Sutton who has been selected for the Australian Kayaking Team for the Canoe Marathon World Championships in September. Chelsea's selection came after she won two 15 kilometre events at the National Canoe Marathon Championships in April, races that took just under one and a half hours of paddling to complete. Showing her versatility, Chelsea also represented Australia at the Asia Pacific Sprint Cup in May where she won an individual bronze medal and a team gold against competition from Japan, Singapore, and New Zealand. Chelsea is a year 12 student at St Aloysius Catholic College in Cronulla, which is very proud of her commitment and achievements. I join with St Aloysius in congratulating Chelsea on her hard work and success so far this year and send her best wishes for the World Championships campaign in Croatia.

#### **AERIA MANAGEMENT GROUP**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Aeria Management Group to major upgrades at Camden Airport. Aeria Management Group has successfully completed a major upgrade of the Camden Airport car park and stormwater infrastructure. The works have delivered a safer

and more efficient airport precinct for members of the community and all airport users. The new works also included the reconstruction and resurfacing of the airport car park, an upgrade of the car park access road, upgrades to aprons, hardstand and hangar access and widening of the taxiway to improve safety for turning aircraft. The efficient delivery of works enabled the early reopening of Taxiway Delta, in February, and reopening of Taxiway Charlie, in March, despite the challenges of recent poor weather. The scope, scale and successful completion of the works are on show and help Camden Airport remain a significant part of local aviation in our community. Thank you to Aeria Management Group for completing this work.

#### **BAILEY PICKLES**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I acknowledge Bailey Pickles from Camden for his significant contributions to music composition. His work has been highlighted successfully as he was recently chosen as a composer for the Vivid Sydney Festival highlighting his talent and dedication, capturing the essence of our cultural landscape. Bailey first became famous showcasing his talents on TikTok. Since then, Bailey has effectively connected with audiences, showcasing the depth of his talents through his music. Bailey has said that he wants "people to be dancing in the streets" during the festival, ensuring everyone has a fantastic time while enjoying Vivid. We commend Bailey for his accomplishments and look forward to his continued music career as he continues to inspire and captivate audiences with his music. Congratulations Bailey.

#### **KILLABAKH COMMUNITY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Killabakh Community for raising \$2,500 for the Cancer Council at their Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser event held at Killabakh Hall. The Biggest Morning Tea raises money for the Cancer Council, providing research, support and prevention programs. For the 75 people in attendance there was cups of tea and coffee, scones, sandwiches and tasty treats made by family and friends. There were lucky door prizes and a raffle with prizes generously donated by local businesses. The event was hosted by Killabakh local, George Hoad AM and his sister Mary Sutherland, who has had her own battle with ovarian cancer. I thank the Killabakh community for coming together and supporting such a wonderful cause. Killabakh's community spirit is so inspiring and it's communities like these that make the Myall Lakes such a special place to live.

#### **TOBWABBA ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICE**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Tobwabba Aboriginal Medical Service on the grand opening of their new clinic building. Tobwabba AMS provides quality holistic healthcare for the people of the Worimi Nation. The new clinic has consult rooms, waiting areas, and even dental facilities complete with an on-site technician - it's incredible to see how Tobwabba AMS has evolved from humble beginnings as an outreach centre under Biripi, operating out of a back room at the land council. Now serving over 2,000 clients, Tobwabba can grow and expand to meet the needs of the community in the best way possible. They've used their own funding to build this new clinic, with construction proudly carried out by local Worimi men from WSC Built. Thank you, Isaac, Leeann and the staff at Tobwabba AMS for your ongoing efforts in promoting healthier indigenous communities through accessible, culturally competent medical services.

#### **WHARF ST DISTILLERY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Wharf St Distillery, for their success at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, earning significant accolades for the second consecutive year. This year, their Oyster Shell and Citrus Gins were awarded the coveted Double Gold medals, scoring 97% and 95%, respectively. This achievement, reserved for entries receiving unanimous Gold Medal classification from all judges, highlights the quality and craftsmanship of their spirits. Additionally, Wharf St Distillery's Pigface Gin and Barrel Aged Gin were awarded Silver medals. Wharf St Distillery's success at such a renowned competition not only elevates their brand internationally but also highlights the potential and excellence found in our community. Congratulations to the team at Wharf St Distillery for your achievements. Thank you for bringing international recognition to our region and for your pursuit of excellence. I wish you many more years of success.

#### **BUNNERONG GYMNASTICS SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)**—I recently had the pleasure of visiting Bunnerong Gymnastics Centre and was thoroughly impressed by their fantastic school holiday activities. Their Holiday Camps are a perfect blend of excitement and creativity, featuring gymnastics, ninja & parkour, trampolining, games, crafts, and movies. Each day is a new adventure for little ones with activities like Junior Olympics, Acro Balances, and Relay Races. The centre's facilities, including bars, beams, rings, foam pits, trampolines, rock climbing, and a ninja rig, make it the ultimate playground for kids. Meanwhile, their dedicated

staff ensures a safe and fun environment, offering flexible hours to accommodate all families. Bunnerong Gymnastics truly provides an exceptional experience for children during the holidays!

#### **ONE&ALL**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)**—I recently had the privilege of visiting the inclusive creative hub, One&All in Rosebery. Founded by Romy Wolman in 2018 and inspired by Israel's Kibbutz Kishorit, One&All is Sydney's first 18+ all-abilities arts concept of its kind, fostering innovation in disability and mental health engagement. The Hub is a registered NDIS provider that provides high-quality workshops empowering creativity, socialisation, and skills development. The team's motto, "difference is a strength, not a weakness, and we should aim to create societies where opportunities exist for all" is nothing short of inspirational and underscores every aspect of their service from creative arts workshops, their urban vegetable garden, retail store, market days and events. One&All truly unites individuals, families, carers, and artists passionate about creating lasting change through their novel approach to supporting the physical and mental health of local individuals and enriching our broader community.

#### **GEOFFREY ERNEST DONALD**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr Geoffrey Ernest Donald was a beloved father of four children and husband to Mrs Beverley Donald, who has been recently recognised and received the Local Women of the Year Award for 2024. Geoffrey, born on the 27th of July in 1937 and has recently passed, was an only child to Mr Ernest Cecil Donald and Muriel Donald, who was often called 'Aunty Mu' by all nieces and nephews. Geoffrey always had a keen interest in becoming a doctor, however, due to circumstances at the time, he chose to become a valuable teacher instead. Geoffrey and Beverley had a loving marriage of about 63 years, having met in a youth group in Church and married in 1960, about 6 years after leaving school. I would like to express my condolences to Mrs Beverley Donald and their children for the passing of Geoffrey, who will be missed.

#### **FATHER ANDREW HUU LE NGUYEN**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 9 March 2024, I had the privilege of attending the book launch of "I Must Live" by Priest Andrew Huu Le Nguyen from New Zealand, held at the Vietnamese Community Cultural Centre in Bonnyrigg in my electorate. "I Must Live" recounts Father Nguyen's miraculous journey, surviving a 13-year imprisonment in communist "re-education" camps after the Fall of Saigon in 1975, and continuing his mission as a priest and advocate for human rights. Father Nguyen has a famous quote: "Before I was a priest, I was a Vietnamese person". This underscores his selfless dedication to advocating for a just, free, and democratic society for the Vietnamese people. This sentiment deeply resonates with many constituents of Vietnamese descent in my Electorate. Having known Father Nguyen for over twenty years, my respect for him has only deepened over time. I extend my heartfelt commendations to Father Nguyen for his extraordinary dedication to the Vietnamese community around the world and congratulate him on his recent 80th Birthday. I thank Mr Ly Viet Hung, and the Organisers "Luc Luong Cuu Quoc" and "Dap Loi Song Nui" for the invitation to this memorable book launch.

#### **ASSYRIAN BABYLONIAN 6,774TH NEW YEAR AND 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADM 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 6th of April 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the Assyrian Babylonian 6,774th New Year celebration, coinciding with the momentous 45th anniversary of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM). It was an honour to be part of such a significant cultural and historical event, where traditions spanning millennia were interwoven with the celebration of a vibrant and resilient community. Their dedication to preserving and promoting Assyrian heritage is commendable, and it was truly inspiring to witness the passion and enthusiasm with which they organized this memorable event. As we commemorated the Assyrian New Year and reflected on the remarkable journey of the ADM over the past four and a half decades, the sense of unity and pride among attendees was palpable. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to share in this moment of joy and look forward to continuing to celebrate the Assyrian community's cultural legacy. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr Immanuel Sada President of the Assyrian Democratic Movement for the kind invitation, and to partake in this joyous occasion.

#### **ALEAH FARRUGIA - NSW BORDER CHALLENGE TRIALS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I want to acknowledge the remarkable talent of Aleah Farrugia. Her outstanding performance at the New South Wales Border Challenge Trials showcased her skills and dedication to gymnastics. Securing a well-deserved second place in her first level 7 competition is truly commendable. Aleah also achieved impressive results in the bar and floor apparatus, as well as the beam, demonstrating her all-round excellence and dedication to gymnastics. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Aleah on this wonderful achievement and wish her well representing NSW in Caloundra this June against Australia's best level 7 gymnasts.

**THE LAKE EXPRESS – LAKE ILLAWARRA CLONTARF ACADEMY NEWSLETTER**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate the Lake Illawarra Clontarf Academy for the introduction of their newsletter The Lake Express. Clontarf is a Mentoring program where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys are given opportunities to improve themselves. The Lake Illawarra Clontarf academy is run out of Lake Illawarra High School. Clontarf has been running all over the country since the year 2000. Currently there are 119 academies with the Lake Illawarra Academy opening in 2019. With 2 full-time staff mentoring up to 46 boys in 2019. They have an Academy room where the boys can feel safe and comfortable to hang out, play table tennis, cards, do homework, eat or just chat with other academy members. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate the Lake Illawarra Clontarf Academy on the introduction of their informative newsletter The Lake Express and wish them well in their endeavours with this vital program.

**KARLIE ZEC - ILLAWARRA WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to express my congratulations to Karlie Zec, the winner of the Illawarra Women in Business Awards. In recognition of successful businesses owned and run by women, this award celebrates Karlie's accomplishments as the owner of Tiny Tins Waste Management. Tiny Tins, which operates across the Illawarra, demonstrate a commitment to responsible waste disposal. In addition to this prestigious award, Karlie's efforts in environmental stewardship were acknowledged with a nomination for an Environmental Achievement Award and Citizen of the Year by the Wollongong City Council earlier this year. Like many other women in business, Karlie exhibits a positive and success-oriented mindset, with a dedication to building sustainable business relationships. On behalf of the Shellharbour Electorate, I would like to congratulate Karlie and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

**GROUP CAPTAIN JOHN HAWKINS RURAL FIRE SERVICE [RFS]**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—With deep respect and gratitude, I would like to acknowledge the unwavering dedication and selfless service of Group Captain John Hawkins, who has been an integral part of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) in Southern NSW for over two decades. Captain Hawkins, whose leadership spanned the regions of Jingellic, Little Billabong, Lankeys Creek, Talmalmo, Wantagong, and the surrounding areas, has decided to resign from his post. His resignation, tendered on Sunday, May 19, comes after a distinguished career marked by both commendable service and challenging circumstances. Throughout his tenure, Captain Hawkins displayed extraordinary bravery and dedication, actions that were formally recognized with the Commissioner's Certificate for Commendation (Individual). This prestigious award, which acknowledges exceptional service and bravery, was bestowed upon him for his efforts during the Black Summer bushfires, a period that tested the limits of human endurance and resilience. I remain thankful for his years of service and leadership. His legacy of bravery, his commitment to protecting our communities, are immense contributions under the most challenging conditions, and will continue to inspire us all.

**HIDDEN TREASURES HONOUR ROLL 2023**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate constituents Desiree Georgiou and Leanne Johnson who were nominated for the 2023 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll. The Hidden Treasures Honour Roll is a tribute to the volunteer efforts of women across regional and rural areas who give their time and energy to help others. It is coordinated by the NSW Rural Women's Network. Both Desiree and Leanne join over 1,200 NSW women who have been recognised since the Honour Roll's inception in 2010, for their valuable contributions to help our community thrive and flourish. Leanne has been recognised for her invaluable community work with Carevan, while Desiree has forged strong business ties through Business Wodonga Albury Wodonga and Albury Business Connect. Well done Desiree Georgiou and Leanne Johnson for this well-deserved recognition. Your dedication and hard work are truly inspiring and greatly appreciated by all.

**LUCIA FORNASIERO CELEBRATES HER 109TH BIRTHDAY ON 26 MAY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to honour one of Albury's most cherished residents, Lucia Fornasiero, as she celebrates her incredible 109th birthday. Mrs. Fornasiero marks this special occasion with the warmth and care that defines her long and remarkable life. Born in Italy in 1915, Lucia lived through two World Wars and has witnessed a century of significant changes. Despite the loss of her father in World War I and the challenges of losing contact with many family members during World War II, she forged a new life in Australia. Whilst part of her heart will always remain in Italy, Lucia has firmly rooted herself in Albury where she has become a beloved member of our community, creating a legacy of love, resilience, and community spirit. Today, we celebrate not just her remarkable longevity, but the countless lives she has touched and her profound impact on our community. I thank her daughter Maria Evans and son-in-law Malcom for creating a nurturing and loving

environment for Lucia. Happy 109th birthday, Lucia Fornasiero — your life is a testament to the enduring power of family and faith.

#### **KJ HILL SPECKLE PARK HILL**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I recognise Wayne and Cindy Tucknott, owners of KJ Hill Speckle Park Hill Stud on their success at the Sydney and Queensland Royal (EKKA) Agricultural Shows. Members would know our agricultural shows are at the heart of rural and regional communities because what is showcased is made, grown and bred locally. KJ Hill Speckle Park Hill have for many years been major supporters of our local agricultural shows. At the 2023 Queensland Royal, Wayne and Cindy claimed one of the highest honours in the beef cattle section, winning Grand Champion Cow with 'KJ Hill Adena,' as well as a third place in the Champions of the World section and Reserve Junior Champion, with 13-month-old heifer 'KJ Hill Tabatha.' The 2024 Sydney Royal Easter Show saw the Tucknott's awarded the Junior Champion Speckle Park Bull with 'Under the Tank'. Wayne and Cindy were also successful in winning first place ribbons with their heifers. KJ Hill Speckle Park Stud is a family run business for more than 60 years, started by Cindy's father Kevin J. Sheather. Congratulations to everyone involved.

#### **THE PUSH-UP CHALLENGE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise the Push-Up Challenge - Australia's largest mental health and fitness event which kickstarts in the month of June. The Challenge aims to promote healthier living and shines a spotlight on better mental health for all Australians. Established in 2017, the Push-Up Challenge has raised more than \$40 million to support all kinds of mental health programs across Australia. Championed by Port Macquarie Headspace, already \$884 has been collected with local Tim Shields as part of the ATeam already raising \$620, smashing his goal of \$500. Tim has pledged to complete 3,249 push-ups in 24 days and has dedicated his endeavours in loving memory of Frances. The goal of 3,249 push-ups sadly represents the number of lives lost to suicide in Australia in 2022. Along with Tim, local men Matt Jorgensen, Tim Inman, Ed Irving and Sander Scheffer have registered to raise funds to support better mental health outcomes. Joining the pledge to raise \$1,000 is local aged care business EACH Port Macquarie, with already \$280 collected for Port Macquarie Headspace. Also registered is East Port Push-Up, Charles Sturt University and Joeys Primary. Best wishes to all those taking part in the 2024 Push-Up Challenge.

#### **MOTHER'S DAY CLASSIC**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—The annual Mother's Day Classic was held on Sunday, 12th May at Westport Park shining a spotlight on breast and ovarian cancer which affect approximately 270 Mid North Coast women each year. Now in its tenth year in Port Macquarie, the Mother's Day Classic attracts hundreds of attendees of all ages, committed to making a difference for people diagnosed with cancer. The event comprises a 5km walk or run from Westport Park, progressing along the foreshore to Town Green to the Southern Breakwall before looping back to the start. Event Managers Kylie Bulmer and Carmen Abi-Saab have championed the Mother's Day Classic in Port Macquarie since 2014 and were again overwhelmed by the unwavering support it received. The aim of the event is to elevate women's health, prevent deaths from breast cancer and improve the survival outcomes for those diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Participants register for the walk/run, showcase a flare of pink outfits and seek donations for their efforts. All funds raised were donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation and the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation. Thank you to the community for supporting this wonderful event and Kylie and Carmen for your amazing efforts.

#### **ROBERT CATER**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Robert Cater on his fifty years of service as a New South Wales Justice of the Peace. The role of a Justice of the Peace was first created in 1787 and aimed to serve the community in a quasi-judicial capacity. As such, the position demands integrity, honesty and an impeccable character from individuals who fulfil duties of a Justice of the Peace. This is true for Robert and his service as a Justice of the Peace. This year, Robert was invited by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and the Attorney General, The Hon. Michael Daley MP to a ceremony at NSW Parliament House to thank Justices of the Peace across the state who have attained fifty years' service in 2022. Fifty years of service is of course an impressive feat, and I would therefore like to offer my gratitude on behalf of the Swansea Electorate to Robert for his dedication to our community.

#### **FRANK BLACKWELL**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Frank Blackwell on his fifty years of service as a New South Wales Justice of the Peace. The role of a Justice of the Peace was first created in 1787 and aimed to serve the community

in a quasi-judicial capacity. As such, the position demands integrity, honesty and an impeccable character from individuals who fulfil duties of a Justice of the Peace. This is true for Frank and his service as a Justice of the Peace. This year, Frank was invited by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and the Attorney General, The Hon. Michael Daley MP to a ceremony at NSW Parliament House to thank Justices of the Peace across the state who have attained fifty years' service in 2023. Fifty years of service is of course an impressive feat, and I would therefore like to offer my gratitude on behalf of the Swansea Electorate to Frank for his dedication to our community.

#### **LIONEL FABER**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Lionel Faber on his fifty years of service as a New South Wales Justice of the Peace. The role of a Justice of the Peace was first created in 1787 and aimed to serve the community in a quasi-judicial capacity. As such, the position demands integrity, honesty and an impeccable character from individuals who fulfil duties of a Justice of the Peace. This is true for Lionel and his service as a Justice of the Peace. This year, Lionel was invited by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and the Attorney General, The Hon. Michael Daley MP to a ceremony at NSW Parliament House to thank Justices of the Peace across the state who have attained fifty years' service in 2023. Fifty years of service is of course an impressive feat, and I would therefore like to offer my gratitude on behalf of the Swansea Electorate to Lionel for his dedication to our community.

#### **RUBY S.G.**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend Glenmore Park local Ruby S.G. on the release of her new book, titled 'Blob Hates Needles!', which explores bravery and courage within the context of children's health. Her book tells the story of a character named 'Blob', who has a fear of needles and whose mum and nurse help overcome his fear. Ruby is a registered nurse and thus has firsthand knowledge of the fear that many children have when faced with a needle. Her book is based on real situations she has experienced and captures the reactions, expressions and behaviours of children facing the needle, whilst including what adults deal with leading up to the situation. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek electorate, I thank and commend Ruby for her service to our community and beyond through her work as a nurse and as an author. I wish her continued success.

#### **TEAGAN FERIFF**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I thank and commend Teagan Feriff for her initiative in starting the Glenmore Park Produce Swap group on Facebook earlier this year. The intention of the group is that members of the group can post on the page when they have homegrown and/or an excess of produce or require produce, which they resultingly swap. This produce swap group seeks to help reduce household expense, whilst also reducing waste. Teagan's innovation was inspired by her desire to assist her family's budget and reduce the cost of living. In doing so, she has also benefitted the community, particularly during an increase in the cost of living and prices of fresh produce. The environment is also better off for her initiative, and I extend my thanks to all involved in the group. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek electorate, I congratulate Teagan Feriff for her wonderful work.

#### **MULGOA VALLEY CRICKET CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend Mulgoa Valley Cricket Club for a very successful 2023/2024 season, which included a premiership for their 7th grade team, whilst the 3rd grade team qualified for the finals. The club had 38 senior players across two teams this season, competing in the Nepean District Cricket Association Competition. In addition, 13 junior players competed in the annual Woolworths Cricket Blast Junior Program. Further to the premiership, the club also experienced some outstanding individual brilliance. Throughout the season, 3 senior players scored a century, whilst 5 players claimed five-wicket hauls. The Club is hopeful of introducing a further senior team for next season. I commend all volunteers, players and supporters for their dedication to the club. I congratulate and thank the Mulgoa Valley Cricket Club for representing our community so proudly and achieving such great success and I wish them the very best in the seasons ahead.

#### **NEWCASTLE LYMPHOEDEMA & LIPOEDEMA CLINIC**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—My congratulations to Newcastle Lymphoedema & Lipodema Clinic of Kotara, winner of the Home Based business award at the 2024 Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards. The annual program recognises and celebrates the outstanding achievements of local businesses in the Hunter across a range of fields, acknowledging the significant contributions these businesses make to our region's economic growth, innovation, and overall prosperity. 2024 marks the twenty-ninth year of

the program. Led by Kristin Osborn, the Newcastle Lymphoedema & Lipoedema Clinic offers complex assessments, exclusive, tailored treatments, education, and products for the management of lymphoedema, lipoedema, pre-surgery preparations, and post-surgery recovery. Lipoedema mainly affects women and is a conditioned characterised by a painful swelling in the legs, thighs, buttocks, and arms; lymphedema is tissue swelling caused by an accumulation of fluid usually drained through the body's lymphatic system. Kristin has nineteen years of experience working in the field of lymphology as a specialist medical therapist and makes use of her lived experience to deliver empathetic and understanding support to her clients. My congratulations to Kristen on this well-deserved recognition.

### **DYNAMIC BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—My congratulations to Dynamic Business Technologies of Warners Bay, winner of the Professional Services Award and Business of the Year at the 2024 Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards. The annual program recognises and celebrates the outstanding achievements of local businesses in the Hunter across a range of fields, acknowledging the significant contributions these businesses make to our region's economic growth, innovation, and overall prosperity. 2024 marks the twenty-ninth year of the program. The team at Dynamic Business Technologies, led by managing director Nathan Franks, provides IT support services and individualised IT solutions to clients across the Charlestown electorate, the broader Hunter Region and beyond. It is a long-standing, multi-award winning company, and they are committed to keeping the IT systems of their clients secure. It is great to see this sort of innovative, information-economy business operating in the Charlestown electorate and achieving such success. My congratulations to Nathan and his team on this well-deserved recognition.

### **2024 PARIS OLYMPIANS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Local legends and national heroes—Emily Van Egmond and Clare Wheeler—are off to Paris! On 4 June, the two Matildas, who each have deep connections in the Charlestown and electorate, were named to the Matildas' side competing at the 2024 Olympics by head coach Tony Gustavsson. Warners Bay High alumni Emily van Egmond was raised in Newcastle, playing for Dudley Redhead United Football Club juniors before going to the Newcastle Jets and going on to a storied career with other Australian sides and internationally. Clare came up through the Adamstown Rosebuds, Northern NSW and the Newcastle Jets, and now plays for the English Women's Super League club Everton. Emily's legend was burnished by her performance in the FIFA Women's World Cup last year, while Clare has emerged as a star, most recently on Monday 3 June when she broke the deadlock in a match against China. Clare's incredible goal in the forty-eighth minute helped usher in the Matildas' 2-1 win in their final home soil match before the Olympics. I want to wish these hometown heroes all the best—I can't wait to follow the Matildas' quest for Olympic glory!

### **SYDNEY MEMORY WALK AND JOG**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I want to acknowledge Dementia Australia's recent Sydney Memory Walk and Jog, an event dedicated to raising awareness and funds for people living with dementia, their carers, families and friends. Each year, the Sydney Memory Walk and Jog brings the community together to run, walk, skip, or dance, around the Bay Run. I was honoured to participate earlier this month and join our community whose efforts have raised vital funds for dementia research and support services, celebrate the strength of caregivers, and honour the memories of loved ones lost to dementia. This year there were 1,484 participants across 74 teams, who have so far raised almost \$283,000. To all those who organised, volunteered, participated or cheered on the Sydney Memory Walk and Jog, thank you.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERS IN GLEBE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I want to acknowledge student leaders from two schools in my electorate, St Scholastica's College and Sydney Secondary College Blackwattle Bay, both of which have campuses in Glebe. I was fortunate enough to meet with Phoebe Myers and Annabel Smit of St Scholastica's College, and Saskia Eveleens and Joshua Park of SSC Blackwattle Bay, during their recent visit to Parliament as part of the Secondary School Leadership Program. I was impressed with the way each of these young leaders conducted themselves during their visit, and the manner in which they engaged with the program. Indeed, they were outstanding representatives for their schools and their fellow students. By taking these and other similar opportunities to develop their incredible potential, I have no doubt that these student leaders of today will go on to become community leaders of the future. In the meantime I wish you all the best for your studies and I thank you for allowing me to spend some time with you during your visit to the NSW Parliament.

### FESTIVAL OF FEMALE FOOTBALL AT LEICHHARDT OVAL

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I want to acknowledge the Festival of Female Football, hosted by Leichhardt Saints FC and Balmain & District FC at Leichhardt Oval on Sunday 26 May, as part of Football NSW's Female Football Week celebrations. The day kicked off early with the under 10s beginning at 8:30am, followed by a full day of football and fun for the whole family. While our future Matilda's were out showcasing their talent and skills on the pitch, others enjoyed free face-painting and lots of great food before the senior teams took to the field in the afternoon. The aim of Female Football Week is to drive female participation at all levels of the game and the Festival of Female Football has done a tremendous job in pursuing this objective. I'd especially like to thank the organisers of this incredible event, Donna Youngman of Balmain & District FC and Kay Harris of Leichhardt Saints FC, and everyone in your amazing teams. Thanks also go to Sydney FC, Football NSW and Inner West Council for their donations and support of the festival.

### CHRISTOPHER PRATTEN

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Christopher (Chris) Pratten was a beloved member of the Summer Hill community. When Chris re-joined the Summer Hill community in 1986 after living in the country for several decades, the Ashfield & District Historical Society (ADHS) gained an invaluable member who dedicated nearly forty years working tirelessly for our community. During Chris's early years in ADHS he held the secretary position, edited publications, wrote, researched, produced the newsletter, and lobbied Council to save heritage sites from demolition. During the forty years we had the privilege to have Chris in our community he wrote for both the Society's journals and various other publications on a range of heritage and history-related topics, helping to inform the wider community of the rich history of our area. In 2000 Chris was named Ashfield Citizen of the year for his heritage protection efforts. In 2005 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his conservation work. In 2014 he was granted a life membership of ADHS. Chris passed away on 12 March 2024 surrounded by his loving family. Vale Christopher Pratten, thank you for your dedication and contribution to our local community.

### ASHBURY COMMUNITY GARDEN 15-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations to the dedicated team behind Ashbury Community Garden on achieving the garden's 15-year anniversary. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to Michelle Favelle who first sprouted the idea in 2009, that has since grown into the wonderful garden bursting with life that we know and love today. From a small prize to establish a community garden, combined with Ashbury Public School's offer of garden space, the Ashbury Community Garden was first planted, and continues to grow and expand. The Garden is run entirely by volunteers whose dedication, passion and tireless work have made it a beautiful space to gather, share and learn. Students from Ashbury Public School are also given the opportunity to grow food sustainably, as well as care for the chickens and bees. Any community members are welcome to join or to attend any of the events that are held in the garden each year. I highly recommend trying the wonderful jams and other delights made from the garden's produce. Congratulations and thank you to the many volunteers who have made the Ashbury Community Garden into such a wonderful community space over 15 years!

### MARRICKVILLE CRICKET CLUB

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations Marrickville Cricket Club (MCC) on a hugely successful 2023-2024 season fielding 30 junior and senior teams and winning seven premierships! MCC is a club with a rich and proud history dating back to 1910 that is still going strong today, committed to developing the Bob Simpson and Elyse Perry's of the future! This year has seen a record number of girls register and play and saw the first ever girls U/17 side. As with all community clubs MCC is only successful due to the many hours of dedicated work from the volunteers who administer, coach and play each season. Thanks to President Arv Sampath and an energetic executive team of Victoria Brigden, Jo Flannagan, Kellie Garnett and Hugh Gibson for ably leading the Club this year. Congratulations also to Kath Swinburn, MCC Volunteer of the Year. Kath is an all-round star and is the U13 age co-ordinator, wrangling kids and parents in the busiest age group at the Club. She's been doing this role tirelessly for over 5 years. Congratulations and thank you Kath! Congratulations Arv and all involved with Marrickville Cricket Club on another outstanding season.

### PEF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to public school students in my electorate who have been awarded scholarships by the Public Education Foundation (PEF). Berivan Yousif Qari of Mount Austin High School and Shamsia Barakzai of Wagga High School are worthy recipients of Friends of Zainab Senior Secondary Scholarships, which support refugee students through the critical years of their Higher School Certificate. Bella Jenkins of Mount Austin High School and Muhammad Yaseen Barakzai of Wagga High School



received Waratah Education Foundation Secondary Transition Scholarships to help them reach their potential and participate fully in school activities, while Zahra Roshan of Wagga High School received the NSW Teachers Federation Refugee Scholarship. Presented at the 'Proudly Public' event in Sydney, these awards support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, students from refugee backgrounds, vocational studies and teacher development. The program has awarded more than \$10 million to help 3,218 students and 120 teachers since it launched in 2009. What a fantastic program and what remarkable achievements by these young people who have been helped to succeed in their education, setting them up to become wonderful contributors to their community. Well done and best wishes to all!

#### **WORLD OCEANS DAY – SURFERS FOR CLIMATE**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to recognise Surfers for Climate and their ongoing work for World Oceans Day. On 8 June 2024, we will celebrate World Oceans Day, a day that seeks to catalyse collective action for a healthy ocean and a stable climate. Surfers for Climate is an Australian charity dedicated to turning the tide on climate change. Led by CEO Josh Kirkman they are passionate about our marine environments and backing the science to ensure they are protected. In the East, our ocean is our playground. We understand the importance of protecting and preserving it for future generations. Surfers for Climate have been a driving force across NSW to ensure that we do just that. Thank you Surfers for Climate and I encourage everyone to participate in World Oceans Day.

#### **PATROL 16 NORTH BONDI**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Patrol 16 from North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club for receiving the Patrol of the Year Award at the 2024 SLS Sydney Branch Awards of Excellence. Held at the Art Gallery of NSW, the Sydney Branch Awards recognise those lifesavers, patrols and clubs that go above and beyond. Under the leadership of Anna Willis, P16 has made their mark on our iconic beach and even on socials from what I hear! We are so lucky to have you patrolling out beach, and we can't wait to see you back on the sand next summer.

#### **FRONTIER PETS - EVANS HEAD**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Diana Scott and her team at Frontier Pets after winning 'Best in Pet Services' at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards in April. These awards offer a unique opportunity to highlight Australia's most outstanding small businesses, along with their dedication to excellence and community contribution. Almost a decade ago Diana developed a business strategy to manufacture nutritional pet food using ethically sourced ingredients. Having procured over eight million dollars' worth of sustainably grown produce and serving more than seven million nutritious meals to Australian pets, Frontier Pets remains steadfast in their commitment to quality and ethical practices. What an achievement, congratulations to Diana and the team.

#### **YAMBA BOWLO - RAINE AND HORNE BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to Raine & Horne Maclean, Yamba, Iluka who in partnership with Bowlo Sports and Leisure Yamba, hosted a Biggest Morning Tea to raise vital funds for the Cancer Council. I was pleased to be invited, unfortunately unable to attend, however it sounds like they could not have had a better day for it. The hard-working team put together a wonderful morning tea with coffee, tea, and pastries. There was a good crowd of people who were able to enjoy a day of barefoot bowls, croquet, raffles, competitions, and prizes. It was a beautiful sunny day and folks who had not tried bowls or croquet were able to try their hand at something new. Everyone was kept well entertained by live music and had a BBQ lunch on offer. Well done to the organisers of the event, as well as those in attendance, raising funds and having great fun and all for a very worthy cause. I hope I get an invitation again next year.

#### **EULIE ALLEN**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Lawrence Historical Society volunteer and life member Eulie (Eulalie) Allen who recently turned 88. This special birthday makes her the oldest volunteer at the Lawrence Museum, and she is also the longest serving. Eulie joined the local historical society in 2000, and along with her husband Jim was very active in the big clean-up of the vacant building to help establish the Museum. It took the society members 2 years to repair and clean the building and begin the collection. From the early days of the Museum the Bluff Point Quilters held an annual Exhibition to raise funds for the operation of the Museum. Since the very beginning, Eulie has been a contributing member of the quilters, working hard to support the museum and local charities. I commend Eulie for the way she is always ready to learn and how she enjoys moving with the times and participating in skills workshops. Her readiness to be a great mentor for new volunteers, along with her knowledge of the collection and museum practices make her an asset to the society and the museum. Well done Eulie.

**SGT MARK LYON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Sgt Mark Lyons signalled his final salute after 42 years of service with the NSW Police Force. Sgt Lyon's started his career with the police force in 1982 as a trainee, moving his way up the ranks, with his final role as Sargent beginning in 2008 up until retirement. The majority of Marks career was spent in Highway patrol in the Oxley and New England Police Districts. A guard of honour was formed by officers as Sgt Lyons marched out from the entry of the Narrabri Police Station. I would like to thank Sgt Mark Lyons on his 42 years of dedication and commitment to the NSW Police Force and his Community and I wish him all the best for his retirement.

**KATE POLSONI- POLISHED SILVER**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Polished Silver recently celebrated their 12-month anniversary. Narrabri's Kate Polsoni started the group Polished Silver 12 months ago. It is a group to get anyone over the age of 50 together and do various fun activities. Starting off with only a few people attending, has now turned into a weekly event that any where from 20 plus people look forward to every week. Kate funds this weekly group entirely on her own, as she wanted to give something back to her community. She offers craft activities, trivia, bingo, tea/coffee and biscuits and excursions around the community just to name a few. I would like to thank Kate for her selfless attitude towards the Narrabri Community. Giving up your time for others, who sometimes just need a reason to get out of their house and have a chat, is something you should be proud of and you are appreciated.

**SUSAN NICHOLS - WENTWORTH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today, I would like to recognise Susan Nichols of Wentworth for her continued community service. Susan has 30-year experience as a Councillor and is currently Deputy Mayor of Wentworth Shire Council and a Life member of Softball Association. Susan has spent twenty-five years as a lawn bowler holding executive positions, mostly as President, of local and district bowls organisation. This has resulted in strong representation and commitment to the growth success of lawn bowls in the region. As a high achieving bowler, Susan's skills in providing leadership and growth over the many years of participation in lawn bowls is to be commended. I congratulate Susan for her passion of lawn bowls and her continually searching for new opportunities to grow the sport through involvement and participation.

**JENNY MCLEOD - WENTWORTH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today, I would like to recognise Jenny McLeod of Wentworth for her dedication to recording Wentworth's history. President Jenny is the current driving force of the Wentworth Historical Society, a volunteer organisation that dedicates time and knowledge toward the preservation of local history and family genealogy. The collection is a valuable one, well documented by the small team of enthusiastic volunteers. The need for documentation is growing with their current focus on paper-based records. Donations have been plentiful, and these records add to this small town's iconic history. Situated on the junction of Australia's two most important rivers, Wentworth was once considered a potential site for the nation's capital. It made it to the short-list of three. This and so much more is clearly identified in this historic town with meticulous keeping of historic documents. I congratulate Jenny for her dedication in overseeing the preservation and restoration of the Wentworth community's history.

**GRAVESIDE YARNS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Graveside Yarns. Volunteers of the Yass and District Historical Society conduct ninety minute tours of the Yass Cemetery which were sold out in April. The tours provide participants with captivating stories of past individuals and families of the Yass Valley, including explorer Hamilton Hume, pastoralist AB Triggs and William Munday. The archive team within the Yass and District Historical Society work vigilantly to uncover the stories and contributions of those from previous generations from within the Yass Valley. These tours support the longevity of raising awareness of the Yass Valley forebearers who have made an impact in the region, at times leaving long-lasting legacies or known for their notoriously scandalous activities. I take this time to thank and congratulate all members of the Yass Valley Historical Society and Yass Graveside Yarns tour guides, Corine and Wade Chalmers, for their contributions in continuing to maintain the importance of capturing our history.

**HUME AND HOVELL EXPEDITION AT COOMA COTTAGE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Hume and Hovell Expedition at Cooma Cottage. October 12th will be the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Hume and Hovell Expedition at Cooma Cottage. Cooma Cottage is the recognised start of the 426-kilometre Hume and Hovell Track, setting out to find new grazing land in 1824. Cooma Cottage was home to Hamilton Hume from 1839 and

is now heritage-listed and managed by the National Trust. The upcoming celebration will host ancestors of convicts who accompanied Hume and Hovell. There will be demonstrations of some of the significant trades that were essential to everyday life with a blacksmith, saddler, and wood crafting. Scout groups will participate in an overnight camp in tents resembling days gone by and re-enacting some historic scenes on the day of celebrations. Cooma Cottage volunteers will host the day reflecting and accentuating the importance of the expedition by Hume and Hovell to the region. I take this time to congratulate organiser Barbara Foster, volunteers and all involved in this momentous celebration.

#### **JANET HEFFERNAN**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Janet Heffernan. Janet has been passionate about land care for many years, whilst initially training to become a schoolteacher, Janet later undertook horticultural studies and went on to open her own gardening business. Janet joined the Jerrawa Creek Land care group in 2002, later moving to Upper Lachlan Landcare, taking on the role of Secretary. Janet is now an executive committee member with Gunning District Landcare. Janet is well recognised for the work that she undertook over a twenty-year period at the 'Moorlands' property, seeing the planting of kilometres of tree lines, paddock trees and establishing reserve areas for wildlife. Janet has achieved many great achievements throughout the years, being honoured with Honorary Life Membership of the Gunning District Landcare in 2018, recognised for her contribution to sustainable land management, Landcare, and the local community. Janet's significant contributions have not gone unnoticed more widely, now a finalist in the 'women in Landcare' NSW Landcare Awards being held on the 3rd of June. I thank and congratulate Janet for her significant contribution to Landcare and the communities which she has served.

#### **LIVING HOPE ANGLICAN KILLARA AND EAST LINDFIELD**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Living Hope Anglican. They are one church in two locations, at St Martin's in Killara and St Peter's in East Lindfield. Together they serve our local community by bringing together traditional, contemporary and multicultural faith services. I recognise Rev Matthew Heazlewood, Rev Dr Roger Chilton OAM, Rev Tim Thambyrajah, Rev Michael Freeman, Rev Carson Wu, Rev Mamie Long, Heather Hutchison, Andrew Stanford, Sarah Chew, Josh Sloan, Marie Visvalingam, Rachel Millynn, Jasmin Taylor, Sophie Szecsodi and Anthony Pitts. Thank you for your service and spiritual leadership that encourages and promotes inclusivity in our local community to make it even more vibrant. I look forward to visiting Living Hope Anglican in the many weeks, months and years ahead.

#### **FRENCHS FOREST BUSHLAND CEMETERY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 19 April 2024, I visited Frenchs Forest Bushland Cemetery in Davidson. I recognise the Friends of the Frenchs Forest Bushland Cemetery, President Beth Robertson and Ross Downie for sharing their passion and interest in preserving this historical site. It's a resting place for thousands of people, sitting on 22 hectares of picturesque Hawkesbury sandstone bushland. The first burial took place on 24 April 1940. I recognise two notable people that rest in the Bushland Cemetery. Beth and Ross shared their stories with me at their gravesites. The first is Major General David Blake, who served in both world wars. His grave states, "Commander of the No 2 Squadron AFC". He was responsible for the remains of the Red Baron after being shot down in 1918. There is a historical debate about this event. The second is Ben Lexcen AM, a yachtsman and naval architect. He designed the winged keel design applied to Australia II, that in 1983, became the first non-American yacht to win the America's Cup. In life, we must all one day prepare for death. The Bushland Cemetery is a sombre and peaceful place. May those that rest there, rest in eternal peace.

#### **VALE GEOFF SELIG**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Geoff Selig, who in sad circumstances, died on 5 May 2024. His life cut far too short. I have known Geoff for over 20 years through the Liberal Party and as a former Ku-ring-gai resident. Geoff was an individual of integrity, intelligence and goodwill. He was an Australian patriot. Geoff believed and acted upon causes greater than himself. Whether in politics, business, not-for-profit – or causes important to the betterment of society. The hundreds upon hundreds of people who attended his memorial service on 27 May in Sydney came from these many worthy causes. In politics, I recognise his role as president of the Liberal Party of Australia, both the NSW Division and Bradfield Federal Electorate Conference. In business, I recognise his role as Executive Chairman of the IVE Group. In not-for-profit, I recognise his role on the boards of the Heart Foundation, the Pinnacle Foundation, and the Lysicrates Foundation. I recognise his work supporting, mentoring and encouraging young people. I was one of these many people. Geoff gave generously his time, seeking nothing in return. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and partner Ben. Vale Geoff Selig.

### **GEORGES RIVER COLLEGE PEAKHURST – FISHTANK COMPETITION WINNERS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to inform the House regarding the progress of year 10 students from Georges River College Peakhurst, who participated in the FishTank competition. The team from GRC Peakhurst came up with an innovative design, titled 'Mechanically Driven Artificial Upwelling'. In a fantastic result, the students have been awarded first place within the Junior Division of the competition. As a result, the school will receive a prize of \$3000, which can be used for a sustainable project of their choice. The team now have another task on their hand, which is to investigate how the funds can be used, however they have completely demonstrated that they are up to the challenge. I would like to congratulate students Abbie Clay, Tahlia Coulton, Lillian King, Abigail McKenzie, Amelia Wilson and Mya Wong, for all their hard work during the program. I look forward to visiting the school very soon to congratulate the team in person and once again, I would like to thank Ahmad Bousaleh and Principal, Diane Wilson, who both made this a possibility. I look forward to seeing where this passion takes them into the future.

### **GEORGES RIVER DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, there have recently been a number of organisations within my community who have received funding under the 2024 Local Sport Grant Program. I would like to recognise one such organisation today. I would like to pass on a special congratulations to the Georges River District Cricket Club, who were recently awarded just over \$6000 to buy some new equipment. Specifically, the funding will be used to purchase a brand-new bowling machine, allowing the club to enhance their training sessions and provide better opportunities for player development. The club also will be purchasing a 'Frogbox' system, which allows them to stream the matches directly to YouTube, whilst also capturing highlights and allowing for replays. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to everyone involved with the Georges River District Cricket Club and would especially like to recognise President Kevin Croom and those on the committee, who campaigned for this project. I have no doubt that this new equipment will contribute to the continued success of the club and help nurture the next generations of talented cricketers.

### **CLUB GRANDVIEWS ANZAC CEREMONY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, ANZAC Day is truly one of the most important days of the year. It is an opportunity to honour and recognise those who have given so much for the freedoms we enjoy as a nation today. I would like to thank the Board of Directors from Club Grandviews, who recently hosted a moving service to remember the sacrifices of our brave servicemen and women in various wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. Not only was it wonderful to meet with veterans and their families, but also to see the number of people from my community who attended the service. It truly is heartening to witness such a strong display of respect and remembrance for our ANZACs. I would like to thank General Manager of Club Grandviews, Nathan Buhagiar, Club President, Alex Fotheringham, as well as the entire Board of Directors who helped to make this event such a success. I believe that it is so important to acknowledge the resilience, mateship, and legacy of the ANZACs and this is something I hope to do for many more years to come. Lest we forget.

### **KYLIE WINSLADE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate Kylie Winslade on being recognised in the 2024 Australian Education Awards. A teacher at Orange High School, Mrs Winslade is one of eight awardees in the Secondary School Teacher of the Year (Government) category to be acknowledged at a black-tie gala event celebrating education's brightest for 2024. The Australian Education Awards are now in their seventh year and put a spotlight on the outstanding achievements of the country's top-performing schools, principals, department heads and teachers. Mrs Winslade, who this year will complete her third decade of teaching, works with senior school students in community and family studies and personal development, health and physical education, and looks beyond the textbooks to inspire her students. The impact of digital media, social media and the diverse environments in which young people are growing up places more complex responsibilities on our educators who also must adapt to rapid change in their efforts to shape young minds. Truly gifted at her job, Mrs Winslade, who was nominated for the honour by OHS principal Alison McLennan, was inspired by a similar role model early in her career. It seems she is returning the favour, tenfold.

### **ROBYN CHURCHLAND**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate Orange's Robyn Churchland on being named Football NSW's female volunteer of the year for 2024. A long-serving member of Orange Waratah Football Club, Mrs Churchland is typical of most volunteers in that she does what she does for the joy of being involved. Robyn's role at Waratahs however, encompasses more than involvement. The parents of budding junior player Kira, Robyn and her husband soon discovered the nearest competition was a one-and-a-half-hour round trip away in Bathurst so Robyn set about building a closer platform for Orange girls keen to play the game. She has worn many hats at

Waratahs, including senior secretary in 2021 when Orange relaunched a women's competition. Fast-forward to 2024 and the league has doubled with nine teams registered and Robyn is credited with its growth – she was the driving force between assembling two of those teams and manages both. She has also been heavily involved in the creation of a seven-a-side women's summer competition. Quick to praise others, Robyn was surprised when she won the NSW award and says she could not have done it without support from the Orange District Football Association. I congratulate Robyn on much-deserved recognition.

#### **SHAY-LEE SPARGO**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate my Parkes constituent Shay-Lee Spargo on being recognised as one of the Western NSW Local Health District's nursing and midwifery rising stars. Shay-Lee has been awarded the local health district's New to Practice Midwife of the Year for 2024, acknowledging her compassion, hard work, willingness-to-learn and dedication to the women under her care. The birth of a child is a life-changing moment for women and their families, and Shay-Lee considers it a privilege and an honour to help guide them through the months leading up to, and after, the baby's arrival. Educating and empowering women to make an informed decision about the impending birth is also a big part of why Shay-Lee loves her job. But she also attributes her award to her fellow team-mates who support and nurture her career, stating in a recent newspaper article 'it takes great midwives to make great midwives'. Mr Speaker, I again congratulate Shay-Lee on her award and wish her future success in an ever-changing but fundamental health role.

#### **SALVATION ARMY HORNSBY CORPS, NEW COMMUNITY CAFE**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—I was pleased recently help open the Hornsby Salvation Army's Community Café. I know this project had been an important vision the Hornsby Salvos for some time. In March 2021, I was thrilled to be able to support the Salvos rebuild the Hornsby Corp's kitchen. This was in desperate need of an upgrade and once completed, by June 2022, the new kitchen allowed the Hornsby Salvos to do so much more in the community, including being able to provide valuable education through meal planning. However, the Hornsby Salvos vision was to also establish a community café to allow them to continue to support more people in our local area. It has created a wonderful haven, including for those doing it a bit tough. For over a century, the Hornsby Salvos have made a phenomenal contribution by supporting the Community. Captains, Sean Li and Lydia Wong arrived at Hornsby a few years ago, after doing so much good work with the Salvos in the Hurstville area. Under their continued leadership, I am certain the Hornsby Salvos will go on to serve Hornsby brilliantly for many years to come.

#### **NORTHERN DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—One of the best sporting organizations in the Hornsby electorate is Northern District Cricket Club, who are about to commence their hundredth season in the Sydney Premier Cricket competition. This club is run by committed volunteers and it has been a pleasure to support them through a significant, but positive transformation. Their home ground at Waitara has been upgraded with a new wicket square and outfield, providing improved drainage. Last summer their new and award-winning Indoor Cricket Centre opened for use. The upgrade to the ground's clubroom amenities is about to get underway and this will further enhance its facilities. On the field the club has achieved some phenomenal results at all levels with Premierships, top placings in the Club Championship and regular recipients of the Spirit of Cricket Award. These achievements are the result of sustained work from President Jerry Hook with the support of his Executive and membership. I particularly recognize former President, Mike Langford and long-time Secretary, Graham Gorrie. Northern District Cricket Club are the benchmark. We are proud of this organization and the outstanding results they have consistently achieved over the past decade, from both their men's and women's cricket teams.

#### **PUSH TO DEVELOP BANKSTOWN 'NIGHT' ECONOMY**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—It was a privilege to attend the Canterbury Bankstown's Chamber of Commerce Night Economy summit in April. The event was entertaining and informative with a special performance by the Bankstown Theatre team, Outloud, and a comprehensive panel discussion to enhance Bankstown's nighttime economy. It was an honour to be amongst local businesses, creative arts organisations, Canterbury Bankstown Council, and other MPs to support the current and future strategy to create a bustling, diverse and unique nighttime economy. This whole of community and government initiative, exemplifies the success of the annual Lakemba Night Markets. As discussed during the panel, the specific strategy tailored to our diverse community, involves utilising our cultural heritage, local resources, and collaborative efforts to create a vibrant nighttime economy that celebrates our diverse commercial, social, and cultural fabric. Our community thrives on diversity and multiculturalism, with street food playing an undeniable role in boosting our nighttime economy and enriching our cohesion. I am keen to endorse the strategy to boost our nighttime economy by

providing my support to local businesses, healthcare, creative arts organisations, retail stores, restaurants and dessert bars, active transport services and nighttime markets.

#### ARTISTS IMAGINING FUTURE IN EXHIBITION

**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 the talented community members who have shown the Bankstown community their amazing work during the MultiFutures exhibition at Bankstown Arts Centre. The exhibition featured multimedia artistic practices, and explores concepts of Afro futurism, Indigenous futurism, and Asian futurism through the lens of culturally and linguistically diverse artists. The exhibition responds to recent artworks that gravitate towards the realm of science fiction, a genre that explores ideas about the future and is highly developed in literature and film but has earlier been regarded as fairly marginal in the visual arts. This exhibition will allow western-Sydney based artist Serwah Attafuah, who creates surreal cyber dreamscapes and heavenly wastelands populated by afro futuristic abstractions of self, to exhibit her series 'The History of Tomorrow'. I would like to say a big thank you to Mayor Bilal El Hayek for his support of these artists' work and the time that he has dedicated to this event. Once again thank you for everyone's time and dedication that they have put into this event and making the Bankstown electorate creative and by showing the importance of art within the community and world.

#### MAYOR PLANTS FIRST OF 30,000 OLIVE TREES IN SYMBOLIC MOVE

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to thank Mayor Bilal El-Hayek and all the Canterbury Bankstown Councillors for taking this wonderful initiative to plant olive trees to represent the people of Gaza. Mayor Bilal El-Hayek planted a symbolic olive tree in front of Lakemba Mosque, the first of 30,000 olive trees to be planted across the Local Government Area, after the Council's decision to plant the trees in remembrance of the innocent lives lost in Gaza. The Mayor's planting of the first olive tree followed Eid-ul-Fitr Prayer at Lakemba Mosque, drawing possibly its largest ever attendance, with an estimated 50,000-plus worshippers. Olive trees play a significant role in the lives of Palestinians but there has been ongoing destruction of olive groves, to sever Palestinian connection to their land. Over 100 journalists have been killed, with the key message that the atrocities must be kept in the public eye and international pressure must be brought to ensure a ceasefire happens sooner not later. Once again thank you to Mayor Bilal El-Hayek and all Canterbury Bankstown Councillors for their amazing work that they have done for the electorate.

#### PANTHERS ORIGIN

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Wishing the NSW Blues team all the best for the first State of Origin match tonight Wednesday 5th June. I'm so proud that Dylan Edwards was picked to debut at fullback but unfortunately due to injury won't play in the first game. Dylan has played in 4 grand finals (winning 3), represented Australia in 2 Tests and a recipient of the Clive Churchill Medal. His outstanding form of late should ensure him a future spot in the line-up. Panther players current and former feature heavily, with 8 of the 20-man squad all having worn the Panthers jersey, 5 of which are current players. Unfortunately, half-back Nathan Cleary has been ruled out with injury. Winger Brian To'o will make his 10th Origin appearance as will backrower Liam Martin. Panthers co-captain Isaah Yeo will make his 12th appearance for the Blues. Jerome Luai will play his 8th Origin game and while he will have a new halves partner that will not interrupt his recent outstanding form. However the game plays out it will be great to see our current Panthers back together in a team that includes ex-Panthers Spencer Leniu, Matt Burton and Stephen Crichton. Go the Penrith Panther Blues!

#### YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE OVER LISMORE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—IT'S thrilling to watch young people at their creative best and that's what we experienced during ABC Takeover Lismore from May 20-24. This was a week for celebrating the talented winners of the national broadcaster's regional storytelling competition on Bundjalung Country. There was a red carpet screening at Lismore's Star Court Arcade for the world premiere of their incredible stories reflecting their lives in our community which has been through so much in recent years. Winners from Lismore High School (The Rivers Secondary College) included Kameka, Rose, Torren, Hannah and Maleah; from Richmond River High (The Rivers Secondary College) Baylie, Isabella, Sarah, Amelia, Xavier, Cameron and Artesia; from Kadina High School (The Rivers Secondary College) Kira, Jayda and Ava; from Blue Hills College Fareeha and Malachi; from Trinity Catholic College Nyah, Conner, Brielle, Logan, Jahanshah, Jax and Ava; from St John's College Woodlawn Misty, Jada, Tom and Emily; from The Living School Rush; from Nimbin Central School Cherokee, Sophie and Hailey; from Summerland Christian College Turichi and Arielle. ABC Takeover Lismore went for an even deeper dive with winners workshopping and presenting their ideas for change at Oakes Oval. Our future is in good hands.

### MURWILLUMBAH'S KINSHIP FESTIVAL GROWS IN STRENGTH

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—THE theme for this year's Kinship Festival in Murwillumbah's Knox Park was 'Yabulgu', which means 'together as one and unity for our children's future'. I congratulate Coordinator Lara Lei and her organising committee, including Aunty Charline Emzin-Boyd and Aunty Deirdre Currie, on the ninth Kinship Festival, a free cultural festival growing in strength each year. The festival is an offering from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to connect all families with a sense of belonging to country, community and culture. It showcases local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture including dancing, music, art and a lunch. Lara Lei told The Tweed Valley Weekly newspaper that sharing a meal together as a community was an important and central part of the day. The festival featured a corroboree with 10 different dance groups from across the Bundjalung nation and beyond celebrating kinship connections. It also featured a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony, local Elders sharing their wisdom in the Story Telling Tent, an interactive community sand art installation, language workshops, weaving, children's nature crafts and traditional games, live music, youth space and an Aboriginal artisan market. The Kinship Festival offered something for everyone.

### NIMBIN'S DJANBUNG GARDENS TURNS 30

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I CONGRATULATE permaculture pioneer and internationally renowned permaculture designer and educator Robyn Francis on her visionary Djanbung Gardens in Nimbin turning 30 this year. Gardening Australia's Costa Georgiadis visited the lush paradise that is Djanbung Gardens for two full-day events to mark this milestone – a Permaculture Fair on May 25 and a Family Fun Day on May 26. The Nimbin Good Times newspaper's May edition quoted Robyn thus: "Regenerating degraded landscapes is an exceptionally rewarding journey, and sharing the skills and inspiration for others to bring their own dreams of healing the land to fruition has been my life mission." Designed as a permaculture education centre and demonstration farm, Djanbung Gardens has hosted visitors and groups from around the globe and trained thousands of people from all continents in permaculture, giving rise to hundreds of significant projects worldwide. The Permaculture Fair featured speakers leading workshops on fungi, cover crops, food forests, plant gestures, appropriate technology, community building and reforesting a sacred mountain in India. Popular celebrity Costa, in his gnome costume, brought a sense of fun to the Family Day with crafting, eco-creations, scarecrow and mask making, nature play, the Permalympics and live music entertainment.

### MILLIE JACKSON

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge 15-year-old Millie Jackson for her outstanding achievements in Powerlifting! Millie, a Year 10 Student at St Johns College who trains with Nemesis Dubbo, broke the Australian record for 13-15 years 67.5kg squat, bench press and deadlift in 2022. In doing so she also broke the World Bench Press record. In October 2023, Millie travelled to Hungary to compete in the Global Powerlifting Championships. Whilst in Hungary, Millie competed in three different sections in the 75kg 13-15 years category. Millie's trip to Hungary was extremely successful with a first place in full power, first place in squat only, second place in bench only and third place in deadlift only. Millie has now received an invitation to participate in the GCP Powerlifting Nationals being held in Newcastle in August. Her outstanding performance across multiple categories highlight her strength, dedication, and exceptional talent in powerlifting. With these incredible achievements already under her belt, Millie has a bright future ahead of her, and I look forward to following where her journey takes her next!

### CALLUM HUTCHISON

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Callum Hutchison from Narromine High on his selection in the Creative Chances team destined for #festival24 taking place in Paris in July. Creating Chances are a social enterprise program who aim to inspire, develop and empower young people to believe in themselves so they contribute positively to society and create positive change in the world. #Festival24 will be the first ever inclusion Youth Sports Festival leading up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Callum is part of a team of 64 delegates from around the world selected by Creating Chances and will have the opportunity to engage, learn, connect and shape the future of sport. He was selected as part of the NSW Rugby Chances program run in partnership with NSW Rugby, Positive Rugby Foundation, Regional NSW, Regional NSW Aboriginal Partnership and Creating Chances. He was identified for selection as part of the team through his commitment to changing the world through sports, promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities. Congratulations Callum on your selection in this team, I know it will be a once in a lifetime experience providing invaluable lifelong learnings.

### CAN ASSIST DUBBO

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Dubbo CAN ASSIST branch on the success of their recent annual major fundraiser, the Dubbo Autumn Gardens. The owners of the

four gardens which were on display, opened their gates with excitement and anticipation, eager to share the beauty and tranquillity of their meticulously tended spaces with the public. Each one being a labour of love. Each garden portrayed a different atmosphere with special events from musical performances to guest speakers, which added another layer of charm and engagement. Guest speakers included Doctor Florian Honeyball, Professor Andrew Rawson and the Three Sisters Violin Trio. This year also included a plant stall, which was so popular that it sold out! Hundreds of people enjoyed the gardens with all funds raised supporting CAN ASSIST to provide financial support to those undergoing cancer treatment in our region. The Autumn Gardens Open Day Fundraiser requires a lot of coordination and effort from a team of volunteers, and I congratulate them on such a successful event.

#### **METTE KITIONA**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I was thrilled to nominate local volunteer, Mette Kitiona for a Community Service Award recognising her significant contribution to our community. Mette has been keenly involved in the Bankstown Jets Touch Association since her eldest child started playing in 2008. She has been the Secretary of the Club since 2016 and was the Vice President from 2014. She also supports the Canterbury Bankstown Junior Rugby League women's program and is the canteen manager of St Christopher's Junior Rugby League Club. Working with NSW Rugby League and the Pacific Island community, Mette also spearheaded the Pasifika Games. Mette juggles her volunteer work, a full-time job and looks after her four children. She displays an admirable amount of care and capability. Her tireless efforts to make a difference in the lives of all who know her was rightfully honoured at the Premier's Volunteer Reception at the Art Gallery of NSW last month. I am proud to call Mette my friend. She is an important part of our community in East Hills.

#### **FOOTBALL VOLUNTEER BRADLEY PERYMAN**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—With Volunteer Week just passed, I want to acknowledge East Hills local Bradley Peryman, who has volunteered at Condell Park Football club for the past 11 years. Bradley started playing football aged six and continues today whilst also performing various administrative duties and roles. At 28 he is the Club's President. Having fulfilled various roles for the club for years, Bradley's passion and dedication to this small local team has seen him turn down roles at other clubs. He sets up and pulls down for every game, as well as playing in his own game. If that wasn't enough, he has also been a registered referee from age 12, serving his club and other clubs throughout the district. Volunteering allows Bradley to give back and make a difference to his community and we are grateful for it. Thank you, Bradley, for donating your time and skills to contribute to the great sporting culture we have in our electorate of East Hills.

#### **WORLD ENVIROMENT DAY**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Congratulations to students, teachers and staff at Jamison High School in Penrith who are going green for World Environment Day today in an environmentally friendly way. They are partnering with Greening Australia and planting 400 native trees, reducing their carbon footprint, and adding to the solar installation at the school. World Environment Day is celebrated annually on 5 June. The theme of World Environment Day 2024 is 'Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience'. The slogan of this event will be "Our Land, Our Future." We are Generation Restoration." Congratulations to all involved as Penrith can always do with more tree canopy to cool our city.

#### **CIVIC PARK PENDLE HILL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Thursday 23rd May 2024, I was honoured as the local Member for Prospect to address residents, Councillors, guests and media at the Official Re-Opening and Plaque Unveiling at Civic Park, Pendle Hill. The newly refurbished Civic Park provides modern infrastructure and equipment for people of all ages, making the location an excellent addition to our vibrant local community. The park will serve as a gathering space, where our wonderfully diverse community can meet and enjoy the great outdoors. The Civic Park Project is a \$17.5 million transformation, with the NSW Government contributing \$7 million to park upgrades, ensuring that Pendle Hill and the wider Cumberland community has an inclusive and accessible green space for many years to come. It was great to unveil the commemorative plaque for the new Civic Park alongside Councillor Lisa Lake, Mayor, Cumberland City Council, in the presence of students from Girraween Public School, community members, Councillors Glenn Elmore, Greg Cummings and Suman Saha, Cumberland City Council, as well as Councillor Sameer Pandey, City of Parramatta. Congratulations to our Cumberland City Council and our entire Pendle Hill community on a great event, re-opening of Civic Park.

#### **CUMBERLAND PAC AWARDS CEREMONY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Tuesday 23rd April 2024, I was happy to pay respect to our serving police officers at the NSW Police Force Cumberland Police Area Command Awards Ceremony at Club Merrylands. As one of four Police Area Commands that serve our Prospect Electorate community, Cumberland PAC covers our local suburbs of Girraween, Greystanes, Pemulwuy, Toongabbie and Wentworthville. Among



the many recipients of awards during the ceremony were Sergeant Matthew Jones, National Medal – 25 Year Clasp, and Chief Inspector Ricky Agius, NSW Police Medal – 35 Year Clasp, while Sergeant Matthew Jones, Sergeant Praveen Chand, Sergeant Andrew Linsell and Detective Sergeant Kaan McGregor each received the NSW Police Medal – 20 Year Clasp. Both the National Police Service Medal and the National Medal were awarded to Sergeant Daniel Irwin, Sergeant James D'Morais and Senior Constable Brooke Thorne, respectively. Thank you to Host Officer, A/Superintendent Darren Beeche, Commander Cumberland PAC, Official Party members, Acting Assistant Commissioner Andrew Holland APM, Commander South West Metropolitan Region, and Fr Paul Donoghue, NSW Police Force Chaplain, as well as all NSW Police Force sworn and unsworn officers who keep our vibrant Western Sydney community safe.

#### ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Sunday 2nd June 2024, I was delighted to join Premier Chris Minns at the annual Italian Republic Day celebrations at Club Marconi, Bossley Park. The Festa della Repubblica is the Italian National Day, which commemorates the 1946 Italian referendum which confirmed the end of fascism in Italy, and return to normalcy after the end of World War II. It abolished the Kingdom of Italy after 85 years, and saw the birth of the Italian Republic. Originally founded in 1956, Club Marconi has become synonymous with our historic Italian community in Western Sydney. This year, an estimated 30,000 patrons attended the Italian Republic Day festival, which included an open-air, Italian-language Catholic Mass, more than 70 market and food stalls, live music, carnival rides, historic Italian sports cars on display and a twilight fireworks finale. It was also great to be joined by Parliamentary colleagues Tri Vo MP and David Saliba MP, for a tour of the stalls, meeting many hard-working volunteers and tasting some authentic Italian cuisine. Congratulations to Morris Licata, President and Matthew Biviano, CEO, Club Marconi, and all our proud Italian-Australians on a record attendance and a fantastic event. Viva la Repubblica!

#### LOCAL SPORT GRANT PROGRAM

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—Over the last couple of weeks, it has been an absolute delight to announce and congratulate local sporting organisations on their successful Local Sport Grant Program applications. Grassroots sport is something that brings our multicultural community together, and I am delighted to see so many groups will benefit from the grant. I would like to specifically congratulate Gina Skinner from the Flames Netball Club, Janelle Eggins from Inclusive Skating Australia, Floreal Alvarez from the Menai Hawks Netball Club, Carolyn Busfield from the Moorebank Rugby League Club, and David McFadden from Sandy Point Dragons. These individuals work hard everyday to ensure their club receive the best for their members. In total, these organisations received just under a combined \$50,000 worth of funding, which I know will make a significant difference to their operations. I wish them all the best for the future and look forward to working alongside them into the future.

#### HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to extend my best wishes and congratulations to the Justices of the Peace (JP) in New South Wales who were recently recognised for 50 years of service as a JP. People seek the services of NSW JPs for all sorts of matters and I and the community appreciate their desire to help others by providing this voluntary and trusted service. It gives me great pride that these individuals have put in five decades of time, dedication, and commitment to our community. Congratulations to Stephen John Ironside, John Stirling Fraser, and Malcolm Chin for their service. I wish them all the best for their continued health, happiness, and future endeavours.

#### GEZEL BARDOSSI

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to congratulate and celebrate Blakehurst resident, Ms Gezel Bardossi on her recent achievements. Ms Bardossi received a 'one to watch' award in the 2024 Women of the Year Ceremony. The awards recognise females who consistently display determination, bravery, skill and passion in inspiring their local communities. Gezel, an aspiring singer and actress, was the youngest ever contestant on the reality television show, The Voice Australia. In 2023, Gezel received the Best Actress Award at the Salt House Creative International Film Festival for her pivotal role in the short film, The Naughty List. Ms Bardossi currently attends St Raphael's Primary School in South Hurstville and is the schools' leader for Positive Behaviours in Learning. Within this role, she raises awareness about bullying and socially acceptable behaviour. Gezel is known to her teachers and fellow students as a grounded and generous person who consistently motivates and inspires others. Once again, I congratulate Ms Bardossi on her wonderful achievements and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

### ST GEORGE SCHOOL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude towards the St George School which held its open day in April this year. The St George School provides a friendly and inclusive learning experience for students with intellectual, physical and multiple disabilities from preschool to year 12. During its open day, the school held demonstrations of paintings, drumming and the school's eye gaze program. Students and their parents also visited the school's unique 'Immersion Room,' an interactive sound and light experience which enables the children to familiarize themselves with daily life experiences such as using public transport or visiting a shopping centre. It is because of the professionalism and hard work of schools like the St George School that these children thrive, can be active and deeply involved in our community. I want to thank the teachers at the St George School for the amazing work they do each and every day to give kids with a disability the best quality education possible.

### THE HEIGHTS LEARNING COMMUNITY

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the Heights Learning Community in Gillieston Heights on their recent official opening. On the day I was joined by Northern NSW President Pastor Cristian Copaceanu, Adventist Schools Australia Director Dr Jean Carter and Northern NSW Education Director Paul Fua to cut the ribbon. Nine very excited students are the first class for this newly opened school. I can only imagine them driving past this school in years to come, telling friends and family "I was part of the first class who ever went there." A big thank you to principal John Venegas, who hosted the evening. John's focus is to build a learning community and be part of the new chapter in education in Gillieston Heights, putting children at the centre of their own learning. It was a fantastic event for the local community, students and parents, all joining in the fun. Congratulations to the students and staff of the Heights Learning Community on this historic opening!

### JOSH NILAND

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Josh Niland was recently described as 'one of the most interesting chefs on the plant' and was recently featured on ABC's Australian Story. In the program Josh spoke of growing up in East Maitland, of his family and of his cancer battle as a young child. Josh began his food journey as an early teen, with posters of celebrity chefs on his walls. His first job was at the Brewery in Newcastle, he soon moved on to chef jobs at some of Sydney's top restaurants, at Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck development kitchen and Fish Face, where his love of fish cookery began. Josh is now known worldwide as the king of gill-to-fin cooking thanks to his best-selling The Whole Fish Cookbook. Using the whole fish isn't just more sustainable, it made business sense for his restaurants. His first restaurant Saint Peter was named best new restaurant in its first year and received 2 hats. Josh and his wife Julie now run Saint Peter, two Fish Butchery fish shops, a la carte restaurant Peterman and takeaway Charcoal Fish. Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson where among the celebrity chefs singing his praises on the program, congratulations Josh on your success.

### GRAYS POINT RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I acknowledge members of the Grays Point Rural Fire Service (RFS) for what they do to keep our community safe. As Patron of the Grays Point RFS I attended its annual general meeting last weekend and like always it was great to see this local group of dedicated volunteers going about the essential administration behind their primary task of protecting life and property in times of emergency. Along with their firefighting efforts their hardworking members also contribute many other hours such as through training, hazard reduction burns, helping in times of flood, station housekeeping, as well as giving back to the community at local events as helpers or educating about fire safety, and not to forget their annual Santa run loved by everyone in Grays Point. I recognise the dedication of the Grays Point Executive Committee elected on the weekend to continue in their roles for another year: Captain Ian Kemp, Senior Deputy Captain Craig Smoothy, Deputy Captains Andrew Deards and John Lawler, who also serves as Vice President, President Sien Tjauw, Secretary Hilton Penfold, Treasurer Leisa Lawler. Matt Garrett was welcomed to the committee, replacing Trent Kemp whose many years of service are appreciated.

### WILLOUGHBY THEATRE COMPANY - JERSEY BOYS

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Friday 17 May, my wife Nikki and I were treated to a fantastic performance of Jersey Boys presented by the Willoughby Theatre Company. Held at the Chatswood Concourse, this captivating musical traced the remarkable rise of four talented individuals from humble beginnings to become the iconic Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. Delighting everybody in the audience, the musical featured classic and exceptionally talented leads. I particularly want to recognise Luc – Pierre Tannous, who embodied Frankie Valli so well! It is little wonder that Jersey Boys has earned its reputation as one of the most popular and appealing

musicals of all time. I would like to thank the whole amazing cast and crew, the company leadership, and everyone involved for such a fun, moving and colourful production. The props, costuming, choreography and music were all first class. I am so proud of the Willoughby Theatre Company for bringing this amazing, multi award-winning musical to our community.

#### **ANDREW WANG AND DANIEL SU**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge two Sydney Boys High School students, Andrew Wang and Daniel Su for their wonderful efforts in supporting disadvantaged youth. Andrew and Daniel are already actively involved in our local community and seeing a need, decided they could do more to help young people and address homelessness. Consequently, they launched Help Elevate Youth (HEY), a not-for-profit organisation that is dedicated to supporting people in need with a focus on combatting youth homelessness. Through their digital platform and tireless efforts, Andrew and Daniel designed special care and relief packages. These packages include items such as socks, non-perishable food, hygiene kits, blankets and reusable water bottles. In 2023, HEY donated more than 60 packages to St Vincent De Paul and Hurstville Salvation Army. The passion and dedication Andrew and Daniel show helping those in need is truly inspirational. I want to thank Daniel and Andrew for making our local community a better place and express my deepest gratitude for their unwavering dedication to supporting our youth. I encourage Andrew and Daniel to pursue their passion for helping others and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

#### **OPENING OF APOTHECARY COFFEE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was most excited to join Apothecary Coffee on Thursday 29 May for the grand opening of their newest location outside St Leonards Station on the Pacific Highway. It was gratifying to see their incredible growth from a single cafe with 4 employees in 2016 to now opening their 4th cafe with 21 dedicated staff members. This achievement is a testament to their hard work and resilience, especially during the COVID pandemic that saw so many other small businesses sadly close their doors. Apothecary Coffee prides itself on the production of artisan, specialty coffee, using the finest quality ingredients. For the Apothecary crew, coffee-making is a real artform and they see coffee as much more than a beverage but as something that connects people to their community. My warmest congratulations to Trent, Amanda and the whole Apothecary team for their outstanding success. I look forward to my next coffee from Apothecary, and I'm looking forward to seeing more businesses thrive in our vibrant local community.

#### **CROWS NEST METRO STATION OPENING DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Sunday, 26 May, over 7,000 community members gathered for an Open Day at the new Crows Nest Metro Station, demonstrating the widespread local enthusiasm for this innovative development. The Sydney Metro, with its state-of-the-art stations in my electorate at Crows Nest and Chatswood, will provide a substantial improvement in local connectivity. Soon, residents will benefit from direct access to the CBD and beyond, with a swift 7-minute journey from Crows Nest to Martin Place. I was delighted also recently to meet the incoming station staff. The advanced features of the Crows Nest station, including platform screen doors and peak services every 4 minutes, exemplify modern, reliable transport. This opening is exciting for the daily lives of our community, cutting travel time from Chatswood to the CBD by nearly half. The Sydney Metro project will undoubtedly leave a lasting positive impact on our city and community.

#### **GEORGE AULD**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I would like to acknowledge the generosity and support that George Auld gives the wider Lithgow community. George is the proprietor of Easyview Blinds in Lithgow and is to be commended for his kind and generous donation to the United Hospital Auxiliaries volunteers who operate the kiosk at Lithgow Hospital. The addition of nearly \$6000 worth of new blinds was a much-needed upgrade for the kiosk and George even spent more than four hours with colleague Matt Rundle installing them free of charge. George's wife Billinda volunteered at the kiosk for many years while Matt's wife Gloria is the kiosk manager and vice president of UHA Lithgow. UHA Lithgow is indeed very fortunate to have such considerable business owners such as George giving not only to benefit Lithgow Hospital but also to the whole Lithgow community. I know the blinds have certainly brightened and life to kiosk area to a new level for which everyone is most appreciative. Thank you and well done to George Auld, another quiet achiever from the Lithgow community.

#### **JAMES GILMORE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—A local farming family enterprise based out of Black Springs near Oberon deserves special recognition for what is an incredible winning streak. Tattykeel Poll Dorsets recently dominated the interbreed classes at the NSW Sheep Show at Dubbo, with the stud claiming the supreme exhibit for the 11th year in a row. This incredible achievement is testimony to the hard work and dedication of James Gilmore who is continuing the family tradition of breeding what can only be described as the best of the best. The

11-year interbreed supreme exhibit winning streak for Tattykeel is even more meritorious considering organisers said there were 613 exhibits catalogued for the two-day show. This was backed up by the fact the stud's Australian Whites made the final three in three separate categories, showing just how strong Tattykeel performed at the Dubbo show which is the biggest sheep show in NSW. The fact that we have a farming operation of this quality right in our very backyard speaks volumes for James and the Gilmore family and the Oberon district as a region for producing a world class product. Congratulations James and the Gilmore family on a job well done.

#### **PETER RYAN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—It is with great pleasure to be able to acknowledge Mr Peter Ryan for his service to the wider Oberon community. Mr Ryan is a true local legend of Oberon Fire Station and is celebrating 60 years of continuous service with Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW). He started off as a fire in 1964 and to mark this auspicious occasion received a visit from FRNS Commissioner Jeremy Fewtrell and Assistant Commissioner (Regional Operations) Cheryl Steer who presented him with a second gold clasp for long service, Good Conduct Medal as well as an Acknowledgement of Service certificate. Very few people get the opportunity to celebrate six decades of service, yet alone with the same organisation which makes Mr Ryan's milestone even more notable. Indeed, Mr Ryan's knowledge of firefighting operations is only surpassed by his knowledge of the town and its people. It is people like Peter Ryan who are the real quiet achievers of a tight knit community such as Oberon and is the perfect example of someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty to give back to the place he is proud to call home. Congratulations Peter Ryan.

#### **SURRY HILLS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE'S COMMUNITY CAFES**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre for the Northcott Cafe (on Wednesdays) and Friday Cafe which have been operating for over two years, strengthening our social fabric and benefiting our most vulnerable community members. The Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre's original cafe started over 10 Years ago meeting monthly. It was closed due to COVID-19 and then reimagined in its present form to meet bi-weekly. Both community cafes provide connection, conversation, friendship, nutrition, health promotion, and access to services for 42 weeks a year. Each week, Friday Cafe serves 60 to 90 and the Northcott Cafe serves 120 to 200 community members, with free baked goods, bread and hot beverages, along with affordable quiche, salad, and cake. Services accessible include a Justice of the Peace, Services Australia, Seniors Rights Service, People with Disability Australia, computer support, Homeless Persons Legal Centre, Counterpoint Community Services, Gamble Aware, Kirketon Road Centre, Junction Neighbourhood Centre-Aged Care Services, and gentle exercise for seniors by St Vincent's Community Health. I commend the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre for providing vulnerable members of our community a sense of belonging; the foundation of a thriving community.

#### **COUNCILLOR SARKIS YEDELIAN**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Councillor Sarkis Yedelian OAM who has just celebrated 20 years as a member of the City of Ryde Council. Councillor Yedelian has been a committed and passionate servant of the City of Ryde since 2004 and has worked tirelessly to encourage the integration and interaction of Ryde's vast multicultural communities. His intention to retire at the next election has been met with great sadness from locals and he will be sorely missed. However, his contribution to the Ryde area will continue to remain well into the future.

#### **SORRY DAY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—National Sorry Day remembers and recognises the historical mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who experienced forced separation from their families, known as 'The Stolen Generations.' Liverpool's ceremony was held at the Collingwood Precinct, a site of Aboriginal significance as it has been a meeting place for the Dharawal, Gandangara & Dharug people for millenia. The event featured a beautiful Smoking Ceremony, accompanied by Muggera Dancers. This group is made up of 3 generations who carry forward ancient, beautiful and significant Indigenous culture and traditions. We were also privileged to hear guest speaker Rita Wright, a survivor of the Stolen Generations, whose story radiated courage and resilience, deeply moving all in attendance. Attendees participated in a solemn Laying of Wreaths and Flag Raising Ceremony, symbolising our collective commitment to reconciliation and honouring the enduring spirit of Indigenous culture. I extend my gratitude to the Liverpool Regional Museum and Liverpool Council's Aboriginal Consultative Committee for their commitment to acknowledging all facets of historical injustices that continue to reverberate and cause intergenerational traumas. With a highly diverse community of over 150 cultural backgrounds in Liverpool, we must honour our original culture with reverence.

### ASHCROFT HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Ashcroft High School was the first school to be built in the Green Valley Housing Estate. The Housing Estate was developed in response to the housing crisis of the 1960s, and saw the area experience a population boom, which required new schools and other infrastructure. Officially opened in May 1964, it was initially home to 138 students and 14 classroom teachers. Despite opening 60 years ago, Ashcroft High School is home to history far preceding its establishment. At the front of the school is a set of iron gates – the Eliza Ashcroft Gates – originally made in 1845 by the Ashcroft family, who the suburb is named for. What started as a rather small high school has evolved into a community mainstay for over 600 students from Years 7 to 12. Over the years, Ashcroft High garnered a reputation for developing local rugby league talent into superstars. Previous students have included the likes of Brad Fittler, Jason Taylor, Ben Te'o and Junior Paulo. I congratulate Ashcroft High School on celebrating 60 years in our community, and I acknowledge Principal Dr Ted Noon, for his continuing dedication to education and advocacy for south-west Sydney's future leaders.

### LIVERPOOL WELLNESS EXPO

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Just this past weekend, I had the pleasure of holding a stall at the Liverpool Wellness Expo at Ultim8 Fitness in Chipping Norton, along with my colleague the Member for Leppington. The Expo, the first of its kind, brought together residents from across the Liverpool LGA who had one thing in common – their shared passion for all things health, wellbeing and fitness. Even a cold and rainy morning couldn't dampen the spirits of stall-holders and community members, who turned out in droves. It was an absolute delight to see the range of stallholders at the event, including nutritionists, physiotherapist, florists, mental health service providers, even natural skincare developers. It is clear that the team at Ultim8 have a truly holistic view to wellness! I want to recognise Tanya and Michael, the dynamic duo behind Ultim8 Fitness, for bringing their vision to life. Through their business, they have channelled their passion to truly make a difference to the community and shift the needle on the health and wellbeing needs of south-west Sydney. Their efforts demonstrate that the community will back those that back them and I wish them well for their future initiatives!

### BERRY CELTIC FESTIVAL

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Berry Celtic Festival and the Rotary Club of Berry. The Berry Celtic Festival is an annual fundraising endeavour of the Rotary Club of Berry and 2024 marked the 17th staging of this event which was held on Saturday 25th May 2024 at Berry Showground. The Berry Celtic Festival program included a fun filled day of medieval entertainment. The Grand Street Parade of Pipe Bands marching in their distinctive kilts, Celtic Clans, medieval knights, and Scottish Terrier dogs were all on display. I also acknowledge the hardworking volunteers from the Rotary Club of Berry who helped make this event an enormous success – in particular, Paul and Shona Gibson for their tireless hard work and dedication behind the scenes. Thank you both very much for your efforts. I also acknowledge the Federal Member for Gilmore Fiona Phillips who was also in attendance along with the Deputy Mayor of the Shoalhaven, Councillor Matthew Norris. I've never seen so many people in Queen Street for the Berry Celtic Festival march. From music to sport, food and fellowship – it's a terrific day of heritage and culture!

### TERRIGAL SLSC AWARDS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I was delighted to attend the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club's Senior Presentation night on Saturday 19th May 2024. The awards night is a great opportunity to recognise and celebrate the hard work and accomplishments club members. Congratulations to all the award recipients and wonderful volunteers who put up their hands every year. I would also like to say a huge thank you to the club volunteers for keeping Terrigal Beach safe for everyone to enjoy.

### MACMASTERS SLSC AWARDS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I was delighted to attend the Macmasters Surf Life Saving Club's Senior Presentation night on Saturday 25th May 2024. The stats for the season speak for themselves and the awards night is a great opportunity to recognise the awesome Team Macs volunteers: 6,204.77 patrol hours; 4 ambulance callouts; 30 rescues performed; 160 first aid actions; 2464 preventative actions taken. Congratulations to all the award recipients and wonderful volunteers who put up their hands every year. I would also like to say a huge thank you to the club volunteers for keeping Macmasters Beach safe for everyone to enjoy.

### KILLCARE SLSC AWARDS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I was delighted to attend the Killcare Surf Life Saving Club's Senior Presentation night on Saturday 1st June 2024. Congratulations to the following major award recipients: JM Macfadyen Rookie of the Year - Nate Redman; Evelyn Forbes Memorial, Most Outstanding Up and Coming

Junior - Jessica Leivesley; Jim Brooker Award Furthering Education of Members - Zac Webb; Alan Burgess Memorial Trophy Club Spirit Award - Charlie Pate; Stephen Forbes Memorial Trophy Most Valuable Member-John Cvetko; RJ Tubby Trophy Most Outstanding Member - Scott Leivesley & Kurt Vella; RJ Moulton Shield for Patrol of the Year - Patrol 2; Troy Felice (Captain), Luke Hayter (Vice Captain), Vic Ramirez (IRB), Sue Ramirez, Sue-Anne Fulton, Ryan Mills, Brendan Medley, Tahlia Fulton & Craig Sheppard. Congratulations to all the award recipients and wonderful volunteers who put up their hands every year. I would also like to say a huge thank you to all the club volunteers for your diligence throughout the season and for keeping Killcare Beach safe for everyone to enjoy.

#### **MIKAYLA KELLEHER**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – I would like to extend my congratulations to Ryde Eastwood Hawks touch footballer Mikayla Kelleher on her appointment as a Ryde Sports Star by the Ryde Sporting Foundation. Mikayla is just one of many youngsters that have been recognised by the Ryde Sports Foundation over the years. The Foundation is a cornerstone of our sporting community, helping to enhance the sporting experiences of thousands through its funding for community sports programs, scholarships for young athletes and organisation of various sporting events and as such the foundation is wholly deserving of our thanks as well.

#### **COMMUNITY OVAL AT CRICKET CENTRAL**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—It was great to grab a shovel and join Minister Steve Kamper, Lord Mayor Councillor Pierre Esber and Cricket NSW, to turn the first sod on the new Community Oval at Cricket Central in my electorate. Thanks Hannah Darlington from Sydney Thunder and Jackson Bird of Sydney Sixers for explaining exactly what this facility will bring to the game of cricket in NSW. Works include a new Cricket Learning and Community Centre, lighting for the main oval and turf practice nets plus construction of our very own "hill" on the eastern side of the main oval to provide extra capacity and an enjoyable fan experience. Facilities of this calibre are a game changer for the community. This excellent accessible facility will help develop cricket as a healthy physical activity and the all-weather pitches will minimise disruption to sporting activities while also incorporating soccer pitches into the mix. Cricket is a popular sport within Parramatta's diverse community with many of our new residents keen to play the game all year round. This facility will support community cricket while also playing a vital role in developing the next generation of state, national and international players.

#### **ELECTRIFY BOUDDI**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—An amazing thing about our Central Coast Community is our collective ability to create positive solutions to tackle big ticket issues. In the NSW Parliament I would like to congratulate 'Electrify Bouddi', a not-for profit community association focusing on reducing impact and building climate resilience for homes and local businesses. I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the launch of Electrify Bouddi which included a procession of electric vehicles, solar panel technology, water pumps, community gardens, electric bikes, energy trading and recycling and waste management information. I want to recognise the importance of this event for the potential it has to impact our community and reduce carbon emissions and our footprint on this planet involving a wide range of sustainable activities. What an amazing celebration of community engagement and collaboration regarding technology and artistic inspiration for the fight against climate change.

#### **BETTER FOUNDATION BLACKTOWN AND MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITALS FUNDRAISER**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, On the 31st May 2024, I attended the Better Carnivale Dinner in aid of the Better Foundation Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals. I joined many Parliamentary colleagues, The Hills Shire Mayor Dr Peter Gangemi and many other supporters of this very worthwhile Foundation. The Better Foundation was created in 2016 to support two of the busiest hospital in western Sydney. To date they have raised over \$2.4million to fund state of the art equipment, research and education for medical staff. I congratulate the sponsors of the Better Foundation including Lander Toyota, Home World, Blacktown Workers Club and Seven Hills RSL. Stephen Bali MP is the Chair of Better Foundation and does a commendable job steering this important organisation. Well done to Stephen and his fellow Directors-Peter Zelas OAM and Irene Ross. It was wonderful, successful night and I look forward to the 2025 Better Carnivale Dinner. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **SYLVANIA ANZ BRANCH OPENING**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the opening of ANZ's new branch in Southgate Shopping Centre Sylvania on 24 April 2024. As bank branches become scarcer, this new branch in Sylvania enables members of our community to get face-to-face assistance across a suite of banking offerings. The new specialised hub can assist members of our community with everyday banking like setting up bank accounts, support small

businesses with business banking or support individuals and families with home loans, personal loans and credit cards to assist them in reaching their financial goals. I take this opportunity to recognise the local team with whom I was pleased to celebrate the branch opening and who strive to have their personal service set them apart from neighbouring branches. I recognise the leadership of Branch Manager Loredana Aiossa and the dedicated local team including Antony Ying and Wendy Bryant for thank them for supporting the banking needs of our community members. Congratulations to ANZ on opening this new branch in Sylvania. I look forward to seeing how the branch assists people in our local community.

#### **ST JOHN OF GOD, RICHMOND HOSPITAL**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, On the 28th May 2024, I had the honour of attending the St John of God Richmond Hospital upgrade opening ceremony. St John of God Health Care have invested \$64.7 million in the redevelopment and expansion of Richmond Hospital at North Richmond. Richmond Hospital has increased its bed numbers from 88 to 112 and provides comprehensive, accessible and life-changing mental health care. St John of God are proud of their focus on supporting patients with mental health challenges. As Shadow Minister for Veterans, I was particularly pleased to see this redevelopment focusing on care for first responders and veterans and their families. The new buildings include a Wellness Centre that opened in 2023. The final redevelopment will include an indoor pool, gym, yoga facility and pharmacy. This upgraded facility is very welcome in Hawkesbury. It is a sanctuary where patients can receive professional care and help them reconnect with family and friends. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **CONCORD JUNIOR SOCCER CLUB**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge a significant milestone for Concord Junior Soccer Club for its 100th Anniversary. I thank all players, staff, coaches and volunteers who have developed the club in the lead up to their Centenary Season. The Club initially consisted of just two teams playing at Edwards Park, Concord and has since grown to host over 60 squads starting as young as under 6's. The Club now averages over 1,000 players across two home grounds, none of which would be possible without the tireless dedication of the club's parents and volunteers. I would also like to commend Concord Junior Soccer Club for their commitment to women's soccer. The club has been running women's and mixed teams since the 1990's and has seen a significant increase in enrolment following the 2024 Women's World Cup, and the success of the Matilda's. I congratulate the 2023 Committee, including President Michael Horseman, Vice President Danny Coral, Secretary Michael Stavrou, Treasurer Mark Byrne, Administrator Vicki Rhodes and all Committee Members and volunteers. I sincerely congratulate Concord Junior Soccer Club on their proud Centenary and wish all players and volunteers all the very best.

#### **DRUMMOYNE DEVILS WATER POLO CLUB**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Drummoyne Devils Water Polo Club on their outstanding 2024 season. This year marks the Club's 120th Year Anniversary and marks a proud history of supporting local players in developing their core values of participation, competition, and community in Water Polo. The Devils Men's Team made a historic win with the Club's first Australian Water Polo League Championship Title. The team defeated the Sydney Uni Lions 11-10 in what captain Blake Edwards described as a community effort in which all players and volunteers contributed to the outcome. I would further like to congratulate the Women's Team who secured 5th place in their league. Both results highlight the hard work and dedication from all players, volunteers, and coaching staff ultimately resulting in the club receiving the AWL Club Championship trophy for the best overall National League Club in Australia. Once again, I would like to sincerely congratulate the Drummoyne Devils on their exceptional season and I wish the Club, and its players all the very best in future competitions.

#### **MAVIS CLEMENTS**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate Mavis Clements from Drummoyne for her recent achievement as the recipient of the Environmental Individual Award at the 2024 City of Canada Bay Council Business and Sustainability Awards. Mavis' contributions to the City of Canada Bay Council's Environment Advisory Committee and Canada Bay Zero Carbon Community have placed her at the forefront of environmental sustainability advocacy in our community. Her unwavering dedication to educating the people of Drummoyne about the importance of better practices, including through solar power and efficient energy use is to be commended. I have had the pleasure of meeting Mavis on many occasions. Her commitment and dedication to preserving our environment and advocating for more sustainable practices to address climate change is to be commended. I sincerely congratulate Mavis on this well-deserved award and congratulate her on the contribution she has made towards shaping a greener future for our community. I wish her all the very best.

### KIAMA'S COMMUNITY BATTERY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama's long-awaited community battery which is now officially live and will allow nearby residents to store and share solar power. Endeavour Energy and Kiama Municipal Council launched the battery on Friday 24th May 2024, encouraging residents to sign up and save on their bills. Its rollout follows a similar initiative in Shell Cove. The Kiama Community Battery, rolled out on the Endeavour Energy network and available through retail partner Origin Energy, is the largest on the provider's network. Community batteries work by storing excess solar not used in homes during the day. The energy then becomes available for customers on the energy provider's network to use during the evening peak. I acknowledge and thank the Mayor of Kiama Neil Reilly and Endeavour Energy's General Manager, Future Grid and Asset Management, Mr Colin Crisafulli. The battery features incredible artwork by Wulbunja woman and Aboriginal Elder, Jodie Stewart. Titled On Country – Where the Mountains Meet the Sea, the stunning artwork features the Birri Birri (whale) totem representing Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong and the black cockatoo, the totem for Shoalhaven. Well done and thank you Auntie Jodie Stewart.

### BLUE HAVEN WORKSHOP

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Blue Haven Bonaira retirement village in Kiama. On Friday 24th May 2024, I was extremely pleased to attend an AED workshop session at Blue Haven Bonaira to discuss defib training with 50 local Blue Haven residents. Blue Haven Bonaira resident Mike Newcombe led fundraising and roll out of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) throughout the facility. Mike, who has previously had a bypass, thoroughly scoped out all areas of the facility that would require CellaAED devices to ensure prompt emergency support for all residents in the event of cardiac arrest. Once installed, Mike recognised training for understandably apprehensive residents was necessary. Naturally, he looked to his highly qualified son, who is also the leader of a not-for-profit charity that runs medical conferences in third world countries. Mark Newcombe kicked the workshop session off with a well-received chuckle about his parents gifting him a CellaAED last Christmas and answered questions. Every year, around 3,800 people die from an out of hospital cardiac arrest. Lives could have been saved if they'd had access to a defibrillator. They save lives, by having them in public places and all forms of public transport.

### GEMCO RAIL

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending the opening of Gemco Rail's new site in Rutherford. Gemco Rail supply products and service to the rail sector including maintenance and refurbishment services and are an important employer in the Maitland community. The day's celebrations began with a smoking ceremony by Uncle Leon and Uncle Richard then I joined Michael Rae, Gemco Rail's Newcastle Service Delivery Manager to officially open the facility. Mai-Wel CEO John Cleary then announced Gemco Rail as the first ambassador business for the Mai-Wel Group. Mai-Wel have operated in Maitland since 1960 as a disability and employment services provider. This announcement follows Gemco Rail being named the Mai-Wel Groups employer of the year for 2023. Gemco Rail was recognised for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace and supporting the work of Mai-Wel. The partnership included Mai-Wel's Transition to Work program which is targeted at 15 to 24 year olds no longer at school who are looking for their next step to achieve their employment or educational goals. Gemco also utilise Mai-Wel's facilities maintenance crew which employs people with disabilities. Congratulations Gemco Rail I wish you well in your new home.

### THE OCEAN QUEEN CLASSIC

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—On the 5th of May, the Illawarra's first invitational all female surf event took place at Woonona Beach. I am proud this event was hosted in my electorate of Keira and that the talented surfers within the Illawarra and South Coast community had this unique opportunity to showcase their skills. I would like to acknowledge and thank all the participants, the Woonona Boardriders Club, the sponsors and everyone who assisted in the creation and execution of this fantastic event. I was also pleased to assist in securing government funding of a \$10,000 grant to contribute to making this event the enormous success it was. Empowering, supporting and celebrating our female surfers is paramount to levelling the playing field for women in sport, something I am absolutely passionate about.

### MIDDLE HARBOUR SCHOOL LEADERS

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker one of my favourite things about being an MP in this place is being able to connect with our local school students in a variety of ways. Each year I invite schools to send their school leaders or representatives here to Parliament to meet with me over a cup of tea and a scone and learn a little about the democratic processes that take place and how it can affect them. I recently hosted school



leaders from Middle Harbour Public School: Barney Court, Claudia Dietz, Phoebe Evans, Mila Apps, Billie Lawler, Thomas Payten, Florence Ward, and Archie Woodard. It was a lovely morning giving them a tour around Parliament, before they got to witness the democratic theatre of question time. It was clear to me why these students were picked for leadership roles within Middle Harbour Public. Their dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment to their roles is commendable and will set a great example for other students. I have no doubt they will continue to make Middle Harbour Public proud in the work they will do. A special thank you to Principal Laura Barry who accompanied the students, but also runs a much loved local school.

#### **MOSMAN STREET PANTRY INITIATIVE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker in response to mounting cost of living pressures, Madeline Godsell and Matt Giles have created a community street pantry for those who are struggling. Their project aims to ease the day-to-day pressures associated with the cost-of-living crisis, as well as reduce food waste in the lower north shore. The street pantry is positioned in a densely populated area of Mosman, where most people live in flats. As we all know, rent has been steadily increasing and household budgets are tightening. So this is a simple way of allowing those who might be doing it a little tough at the moment to grab an item or two from the pantry. The Street Pantry is a low-cost yet effective way to lend a helping hand to those who are struggling. It also allows those who might have over shopped to donate items so they don't go to waste. I commend Madeline and Matt for their generosity, ingenuity, and compassion for their fellow north shore residents. Together, they are a truly dynamic duo who are making a tangible difference to the north shore community. Thank you both for all you are doing.

#### **ARCHIBALD PRIZE FINALIST CAMELLIA MORRIS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate Camellia Morris, a local gallery owner in Mosman, for being named as a finalist in the esteemed Archibald Prize. Camellia is a self-taught artist, having taken up painting after a career in accounting. This is her first time as an Archibald finalist. Her subject is Anthony Field, affectionately known as the "Blue Wiggle", one of the founding members of the Australian Children's Television hit. In 2022, Camellia's portrait of Purple Wiggle, Jeff, titled 'Sleeping on the Job' was selected for the Salon des Refuses. Now, Camellia's portrait of Anthony, 'Wild Wild Wiggle', is set to make waves at this year's Archibald Prize Exhibition. The exhibition kicks off this Saturday at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Congratulations Camellia on your fantastic achievement.

#### **EATING DISORDERS RESEARCH AND FUNDING PRESENTATION**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, on the 15th May 2024, I attended a presentation on Eating Disorders hosted by the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health. I congratulate Co-chairs Hon Emily Suvaal MLC and Hon Susan Carter MLC for organising this important event. The Butterfly Foundation released the updated 'Paying the Price 2024' study that examines the society wide impact of eating disorders. The report estimated the total cost of eating disorders was \$66.9 Billion in the past year. The InsideOut Institute for Eating Disorders highlighted this field received the lowest share of mental health research funding and mental health research overall received only 7.5% of the medical research budget. 1.1million Australians are living with eating disorders. There were 1273 deaths in Australia in 2023 attributable to eating disorders. We listened to researchers, but also heard from a person with lived experience of an eating disorder. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **BACK TO GUILDFORD FESTIVAL**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On Saturday 25 May 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the "Back to Guildford" Festival and launch of the new laneway, alongside Cumberland City Council Mayor Lisa Lake and Federal MP Chris Bowen as part of the street festival. The event returned for the first time in 20 years and was attended by thousands of the local community. Upon meeting with local business and residents, I encouraged Council to reinvest in the revitalisation of Guildford and to address safety concerns throughout the shopping centre. The Laneway transformation and street festival was funded through the Safer Cities: Her Way grant program, a collaborative partnership between Transport for NSW and Cumberland City Council. Guildford Laneway has been transformed into a more vibrant and welcoming public place, that has already been embraced by local businesses and community. The improvements were shaped by engagement and co-design with local women and girls who expressed the need for an activated and well-lit space that enables connection. New features including, free mobile phone charging stations, Mural by artist Sophie Odling, Creative lighting, circular seating, stage area for the community, smart bins and greenery.

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