



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 6 June 2024**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 6 June 2024**

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

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

*Governor*

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message regarding the administration of the Government.

*[Notices of motions given]*

*Bills*

## PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONS AMENDMENT (BALLOONS) BILL 2024

### First Reading

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Kobi Shetty, read a first time and printed.**

### Second Reading Speech

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (10:18):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of The Greens, I introduce the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to amend the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to prohibit the release of helium balloons into the environment. Currently, under the Act, it is illegal to release 20 or more lighter-than-air balloons. The bill seeks to amend section 146E to make it an offence to release one or more lighter-than-air balloons into the environment. The change would bring New South Wales legislation in line with recognised best practice adopted in other States, including Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria, and shortly to be adopted in the Northern Territory. It would help to significantly reduce plastic pollution in our environment.

While I am pleased to introduce the bill, the changes it proposes should have been actioned much earlier. As noted, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria have already banned the release of helium balloons. The Victorian ban has been in effect since 2021; the Western Australia ban came into effect in January 2022; and the Queensland ban came into effect in September last year. Meanwhile, the Northern Territory ban is planned to come into effect in 2025. While New South Wales has made some progress in phasing out problematic single-use plastics, it has not moved fast enough and has failed to keep up with progress in other States.

The introduction of the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021 established a mechanism through which problematic single-use plastics could be phased out. The *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper released by the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] in October last year identified suggested next steps to reduce plastic pollution in New South Wales, including the suggestion to "phase out the release of helium balloons, as well as accessory items such as plastic balloon sticks and ties". Disappointingly, no further action has been taken since that recommendation was released, and there has been no indication from the Government that it intends to introduce legislation to enact the recommendation. This inaction is particularly disappointing given the significant risk that balloons pose to animals and our environment, which I will turn to in further detail shortly. We need to act now to prohibit the release of helium balloons into our environment.

First, I address the types of balloons that this legislation would apply to. There are two primary types of balloons currently available: mylar balloons, which are made of foil and plastic, and latex balloons. While there is no disputing that mylar balloons are a form of single-use plastic, latex balloons are often sold with claims that they are biodegradable. I have attended recent events where people have been at pains to explain to me that helium balloons are biodegradable, because they know and share my environmental concerns, but they have been misled by greenwashing that suggests that those types of balloons are biodegradable and will not harm the environment.

A 2021 study from the University of Tasmania found that was not the case. The UTAS study highlighted the fact that latex balloons are not made from natural rubber latex alone but are mixed with chemicals. These chemicals include antioxidants and anti-fogging chemicals, plasticisers—to make the balloons more flexible—preservatives, flame retardants, fragrances, dyes and pigments. Even more chemicals are used to make the

additives "stick" to the latex and to each other. The balloons cannot be "100 per cent natural rubber latex", despite common labelling claims. The impact of added chemicals on the end product is significant. The 2021 UTAS study found that no latex balloon showed evidence of degradation across a 16-week period. Dr Morgan Gilmour, the lead author on the study, said:

For biodegradability to be meaningful the balloons would need to degrade relatively quickly and consistently so they were no longer a risk to wildlife or the environment. Our results showed no such outcome, and even industrial compost methods did not facilitate degradation during our experiment.

This study makes it clear that both types of balloons primarily available on the market that use helium contain either single-use plastics or chemicals that operate in similar ways that allow them to persist in the environment without breaking down. The impact is significant and demonstrates why it is important to prohibit the release of both latex and mylar balloons that contain helium. Looking now at the impact of balloons on our environment, there is considerable evidence that demonstrates the damage they cause. First, balloons released into the environment often become marine debris, travelling hundreds of kilometres to end up as litter along our beaches and in our oceans.

People who do not live along the coast might think that there is no way that balloons become ocean debris, but there is evidence that suggests otherwise. The Australian Marine Debris Initiative has documented several examples showing how quickly balloons can travel and become litter. It found that balloons released in Albury, with the city council logo on them, washed up on a beach in Bermagui, 300 kilometres from where they were released. Balloons released during a festival in Western Sydney were found some three weeks later on Lord Howe Island, 800 kilometres away. It is surprising how far balloons can travel, and a lot of people do not realise that this is where they end up. These are not isolated incidents.

The Australian Marine Debris Initiative database reported that an estimated 27,777 balloons, clips, ribbons and accessories were collected from beaches alone in the five years from January 2017. Latex balloons have been shown to float on the surface of water and are easily mistaken for food by birds and other marine animals, including turtles. The impact of this on marine life is considerable. A 2019 CSIRO report found that balloons are the highest risk plastic debris item for seabirds; they are 32 times more likely than hard plastics to kill birds when ingested. Although soft plastic items, including balloons, accounted for only 5 per cent of items ingested by seabirds in the study, they were responsible for more than 40 per cent of the mortalities. The lead scientist and researcher on the CSIRO report, Dr Lauren Roman, said:

Balloons, or balloon fragments, were the marine debris most likely to cause mortality, and they killed almost one in five of the seabirds that ingested them. As similar research into plastic ingestion by sea turtles has found, it appears that while hard plastic fragments may pass quickly through the gut, soft plastics are more likely to become compacted and cause fatal obstructions.

We do not want to see our native wildlife swallowing any kinds of plastics, but when they swallow this particular kind of plastic, they often mistake it for some kind of food source and end up with significantly more impactful and fatal obstructions. I frequently hear from hardworking advocates, including volunteers like Karen Joynes from No Balloon Release Australia, about the devastating impact that balloons have on wildlife. She has worked closely with wildlife carers and marine debris collectors who have reported on the horrific deaths that they have witnessed because of balloon litter in the environment.

Karen has shared with me evidence of the impact that balloons have on a wide range of Australian animals, including shorebirds like albatrosses and penguins, turtles, platypuses, magpies and satin bowerbirds. We know that platypuses are endangered and incredibly difficult to spot. It is concerning to hear that they are falling victim to ingesting balloon litter. In some cases, the balloons block the digestive tract, leading to slow and excruciating deaths from starvation. Other wildlife, including birds, become entangled in ribbons and other accessories used in balloon releases. This can prevent them from flying and obtaining food, again, leading to a painful, prolonged death from starvation.

The NSW Wildlife Council has also documented the extensive harm caused by balloons. In its 2019 submission on plastic pollution to the EPA, the NSW Wildlife Council identified balloons as one of the 10 most common things that impact wildlife and result in the need for rescue. The submission noted that beach-litter surveys demonstrated that the number of balloons and balloon pieces found on beaches had tripled in the 10 years from 2009 to 2019. The NSW Wildlife Council paints an incredibly bleak picture, noting that half of all marine life has been lost in the past 40 years, with plastic pollution a significant driver. It details wildlife rescues where a wide range of sea animals, including dolphins, whales and turtles, have ingested balloons, resulting in blocked digestive tracts. It also notes that terrestrial animals, including tortoises, birds and others, are prone to becoming entangled in ribbons from balloons. This can cause significant injury or restrict movement, leading to death through drowning, suffocation or an inability to eat and avoid predators.

There are countless stories from wildlife rescuers detailing the harm that balloons cause. In May 2020 news broke of the rescue of Ella, the sea turtle. Ella was 15 years old, found in distress off Manly beach and taken in

by the Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue volunteers working from the Central Coast. They found that Ella had pneumonia and a case of blood poisoning and was close to death. At first, they could not work out what had caused her illness—until the following day when she was able to pass a balloon. Ella had ingested the balloon along with two and a half metres of string tied to it. This balloon resulted in pneumonia and blood poisoning. Thankfully, Ella's story had a happy ending. She was saved. We know that turtles can live an incredibly long time. For a 15-year-old turtle to be dying because of the result of that type of pollution is really shocking. Due to the hardworking wildlife rescue volunteers who took her into care, she was saved—but not all turtles are so fortunate.

There is overwhelming consensus among the scientific community, and among animal conservationists, that balloons are incredibly dangerous. Zoos Victoria has had an active campaign entitled "When Balloons Fly, Seabirds Die." They have demonstrated that two marine birds, the flesh-footed shearwaters and the short-tailed shearwaters, have both been significantly impacted by marine debris, particularly balloons. Those seabirds are now classified as "near threatened" and "population decreasing", respectively. They have documented evidence of those threatened bird populations mistakenly ingesting plastic debris, including balloons, and even feeding it to their young chicks in the nest. It is painfully clear that balloon releases are causing significant harm and suffering to a wide range of animals and are even pushing some closer to extinction. This is unacceptable and we must do better. The release of balloons into the environment is completely unnecessary. We could easily prohibit it, as other States have already done, and we can help to make a positive difference for our environment and for native animals.

Support for a ban on balloon releases is also gaining widespread support among the broader community. During the most recent EPA consultation on the NSW Plastics Action Plan, I received hundreds of submissions from members of my community supporting a ban on problematic single-use plastics, including balloons. We know that single-use plastics are a broad issue and that there are so many things we need to consider as part of this plan. Balloons are only a small piece but I mention the incredible importance of getting on with banning the remainder of single-use plastics. There are still plenty of items in our environment that we could be taking a much more proactive stand on to get rid of single-use plastics and improve environmental outcomes for our community. In the submissions, people responded to this. Increasingly, people realise that balloon releases are unnecessary, and that they are leading to significant harm and suffering for animals.

The need for New South Wales to act is made even clearer still by the disappointing lack of action at the Federal level. Despite calls for Federal regulations to control and effectively limit the sale and use of helium to inflate balloons, there has been no action taken. Again at the Federal level, the *Threat Abatement Plan for the impacts of marine debris on the vertebrate wildlife of Australia's coasts and oceans (2018)* mentions the impact of balloons and the harm that they cause, but no clear action has resulted. As mentioned earlier, other States have acknowledged the inaction at the Federal level and have moved to fill the regulatory gap. It is time for New South Wales to follow suit and bring our legislation in line with recognised best practice. The evidence is clear on the harm balloon releases cause in our environment, and the immense suffering animals endure when they mistakenly ingest balloon debris. Balloons are deadly. They are 32 times more likely to kill seabirds than hard plastics. Despite this overwhelming evidence, New South Wales still permits the release of up to 19 helium balloons at a time.

I acknowledge the association that some people have with balloons when celebrating something joyful, or indeed something sombre. We often see balloon releases used to mark a significant death, a significant memorial, a birthday; and I do appreciate that some feel an attachment to the idea of balloon releases as something that marks a significant event. A balloon release is something they feel is important, but we have to acknowledge the reality, which is that it is predicted by 2050 we will have more plastic in the ocean than fish. It is incumbent on all of us to look to our responsibility for future generations as well as to all other species that we share this incredibly beautiful planet with and end this practice of balloon releases. We need to ask ourselves whether this incredibly brief moment is worth the long-term implications. Is it worth seeing turtles, penguins, albatrosses, and more, ingesting the remnants of these balloons, or becoming entangled and unable to fly, only to die slowly from starvation?

I urge my colleagues to recognise that this immense suffering and the potential long-term impact on our wildlife is not worth that fleeting moment of colour. There are countless other ways to celebrate and mark significant occasions without contributing to marine debris or litter in our environment. Ultimately, releasing 19 helium balloons at a time is still far too many. We need to update our legislation to prohibit the release of any helium balloons into our environment. The amendment I propose is a simple one. It is supported by evidence and testimony from the scientific community and from hardworking animal conservationists. To be honest, it is recognised by young people as well. My kids love balloons. They get incredibly excited when they come across a balloon because I do not buy them for them. They love getting second-hand balloons from anyone who will give them to them, and they are treasured in my house, but I think they appreciate that the damage caused, particularly by helium balloons, is really just not worth that moment of fun.

The amendment will finally bring our legislation in line with recognised best practice and with laws in other States including Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. Balloons are deadly to animals, particularly seabirds. Balloon releases are responsible for significant litter in our environment—litter which, despite common and misleading greenwashing label claims, is not biodegradable. The evidence is clear. Prohibiting the release of helium balloons would have a significant positive impact on the wellbeing of Australian animals and our environment. I strongly urge each of my colleagues to recognise that this change would be a positive step forward and support this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (PUBLIC ACCESS) BILL 2024 (NO 2)**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:37):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I will not need a very long time to speak because I have previously introduced this bill and, because of the appalling behaviour of the Government, I was not able to extend the time of this bill, which is designed to save lives. I refer members to the second reading speech I gave in this place on 21 March 2024. I ask members to reflect on that speech. This bill is designed to save lives. It is about following the lead of the South Australian Parliament, which decided, following the introduction of a private member's bill in its Parliament, to upgrade standards that we expect in public buildings and in public places to ensure that, just like fire hydrants, defibrillators are part of the instrumentality of public buildings.

This bill seeks to emulate that, improve upon it and improve access by not just having defibrillators in public places but also to improve regulation around the Service NSW app to ensure that people can find these devices when they are needed most. Around 3,800 people die from out of hospital cardiac arrests every year in New South Wales. More than 70 per cent of those lives could be saved. The figure is higher than the national road toll. This bill will save lives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 16 May 2024.**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (10:39):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. Before the debate was interrupted, I was addressing the current obligations on third-party lobbyists under the Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011. In addition to obligations imposed on all lobbyists, third-party lobbyists must also not lobby on a matter that relates to the functions of a New South Wales government board or committee of which they are a member. They must not make exaggerated or misleading claims to their clients about the nature or extent of their access to political parties, the Government or government agencies. They must keep separate from their lobbying activities any personal activity or involvement on behalf of a political party.

In addition, third-party lobbyists are ineligible for appointment to any government board or committee with functions related to any matter for which they represent the interests of third parties or have represented the interests of third parties in the previous 12 months. They may have their registration cancelled or suspended by the NSW Electoral Commission if they contravene the code. This framework was carefully examined by the ICAC. This bill pre-empt's the Government's position on the implementation of recommendations made during the Operation Eclipse investigation.

The ICAC's recommendations raise complex and important issues for the regulatory framework of lobbying in New South Wales. They require careful consideration. The second reading speech for this bill noted that the bill contains ICAC's Operation Eclipse recommendations. While Operation Eclipse made several recommendations on ministerial diaries, this bill does not directly implement any of them. Specifically, it does not require monthly disclosures or diaries to be published in a searchable format and it does not require the New South Wales Government to create a preset menu of options for the purpose of a meeting—all ICAC recommendations.

As I have outlined, the Government cannot support this bill at this time. The regulation of the lobbying of government officials, including the transparency of Ministers' meetings, should be the subject of thoughtful, considered and deliberate reform. This bill does not examine the lobbying framework as a whole. However, in fairness to the member who introduced the bill, it does not purport to. For those reasons, the Government opposes the bill.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:42):** I speak on behalf of the Opposition on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. The Opposition supports this excellent example of further transparency in government. I inform and remind the House that Operation Eclipse made 29 recommendations. The former Coalition Government accepted 16, accepted 11 in principle and noted two. Importantly, the former Coalition Government accepted recommendation 12 and intended to introduce a requirement for all members of Parliament to publish diary disclosures on a routine basis. However, the parliamentary term expired before we were able to do so.

I will note some of the bill's important provisions for the benefit of those who have not had the opportunity to read it. It is important for the public to know that lurk merchants are not meeting with decision-makers in Government in secret and hiding their lurking behaviour. I remember Luke Foley often lectured the former Government about contact with who he called "lurk merchants" when he was Leader of the Opposition. It was incredibly surprising to hear the Minister's response to this bill. The current Government wants to keep the lurk merchants in the shadows—

**Ms Donna Davis:** You're the expert at meeting with lurk merchants.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** You will have your chance in a moment. I know there are problems with your behaviour more generally, but you should not bring them into this Chamber.

**Ms Julia Finn:** Really?

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** She opened it up. If you want to talk the talk, you need to be prepared to walk the walk.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The member for Wahroonga will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It is incredibly important for democracy that the sun is able to shine on the activities important to democracy. We need to sterilise any undesirable behaviours during those activities. The bill introduced by the member for Kiama does exactly that. It is surprising to hear that a bill that implements recommendations made by the Independent Commission Against Corruption is not being adopted and warmly embraced by the Government.

**Mr Rory Amon:** With open arms. Just cuddle it.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I must say, the member for Pittwater is in fine form. That sort of enthusiasm should be encouraged.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The member for Pittwater will come to order. He will be able to contribute to the debate at a later stage. The member for Pittwater will cease interjecting.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It could be post-State of Origin remorse. There were no opportunities for chirping last night. It might be coming into the Chamber. Importantly, new section 22A states that "relevant meetings" means meetings or discussions that involve a Minister and an external person meeting to discuss a matter that may be considered by the Minister, whether formally or informally, in the Minister's role as a portfolio Minister or member of Cabinet or parliamentary secretary. That is very important. All of Executive Government is covered by this bill. That lacuna in the current situation requires remedy. A relevant meeting may take place in person, by videoconference or by telephone. That is also very important. The bill is extensive and thorough, as it should be.

An "external person" means a person other than a Minister, ministerial or parliamentary staff member, government official, or person representing or engaged by the State or member. Importantly, new section 22B requires the name of each person attending the meeting and details of the purpose of the meeting to be identified. That is not the case under the current regime. Members opposite never proposed it.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** You did nothing in your 12 years in government. I've got a document here that would show you that we actually did propose it.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I hear the interjections of the member for Auburn. She reminds me that the current Government's view is that their 12 years in opposition were some kind of slumber period or hibernation.

They did not come up with any ideas or propose any policies. Apparently, they went to sleep, did nothing and are now blaming everything on the other side. They did nothing during their period in opposition to suggest doing anything differently. The only thing they did while they were in opposition was oppose every single beneficial measure the former Coalition Government proposed for the State of New South Wales. But I digress. I apologise, Mr Temporary Speaker.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I appreciate that.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I know I should not be baited. I will resist. I will treat it as the white noise it is. They are chirping away—chirp, chirp, chirp.

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

*[A Government member interjected.]*

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** There we go. It keeps going. The bill is an incredibly beneficial and important enhancement of transparency in our democracy. I remind the House that democratic institutions and democracy are being challenged all over the world. At the moment, we still have a vibrant democracy in this country. That is something we should celebrate and be ever vigilant to protect. The ICAC's report was geared towards that end. The bill introduced by the member for Kiama, in implementing the recommendations of ICAC, is also geared towards that end. Anyone in this place who believes in the ideals of democracy and the importance of a proper, functioning democracy, and not some of the aberrations we see in other parts of the world where undesirable roads are being gone down—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** They're interested in democracy, but not when they're in government.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I thought I heard some sort of strange noise.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The member for Wahroonga will be heard in silence. Members will be removed from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A if they continue to interject.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** As I was saying, we need and want a vibrant democracy in our country, so anything with a hint of irregularity that can lead to corruption, as identified by the ICAC report, should be dealt with. That is what the member for Kiama is doing through this private member's bill. I encourage all members to stand up for the ideals of our democracy, for transparency and for proper process, and to support the bill. Disclosures of meetings should not simply identify the organisations and give bland descriptions such as "meet and greet" or "current affairs". They should provide the details of all the people who attended and properly identify all of the issues discussed to provide a ray of transparency. Shining a light is the greatest antiseptic to corruption. That is why all members who believe in the importance of the freedoms and institutions of our government should support the bill. I thank the House for its attention.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:52):** I speak in opposition to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. I acknowledge the grandstanding intentions of the member for Kiama in bringing forward the bill. It is clearly a matter of public importance that people know their representatives are acting honestly and with integrity. Our New South Wales system achieves that in various ways. In many ways it is the envy of the world, and it does a good job of building transparency and accountability into our robust democracy.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** What have you got against ICAC?

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** You're the experts on ICAC. When, through error or malice, elected representatives fall short, it shakes confidence in the system. More than ever, in the age of disinformation, it is crucial that the political system is seen to be open and transparent. I have been pleased to see the achievements of the Minns Labor Government in the past year in implementing various integrity and transparency measures. Significant reforms have been made in areas such as grants reform and the overhaul of political donation regulations. The Government is committed to taking decisive actions in that area following careful assessment of the issues to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling major issues more effectively. Transparency and integrity are fundamental to the wellbeing of our society, and it is our duty as members in this place to seriously address those concerns.

The bill touches on critical aspects of integrity and probity but, unfortunately, is insufficient. The provisions outlined in the bill largely overlap with existing requirements outlined in the Premier's memorandum, including the obligation for Ministers to regularly publish summaries of their meetings. Ministers are already obliged to disclose quarterly summaries of their diaries, as mandated by the Premier's memorandum, which are readily accessible on the Cabinet Office's website. Members know where to find those disclosures because, occasionally, they will seek clarity on something, whether in this place, in budget estimates hearings, in the other

place or in the media. That is entirely right. It is entirely proper that Ministers' meetings should be documented and available for the public to see. If improvements can be made to the system, which is usually the case for any system, we can do that. We do not need the member for Kiama to lecture us on how to make those improvements. We can do it, but not in the piecemeal way that the member for Kiama proposes in this bill.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Mount Druitt will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Auburn.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Mr Temporary Speaker has made a number of comments during this debate about members interjecting while another member is speaking. I would ask that the members opposite, who complain the most about interjections, show some respect to the current speaker and cease interjecting.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Mount Druitt will be heard in silence.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** Despite referencing the ICAC's Operation Eclipse report, the bill fails to include any of the ICAC's recommendations regarding ministerial diary disclosures. The bill falls short in addressing the comprehensive reforms called for by Operation Eclipse, particularly those concerning the regulation of lobbying. The Government is actively deliberating on recommendations that emerged from the inquiry pertaining to lobbying and recognises the complexities involved. Operation Eclipse made recommendations regarding ministerial diaries, but the bill fails to directly address any of them.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Rubbish!

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** Just be quiet and you might learn something.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Kiama will come to order.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** The regulation of the lobbying of government officials, including transparency in ministerial meetings, demands thorough strategic reform, which this bill does not do. The Minns Labor Government will act in that area but the issues are complex. In targeting the problem, the Government must carefully consider it in totality. For the benefit of members who brought up the issue of supporting ICAC, I quote from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which states:

NSW's key integrity agencies, including the corruption watchdog, will take a \$14 million hit over the next four years as the government forces them to find significant savings from their budgets.

When was that published? It was during the Liberal-Nationals Government's term, in March 2021. Members opposite should not lecture us about ICAC, our integrity and what we are trying to do, when they cut the ICAC budget by \$14 million. They should not grandstand in this House.

**Ms Julia Finn:** Point of order: The member for Kiama is flouting your ruling about interjections.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Kiama will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt has the call.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** I am just reminding those opposite that, while they are grandstanding today and touting themselves to be the Knighthood of Integrity, they cut \$14 million from the ICAC budget. They should not be lecturing us about ICAC. Their contribution to ICAC was to leave a \$14 million black hole in its budget.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Members are far too disorderly. The contribution of the member for Mount Druitt cannot be heard.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the Leader of the House. I apologise to the member for Mount Druitt but, it being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time and the routine of business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Members*

**MEMBER FOR NORTH SHORE**

**MEMBER FOR PROSPECT**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for North Shore and the member for Prospect all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have a wonderful time.



*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to guests of the Premier, Brett and Belinda Beasley. I also welcome guests of the member for Heathcote, students from Engadine High School. I acknowledge guests of the member for Kiama, the Shoalhaven Southern Belles Nowra Red Hats group. I welcome Nayce Dalton, the husband of the member for Murray. On behalf of the member for Oxley, I acknowledge Daniel and Liam from Rise Projects, South West Rocks. I also welcome my guests, Sara Krause and Abby Bryce, who are friends of Shu-Fang Wei in my office. I welcome high school students from across New South Wales, sitting in the Cooper gallery, who are attending programs conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement team. I welcome the Deputy Mayor of Hawkesbury City Council, Councillor Barry Calvert, as a guest of the member for Hawkesbury. I also recognise in the gallery Councillor Phyllis Miller, OAM, Mayor of Forbes Shire Council.

*Question Time***SMALL BUSINESS INSOLVENCIES**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Small Business. New South Wales business insolvencies are up 61 per cent on last year under the Minister's watch. Will the Minister ensure that his colleagues do not impose any new or increased taxes on small and medium businesses and, indeed, will provide them with tax relief in the forthcoming budget?

**Mr Mark Coure:** Without notes.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:07):** I'm not like you; I don't need notes.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The Opposition has asked a question of the Minister. He is trying to answer it but he cannot be heard. The Minister has the call.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. It is a serious question. We are all aware that there have been tough times for small business for a number of years. Representing small business is something that members on this side of the House are very proud of. There was not much done by those opposite for many moons. Just like everything else, small business was neglected by the former Government. There was no representation. We have set up the Service NSW Business Bureau to represent our business community and help them during these difficult times.

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We will continue to represent them. The Opposition wants to know what is in the budget. They can wait and see on 18 June. They need a little bit of patience. But it was a good question from the Leader of the Opposition. All of those members opposite need to get a bit consistent and support the man. He is doing a great job. I thank him for the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I warn the member for Upper Hunter that he will be called to order if he continues to interject.

**KNIFE CRIME**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:09):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on action the Government is taking to increase safety for the people of New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:09):** I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. Yesterday, along with the police Minister, I met Belinda and Brett Beasley, inspiring people who helped change the law to make it safer for the people of this State. Brett and Belinda lost their son, Jack, who was attacked and fatally stabbed during a night out with friends in Surfers Paradise in 2019. Tragically, Jack was just 17 years old. In the wake of that shocking crime, Brett and Belinda launched the Jack Beasley Foundation to drive change and ensure that Jack's death would not be in vain.

Since then they have been tireless in raising awareness about the dangers and tragic consequences of knife violence, while at the same time managing their grief, getting on with their careers and taking care of their family. Because of their advocacy, Queensland passed Jack's law a few years ago, and it is working. I report to the House that 50,000 people were wanded over a 12-month period in Queensland, resulting in 400 weapons being seized and taken off the streets. Belinda and Brett advised us on proposed legislation, and they are in the gallery today. It is wonderful to see them both here, and I thank them very much.

They went to see the Attorney General and the police Minister. As a result, the New South Wales Government has moved changes to the law, which have passed the Legislative Assembly and which we hope will pass the Legislative Council soon. Part of the new law will see higher maximum penalties for selling a knife to a child under the age of 16. To put that in perspective, the current maximum penalty for that offence is 50 penalty units, or \$5,500, and no imprisonment. For context, the maximum penalty for selling alcohol to a minor is \$11,000 and/or 12 months imprisonment. A commonsense change will harmonise those laws and see the same rules apply to selling a knife to a child under the age of 16. We will also prohibit the sale of knives to people under the age of 18, except for understandable approved purposes such as hospitality or an apprenticeship. Crucially, the laws will also introduce wandering powers. [*Extension of time*]

A senior police officer at the rank of assistant commissioner or above can turn on wandering powers for use in designated areas. That includes bus, train and tram stations and their surroundings, public transport within two stops of the designated area, shopping precincts, sporting venues and other public places. Importantly, it is not possible for a government to introduce legislation that will prevent all knife crime in this State. But we can take steps to reduce the number of knives in circulation and, crucially, prevent them from falling into the hands of someone who means to or could potentially do harm to another citizen.

The laws are important for New South Wales. We believe that they will save lives. I hope the bill passes the Legislative Council soon. It is important for this State. I genuinely thank Brett and Belinda for driving the change and for coming to New South Wales. I also thank them for supporting the Blues last night, even though the team went down. The profound hope of all members of this Parliament is that these laws, once in place, will save lives.

### STAYING HOME LEAVING VIOLENCE PROGRAM

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. In question time on 15 May the member for Orange asked the Minister if the expanded rollout of the Staying Home Leaving Violence program would include an urgent time frame within which security upgrades must be completed. The Minister told the House that the existing program saw:

... services leverage their relationships with providers to be able to install security upgrades urgently, meanwhile keeping women safe in refuges or other temporary accommodation until those upgrades can happen.

When the Minister gave that answer, had she already been told that when Molly Ticehurst was found dead in her home after being assured of an impending Staying Home Leaving Violence home security upgrade, she had been waiting 14 days for one?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:15):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question and ongoing interest in domestic and family violence in this State. The answer that I provided to the member for Orange at the time was and remains a valid answer, and I stand by it. In relation to the death of Molly Ticehurst, obviously, something went wrong. The Cabinet Office has been tasked with undertaking a review of all interactions Molly Ticehurst had with New South Wales government agencies and domestic violence services in the lead-up to her death.

The Premier has previously said, and I acknowledge, that her tragic death should have been preventable. I am not in a position to comment on the specifics of what happened step by step. This Government is absolutely committed to doing better to prevent domestic and family violence and to better support victim-survivors. While the police investigation is occurring, there will also be a Coroner's investigation. As I said, the Cabinet Office has been tasked with undertaking a review, but we do not want to wait for those results. The Government has already made a significant commitment to improve its response to domestic and family violence. We did that through the \$230 million emergency package.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order: My point of order is on direct relevance under Standing Order 129. The specific question I asked was whether the Minister had already been told that when Molly Ticehurst was found dead, she had been waiting 14 days for a security upgrade.

**Mr Michael Daley:** To the point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I do not need assistance from the Attorney General. I do not uphold the point of order. I note the significance and tone of the question and answer. The Minister has said that she is unable to answer. That might not be the answer that the member for Macquarie was seeking, but it is a directly relevant.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** I ask for an extension of time.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for the extension of time. The Government is taking action to prevent domestic and family violence and improve responses to it. There are two key prongs. The first steps include the \$230 million emergency package that we announced last month, which will be in the budget and represents an increase of funding for domestic, family and sexual violence in New South Wales to the tune of 23 per cent.

That includes \$48 million to expand the Staying Home Leaving Violence program right across the State. I met with the member for Drummoyne yesterday about that program and the fact that it will be available in her electorate. The Government will be expanding the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services program beyond where it currently is. It also includes \$48.2 million to increase and extend the number of current specialist workers by 50 per cent in refuges for children and young people. Those workers provide support to children who have been affected by violence, whether they have experienced it directly or not, in order to stop the cycle of violence that often occurs in young people's lives. Finally, it includes \$38.7 million for implementing the State's first dedicated primary prevention strategy to stop the violence before it starts and to change people's attitudes to gender-based violence. There is \$45 million to support improvements in the way that our justice system responds to domestic and family violence, including changes to the Bail Act that are currently going through this Parliament.

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS FUNDING

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (11:20):** With the beautiful young people and their teachers in the gallery, my question is addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will she update the House on how the Government is standing up for the people of New South Wales by working to ensure that all public schools receive full and fair funding?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:21):** I thank the member for Heathcote for her important question. It was great to be with her recently at schools in Otford, Helensburgh and Heathcote. I also acknowledge the Engadine High School students in the gallery. I think the year 11 legal studies students are here; I hope that is right. I am sorry to embarrass those students, but I hope this is somewhat of a learning opportunity for them today. The funding of public schools is important for the future of this country as well as New South Wales. On this side of the House we are proud of the Gonski review, which was an extraordinary initiative led by a Federal Labor Government. It laid out the path for a transformation in how our public schools were funded in this country.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, particularly Opposition members, will come to order. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That fact hurts those opposite. It really hurts them. The Gonski report laid out the path for the full and fair funding of our public schools. It was transformational at the time. It was about delivering the minimum funding needed for our public schools so that students could realise their full potential and the schools across the country, and in New South Wales especially, could realise their true ambition of delivering equity and excellence in the classroom. When the Federal Liberal Party was in Government, it kneecapped what the Gonski review was always supposed to achieve. It legislated a cap on the funding that was supposed to go to public schools. Let that sink in for a minute. How disgraceful that was.

This Government believes that the Albanese Labor Government has a chance to right that wrong once and for all, and to demonstrate that it is a different government that believes in full and fair funding for our public schools. At the moment it is true that the Federal Government's funding for public schools is like last night's State of Origin game—public school students are playing with one player down. They start behind the eight ball because there is too much Federal money going to private schools over public schools. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** This Government is calling on the Albanese Labor Government to level the playing field once and for all and deliver the full 5 per cent shortfall in funding. That is a mere quarter of the cost of running public schools. This situation is deadly serious, and it shows just how much members opposite care by the fact that they think it is funny. We are talking about the future of our country and the future of New South Wales. The situation is that the Federal Government gives private schools four times the Federal funding that it gives to public schools.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Yes, it is a Federal Labor government and this Government calls on it to right that wrong once and for all. This Government believes that there is an opportunity for the Federal Labor Government to get the balance right so that this Government can ensure that our public school students have the opportunities to

reach their best potential. The Federal Government told this Government that it has to chip in and that is what it is doing. This Government is delivering 75 per cent of that Gonski funding two years earlier than proposed.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Even though New South Wales has been robbed of billions of dollars by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, this Government is still delivering 75 per cent of that funding to our public schools.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We believe that the Commonwealth should up its offer to 5 per cent because it has greater revenue-raising opportunities than this State does. This State needs 5 per cent to ensure that our public schools get full and fair funding. It is only right and fair, and we owe it to the next generation. This Government calls on the Federal Government to do just that.

### LGBTQIA+ EQUALITY LEGISLATION

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:26):** Mr Speaker, you are doing a really great job.

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate that. Thank you. The member for Sydney can have an extension of time.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Attorney General. As the Committee on Community Services has recommended that the House now consider the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTQIA+) Bill 2023 and nearly 100 organisations have written to the Government seeking action, will the Attorney General work with me over the coming months to progress those important reforms?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:27):** The directly relevant answer to that question is yes, absolutely. Of course the Government will. I thank the member for Sydney for his question and for his ongoing work to remove discrimination from our legal system. I also thank the community services committee, chaired by the member for Cessnock, and the staff of the Parliament, who provided the committee secretariat, for their work holding their inquiry into the bill and for the excellent report delivered yesterday. The inquiry received 66 written submissions and heard from 44 witnesses during the hearings. The Chair's foreword to that report states:

... the real strength of the work undertaken was the opportunity created for a diverse range of views to be presented to the NSW Parliament for consideration.

It is important to note that some material, evidence and testimony caused hurt and harm to others. I sincerely hope that all of my colleagues, and public commentators, will be sensitive to that, as the Equality Bill is further contemplated.

Personally, I see an opportunity for the Member that introduced the Bill to the Parliament, Mr Greenwich, to continue his dialogue with other Members of Parliament around this concept of, and need for, advances in equality for all people in NSW.

I refer the House to the member for Cessnock's speech in this place yesterday on that report. It was an excellent speech. I have heard him deliver many heartfelt, sensitive and intelligent remarks to this House over a long period, but I refer the House to yesterday's speech in particular. In March we had a debate in both Houses as part of the passage of the Conversion Practices Ban Bill 2024. The debate for that bill also highlighted the considerable polarisation of views.

However, as I noted when the bill was returned to this place in the early hours of 21 March, the debate was conducted respectfully. When it passed through both Houses, it was a very proud moment for this Government, for this Parliament and for the member for Sydney. I was disappointed to read in the foreword from the chair of the Committee on Community Services that some of the testimony presented to the committee caused hurt and harm to others. When the bill comes forward for debate, I hope we can deal with the subject matter respectfully, as we did with the Conversion Practices Ban Bill. I am sure we will. Before I conclude, I note that several of the Government's election commitments overlap with the equality bill of the member for Sydney. They include our commitment to refer the Anti-Discrimination Act to the Law Reform Commission for review. [*Extension of time*]

I made that reference in June 2023, and that review is underway. The Anti-Discrimination Act dates back to 1977 and has not been reviewed for many years. It is a large piece of work for the Law Reform Commission, and it is important. The Government has also committed to a review of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act as it relates to gender markers on birth certificates, as well as a review of the Surrogacy Act. Those reviews have not yet taken place. I thank the member for Sydney for his advocacy. He has always been and continues to be a trailblazer for those sorts of issues in this place.

There will be differences between the Government and the member for Sydney on aspects of the equality bill, and we have discussed those already. But whatever happens to the bill—whatever laws arise from it and from

the work that the Government is doing—the member for Sydney will have accomplished his stated mission before the last election to continue to bring those issues before the Parliament, no matter what the outcome. They deserve to be ventilated, so we will work with him and with all members, in good faith, to make sure that people who are marginalised in our community get the protection of the law that they deserve.

### TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (11:31):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. What is the Government's response to efforts to prevent the Government from addressing the housing crisis in New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:31):** I thank the member for Strathfield for his question, for his answer yesterday and, particularly, for the cooperative approach he took in the consultation with his councils. It was a great result. We all understand that New South Wales is in a housing crisis; Government members inherited it from those opposite. Everyone recognises that. For that reason, the Government has embarked on the biggest rezoning project in New South Wales in modern history.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We have a clear plan: Build thousands of well-located homes, close to transport and, crucially, close to jobs, so that kids like those in the gallery can actually have a home. Those homes will be supported by infrastructure. In fact, the transport oriented development [TOD] sites were selected because of their access to infrastructure. We have committed \$200 million in infrastructure grants to councils to provide amenities to build great communities. We have also committed \$520 million for infrastructure in accelerated transport oriented development precincts. There is more than just a housing benefit; there is a jobs benefit. Every time a new water connection is made, a new road is built, a new park is created or a new footpath is built, it creates jobs. Thousands of new homes need thousands of people to build them. Those builders need truck drivers and suppliers to get materials to sites.

In fact, it has been estimated that 100,000 jobs will be created directly by building homes in the TOD locations over the next 15 years. That is in addition to the 200,000 indirect jobs that are being created—so 300,000 jobs created in New South Wales to deliver around 170,000 new homes, supporting the next generation into a home and into work. The loss of those homes and those jobs are the real cost of the Opposition's policy to stop housing at any cost. Can members believe we are even talking about that? We all recognise we have a housing crisis; it is in the media every day. The Opposition wants to stop building homes in the middle of a housing crisis. It is insane. Not only will it cost young people and families the opportunity to rent or buy a house; it will cost tradies work. Opposition members think that density done well at transport hubs is a sensible and popular policy proposal. They think it is so good that they want to stop it. They agree with it so much that they are legislating against it. [*Extension of time*]

When introducing his bill, the shadow Minister claimed that there was a lack of consultation, despite the Government making agreements with 12 of the 13 councils in the areas. But it seems the shadow Minister might be guilty of not consulting. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* today, I noticed a piece by Alex Smith. She wrote:

Without warning (even for some within the Liberal Party), the opposition's planning spokesman ... dropped a bomb in the upper house ...

So the big question today is who really agreed to the bill. Did any members opposite get a say? The member for Manly is one of the Young Turks talking positively about housing. Did he get a say? Did the Leader of the Opposition even have a say in it? Has he lost control of both his frontbenchers and his backbenchers? The "not in my backyard" brigade have become "not in my party room either", and it seems that the infection has spread across the Liberal Party—the yimbys versus the nimbys versus the unsure. Senator Andrew Bragg decided to weigh in with a tweet earlier today. He wrote:

The Liberal Party must be the party of supply and development, not the party of NIMBYs. In a city like Sydney—

That is where Liberal members all come from—

we must support development and call out NIMBYism for the poison it is. It is counterproductive to place additional barriers on supply.

Senator Bragg seems to have worked it out, but the New South Wales Liberals are intent on creating uncertainty instead of building homes. They want to build uncertainty, not build homes. In contrast, Government members will stand by housing. We will stand by the 37 TOD locations, because the plan from members opposite is anti-housing, anti-jobs, anti-tradie, anti-opportunity, reckless and pathetic.

**KNIFE CRIME AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:37):** My question is directed to the Premier. This morning the Premier has done media spruiking the importance of the Government's knife crime bill and domestic violence bill. Given the importance the Premier has placed on those bills, why did he not take part in any way in either?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order so that we can hear the answer from the Premier.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:37):** I honestly do not know what point the member for Dubbo is trying to make. I genuinely do not understand the question. Is the member suggesting that the bills were introduced without my knowledge? What is he saying—that I did not participate in the legislation? It went through Cabinet and the party room, and I introduced it in a press conference. I met with the Beasleys. I have spoken about it endlessly.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on both sides of the House will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I understand there are not a lot of questions around, but honestly—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Summer Hill will come to order. The member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

**ENERGY SECURITY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:38):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services, representing the Minister for Energy. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to ensure that New South Wales has reliable and affordable energy while the transition to renewable energy is undertaken?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:39):** I thank the member for Blue Mountains for the question. She is an outstanding member and Parliamentary Secretary for Energy. The transition of the energy grid is well and truly underway. We are almost halfway to meeting the State's 2030 target of 12 gigawatts of renewable energy generation, supported by an investment of \$1.8 billion in our first budget. Despite that work, the latest analysis from the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] confirms there are risks of reliability gaps from 2025 to 2027. To keep the prices low and the lights on, we need to make some interesting decisions. These are important decisions around renewable infrastructure and ensuring that storage is online before coal-fired power exits the system. For that reason, the New South Wales Government has secured an agreement with Origin Energy to operate Eraring Power Station until August 2027. Let us be clear: We are only in this position because the previous Government privatised the State's energy grid and generators. That is the reason.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** They flogged off the State's remaining energy assets. It is interesting because Opposition members do not have a clear position on the Origin Energy decision at the moment. Do they support it? Do they oppose it? Do they want to see higher prices? Do they want to see the lights go off? Would they have preferred the deal promoted by the member for Hornsby, which could have been anywhere between \$1.6 billion and \$3 billion? That says everything about the so-called party of economic management. Rather, the Liberal Party was the party of economic mismanagement while in government. A few things are very clear. The Opposition has been undermining the deal for some time. We have heard absurd interventions from the member for Hornsby about the supposed costs of the agreement. If he thinks the best deal that could be done was for \$3 billion, then that says everything we need to know about the economic thinking of Opposition members. The previous Coalition Government over-promised and underdelivered. When we came to government—

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** They do not like to hear it, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The question is clearly about what the Government is doing. This sort of retrospective historical analysis is not relevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** We have started to clean up the mess that was left behind by those opposite. They talked a big game but did not actually do anything. When we came to government, we found that there was not one shovel-ready project for the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. There was no whole-of-government approach. This Government is taking a whole-of-government approach to ensure that the State meets its net zero target. [*Extension of time*]

We are good, but even we cannot fix in 12 months the damage that was done over 12 years—but we are giving it a go. The agreement with Origin Energy is part of a suite of measures, including \$1 billion to establish the Energy Security Corporation. I was very proud to introduce that legislation to the Parliament on Tuesday. A further \$800 million is invested into the Transmission Acceleration Facility. We are making it easier to get planning approval, and we are working with the Commonwealth. We have secured more than one-third of the funding so that homes can have more access to batteries and make the most of rooftop solar. That is what real action looks like. Meanwhile, Opposition members cannot agree on what to say about Eraring. That is probably because they do not know what their position is on energy.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Alexandra Smith wrote an interesting article a couple of weeks ago that referred to the member for Bathurst. The member for Bathurst—like that nuclear nimby, the member for Wahroonga—said that he wanted nuclear energy. Next, some polling was done. The member had said, "Yes, I am with David Littleproud. We want nuclear energy. We are going for it." What happened after the polling results came out? He said, "David Littleproud, mate, hold my beer—I'm out of here. I've changed my mind." This Government is interested in facts. It is getting the job done. This Government is not, as the member for Hornsby said about his colleagues, chasing unicorns. The Government believes that it needs to get the job done. The nuclear nimbys are not sure what they want, but the Government wants to keep the lights on and the prices low. It is doing everything it can to support the communities of New South Wales. Thank goodness the adults are in charge.

#### LITTLE WINGS CHARITY

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (11:44):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Health. Over the past 24 hours the Government has been forced to provide \$600,000 to Little Wings after the Premier broke an election promise to the organisation in 2023. What will it take for the Government to reverse the \$250 million cut to palliative care services in New South Wales?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Under Standing Order 128 (2) a question should not contain argument, inference or imputation.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The question creates an assertion of culpability or wrongdoing; it cannot do that. Opposition members can put forth a fact and ask a question; they cannot make an assertion. The question clearly contains an assertion. I am sure the member read the question before she asked it.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House. I do not need to hear from the Manager of Opposition Business to make my ruling. While the Leader of the House has put forth a reasoned point of view, if every question were ruled out of order on that basis, we would need to go back to the drawing board for many questions. The Minister is prepared to answer the question. Therefore, I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:46):** I have been around this place for a little while. I was always under the impression that the Dixers came from this side of the Chamber; that has obviously changed somewhat. That is okay.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Let us deal with the Little Wings funding issue. I found it very interesting. We have been in office for 12 months; members opposite were in office for 12 years. Since the issue was raised, I have had a number of discussions with the CEO of Little Wings. One of those discussions was at the Community Cabinet at East Hills and another was at a function. Since that time, my office has regularly engaged with Little Wings. One request was for \$600,000 in additional funding. Little Wings performs a fantastic service in moving young children in and around and out of regional, rural and remote New South Wales to healthcare appointments.

When Opposition members spoke to me about the funding, I thought they meant that the Government was cutting the funding. That was a reasonable assumption. The National Party purports to be the party for the bush.

I thought that I must have it wrong. I asked my office about it. I said, "No, you've got it wrong. Opposition members are saying that we are not doing this. We must be cutting it. Can you double-check?"

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Here he is, Dopey Dugald.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** What a disgrace. I refer to Standing Order 129. The question was fairly specific. The Minister made the promise. Will he make a promise for other things as well?

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that the point of order is about relevance. The Minister has been relevant but will be more directly relevant to the second part of the question.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The Government is funding Little Wings to the tune of \$600,000. The Coalition Government funded Little Wings to the tune of \$300,000.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** The Minister has missed the point of the question. The question is will the Minister now reverse the \$250 million cuts to palliative care in New South Wales. The Minister is not answering it.

**The SPEAKER:** I have drawn the Minister's attention to it.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** He has talked about everything but.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** I seek an extension of time.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Very well played. I could not have orchestrated that better myself. Imagine being that miserable. Those opposite are angry that a service that provides paediatric health care to kids in the bush is getting double the funding that they offered.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** It is miserable. Members opposite are angry.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It has now been over 3½ minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the Minister to resume his seat when a point of order is taken.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Minister has said nothing about palliative care cuts. That is what the question was about.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will address the second part of the question, which relates to palliative care services.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** All members of this House would know, love and have people in their community who have experience with palliative care. They know that it is a difficult area of health care.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The men and women who deliver that health care are special. I hope that all members back those people. Comments like, "People are dying in pain," are offensive. That is not happening. Healthcare workers in New South Wales are not allowing that to happen. Palliative care, particularly in Hunter New England, was allocated \$2.675 million under the former Government. Under this Government it has an incredible \$4.493 million, and next year it will have \$5.6 million. The Government believes in good palliative care and will continue to fund it.

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:51):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Youth. Will the Minister update the House on measures that the Government is taking to minimise the negative impacts that social media and devices are having on young people?



**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:51):** I thank the member for Wallsend for the question. I think all members of this place would agree that she has been a great advocate for her community for a long time. I am sure there are one or two members who do not vote for the member for Wallsend, but no member on this side of the Chamber can find them. I think she was the only Labor MP whose margin went up in 2011. I congratulate the Minister for Youth in the other place, the Hon. Rose Jackson, for the work that she is doing. I do not think there is a parent in this place or in the community who is not concerned about social media and its impact on young people. As a dad to a 14-year-old, it is a challenging issue most days of the week. The Government has been up-front about those challenges. The Premier, the Minister for Education and Early Learning and the Minister for Youth have been very up-front that there are big challenges.

Social media can be used for great good, and we have seen that in our communities, but often it can cause significant harm for young people, particularly in relation to mental health, bullying and body image, which has been a real challenge. The Government has decided to try to tackle this front-on and make sure that young people are brought along. It is pleasing that the Government is holding a summit at the back end of this year. The Government will be bringing together young people, social media networks and experts in policy in the space to make sure that it can chart a plan forward. Last year the Premier and the Deputy Premier introduced the ban on mobile phone in schools.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** A great thing!

**Mr RYAN PARK:** It is an absolutely fantastic thing. It is extremely unpopular with some people in my house, but it is absolutely fantastic from my perspective. The Government is also investing in research. Millions of dollars are going into research to look at the impacts of screens and screen time on young people. It is a challenging area of public policy. [*Extension of time*]

It is an area of public policy that the Government is determined to get right. The Government is not going to ignore the harms of social media. In fact, it needs to face the issues head-on for not just parents but children themselves. Social media has benefits, but it also causes harm. I am pleased to be part of a government that has committed to an additional 250 school counsellors. It is an incredibly important commitment that will help to engage young people around the mental health challenges that they experience. All members, as leaders in their communities, have to lean into the issue and engage with young people in conversations about the impact that social media can have. We also have to make sure that they are aware of their own signs, symptoms and triggers as to the harm that social media could be causing.

I am confident that the summit at the back end of the year, the ban on mobile phones in schools, the investment in research in the area and the engagement with young people will deliver the benefits that are needed for children. Most importantly, the Government will bring them on the journey. It is an important component of what the Government is determined to do. I look forward to being part of the summit. It will be an opportunity to get an important area of public policy right, but it can only be done by engaging with young people and bringing them along.

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (11:57):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. As per the Bureau of Health Information's report, 16.9 per cent more patients left emergency departments [EDs] without completing treatment in the March 2024 quarter compared with the same quarter last year. Why is the Minister allowing patients to leave EDs without completing treatment?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:57):** I thank the member for Hornsby for the question. I will go through a few facts about emergency departments, which I have not hidden from the House. In fact, I have been very up-front about my concerns about emergency departments. Record numbers of people are coming into emergency departments.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will come to order. The member for Canterbury will stop inciting other members.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I tell those in the gallery what would have occurred in a few weeks time had members opposite been on this side of the Chamber. They would have tried to resolve and address the record numbers of emergency department presentations by removing 1,112 nurses.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is entitled to his own opinions. He is not entitled to his own facts.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will resume his seat. That is not a point of order. The member for Hornsby will be removed from the Chamber if that behaviour continues. It is becoming all too routine. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the second time.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** When there is a record number of presentations, the Opposition's solution is—wait for it—to remove staff.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question is why, when emergency department attendances are up 5 per cent, the number of those leaving without completing treatment is up 17 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat while I rule on the point of order.

[Interruption]

Order! Given the way in which the question was put, the Minister could not have been more directly relevant.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Let me be clear: Our solution is to be up-front with the Commonwealth at every single health ministerial meeting that the Commonwealth has to do more to provide GP access and bulk-billing to our communities. We have fewer GPs in New South Wales now than we had in 2018. What else are we doing? We are rolling out 25 urgent care services to provide alternative pathways to care. We are boosting our ratio base model to the tune of over 2,000 nurses, which will result in one to three in our emergency departments. We are expanding virtual care so that people have an alternative pathway to emergency departments. But let me tell the House what I will not be doing. I will not be sacking nurses because that would be absolute hypocrisy with our system and emergency departments under such pressure at the moment.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Hornsby to order for the third time.

#### DISASTER RECOVERY FUNDING

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (12:01):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on action taken by the New South Wales Government to slash red tape for disaster-impacted councils to allow them to get on with their work?

**The SPEAKER:** I hope the Minister is okay after last night's State of Origin match. I see that she is still in mourning.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:02):** That is the difference between members on this side of the Chamber and those opposite.

**The SPEAKER:** We are all winners. Both sides reached double digits; we should embrace that.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I have had a few questions from the Opposition about why I am wearing my blue outfit today. Government members do not only celebrate the successes. We stand by our team, whatever the result. More importantly, people will see a change in the New South Wales Government's approach to women in sport, because guess who are playing tonight—the girls! Government members are cheering; we would not have had that from those opposite when they were in government. The Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism is dressed in blue. The Minister for Women is going up to the Hunter to see the team play tonight. We will always back our girls.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** The Minister for Sport is wearing a maroon tie.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The Minister for Sport is working on the principle of reverse psychology to get them geed up. We did miss the Leader of the House—but I digress.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will answer the question.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I congratulate one of our big heroes in this House, the member for Lismore and Parliamentary Secretary, who proved her heroism in the 2022 floods by swimming to safety. She has been a champion for all of our communities.

**Mr Ryan Park:** The entire Northern Rivers!

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Exactly—in fact, she has been an advocate for the whole State. She has been pushing us all.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order: We are now two minutes into a three-minute answer. We have not yet heard why the Government is not paying our councils the money they are owed.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is making introductory comments. Members will come to order, particularly the member for Wollongong, the member for Canterbury and Opposition members. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Our State was really in Struggle Street with our roads under the previous Government, which had 12 years to prepare our roads for the floods of the past five years but did nothing. Our maintenance backlog on State roads was in the order of \$1 billion. For the Opposition to pretend to have any expertise is a complete joke. The previous Government was spending about \$190 million a year on disaster recovery. That was the task in New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will be removed from the Chamber if they do not come to order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I acknowledge in the gallery my favourite quiet achiever and number one supporter, Councillor Aitchison. The issue is that the previous Government's investment in disaster—its business-as-usual model—was approximately \$190 million. The scale of the floods is far greater than that. There has been about \$3.5 billion worth of damage on local road networks and another \$1 billion on the State road network. Earlier this year, in conjunction with the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Premier and the Minister for Roads, we launched the tripartite agreement. We started at Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond and Tweed. They provide funding up-front.

There are members of the Opposition who have not adequately represented their communities to get onto that, and that is on them. Every day that I speak in question time I say that Labor is the party of the bush. I say to members opposite: Tell me your problems, and we will sort them out. I ask the member for Tweed to talk to me. He has never spoken to me. It has always been his local council working around him because he will not advocate.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order: The Minister is misleading the House. I have a text message right now from a mayor in regional New South Wales—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. There is no point of order. I direct the member for Coffs Harbour to remove himself from the House under Standing Order 249A for 18 seconds.

[*Pursuant to standing order the member for Coffs Harbour left the Chamber at 12:07.*]

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** We also have Lithgow, Blue Mountains, Cabonne, Forbes, Lachlan, Parkes, Weddin shire, Shoalhaven, Wingecarribee, Armidale and the Central Coast. They are all in the scheme. Under this Government, the money is flowing. Under Opposition members, the damage continued. Labor is the party of the bush!

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:07):** My question is directed to the Premier. Since coming to government, he has talked a lot about housing. His planning department's website says that regional plans take precedence over local housing strategies. The 2019 Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan sets housing projections at 13,844 for Wollongong City Council and 4,283 for Shoalhaven City Council. By contrast, the Premier's housing targets announced last week set the target for Wollongong City Council, which covers the planning Minister's own electorate, at 9,200, which is a cut of 4,644 homes.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kiama is seriously testing the patience of the Chair. The member will ask his question.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The Shoalhaven City Council, which covers my electorate, is at 4,900, which is an increase of 617. Is all of New South Wales shouldering the Premier's housing targets, or is it just the areas that did not vote for him?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Questions should not be preceded by what could be a private member's statement.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The question is out of order. It contains facts that are not necessary. It also contains imputations.

**The SPEAKER:** The question has been asked. It will make no difference to the time. The Premier may answer the question. In future, questions that are asked in that manner will not be tolerated.

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

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Will the Minister please update the House on the importance of accessible and culturally appropriate responses to domestic, family and sexual violence.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:10):** Absolutely. I thank the member for Auburn for her question. Only a couple of days ago, we talked about domestic and family violence issues in her electorate. The diversity of the Auburn electorate is amazing. It is home to amazing Chinese, Lebanese, Korean and many other communities. As we all know, domestic and family violence does not have any socio-economic or cultural boundaries. It does not matter what postcode a person comes from when it comes to the experience or perpetration of domestic or family violence. That is why we cannot have a one-size-fits-all response to domestic and family violence.

We need appropriate, place-based support services that meet women where they are. My office recently attended a multicultural domestic and family violence round table organised by the hardworking member for Strathfield and the Federal member for Reid, Sally Sitou. They brought together local communities and services, police, legal stakeholders and local government to share knowledge and understanding about domestic and family violence. The round table helped develop deeper networks and local responses to domestic and family violence. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn and understand the issues experienced by people from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds. One of the things that really stood out was the crucial role that young people play in diverse families. They can often be the source of information for understanding the local context for mainstream services and responders. It is so important to understand how to support those young people as they try to explain domestic and family violence to their families.

I thank the member for Strathfield for putting that round table together. I thank also the people who shared their experiences. We know that women and children from diverse backgrounds face unique forms of violence that need tailored approaches. That is why our coercive control campaign has been tailored for CALD communities. We consulted with community members and the CALD communities reference group for coercive control and tested the campaign with CALD communities. [*Extension of time*]

That feedback resulted in the use of the image of a spider's web to illustrate coercive control. The ads have been translated into Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic and Vietnamese, and there are more translations to come. We know that migrant and refugee women are less likely to report violence, and face structural barriers to doing so. In response to that issue the Government made a very important election commitment to establish the Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety, which is run by Settlement Services International. It was an election promise that we were very proud to keep. With \$4.4 million of funding, the service brings together expertise on family safety and the cultural responsiveness that is needed to address the devastating impact of domestic and family violence in migrant and refugee communities. The centre addresses immediate safety risks through trauma-informed and culturally responsive support. It will create long-term change for multicultural communities by collaborating with other services across the State, which will be strengthened by the sharing of good practice.

Domestic and family violence is a complex issue. It is incredibly important that responses reflect the communities that they are made for. That is so important for individuals who face intersectional experiences. That is why we need to ensure that the voices of people with lived experiences are at the heart of our decision-making. That is how we will address domestic and family violence in this State and how we will work with CALD communities to do so.

### Motions

### STATE APOLOGY FOR THE CRIMINALISATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

**The SPEAKER (12:26):** I welcome everyone to the Legislative Assembly on this historic day. The laws that have guided our State for more than 200 years in this Parliament, but for 160 years or so in this Chamber, have affected many people. While many of those laws were good, we know that not all of them were. In fact, some have been horrendously prejudicial and have had equally horrendous outcomes for many people. Some of those matters have been addressed previously in this very Chamber, including our treatment of First Nations people. The ability to recognise and admit fault is a hallmark of a mature and compassionate society, but getting

to that point has been difficult. I know there are those who carry very deep scars, and some of them are reflected on the faces I see in the gallery today. As I introduce the Premier on this important and historic day, I would like to convey the warmest of welcomes to everyone in the galleries and other rooms throughout the Parliament and to those watching online.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:28):** Pursuant to the resolution of the House of 5 June 2024, I move:

That this House, on behalf of the people of New South Wales:

- (1) Apologises unreservedly to those convicted under discriminatory laws that criminalised homosexual acts.
- (2) Recognises and regrets this Parliament's role in enacting laws and endorsing policies of successive governments' decisions that criminalised, persecuted and harmed people based on their sexuality and gender.
- (3) Recognises the trauma people of diverse sexualities, their families and loved ones have endured and continue to live with.
- (4) Acknowledges that there is still much work to be done to ensure the equal rights for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Forty years ago New South Wales ended the legal criminalisation of homosexuality in this State. Today, as a Parliament and as a State, as people who want to make good, we are here to apologise for every life that was damaged or diminished or destroyed by these unjust laws. To those who survived those terrible years and to those who never made it through, we are truly sorry. We say sorry to every person convicted under legislation that should never have existed, every person who experienced fear as a result of that legislation and everyone who lost a job, who lost their future or who lost the love of friends and family. We say sorry to every person, convicted or otherwise, who was made to live a smaller life because of these laws. We are sorry for those people who reached the end of their days without ever voicing who they really were, without ever openly experiencing the greatest human joy—the joy of love. We are sorry.

As a State, we told you that you were wrong. But the truth is you were never wrong. These laws were wrong, and today we openly acknowledge that truth. These cruel laws were written in a single sentence, just 22 words in the Crimes Act. But the real story of this legislation was written through the lives of the people it targeted. They were good people, like Peter Bonsall-Boone. Bon, as he was known to friends, met his partner, Peter de Waal, in 1966. In his own words, "It was love at first sight." Bon and Peter were an incredibly brave couple, who in 1972 became the first men to kiss on national television. But before all that, Bon was arrested and convicted under this legislation. As a result of that conviction he was kicked out of the Anglican seminary where he was studying to be a priest, and when he went home to his family he was told that he was no longer welcome there.

For the rest of his life, that criminal record followed him around like a great weight of shame, holding him back, slowing him down. Because of this, he could never work as a Commonwealth or State public servant. He could not sit on a jury, he could not serve as a justice of the peace and, when he went to buy a house with Peter, they found it very difficult to borrow money. These laws came with a sense of humiliation, exclusion and pain. They also carried a deeply practical burden on everyday life. Later, when Bon needed an income, he applied to work as a taxi driver but was told he could not because of the conviction. And when he tried to do some good in the community by volunteering to teach new immigrants the English language, he was questioned about his suitability to work with such people. Bon passed away seven years ago. Even at the end of his life, the arrest still weighed on him—50 years later.

So when this Parliament passed a law in 2014 allowing for the expungement of these historical convictions, it meant a great deal for people like Bon. Just weeks before he died, Bon received an official letter notifying him that his criminal record had been extinguished. Peter read those words out to him; it was the last time that Bon smiled. That is what this legislation meant for the people who were outlawed by it. Today we apologise to Bon and Peter, and everyone who was forced to walk that same lonely path. People from that time will tell you about the horrible isolation. One man told us he was still anxious that family members would discover his conviction, 40 years later. They also recall the sense of danger that surrounded every interaction with authorities.

When Barry had his apartment robbed, he did what anyone else would do—he called the police. But when the police arrived on the scene, their interest quickly shifted from the burglary investigation to his living arrangements. They asked what kind of relationship he had with his flatmate, did they share a single bed, and were they breaking any laws. He was threatened, intimidated and made to feel, in no uncertain terms, that he was the real criminal. For gay men that threat was always lurking. Not too long before that, the police commissioner had described homosexuality as "the greatest menace" facing Australia. The fear was intense because the punishments were severe. If they were caught, men could be arrested, fined, locked up. To save themselves, they were encouraged to inform on their partners and other members of the gay community. To avoid jail time, many also accepted the "court endorsed treatments". Shamefully, that included electroshock therapy, where a voltage was

pumped through a patient's body while they were shown pictures of naked men. Others were given drugs designed to bring on nausea and vomiting.

Of course, none of it worked. You cannot shock someone out of who they love and you cannot rewire their basic humanity. One of the great advances in recent years has been the discrediting of aversion therapy, conversion therapy and other forms of pseudoscience. That argument was made by the gay community—in particular by our colleague the member for Sydney—and as a Parliament we were proud to continue in their footsteps last month by banning conversion therapy in New South Wales. These laws were directed at the sex lives of men, but they produced the kind of society that also suppressed the relationships of women. Gay love was taboo, and a thick wall of silence surrounded the love of two women, as a female librarian from Sydney wrote at the time:

I find it hard to express the bewilderment, the conflict and the anxiety that overshadowed my late adolescence, as I realised how different, how unacceptable, was my own pattern of loving, and yet how real it was.

That isolation, confusion and sense of fundamental difference all began in the same place as these laws. Robyn was one of those courageous women who attended the first Mardi Gras in 1978. Growing up, she remembers watching how she dressed. She was especially careful about holding hands with other women. Her fears were realised when her picture was published in the newspaper after the first Mardi Gras. Remembering that moment, she said:

My life flashed before my eyes. I thought I was going to lose my job. I was really worried my teaching career would be ruined.

For another woman, also named Robyn, that fear was very real. Robyn lost two jobs because of her sexuality. She kept other jobs by inventing imaginary boyfriends as a cover story. She saw friends kicked out of homes. She watched families turn their backs. This was a time when many lesbians felt invisible—like they did not exist. If their partner was sick or dying in hospital, they might not be allowed in to see them. The State did not recognise their relationship or see them as what they fundamentally were—a family.

Others were judged as unsuitable mums and had their children taken from them just because of their sexuality. All of this was deeply wrong and all of it was our fault, so today we say, "We are very sorry." Reliving these memories must be painful for anyone who experienced them. There might be a different kind of distress for young people hearing these stories today. Younger people may be imagining how different things would have been for them if they had been born a generation or two earlier. What would their life look like if these laws had never changed? It is important to state clearly today that these legislative changes did not happen because of good luck or some natural movement towards inevitable change. The changes followed one of the most successful social movements in the history of the State of New South Wales.

Forty years ago, Neville Wran submitted a private member's bill to amend the Crimes Act. It was seconded by Nick Greiner and passed by both Houses of Parliament. It was a great day—a day this Parliament can rightly and justifiably be proud of. But for at least 15 years before that moment, activists and allies had been fighting for these changes, risking their careers and their safety in the process. It began in 1970 with Campaign Against Moral Persecution, or CAMP, as they called themselves. That spirit continued in political parties, church groups, trade unions, sporting clubs, neighbourhood conversations and even around the family dinner table.

As Garry Wotherspoon wrote of those years, "How wonderful it was to be part of a whole group of people who could actually talk about homosexuality and not be scared." With great bravery, people took their message to the streets. They shared it in workplaces and across dinner tables. They spoke in quiet voices as well as through very loud megaphones. And they did it with a sense of flair, creativity and, fundamentally, fun, which proved impossible for the rest of society to resist. People wanted to join the movement. They could sense that it was where all the fun was, and that the laws needed to change.

In the year before the law reform, a group of people established the Gay Rights Embassy, in a caravan, which held vigils encouraging MPs to hurry up with the changes. Jill Wran is in the gallery today, and she might remember that particular consular visit in Woollahra. In the same year, two other activists took things a step further. Lex Watson and Robert French decided to sign a statutory declaration acknowledging that they had broken the law, without a hint of shame or embarrassment. They then walked into the police station and handed those forms to the head of the vice squad. Apparently the detective sergeant was lost for words and no charges were laid that day.

Each of those actions was part of a wave that grew in size, speed and momentum and swept away the legal enforcement of ancient prejudice. It is one of the great underdog stories of Australian history. People who were pushed to the margins all their lives, and who were denied, disrespected and criminalised for who they were, in the end insisted on being themselves. They challenged every social convention and, with the help of the Wran Labor Government, succeeded in changing the law of the land.

That bill was an important step on the long road to justice and equality. As a government, we know that we are not there yet. There are kids today who feel like they have something to hide, maybe from their schoolmates, sporting teams, families and friends, and maybe even from themselves. The member for Sydney is currently progressing his equality bill, and we will work with him in good faith and with a shared ambition to help vulnerable people. In the end, true progress is not measured only in laws passed or statutes amended. It is measured in the lives of people, in how we treat each other and in how free we feel to be ourselves in our communities.

Looking at this State, I have seen a slow but unmistakable revolution in my lifetime. When I think about how kids in my generation treated each other and then look at the current generation, it is the difference between night and day. This generation is more open, more tolerant and more accepting of difference. If anyone is responsible for that change, it is the people we are apologising to today. I hope you feel a sense of vindication. In the depths of the bad old days, this must have seemed like an almost impossible prospect. But you did it. You changed our attitudes, our laws and many people's lives. Today we say sorry for the unforgivable pain we put you through. But we also offer thanks for giving us a future that is better than your past.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, and while it is fraught to do so, I recognise a number of people in the gallery. First of all, I thank Commissioner of Police Karen Webb for being here. I also thank former member of the Legislative Assembly, my friend and the friend of many here Lord Mayor Clover Moore; former member for Coogee Bruce Notley-Smith; former member of the other place Mr Shayne Mallard; and my former constituent Jill Wran. It is lovely to have you here, Jill. To those whom I have not recognised, I am sorry. I am sure there are many people who deserve to be recognised but I am, unfortunately, fallible. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:44):** An apology to those who suffered criminal convictions because laws were brazenly discriminatory is long overdue. It is an apology to those who were made to feel shame by their government. It is an apology to those who were otherwise law-abiding citizens, turned criminals based solely on their sexuality. It is an apology for laws that discriminated against, among others, men who were willing to risk their lives for others and their nation. It is an apology for laws that let discrimination flourish—laws that said gays and lesbians were lesser people and were to stay in the shadows, instead of being embraced as part of a diverse community.

Given the freedoms we enjoy across our State today, it is hard to contemplate now that men were charged, prosecuted and convicted for engaging in consenting sexual relationships. When Parliament debated the reforms in 1984—reforms that were supported by a decisive bipartisan majority—it was not without controversy. Some members of this place sought to use it as a referendum on moral standards and the place of homosexuality more broadly in society. There was disagreement over the fundamental right of the individual and the role of government in regulating and criminalising private affairs. Forty years on, we unite as a Parliament in rejecting the notion that government should be criminalising consensual private sexual activity. The then Leader of the Opposition, Nick Greiner, said of the law at the time:

I have always supported the principle that sexual activity in private between consenting adults should not be the subject of criminal sanction.

He went on to say that that law "is, in my view, a bad law today, just as it was a bad law 20 or 30 years ago."

Fundamentally, the debate was a question about the place of government in people's lives. As Mr Greiner said, the decision at the time was about the proper role of government in a liberal democratic society. Michael Yabsley, the then fresh-faced member for Bligh, contributed:

The legislation before the House comes to terms with the notion that adult individuals enjoy liberty and freedom provided that in the exercise of that liberty and freedom they do not interfere with the rights of others.

Those principles continue to guide us today, some four decades later.

Not only did the reforms redirect the criminal law to an appropriate role in the lives of citizens, but they were also one step in an evolution towards ensuring that members of the LGBTIQ+ community were not treated as second-class citizens or lesser members of our community. But for many, merely decriminalising homosexuality going forward did not remove the stain of conviction. It remained, as did the stigma associated with being gay. It would adversely impact employment, an individual's ability to volunteer and someone's options to travel abroad. Those men would continue to feel the impact of their government's and, indeed, their society's discrimination.

In 2014 the then member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith, introduced the Criminal Records Amendment (Historical Homosexual Offences) Bill to enable those convicted of consensual gay male same-sex sexual activity to apply for their convictions to be expunged. In his contribution to the debate, he said:

No-one should have to continue to suffer the disadvantage of having a criminal conviction for sexual activity with another consenting adult.

That bill was unanimously passed by both Houses of Parliament. It was a moment of liberation for many. It was the rightful removal of shame imposed on men by their government and a strong signal of acceptance and embrace, not just within these walls but also across our communities. Over the past decades, despite the decriminalisation of homosexual acts, discrimination has remained.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, gay hate crimes were a shocking stain on Sydney life. In 2018 a parliamentary committee into gay and transgender hate crimes found that the New South Wales police were indifferent to these gay hate crimes and failed to properly investigate them at the time. Following this inquiry, I as Attorney General at the time, along with then Premier Dominic Perrottet, stewarded the establishment of a special commission of inquiry led by Supreme Court Judge Justice John Sakar. It was tasked with looking at 88 unsolved murders committed against gay men from 1970 to 2010. As I said at the time, no-one should have to suffer the distress of not knowing what happened to someone they loved. Today's motion acknowledges that there is still much work to be done, and responding to the special commission of inquiry is part of that work.

The Opposition remains committed to working with the Government in considering the recommendations of the final report handed down last December. As we continue to travel this road, all of us must do so with respect and empathy for one another, and for the at times varying views that exist throughout our community, and while accepting difference and diversity. We cannot move our State forward through division and disregard for people's views. Today this Parliament apologises to those whose lives were criminalised, to those who were persecuted, to those who were harmed, and to those who were convicted because laws were discriminatory, and for all the pain, hurt and trauma caused by these laws. We acknowledge the discrimination, stigmatisation and pain suffered by LGBTQIA+ people. On behalf of the Opposition, to those who suffered as a result of these bad laws, I hope that today's apology helps you heal.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:51):** As Attorney General, I support the motion moved by the Premier and extend my apologies to those who are the subject of that motion. I begin by acknowledging the presence of many people in the gallery who have fought for and who continue to fight for an end to discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people. I acknowledge their bravery in the face of often hostile actions, expressions and other forms of discrimination over many decades by lawmakers who made bad laws, by police who enforced bad laws and by sections of our society more broadly. I thank them for their advocacy—a lived, experienced, honest, selfless, conscientious and indefatigable advocacy that continues to deliver tangible and practical improvements in the lives of other people in the LGBTQIA+ community, not only in terms of being free from legal discrimination, but also in terms of their mental health.

I think that is particularly important for young people who are same-sex attracted and others who are exploring their gender identity. Since the marriage equality plebiscite I am sure that many members in this place have had discussions with their LGBTQIA+ friends or family about how much more positive they feel and the acceptance they feel they have been sent by broader mainstream Australia. To state the obvious, it is very hard to believe that up until 1984 consensual sex between gay men was a criminal act in New South Wales. In 2024 going to prison for being gay is an outrageously unthinkable concept. At times New South Wales courts recorded up to 1,000 convictions a year before homosexuality was finally decriminalised in 1984.

Many people were slapped with fines, and prison sentences were imposed upon them. The courts sent others away for treatments, including electric shock, and drugs and brain therapy to "cure" their homosexuality. Pause for a moment to reflect on that, as we have already done this year. In this day and age that sounds like the plot from a horror movie. That is why I am proud to be a part of the Government and the Parliament that is issuing an apology to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in our State. I pay tribute to and thank the people who agitated for this change decades ago, particularly that group of people now known as the 78ers.

The 78ers are those who took part in events that took place in 1978, including the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade on 24 June 1978, protests at Darlinghurst and Central police stations on 25 June 1978, a protest at Central Court Sydney on 26 June 1978, a march from Martin Place to Darlinghurst Police Station on 15 July 1978, and a march from Taylor Square to Hyde Park on 27 August 1978. Without the core group of activists who pushed for this change, it is possible that the New South Wales Parliament would still not have prioritised this very significant legislative and social shift. Sex between two men was criminalised under the Crimes Act 1900, though there was a loophole—a so-called loophole—if it was consensual. That provision was removed in the 1950s, but the police were given powers to arrest anyone committing what was deemed an indecent act, even if it was consensual.



Some men reported at the time that police used entrapment tactics, pretending to be seeking sex and then arresting people if they expressed any interest. No apology will make up for all the hurt, pain and humiliation of the past—we understand that—but it is a step towards closure for people who were brutally targeted by laws that criminalised gay and lesbian people who were simply seeking to live their lives. Earlier this year, just some three months ago, this Parliament passed the Conversion Practices Ban Bill 2024. After an all-night sitting of the upper House—and I acknowledge the presence of the Hon. Penny Sharpe in the gallery—the bleary-eyed lower House convened just before 7.00 a.m. I stood in this place and spoke about the history of that bill as it came to fruition. It was a historic moment for New South Wales. It was a moment to shine a light on marginalised communities who, for so long and for too long, were discriminated against for their sexual orientation.

That bill prohibited practices directed to changing or suppressing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It created criminal offences where substantial harm is caused and established a civil complaints scheme in relation to conversion practices. As we all know, it was a big step forward in taking action to help end discrimination and ensure equality for all, without exception. At that time the Parliament of New South Wales generally recognised that nobody should be told that they are broken for liking or—even worse—loving someone of the same sex, or for identifying as a certain gender. We as a Parliament acknowledge that again today: No-one should be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. It should not happen today and it should not have happened 40, 50 or 100 years ago.

There is much talk these days about inclusion and diversity, and about how we have stronger communities when we recognise that different people with different beliefs and different lifestyles and different points of view bring so much more to the table. The fact is that inclusive societies thrive and beget communities that are resilient and creative and stimulating, whereas laws that discriminate against particular segments of our society beget weaker, more divided communities. I believe it is fitting to close by acknowledging the efforts of the activists who, decades ago, brought about the change that took place in 1984. The fact is that in the early 1980s history unfortunately recalls—in fact, *Hansard* records—that there was no overwhelming support in this Parliament for decriminalising homosexuality.

It was up to a core group of activists, conscientious and unyielding, within and outside this Parliament to stir up support for the cause in the wider community. And when homosexuality was ultimately decriminalised in '94 through, as the Premier said, Neville Wran's private member's bill, it was a moment of huge relief for people who were finally able to live as themselves. So I hope—we all hope—that this apology today greatly advances the work done in the 1980s to right this wrong and provides some additional closure.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Before I call the shadow Attorney General, I acknowledge the presence of the Hon. Ben Franklin, the President of the Legislative Council. I also welcome the Hon. Don Harwin and the Hon. Meredith Burgmann, former Presidents of the Legislative Council.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (13:00):** In speaking to the motion as the shadow Attorney General, I put the passing of laws 40 years ago to decriminalise homosexual acts in its full historical context, which is interlinked. It is important, in this debate, to note that something occurred 80 years ago on this very day that was a necessary condition to the passing of that bill 40 years ago. Eighty years ago, many thousands of young men from all around the democratic and free world gave their lives in the fight for freedom and democracy to rid the world of the oppression of Nazi rule in Europe. Of course, I speak of today's anniversary of the Normandy landing by the Allied forces, which was the beginning of the end of the oppression of many parts of the world by an evil Nazi regime.

It may seem strange to our modern world that young men would voluntarily fight for an ideal like freedom and risk their lives, well away from their own countries, for the ideals of freedom and democracy. I know exactly what my father was doing on this day 80 years ago, because he was living under Nazi occupation in Europe. He was member of the Dutch resistance. He was told about the Allied landing in Normandy by a German soldier who was occupying his city. Few of us have had to live in a totalitarian State, as my father did during the Second World War. Fewer people still have risked every moment of their lives by voluntarily joining an organisation like the Dutch resistance, which meant that, if caught, they would be humiliated and tortured and would suffer certain death. It is difficult to understand why small groups of young men, organised in secret cells, thought they could bring freedom to the world by engaging in unlawful activity against the might of the Nazi State. But there are people in the gallery today who understand exactly what I am talking about, because it is people like them who brought about the events 40 years ago that we are honouring in the motion.

Members of my father's generation, because of their wartime experiences, had a deeper and more nuanced radar for and understanding of freedom than many people do today. Freedom necessarily involves the freedom to be who you are, the freedom to think different ideas, and the freedom to speak about uncomfortable ideas. They are some of the necessary tools to take on what might seem to be the overwhelming orthodoxy of a moment in time. But, unfortunately, many of those beliefs in freedom are being eroded today, destroying the very freedom

of thought, actions and speech that led to the passing of the bill that we are commemorating today. In this debate it is important to reflect on the tectonic shift that the bill represented 40 years ago. My predecessor as the member for Ku-ring-gai and now my friend and mentor, the Hon. Nick Greiner, AC, made some important points in the debate 40 years ago, when he was the Leader of the Opposition. He said:

I have always supported the principle that sexual activity in private between consenting adults should not be the subject of criminal sanction. Therefore I support the bill.

...

The proscription on homosexual acts between consenting adults in private is, in my view, a bad law today, just as it was a bad law twenty or thirty years ago. I support the bill because it reflects what I consider to be the proper role of Government in a liberal-democratic society.

Nick Greiner then went on to refer to the English philosopher John Stuart Mill. He said:

... the law will represent a classic liberal position ... In his introduction to *On Liberty*, Mill eloquently put the classic liberal view on the coercive powers of the State:

The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.

Nick Greiner, in concluding, said that society requires tolerance; it does not require agreed morality or even the avoidance of discrimination. Nick Greiner's words from 40 years ago are important. It is all about tolerance. In a cohesive and tolerant society, we should not force our morals or views upon others. To persuade others about morality or our views is an exercise of the freedom of speech and thought that we all enjoy. But to force our morality or views on other people is the very tyranny that my father and his generation fought against and which we need to always fight against if we are to continue to enjoy the freedoms that we are born with and which we are entitled to as human beings.

Contrary to the public negative narrative by some who are always critical of our country, it should be remembered that much has changed in the past 40 years. The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Attorney General have all made mention of this. I also note the important event in 2017 when the Federal Coalition Government held a plebiscite in which 62 per cent of people nationally supported same-sex marriage. It is interesting; 40 years ago over 60 per cent of members of this House supported the decriminalisation of homosexuality, which we are recognising today.

In conclusion, the motion is an expression of regret that recognises our values and tolerance today have moved a long way from the prevailing views of over 40 years ago. But we only understand our current freedoms if we recognise and understand the past. So it is entirely appropriate that, in paragraph (1) of the motion, we make an important apology for past legal discrimination against homosexuality. It is an important principle of the rule of law that we are all equal before the law. The rule of law is incredibly important and fundamental to the freedoms of our democracy. I commend those who, 40 years ago, fought for equality under the law for people who are simply being the way they were made and the way that they were.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:08):** Today is a historic day for the New South Wales Parliament and for the LGBTQIA+ community. I thank the Premier and the Minns Labor Government for bringing the significant apology to the Parliament as we say sorry for past wrongs that did untold damage and commit ourselves to further reforms to make New South Wales a safer and fairer place for the LGBTQIA+ community. I rise as the only openly gay member of the Legislative Assembly to contribute to this apology. I am one of only two in this Chamber's 186-year history, the first being Bruce Notley-Smith, a former member for Coogee, who also joins us today. That shows how much work we need to do. I acknowledge that in the Legislative Council there have been many more openly LGBTQ members. In fact, I have to say that is the only thing the Legislative Council has going for it over this place. The Government is obviously very ably led in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who continues to be an amazing champion for the LGBTQ community.

Forty years ago this Chamber did a good thing. It decriminalised homosexuality. Of course, it was not a perfect law. Larry Galbraith, who joins us here in the gallery today and who was vital to my election to this place, wrote in 1984 in *Campaign*:

After three previous attempts, the New South Wales Parliament has finally succeeded in decriminalising consenting homosexual activity between adults and 18 years above. Under the bill, introduced by Premier Wran, the phrases "unnatural offences" and "the abominable crime of buggery" will disappear from the Crimes Act, and sections 81-81B, the anti-gay soliciting provisions, have been repealed. The law reform is undoubtedly an advance for adult gay men whose sexual relations are exclusively with each other. It will, however, cause serious problems with those who engage in consenting sexual acts with those under 18.

Mr Galbraith is referring to the fact that the law entrenched an inequal age of consent for homosexual people, something that took another 20 years to harmonise. I seek leave to table the article by Mr Larry Galbraith entitled "Law reform Free-For-All", published in *Campaign*, dated June 1984.

**Leave granted.**

**Document tabled.**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** Forty years ago the ask of the LGBTIQ community to this Parliament was the same as it is today: Get out of our bedrooms, get out of our pants and let us live our lives. In preparing my remarks, I asked leading historian Garry Wotherspoon to reflect on the meaning of this apology. Garry joins us here today. He told me:

Today is surely a momentous day for our state, with an apology being made for legal actions of the past that today are seen as not only anachronistic but were also oppressive and destructive for many of our citizens, citizens who were someone's sons or fathers, or relatives, or friends, or neighbours. Indeed, it was only a few generations ago that people of sexual and gender diversity were treated with hatred and contempt, and for men, their emotional and sexual lives were criminal offences. Homosexuality was long seen as a "problem" by the authorities in Australia, and it was classed as a crime in all Australian states until well into the latter half of the 20th century. Since the churches traditionally classed it as a sin, there was little compassion for homo-erotically inclined men, and the medical profession allowed such barbarities as aversion therapy and psychosurgery.

While today's speech by the Premier is most welcome, and gratefully acknowledged, we should not presume that all our battles are over. We are still awaiting a police response to the recommendations of the Sackar Report. There is proposed legislation before Parliament that would be a step forward; it is still awaiting meaningful debate. Transphobia is being aired around us; this is one of the new battlegrounds.

In a civilized society, all people should be treated equally and with dignity, their rights respected, and no one group allowed to impose their values on others as restrictions to the way they live their lives, lives that are no threat to others.

We should always acknowledge the dark days of our past, but we should never be captive to it. That is why the Premier's speech is important, in that it brings to light part of our shameful history. It will hopefully give us all—the police included—a chance to reflect on this, and seek out new ways to move forward.

Another prominent historian, Dr Shirleene Robinson, AM, a leader of Australia's marriage equality campaign, told me:

Those men who were criminalised for consensual sexual acts with other men before decriminalisation in this state hold a trauma that is hard to comprehend. So too do the trans women who were criminalised under New South Wales law. These laws—and their very public policing—ruined lives. Those who were arrested faced being publicly outed, losing employment and being abandoned by family and friends.

The criminalisation of male sexual acts had consequences that stretched even further than this. Same-sex acts between women were not criminalised in this state in the same way that male acts were. Yet, anti-homosexual laws did impact women—and non-binary people—too.

Laws set standards. They tell a community what is to be accepted and what is to be punished. The laws that operated in this state sent a strident and unmistakable message that homosexuality acts were criminal acts and that same-sex intimacy was shameful. They permeated every aspect of society from home, school, the workforce and beyond.

The law told young people of diverse sexualities and gender identities that they needed to hide who they were or face losing everything. And we know from so many people who have shared their experiences of growing up in New South Wales before 1984 that they absorbed the law's message, reinforced by the medical profession and many religious bodies, that they were sick, criminal or sinful.

As a result, many LGBTIQ+ people who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s when homosexuality was being so aggressively policed, either sought out or accepted when pressured, horrifying psychiatric treatments such as psycho-surgery and aversion therapy to "correct" what could never be corrected—who they were and who they loved. Too many people never recovered from this.

The law was wrong. It was invasive. It punished people for who they were. It drove discrimination and prejudice and ruined lives. Its ultimate removal shows great change is possible with thanks to the selfless courage of those who fought so tirelessly for this reform and a more accepting society.

Indeed, as both Shirleene and Garry reflect, the laws back then, as do many laws today, had a profound and cruel impact on society and especially the LGBTIQ community, and not just those who were directly impacted by those laws.

Anthony Venn-Brown, who also joins us here today and who was the driving force in achieving the ban on conversion practices in New South Wales, shared with me his traumatic experiences as a young person during this time. Anthony tells me that the impacts of the criminality of homosexuality extend beyond and run deeper than being arrested. He said:

These were dangerous times not only for the homosexual man but for the young gay boys like me, trying to discover meaning to the desires and feelings emerging within us. The culture of secrecy and shame meant we were vulnerable in many ways to the bad people and bad experiences. During those mid to late teen years, I was robbed, raped, and bashed, but never arrested. I took these incidents as God warning me to stop and became one of the motivators for me to seek conversion "therapy". These things were the price we paid in a hostile world that either didn't understand homosexuality or hated us. It could have been worse; I could have been murdered as we discovered several decades later, many were.

Today's formal apology is a moment of healing for the LGBTIQ+ community, but also a timely reminder of the damage caused by a discriminatory legal system. Laws criminalising homosexuality justified stigma, violence, hatred, prejudice and indifference towards LGBTIQ+ people. But discrimination is still inherent in our legal

system, leaving LGBTQ students in private schools vulnerable to expulsion and trans people without accurate identity documents needed to get on with their lives. As the chair of the inquiry into my LGBTIQ+ equality bill told the Parliament yesterday, "Our legal system legislates inequality." That is today. That is why, in welcoming this apology, all leading LGBTIQ+ organisations have issued a joint statement asking the Parliament to back up today's words with action. The joint statement, coordinated by Equality Australia, requests the following:

Let's make 2024 the year that NSW finally removes all remaining discrimination facing LGBTIQ+ people in our laws.

I seek leave to table the joint statement issued by LGBTIQ+ organisations, coordinated by Equality Australia, dated 6 June 2024.

**Leave granted.**

**Document tabled.**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** We have come a long way in the 40 years since decriminalisation, but it is time we catch up with the rest of the country on LGBTIQ+ reform. There are many activists to acknowledge who worked tirelessly to deliver the reform that we commemorate today. Those include Craig Johnson and the late Lex Watson, who co-founded the Gay Rights Lobby; Robert French and John Schwartzkopf, who, along with Lex Watson, met with Neville Wran on the morning he introduced the bill to Parliament to seek improvements; and Terry Golden, whose story has been shared and who made a significant contribution to what was then the gay and lesbian community in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. I will conclude my remarks the way that Larry Galbraith concluded his coverage of the passage of the laws to decriminalise homosexuality in New South Wales. He said:

The Wran bill does not achieve all the movement's objectives. They will only be gained by working hard to ensure there is majority support where they will be won: inside the NSW Parliament. The struggle will not be easy; but it must be the goal for the years ahead.

Colleagues, let us back up this apology with action. I commend it to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:20):** On behalf of my Greens colleagues in this place—the member for Balmain, Kobi Shetty, and the member for Ballina, Tamara Smith—and as another member of the crossbench, I recognise and state our support for the apology being offered by the New South Wales Parliament today for laws against homosexual acts. I also speak on behalf of the electorate of Newtown, proudly one of the most queer communities in the country. I vie for that title with the member for Sydney.

I recognise the 78ers, who spoke up for equality, and those who were speaking up for equality before 1978, including the incredible legends from the Campaign Against Moral Persecution [CAMP] and those with the courage to face up and speak out against harmful laws, police oppression and societal discrimination, which laid the foundation for the apology that we are engaging with today. On behalf of the phenomenal queer activists who carry their legacy on today, I acknowledge that the work is still not done. In that spirit, I recognise that there was action outside of this Parliament on this day urging the Government to act in the true spirit of the ongoing determination of the rainbow communities here in New South Wales to see equality delivered for all.

The policing and prosecution of the LGBTIQ+ community casts a long and grim shadow over the history of this State. Today we absolutely welcome the New South Wales Labor Government's apology for utterly shameful laws that were in place in New South Wales in 1984 that criminalised consensual sex between gay men. Those laws allowed the police and the criminal justice system to deny people's safety because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender presentation.

As the only non cis-man to contribute to this debate and as a proudly inclusive feminist who recognises that our feminism must include and acknowledge our trans and non-binary friends, I am sad to say that I know that a future Parliament in this place will be issuing an apology to trans and non-binary communities for the horrific and ongoing harm that is inflicted on them. It is not too soon that we change the law such that we are not too far off an apology being issued for the injustice and ongoing discrimination faced by those communities.

Arrest and prosecution under laws against homosexuality, and the unimaginable consequences for those who were subject to them in New South Wales, goes beyond belief. We saw the looks of shock and horror of members in this place hearing the stories recounted and the impact that discrimination has had on people's lives. It changed the course of the future for many people. It changed their ability to travel overseas and engage in meaningful work. It changed their financial impacts. The personal consequences were huge. Many faced fines and imprisonment. Some were subjected to painful court-sanctioned medical treatments and many died by suicide or lived through suicide attempts. Many are not here and have not lived to hear this apology, and many more have not been able to fulfil the lives that were set out before them because of the trauma and harm that these discriminatory laws had on them, their families and their loved ones.

The impacts of these laws went well beyond the criminal justice system. They gave a free pass for systemic, institutionalised discrimination by employers, members of the public and the NSW Police Force. Coming out

could lead to somebody losing their job, and engaging in a same-sex act could cost somebody their life. Publications of mainstream media outlets non-consensually outed people, which added to further discrimination and harm. The laws were aimed at subjugating members of the LGBTIQ+ community for being their true selves. The laws aimed to limit their ability to fully and safely participate in society—and for many years they were effective. But the laws were not effective enough to silence the voices of those who were determined to stand up against the discrimination. Even once homosexuality was decriminalised, it took over 30 years for the Criminal Records Act to be amended to allow historical homosexual offences to be extinguished.

People with convictions for historical offences have dealt with and had to live with the crushing stigma of criminal convictions for a sex offence. Those convictions impacted so many aspects of their lives. The legacy of those laws and the impacts on people's lives undoubtedly are still felt today, including by many of those in the Chamber. Sadly, they live on in the hateful acts that we continue to see. It is not quick to break and change society and the discriminatory laws that have influenced that society. It lives on in the hateful acts of banning books on homosexual parenting and it is, sadly, alive in recently banned so-called conversion practices.

I acknowledge the pain and anguish felt by so many members of the LGBTIQ+ community at the hands of government, the State and the police. I acknowledge everyone in the gallery and people listening online because I know that many older people were not able to join us today. I recognise that people have been hurt and harmed by these laws. To all of those people who chose to hide their sexuality, their gender identity and their true selves to avoid punishment, harassment and vilification because of the laws, I say that we see you. To all of those people who are seeing this apology now, please know that we stand united in this Parliament to apologise for the harm done. All members in this Parliament stand united to recognise those people for who they are. We stand determined to deliver changes to laws in this place to ensure that we no longer discriminate and cause further harm.

I acknowledge that the decriminalisation of homosexuality came after years of protest. I particularly pay tribute to the Campaign Against Moral Persecution, which was founded in the inner west of Sydney in 1970. CAMP led to Australia's first ever gay rights march and was part of the amazing 1978 protest movement that turned into what we now know as the wonderful Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. I acknowledge, in his absence, Peter Bonsall-Boone and his late partner to say that it has been a privilege to campaign with them for rainbow rights over many years. I acknowledge that the legacy of their activism lives on today. I am sure that, had Peter been in the country, he would have happily joined the action outside and said a few words before joining us inside for this apology.

The activists outside and those in the gallery advocating for equality and change know that there have been apologies to the LGBTIQ+ community in the past and that there will need to be apologies for current laws in the future. They also know that there is so much more that we need to do to address the ongoing systematic discrimination that exists in our society and the unfortunate reality of the ongoing lack of response from the NSW Police Force to address serious concerns of the rainbow community.

From time to time we see significant levels of discrimination, hurt and harm inflicted on members of this Parliament—in this Chamber and in the other place—on the community, and particularly on our young people. We need to recognise that apologies are absolutely critical but they do not go far enough. We need to recognise that, in making an apology, we also need to make a commitment to deliver genuine changes to our laws in this State so that there are no laws on our books that future parliaments will need to apologise for. Today's apology sits in stark contrast to the many laws that still exist in New South Wales that discriminate against the LGBTIQ+ community. Today's apology sits in contrast, sadly, to the ongoing harm that continues to be inflicted by the NSW Police Force against the LGBTIQ+ community.

This apology is welcome and long overdue. We collectively share in the importance and significance of that apology. I acknowledge the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Attorney General and the shadow Attorney General for their contributions. I also acknowledge current and former members of the LGBTIQ+ Parliamentary Friends group, including my colleague the member for Sydney, who has already spoken; my Greens colleague Dr Amanda Cohn, who will speak later on this apology in the other place; as well as the many others who have joined us, including the Hon. Penny Sharpe, Bruce Notley-Smith, Don Harwin and Shayne Mallard. It has been a collective effort across party lines to ensure that we deliver rainbow rights reform in this State.

We all have a role to play. I would like to think that my role and that of The Greens is to always push a bit further, because there is no excuse for inequality in our society, nor for exceptions or exemptions. The Greens will continue to push so that the centre eventually sits exactly where equality sits. I am proud to be part of this apology today. I am completely honoured, as a representative of The Greens, to have been campaigning with those who have been pushing for LGBTIQ+ rights for over two decades in this city. I am pleased to say that urgent reforms are needed to ensure that there is no discrimination in our laws against the LGBTIQ+ community. There can be no excuses. There can be no faffing around. There can be no delays. We need to get it done.

The crossbench support of this apology is a special moment and we must remind members of that when we are debating the equality bill, because no member has the right to be sorry for the wrongs of the past if they are part of creating laws that will inflict wrongs on people in the future. Let us hold on to this moment, my friends, and ensure that when we say sorry today, it means that we will never do it again.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Documents*

### **OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS**

#### **Reports**

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In accordance with section 46D of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce the electronic tabling of the report entitled *Bus Safety Investigation Report: Collision of Buses in Campsie on 20 March 2024*, dated June 2024.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That Ms Charishma Kaliyanda be appointed to serve on the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Ms Kylie Wilkinson, discharged, and that a message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE**

#### **Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That Ms Lynda Voltz be appointed to serve on the Modern Slavery Committee in place of Ms Kylie Wilkinson, discharged, and that a message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:35):** I contribute to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the highest standards of integrity are adhered to across government and that all decisions are made in the public interest. This Government has introduced numerous new integrity measures in areas such as grants and political donations in the 15 months since the election. I appreciate the suggestions put forward by the member for Kiama but, although his second reading speech refers to the ICAC's Operation Eclipse report, the bill does not directly implement any of its recommendations regarding ministerial diary disclosures. The Government is looking at that report very carefully. Specifically, the bill does not require that monthly disclosures and diaries are to be published in a searchable format, which is recommendation 12. It does not require a preset menu of options to describe the purpose of the meeting, which is recommendation 13, and it does not require the disclosure of fundraising events where an attendee pays for exclusive or private access to a Minister, which is recommendation 25.

Unfortunately, by considering this private member's bill, the Parliament is pre-empting the Government's consideration of the Operation Eclipse report. The ICAC's recommendations raise complex and important issues regarding the regulatory framework for lobbying in New South Wales and so require careful consideration. In some ways I am intrigued as to why the member for Kiama has brought the bill forward, but I respect that integrity is incredibly important. He is uniquely placed to bring forward such a bill. Having been a Minister in the past and now being on the crossbench, he has had time to reflect on what took place while he was in Cabinet.

One interesting decision that was made while he was part of the Cabinet was to cut the funding of the ICAC by \$14 million over four years, which was reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 24 March 2021, a couple of months before he resigned from Cabinet. That was revealed at the same time as the ICAC was investigating former member for Drummoyne John Sidoti and former member for Wagga Wagga Daryl Maguire. It was also the time when the Premier of this State, Gladys Berejiklian—who later denied that she was required to comply with the ministerial code of conduct because as the Premier she was not a Minister, which, of course, she was. She was the first Minister. That was a ridiculous defence. She was also the subject of the investigation into Daryl Maguire, and we all know how that turned out. She was found to have acted corruptly and in breach of the ministerial code of conduct by the ICAC.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: As much as I am loath to interrupt my friend the member for Granville, I remind the member of the sub judice rules. That matter is currently before the Court of Appeal, and I encourage her not to reflect on that issue.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I have been in this place for a long time and have heard a lot of conjecture about matters that are before different legal entities. I urge caution from the member for Granville, but I will not stop her from making a contribution.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** I understand that the former Premier is appealing the finding of the Independent Commission Against Corruption that she breached the ministerial code of conduct, and I note that one of the reasons used in her defence is that, being the Premier, she was not required to comply with the ministerial code of conduct. We all know that is not true. That is quite important context for this discussion, and I acknowledge that she is appealing the finding against her. As I mentioned previously, the Government has introduced a number of new integrity measures in areas such as grants and political donations. But the private member's bill before the House has some other problems.

Ministers are already required to publish quarterly summaries of their diaries, in accordance with Premier's memorandum *M2015-05-Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information*. The private member's bill pre-empts the Government's consideration of recommendations regarding ministerial diary disclosure obligations arising from Operation Eclipse, and it is really important that the Government considers those. If the member for Kiama does not agree with how the Government then chooses to proceed, that is probably a more appropriate time to put forward these measures.

The bill overlaps with many of the existing requirements set out in the Premier's memorandum. Under that memorandum, Ministers are already required to publish quarterly summaries of their diaries, which are available on the Cabinet Office website. That includes all scheduled meetings involving discussion of the matter that may be considered by the Minister, whether formally or informally, in their role as portfolio Minister or as a member of Cabinet. When the member for Kiama was in Cabinet, there were so many fascinating findings about how ministerial processes and Cabinet declarations were worked around to avoid disclosures. We heard time and again about "corridor meetings"—meetings where people accidentally run into one another in the corridors in this place which do not need to be disclosed.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Happenstance!

**Ms JULIA FINN:** Indeed. Evidence was presented that the former member for Wagga Wagga was very keen to make sure that people ran into one another in the corridors, which was seemingly a very easy thing to arrange. It reminds me somewhat of *Muriel's Wedding*.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Deirdre Chambers—what a coincidence!

**Ms JULIA FINN:** Yes.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** A union official—what a coincidence!

**Ms JULIA FINN:** A property developer—what a coincidence!

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Granville does not need any assistance from other members.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** That should not be happening. If the Minister is in a situation where it would be very embarrassing to meet with somebody and put it in writing, then they probably should not be meeting with them. My office is on level 9 of this building, and I do not actually run into people hanging around in corridors, waiting to accidentally run into Ministers, so maybe the Daryl Maguire days are over. But it is really important that Ministers declare the meetings that they have and do not try to find ways around declaring their meetings. ICAC has published a report about making sure that ministerial meetings are all conducted in accordance with the

ministerial code of conduct and that the code remains fit for purpose. We should wait until we have received the report and worked through its recommendations, which the bill does not do.

In responding to those recommendations, we should either implement them or identify why they are not workable. We should not just mention that they are there and then ignore them or pre-empt them. They need to be carefully considered to make sure that they can be implemented, because we have seen time and again in this State—and we certainly saw it time and again over the 12 years of the previous Government—that despite constantly having its budget starved by the previous Government, the Independent Commission Against Corruption has a lot to say about the behaviour of people in this place, how they could do their jobs better and their responsibility for public administration and for doing things in the best possible way. I do not think that we are ready to consider the issue yet. We should absolutely respond to the Operation Eclipse report, but not just in passing and without actually dealing with the recommendations. That is alluded to but not implemented in this bill.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (13:45):** I contribute to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. I am proud of the Minns Labor Government's record over the past year in implementing numerous integrity and transparency measures—grants reform and political donations reform, to name just two. The Special Minister of State has referred a raft of issues to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to defend our democracy, increase participation, and regain and build public confidence in the system. Those sorts of reforms are vital. We cannot rest on our laurels and be complacent about what still needs to be done, and there is much more to come. Those serious matters are of great importance to the community, and it is right that we continue to return to them in this House. It is incumbent on all of us to have issues of transparency and integrity front of mind. The bill of the member for Kiama touches on several extremely important issues of integrity and probity, and there is nothing inherently wrong with the concept behind it.

The Government, however, does not support the bill. That is not, as the member for Kiama will say, because we are running away from additional integrity and transparency measures but because the bill proposes only a few minor changes, which are mostly redundant and do not tackle the tough issues. The bill would overlap with many of the requirements already set out in the Premier's memorandum, including that Ministers are required to publish regular summaries of certain meetings. Under the Premier's memorandum, Ministers are already required to publish quarterly summaries of their diaries, which are available on the Cabinet Office website, including all scheduled meetings involving the discussion of a matter that may be considered by the Minister, whether formally or informally, in their role as portfolio Minister or as a member of Cabinet. The Leader of the Opposition committed to disclosing his diary. When is that happening? Nothing has happened.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Where, Donna?

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** I have not found it yet. Former Labor Opposition leaders disclosed their diaries; the current Leader of the Opposition should be disclosing his diary too. Although the second reading speech referred to the ICAC Operation Eclipse report, the bill of the member for Kiama does not actually implement any of the recommendations regarding ministerial diary disclosures. Specifically, the bill does not require monthly disclosures and diaries to be published in a searchable format, as per recommendation 12; a preset menu of options to describe the purpose of the meeting, as per recommendation 13; or the disclosure of fundraising events where an attendee pays for exclusive or private access to a Minister, as per recommendation 25.

The bill pre-empts the Government's consideration of the Operation Eclipse report. The ICAC's recommendations raise complex and important issues regarding the regulatory framework for lobbying in New South Wales, which require careful consideration. Essentially, the bill avoids the major issues raised by Operation Eclipse in terms of lobbying reform. The Government is carefully considering the recommendations around lobbying coming out of that inquiry. While Operation Eclipse made several recommendations regarding ministerial diaries, the bill does not directly implement any of those recommendations. Specifically, it does not require monthly disclosures, require diaries to be published in a searchable format or require that the New South Wales Government create a preset menu of options for the purpose of a meeting, all of which were recommendations of the ICAC.

The regulation of the lobbying of Government officials, including matters relating to the transparency of the meetings that are held by Ministers, should be the subject of thoughtful, considered and deliberate reform. This bill does not examine the lobbying framework as a whole. Maintaining voter confidence is paramount to a robust democracy. Unfortunately, public confidence can be eroded due to real or perceived weaknesses in the system, and that is what those behind misinformation and disinformation campaigns seek to exploit. The Government will act, and it will act after careful consideration that addresses the major issues in a concrete, effective and holistic way.



**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (13:50):** On behalf of The Greens, I make a brief contribution to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024 and indicate that The Greens will not support the bill. In saying that, I thank the member for Kianna for bringing the bill to the House, as it deals with how governments are lobbied by third parties. That is an incredibly important matter and the debate on the issue is welcome.

The bill amends the New South Wales ministerial code of conduct to require Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to disclose information about meetings with persons external to government, and for that information to be published on the Cabinet Office's website. By seeking to shine a light on who is in the room lobbying Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and their staff, the intent of the bill has merit. It speaks to an important issue that absolutely needs to be legislated. Because of the technicalities of the bill, The Greens cannot support it.

The member for Kiama indicated in his second reading speech that he intends the bill to implement the recommendations of the ICAC's 2021 report on Operation Eclipse. That, it must be acknowledged, is clearly overdue. This morning, I was amused to hear the Manager of Opposition Business talk about Labor not doing anything for a whole 12 months, while Coalition members had plenty of time to do things themselves. It speaks volumes about the priorities of the previous Government that the matter has not already been dealt with. But, on closer inspection, it is clear that the bill only singles out some of those recommendations and would deal with them in a manner that lacks the required strength. The law needs to be much stronger and go much further.

I understand that the Government is working through the recommendations of the Operation Eclipse report. I call on the Government to bring a more comprehensive ministerial diary disclosure bill for consideration of the House. I have discussed that recently with the Minister. I look forward to the Government taking it forward. It is the preference of The Greens to deal with these matters in that way, rather than through the bill before the House. I note that the member for Kiama's bill could be seen as something of a stop-gap measure, ensuring that the ICAC's recommendations on ministerial diary disclosures are dealt with at least in some form while we wait for more comprehensive reform. But we do not want to let the Government off the hook. We will not give it the excuse that the ministerial diary disclosure issue has been dealt with by this bill to delay further reform to deliver stronger corruption prevention measures. I look forward to further discussion on the matter in the coming months.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (13:53):** I welcome the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024 because it raises topics that I care a lot about. While I have criticisms of the bill brought by the member for Kiama, it deals with matters of the highest importance for all members to be constantly vigilant about. The Minns Labor Government is built on the three primary pillars of transparency, accountability and community engagement. I acknowledge the achievements of the Minns Labor Government over the past year in enacting numerous integrity and transparency measures. Key reforms, such as grants reform and the strengthening of political donation regulations, underscore our commitment to a more accountable system.

Of course, that work is ongoing. We can never stop searching for ways to protect our democracy against improper influence. Transparency and integrity are at the heart of a healthy, vibrant democracy, and it is our collective responsibility as lawmakers to prioritise those principles. For example, the Leader of the Opposition committed to disclosing his diary. When will that happen? Nothing has happened. Former Labor Opposition leaders disclosed their diaries; the current Leader of the Opposition should disclose his diary. I call for that to happen now.

The bill touches upon a few facets of integrity and probity. However, the Government cannot endorse it in its current form. As other speakers have noted, the Government will present its own package aimed at tackling improper lobbying. When it does, it will be based on careful consideration of how to most effectively tackle the real problems. Many provisions outlined in the bill replicate existing requirements set forth in the Premier's memorandum, including the obligation for Ministers to regularly publish meeting summaries. Ministerial disclosure of quarterly diary summaries is already mandated by the Premier's memorandum. They are readily accessible on the Cabinet Office's website.

Despite referencing the ICAC report on Operation Eclipse, the bill fails to incorporate any of the ICAC's recommendations pertaining to ministerial diary disclosures. In circumventing those crucial issues, the bill neglects to address the comprehensive reforms urged by Operation Eclipse, particularly in regard to lobbying regulation. The Government is actively assessing the recommendations concerning lobbying arising from the inquiry, cognisant of the intricate considerations at play.

Safeguarding voter confidence is imperative for the vitality of our democracy. At the moment there is a public debate in Australia and around the world on the impact of misinformation and disinformation on the political system. Public confidence can easily be eroded due to actual or perceived weaknesses in the integrity or security of electoral systems—matters that misinformation and disinformation campaigns can easily exploit.

Disinformation is not a new problem, but the internet and AI have made generating disinformation trivially easy and social media has made distributing it essentially costless. It is an international phenomenon—64 countries, plus the European Union, are voting this year in elections that will be varying degrees of free and fair. Major democracies like India and the United States of America are grappling with weaponised disinformation and deepfakes. Some of that is chaotic and opportunistic; other examples are clearly the coordinated actions of powerful actors.

Australia and New South Wales are not immune from those globally profound forces. Measures that aim to strengthen the security and integrity of the New South Wales electoral system are essential to achieving 100 per cent confidence in that system. Promoting confidence in the system includes addressing transparency in matters related to lobbying, which the bill aims to address. The Government is committed to taking decisive action following thorough consideration, ensuring a holistic approach to addressing major issues effectively. I look forward to the contributions from the member for Kiama and others to that package when it is brought forward in the near future.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (13:59):** I make a contribution to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Kiama. The bill makes recommendations to require, under the ministerial code of conduct, the publication of information relating to certain meetings involving Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and external persons. The bill seeks to insert into the regulation new part 4A of the schedule to the New South Wales ministerial code of conduct, which provides for a mandatory disclosure scheme of ministerial diaries on a quarterly basis, and new clause 22B (4), which stipulates that said disclosures should be published on the Cabinet Office website.

The bill, in large part, overlaps with existing requirements set out in the Premier's memorandum, which commenced on 1 July 2014. The existing Premier's memorandum requires that Ministers publish summaries of certain meetings, which must be published quarterly on the Cabinet Office website. The diary summaries currently made public via the Cabinet Office website list scheduled meetings with stakeholders, external organisations, third-party lobbyists and individuals. Scheduled meetings include meetings scheduled to take place in person or via videoconference, teleconference or telephone call. The existing Premier's memorandum also requires the date and purpose of meetings and the organisations or individuals in attendance, including details of any third-party lobbyists. Where a third-party lobbyist is present, the memorandum stipulates that the name of the third-party lobbyist's firm, any personnel present and the name of the client on whose behalf they are lobbying should be disclosed.

While references have previously been made to the ICAC's Operation Eclipse report, the bill does not directly implement any of the ICAC's recommendations relating to ministerial diary disclosures. The recommendations include that monthly disclosures and diaries be published in a searchable format, that there be a preset menu of options to describe the purpose of a meeting and that fundraising events where an attendee pays for exclusive or private access to a Minister are disclosed. As I mentioned, the Premier's memorandum commenced on 1 July 2014, just under 10 years ago. The Leader of the Opposition committed to disclosing his diary, but nothing of that nature has happened. Former Labor Opposition leaders disclosed their diaries. The disclosure of an Opposition leader's diary should be an important balancing of the requirement for the Premier, Ministers and Parliament Secretaries to disclose their diaries. Therefore, the Leader of the Opposition should be disclosing his diary, in line with the Premier's memorandum and the expectations of the community.

Given the complex and important issues pertaining to the regulatory framework for lobbying in New South Wales, the bill pre-empts the careful consideration needed for the specific matters in the ICAC's report concerning ministerial disclosures. The Operation Eclipse report that was released in 2021 built on the work of Operation Halifax in 2010, which made 17 recommendations to improve the regulation of lobbying in New South Wales, centred on the establishment of a new lobbying regulatory scheme for New South Wales. Arising from Operation Halifax, the Lobbying of Government Officials Act, which established a lobbyists code of conduct and a register of third-party lobbyists, was passed in 2011 and is administered by the NSW Electoral Commission. Resulting from Operation Eclipse, the ICAC made a further 29 recommendations in total, which cover similar issues to those explored in Operation Halifax. They are the subject of a future Government bill that overlaps significantly with the private member's bill.

Over the past five years, public awareness of corruption and recognition of the significance and value of the ICAC has skyrocketed. This is a time when the public's confidence in institutions, both political and otherwise, is falling. Therefore, it is crucial that everything is done to ensure that organisations like the ICAC have the powers and resources they need to weed out those who would inappropriately cause further harm to the confidence that the public should have in bureaucracy, public servants and political representatives. Going back and looking at the reason for the establishment of the ICAC, it is clear that we must build on public awareness and the lessons of the past.

In the late 1980s, community concern about integrity in the New South Wales public sector reached new heights due to the exposure of corruption amongst Ministers, within the judiciary and at senior levels of the NSW Police Force. Responding to the concern, the then Opposition pledged to establish an anti-corruption agency with powers similar to that of a royal commission. It fulfilled that pledge when it came into government in July 1988, and the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 was passed following extensive parliamentary debate. The ICAC was then established in March 1989 as an independent organisation monitored by a parliamentary committee. The Premier at the time told the Parliament that the measure of the ICAC's success would be the enhancement of integrity and the restoration of community confidence in public administration.

The ICAC's mission is to combat corruption and improve the integrity of the New South Wales public sector. It does so by fulfilling its role to investigate, expose and minimise corruption in and affecting the public sector. The responsibility for the management of corruption risk rests with individual organisations. The ICAC directs its attention to serious and systemic corrupt conduct and takes into account the responsibility and role of other public officials and authorities in the prevention of corrupt conduct. It is a measure of the importance and value of the ICAC that not only have other jurisdictions in Australia followed suit but, over the past two years, there has been an extensive debate on the importance and significance of having a national anti-corruption commission that takes into account the framework and the role of the New South Wales model.

There are four key result areas that the ICAC works within. The first is to expose corruption by detecting and investigating corrupt conduct and identifying any methods of work, practices or procedures that allow, encourage or cause the occurrence of corrupt conduct. It also tries to ensure a good-practice approach for all investigations. The second area is to prevent corruption by encouraging government to address corruption risks of statewide significance and public concern, raising awareness in the community of corrupt conduct and encouraging the reporting of such corrupt conduct.

The third area is in accountability, by providing timely, accurate and relevant reporting to the Inspector of the ICAC and the parliamentary Committee on the ICAC; reporting publicly on the work of the commission; keeping the public informed about the work of the commission through the publication of its reports and the sharing of current information on its website; and assisting the parliamentary Committee on the ICAC. Finally, as an organisation, the ICAC provides a safe, equitable, productive and satisfying workplace so that the people who are conducting the investigations and are at the heart of the apparatus to minimise, expose and root out corruption in the public system have the best possible capacity to do that.

The bill does not consider the broader issues of lobbying in New South Wales as examined by the ICAC's report. That includes similar concerns about lobbying activities in the local government sector, with which I am quite familiar. Ostensibly, it derives from the fact that local government officials are not denoted as "government officials" in the same way that Ministers, their staff and Parliamentary Secretaries are. Instead, the conduct of local government officials is largely governed by the *Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW*. The private member's bill does nothing to improve the confidence in our most direct form of government, our local governments. That is a serious gap in the bill, which is why the Government does not support it and why I do not support it, despite the fact that it raises some important considerations. I encourage my colleagues to oppose the bill.

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (14:09):** I welcome the chance to make a contribution in debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024 because the member for Kiama's bill touches on issues that are of concern to all of us in this place. This Government takes integrity and transparency very seriously. We do not just talk about it. We have acted on it in numerous ways since coming to government. We will continue to strengthen existing systems to maintain and strengthen public confidence in the integrity of our democracy. Queensland recently released the Coaldrake report into various matters of strengthening public integrity and accountability. It is an interesting report and a good starting point for anyone thinking about these issues.

One big component of a healthy public sector is the culture set by leaders. The Premier has made it clear to everyone, privately and publicly, that he expects the highest standard of ethical behaviour. Another under-appreciated aspect of anti-corruption and public confidence is reversing the capacity drain in the public service and the over-reliance on outside commercial interests to do the basic work of a mission-driven public service. The Government is also working on that issue. Another aspect of integrity in the New South Wales political system that the Government has acted on is confidence in our electoral system. This week the Special Minister of State requested that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters establish an inquiry to conduct a review into proposals for reform to electoral legislation and policy to support the following targets for New South Wales elections: first, 100 per cent enrolment rate; secondly, 100 per cent turnout rate; thirdly, 100 per cent formality rate; and fourthly, 100 per cent confidence in the electoral system.

Enrolment, turnout and formality rates are key indicators of voter engagement with the democratic process and the overall health of the democratic system. This State should be proud of its high rates of electoral participation, especially when compared to international examples. However, the strength of electoral systems and processes across the world is regularly being challenged. Furthermore, barriers to participation continue to exist for certain marginalised groups. In this context, ensuring all eligible voters are enrolled and participate in elections is an important target. Maintaining voter confidence in the integrity of electoral processes is essential to maintaining a robust democracy. Unfortunately, public confidence can easily be eroded due to actual or perceived weaknesses in the integrity or security of electoral systems, which misinformation and disinformation campaigns can easily exploit.

As a result, measures that aim to strengthen the security and integrity of the New South Wales electoral system are essential to achieving 100 per cent confidence in that system. Of course, 100 per cent is an aspiration and not a realistic statistic that will be achievable, but it is important to state clearly the framework we are working towards. All of these issues of transparency and integrity are connected. The Government is working through them in a methodical way. The Government is opposing the member for Kiama's bill, not because it does not raise worthy issues but because it does not deal in substance with the real issues and would pre-empt the Government's position on the implementation of recommendations made following the Operation Eclipse investigation. The ICAC recommendations raise complex and important issues regarding the regulatory framework for lobbying in New South Wales and require careful consideration.

The member for Kiama's second reading speech noted that the bill contains recommendations from ICAC, which refers to the recommendations resulting from Operation Eclipse. While Operation Eclipse led to several recommendations regarding ministerial diaries, the bill does not directly implement any of those recommendations. Specifically, it does not require monthly disclosures, that diaries be published in a searchable format or that the New South Wales Government create a preset menu of options for the purpose of a meeting—all of which were recommendations of the ICAC. That said, the Leader of the Opposition committed to disclosing his diary. When is that happening? Nothing has happened. Former Labor Opposition leaders disclosed their diaries. The current Leader of the Opposition should disclose his diary. I look forward to continuing the important debate around how we can strengthen transparency and integrity in New South Wales.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:14):** I will not go into the irony of being lectured by the member for Kiama on an integrity bill, but I will make a few preliminary points that relate to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024 as it has been presented to the House. I have taken a long look at the bill's one and a half pages. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts into the regulation new part 4A of the schedule to the New South Wales ministerial code of conduct. New clause 22A deals with relevant meetings. For a start, when considering a bill such as this one, there is an ICAC report that sets out what ICAC wants to see in ministerial diaries. What everybody wants from ministerial diaries is surety. We want to know exactly who is meeting with our Ministers, why they are meeting with the Ministers, and we want to access the diaries in some reasonable way so we can understand what is happening. At the moment, that is not what we will get from this bill. I will deal with that in greater detail at a later stage. The bill states in schedule 1:

- (1) In this part, a **relevant meeting** means a meeting or discussion, whether or not scheduled in advance, involving—
  - (a) a Minister and an external person, and
  - (b) a matter that may be considered by the Minister, whether formally or informally, in the Minister's role as a—
    - (i) portfolio Minister or member of Cabinet, or ...

The first point to note is the word "may" in "a matter that may be considered"—not a matter that will be considered or has been considered. Subclause (2) of new clause 22A states "A relevant meeting may take place" and subclause (3) states a range of external persons who do not need to be declared, one of which is "another person representing or engaged by the State or another jurisdiction". An external person required to be declared does not include a Minister, ministerial or parliamentary staff, a government official, or another person representing or engaged by the State or another jurisdiction. I have a huge problem with that.

I refer to the airport link that was part of the original WestConnex proposal. In 2014 the former Government included the airport link as part of the WestConnex proposal. It was part of the funding, the management office in charge of building the project and the WestConnex development office. Somewhere along the line, certainly after Lendlease was engaged by the Government, people who had worked for Lendlease later worked for Minister Duncan Gay. Somewhere in the murky depths of this project, when Stuart Ayres was having meetings with them, the airport link was dropped from the WestConnex project and became a completely different entity. The project was supposed to be delivered in 2023. Anyone can go to the airport now and see that the rest of WestConnex is open sans the airport link.

My fundamental problem in considering the bill is that it should be considered in the whole context of ICAC's recommendations about how to define who and where Ministers meet. All the "mays", exemptions and provisions that are left out fall well short of solving the problems with ministerial diaries. Proposed new clause 22B, which deals with summaries of relevant meetings, requires that Ministers, no later than one month after the end of each quarter, give to the secretary a summary of relevant meetings attended by the Minister in the quarter. That is what we have now. That is the requirement we have a problem with. We do not want meetings presented quarterly. The recommendation from ICAC was that those meetings should be presented every month. They should be presented in a timely manner so we can see who Ministers are meeting with and what they are doing.

The quarterly reports are hidden somewhere in the bowels of some website with a link. The disclosure gives no indication of which Minister it is. It requires the reader to go back to look at the Minister of the day. If a person wants to check who the Minister was, they have to go back. And at that point a debate in Parliament has already occurred or budget estimates have already finished. There is no transparency and none of that information is available to the public. That is a fundamental change that is missing from the bill. The other fundamental change that ICAC recommended that is not included in the bill in any way is a requirement for the information to be provided in a searchable, electronic format. We are not living in the Dark Ages, when no-one knew how to put together a database or Excel spreadsheet. We can create a system for Ministers to publish their diaries and who they met every day.

By the way, there is this program called Outlook that will take the information and put it into a system automatically. It is not hard. I can recommend some good courses for anyone who has not got into artificial intelligence. It is not beyond anyone's capability to find a system that can take that information and plonk it into a data system and put it on the website. The public would be able to see almost instantaneously that a Minister has met with someone, from their diary. That fundamental change is missing from this piece of legislation. The Opposition is clearly not taking it seriously.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Because you're speaking.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** The thing about the member for Kiama is that he thinks everything is a joke. It is clear that this bill is a joke because zero Opposition members have turned up to speak in debate on this bill and back up a former member of their party. Part of the irony of being lectured on integrity by the member for Kiama is that not even Opposition members are in the Chamber to support this piece of legislation. The bill falls so far short of what we need. We know what Coalition Ministers provided in the past in their declarations. Stuart Ayers—the former Minister for sport, trading and some other things—stated in a declaration that he met with Rowing Australia. Do members know what reason he gave for the purpose of that meeting? Go on; have a guess.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** A fundraiser?

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** Rowing. He had a meeting with Rowing Australia to discuss rowing. Former Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor made a similar declaration. I love Bronnie, but she was the Minister for Women and in nine meetings over three months she did not have one where the purpose of the meeting concerned women. The purposes of the nine meetings were stated as regional youth, regional youth, mental health, mental health, innovation, training, mental health, mental health, and mental health. She was the Minister for Mental Health, so she just put the portfolio name in as the purpose of the meeting. When it comes to the purpose of a meeting, there are no provisions in this bill that require any more clarity than the nonsense we were getting. Former corrections Minister Anthony Roberts did the same thing. I love Anthony Roberts; he is a great soccer player. *[Extension of time]*

When he was the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections, he did not disclose a huge number of meetings. But he did declare a meeting with Meriton. Why would Meriton meet with the corrections Minister? Apparently, he was meeting with Meriton to "discuss corrections". That tells us absolutely nothing. The problem with this bill is that it does not require any more information to clarify what is going on. I may have misled the House when I said that no-one from the Opposition came into the Chamber to support the member for Kiama. Our old mate the member for Wairoa came into the Chamber and asked, "What have you guys done?" We have been in government for 12 months as opposed to 12 years. I went to have a look. I know this will bore members senseless, but I have been a member of Parliament for a while.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** So have I.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** Yes, I think the current member for Lismore was here the first term I was here. She has been other places since. I did go back to have a look and in 2015, Luke Foley, who was the Labor leader at the time, tried to implement changes. In 2015 he wrote a letter that stated:

Matters raised by me resulted in the very first finding of a breach of the NSW Lobbyist Code of Conduct. Further matters raised by me at the most recent Estimates hearings are the subject of an ongoing investigation.

Labor in government implemented a number of improvements concerning lobbying in NSW, and if elected on March 28, we would build on these changes to the rules. The previous Labor Government introduced the Lobbyist Register, a Lobbyist Code of Conduct, and new guidelines for the Department of Planning staff.

The public deserves to know that MPs, who make decisions every day about the laws that govern our State, are not motivated by personal gain. That's why Labor has responded by committing to implement the highest integrity standards for MPs of any party anywhere in Australia.

In 2015 Labor put down the challenge. When we were in government, we introduced all those codes. In 2015 we put down the challenge. The former Government ignored us. It did not implement those recommendations. This bill does not implement the ICAC inquiry recommendations. I would like the post-employment recommendations to be included, given the behaviour of the last Government. John Barilaro was out there getting jobs for himself. Other former Ministers were running around making sure their futures were set up. I would like to see some of those changes now. Not including those recommendations in this bill is a clear indication from the member that he is not taking these problems seriously. Former Government members saw what was happening in this Parliament. Our good mates Stuart Ayres and John Barilaro were running off to do whatever they thought was a good idea.

Those issues should be dealt with in this bill. Quite frankly, if this was a serious bill it would include the recommendations put forward by ICAC. We know it is not serious because the Opposition is not in the Chamber fighting to get it passed. They know that they dropped the ball on lobbyists. They know that they dropped the ball on ministerial diaries. What the Opposition did in Government is full of holes despite so much information coming out of ICAC about the problems with lobbyists. We still get them. We see them every day. That fundraising is not included in this bill and that people can pay \$2,000 to sit in a room with somebody is ridiculous. We will not support a half bill that does not improve existing legislation.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (14:29):** I contribute to the debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. The New South Wales Government is absolutely committed to the highest standards of integrity and transparency across public administration. Since coming to office, the Minns Government has introduced a number of reforms in the area of integrity. It has introduced a reform package seeking to amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act to make it a legislative requirement for the Government to respond to recommendations of the ICAC directed to the Government. Previously there was no strict requirement for the Government to respond. The legislation proposes to fix that.

The Government has also referred a matter which looks at the nature and frequency of parliamentary disclosures by all MPs to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. It includes not just the disclosure of pecuniary interests and certain State environmental planning policy interests but also the concept of conflicts of interest and whether potential or perceived conflicts of interest should be part of regular, ongoing disclosures by MPs. That reflects best practice in a lot of listed companies and large organisations where boards of directors or senior management have a continuous disclosure requirement. Whenever there is a meeting, there is an ongoing register of conflicts and potential conflicts that has to be kept up to date. At the beginning of every meeting and every session there is a standing question that asks, "Do you have any new or additional conflicts to declare?" That is put on the register and remains on the register until something changes. That is what I observe to be best practice amongst good, well-governed organisations. That matter has been referred to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. I am a member of that committee, and we are giving it deep and due consideration.

In the interests of improving integrity, the New South Wales Government has also amended the Electoral Funding Act 2018 through the Electoral Funding Amendment (Registered Clubs) Act 2023 that prohibits political donations from clubs that house poker machines or are otherwise involved in wagering, betting and other gambling. Another key part of the Minns Government's efforts to improve integrity and accountability is that it has strengthened grants administration. It has passed the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Grants) Act 2023, which codifies key principles of grant administration as set up in the *Grants Administration Guide*. In other words, the Government has made certain grants information open access information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act regime. Ministers must ensure that grants approved are efficient, effective, economical, ethical, and that they achieve value for money. In respect of disaster relief grants, all grant details need to be forwarded to the Auditor-General within three months of approval. That is an overview of what the Minns Labor Government has done to demonstrate its commitment to improving integrity in the State.

I am pleased to contribute to this debate about integrity, transparency and accountability because I am the chair of both the Public Accounts Committee and the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Those two institutions form the spine of the integrity infrastructure of the State, and when I became

chair I asked myself what our core objective should be. What should the committee be trying to achieve? I wondered whether the core objective should be to rebuild the public's trust in politics and politicians. Should that be at the core of what we are trying to do through those two integrity committees? I wondered if we should unpack the idea of rebuilding the public's trust in politics and government. Here I draw on some very interesting writings and musings by Baroness Onora O'Neill, who is a professor of philosophy at the University of Cambridge. Let me do this via a number of statements. The first statement I challenge people to think about is that trust is declining. Do people believe that trust is declining? Trust in politicians is low right now. In the integrity indexes and public measures of trust, I think politicians rank slightly above used-car salesmen—

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** Real estate agents.

**Mr JASON LI:** —real estate agents and insurance salespeople. But was there a time when politicians were deeply trusted? Has trust in politicians really fallen all that much? As a general statement, I think we can agree that public trust in our institutions has been declining over the past few decades. A second statement is that we want to have more trust. Would we agree with that statement? Some would argue that is a stupid aim. They would say that we should have more trust in that which is trustworthy, but we should have less trust in that which is dodgy. If we have more trust in that which is dodgy—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** The grants process.

**Mr JASON LI:** —such as the grants process, it will be a debacle. Just having more trust is not an intelligent aim. When we ask ourselves if a person is trustworthy, we probably consider three things: Are they honest? Are they competent? Are they reliable? Think of a friend who is honest and competent, who can do a job but who is completely unreliable. Can you trust that person? Similarly, think of a friend who is very honest and reliable but is completely useless and incompetent. You cannot reasonably trust them. Thankfully, I cannot think of a friend who is competent and reliable but completely dishonest. I can happily say that I do not know anybody like that. The third statement is that our goal is to rebuild trust. What do we think of that? I think that is a nuanced concept, but there is a better way to talk about it. As parliamentarians and through our integrity institutions, we should be building more trust in that which is trustworthy, but we should be exposing that which is not trustworthy. That is our role and the role of integrity institutions. That is what we are meant to be doing.

I lived in China for 10 years, and that built in me a very deep appreciation of the preciousness of our democratic institutions and how we need to defend them. I thought that, ideally, our most important institutions are places that shape those who act in them. A person rises and grows into the responsibilities of their office—a member of Parliament, an accountant, a lawyer, a parent. [*Extension of time*]

When you become a new parent, you hope that you will grow into the institution of being a parent. For instance, if somebody's child was being terrible on the street, or your child was being terrible on the street, you would not shout at them there, because you want to set the right example to children. We want institutions where reasonable people can rise, institutions that cause people to lift and to elevate themselves. However, there is a view that the very performative nature of politics is ruining that and causing institutions to be something else.

Institutions, politicians and people who occupy high office are becoming less and less formative. There is less shaping occurring. Rather, they are becoming more performative. They are there to perform. They are there to put on a bit of a show. Political actors now use institutions as a stage or a platform for celebrity, self-promotion and ideology. Donald Trump is probably the most extreme example of this, but there are also lots of examples in Australian and New South Wales politics and institutions where actors are using the platform to put on a show, in order to be a celebrity, in order to grandstand, for instance. I argue that this is one of the reasons the public's trust in politics and politicians has been declining so much over the years.

In light of all of this, I now turn to the bill. I do not support this bill, and the main reason is that I believe in the prerogative of the executive government. The prerogative of the executive government should be the first priority. The executive government should have the priority to deliver the legislation and the governmental agenda that it chooses, because it was elected to do that. The Minns Labor Government has a comprehensive approach to look at the integrity infrastructure and the integrity mechanisms of the State, including in respect of the ICAC's Operation Eclipse report. The Government is considering the recommendations of that report carefully and will respond comprehensively. The bill deals with a very limited part of it. Most of it repeats the requirement in the Premier's memorandum for Ministers to publish quarterly summaries of their diaries, so this bill is unnecessary, superfluous and goes against the prerogative of the executive government to deliver its legislative agenda and governmental agenda according to its electoral mandate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** It being 2.43 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, consideration of general business orders of the day (for bills) has concluded. The House will now proceed to consideration of general business notices of motions (general notices).

*Motions***EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TASKFORCE****Debate resumed from 16 May 2024.**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (14:44):** I am delighted to pick up where I left off speaking on this motion. In the interim since I last spoke, I have further reflected upon some of the wonderful announcements that were involved in the Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospital redevelopment. I must confess, it has made me jealous. One of the things I talk about ad nauseam in my electorate is the \$479 million rebuild of Ryde Hospital, the single largest investment in health care in my electorate's history, to the best of my knowledge. That has left the Ryde electorate over the moon. It is something that my predecessor was proud to announce and deliver. I now have the honour of implementing it. When I think about the way that the Government has been responding to this motion, with criticism and condemnation, I am upset. The constituents of the member for Blacktown's electorate have gotten an even better deal than my constituents in Ryde, yet in Ryde we are very, very happy with our hospital redevelopment.

On the previous occasion I was speaking about some of the great services at the Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals. As I read through them, I was more and more impressed. I spoke about the new inpatient building adjacent to the existing hospital. There are 170 additional beds, including chemo chairs. This is extremely important. As we know, there are an extraordinary number of cancer patients. There are additional outpatient clinics and a new in-centre renal dialysis unit—again, something that I have been fighting hard to secure for Ryde Hospital, without success. It is fantastic that Mount Druitt has those dialysis services, because they are in high demand across all of Sydney. The redevelopment included a new comprehensive cancer centre; additional cardiac catheterisation capability; future provisioning for a nuclear medicine service—which is very innovative; and an expanded medical imaging, pharmacy, pathology and central sterilising services department. These are all important things that feed into delivering a first-class hospital. Stage 1 was officially opened in May 2016.

My constituents in Ryde will be upset to learn there was then a second stage. Stage two of the more than \$700 million project involved over \$400 million to transition Blacktown Hospital into a major metropolitan hospital to service all of Western Sydney. Residents should be most pleased that service is in their backyard. The project included an acute services building at Blacktown, housing an emergency department, an intensive care unit, surgical and interventional services, a psychiatric emergency care centre, endoscopy, imaging, additional in-centre renal dialysis services, and women's health, birthing and newborn care services. The latter is something close to my heart. This Government decided to pull birthing and maternity services from the Ryde Hospital rebuild. I call on the Government to keep its pre-election promise and restore funding for the birthing unit in the upcoming budget. The people of Ryde understood it would be delivered. If it was good for Blacktown and Mount Druitt it should also be good for Ryde. I am pleased that Blacktown and Mount Druitt have that unit, but I want it in my community as well. There is nothing more important than making it easy for women to give birth close to where they live.

Other services include paediatrics and ambulatory care. At Mount Druitt, there has been investment in drug health, imaging, increased surgical services and additional renal dialysis services. All of that is within the hospital. There has also been incredible investment outside the hospital—a \$24.2 million car park, which means that there is additional accessibility for staff, patients and visitors. I would go there just to have a look at it. It is such a fantastic build. It became operational in 2014. I have more to say, but I have run out of time. I oppose the motion.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:48):** I make a contribution to debate on the member for Blacktown's motion. As the member for Mount Druitt, I know how important a well-resourced hospital is to the community. The sign of a good hospital is the health of its emergency department and, for many of us, it is the first impression we form about our local hospital. We know that our emergency departments are under pressure. Addressing the current heavy demand on our emergency departments is a key priority for the New South Wales Government. We recognise that more than 100,000 patients visit the Blacktown and Mount Druitt emergency departments each year. Statistics show that almost half of all presentations to emergency departments in the October to December quarter last year were in category four, including sprained ankles and earaches et cetera, or category five, including small cuts or abrasions—the lowest urgency categories. That is why providing people with alternatives to an emergency department is so important. It means many more people with less serious conditions can be seen and treated appropriately and more quickly.

The Government's decision to establish an Emergency Department Taskforce is an important step towards finding innovative solutions to divert pressure from our hospitals. I am very proud that the latest quarterly report of the Bureau of Health Information shows a significant 13.9 per cent improvement in the percentage of patients starting treatment on time at Blacktown emergency department, and a 6.3 per cent improvement in the percentage of patients starting treatment on time at Mount Druitt emergency department, when compared with the same



quarter the previous year. That is great news, but there is still a lot to do. The New South Wales Government has invested \$120 million to deliver additional bed capacity to Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals. The Government is also rolling out a range of other initiatives to address demand on our emergency departments. That includes a \$124 million program to deliver 25 urgent care services across New South Wales, with all expected to be operational by June 2025. Those measures will ease pressure on emergency departments and provide faster care for urgent but non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries such as wounds, minor burns, infections and sprains.

In partnership with primary care providers, the Australian Government has also delivered 14 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics in New South Wales, with two located in Western Sydney. Further initiatives designed to address demand on emergency departments and provide care closer to home include increasing the use of virtual care services. For instance, urgent care response teams operating in Western Sydney link elderly people in aged care facilities or the community with their general practitioner, specialists, family and aged care staff using videoconferencing technology at home. Better supporting people with urgent care needs in settings outside emergency departments reduces the need for them to travel to their nearest hospital, where they may endure a long wait as more seriously ill people are prioritised. I thank the member for Blacktown for moving this important motion, and I look forward to seeing Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals well resourced to cater for the people of Western Sydney in the near future.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (14:52):** It is staggering that our public hospital emergency departments treat over three million people a year. That is more than any other State or Territory. In fact, the latest available data shows emergency department activity continued to be higher than pre-pandemic levels, with over 810,000 emergency department attendances across New South Wales between January and March this year. That includes a record 6,677 triage category one, and 123,935 triage category two presentations. Recent record numbers of seriously unwell patients presenting to emergency departments have no doubt added to the pressures facing hospitals like Blacktown and Mount Druitt in Western Sydney. Adding to that is the massive population growth experienced throughout Blacktown City. As the member for Blacktown has noted a couple of times, around 12,000 new residents come into Blacktown City every year, and between 8,000 and 10,000 come to my electorate alone. That is not a new phenomenon; it has been happening for years.

The New South Wales Government is serious about addressing the resourcing of and demands made upon our public hospital emergency departments and acute clinical services. As the member for Blacktown noted in his contribution, under the last Labor Government 84 per cent of patients were attended to on time in emergency departments. That fell to just 16.5 per cent in the last year of the previous Government. That is not a statistical anomaly; it is a complete abrogation of responsibility.

The New South Wales Government has amply demonstrated its commitment to improving Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals with the funding of 60 extra beds. The communities that rely on Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals know how necessary the expanded bed capacity is to meet future demand. After many promises by the previous Government, we have also finally funded the construction of Rouse Hill Hospital, which will include an emergency department. Before being elected, I remember hearing promise after promise about Rouse Hill Hospital coming to fruition. In fact, for three election cycles, I heard, "There will be a Rouse Hill Hospital. We are committed to building a Rouse Hill Hospital." And yet no money was ever allocated to making that dream a reality. In fact, in the former Government's last budget, a measly \$11 million for a proposed \$300 million hospital was allocated. I am pleased to report that our Government, in its very first budget, allocated \$700 million for a massively expanded Rouse Hill Hospital, which includes that emergency department.

Just as important is the New South Wales Government funding of new urgent care services that are designed to bridge the gap between primary and emergency care. That measure alone ensures that many more patients in Blacktown and Mount Druitt will have fast access to the urgent care they need, without necessarily needing to turn to the hospital's busy emergency department, where they face a long wait time while more seriously injured or ill people are prioritised. In fact, that played out earlier this week, when I received an inquiry from a constituent who had to wait in the emergency room at Blacktown Hospital. We are committed to fixing the complete abrogation of responsibility and the emergency departments in New South Wales.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (14:56):** In reply: I am somewhat—

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Perplexed?

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** Saddened, actually. The member for Winston Hills, whose electorate covers the Blacktown Hospital area, could not be bothered to come to the Chamber to address this important issue. It seems like Opposition members do not care. Maybe the Liberal Party is on heart support, and they need a big whack to keep them going.

**Mr Jordan Lane:** There is good heart support at the hospital.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** The member for Ryde just does not get it and neither does anyone in the Liberal Party. The motion is about emergency departments. Does the member for Ryde seriously feel that we have a good outcome? In 2011 seven out of eight patients that were triaged by a nurse as a triage category two patient were seen on time. They must be seen within 10 minutes. I am not talking about people turning up with a snotty nose or something; that is a different classification. I am talking about a person to whom the nurse says, "You must see a doctor within 10 minutes or your life is at risk." Seven out of eight were seen on time in 2011.

The member for Ryde talked about the new mega hospital that was built—the \$700 million hospital that has one of the smallest emergency rooms out there. Whereas 16,000 people per quarter turn up to emergency at Blacktown Hospital, only 7,000 go to Ryde Hospital. Seven out of eight patients being seen on time was basically the average across the State—in Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital, for example. In Ryde, I notice it was about 83 per cent. By the end of the Liberal Government's 12 years in power, only one in eight patients was seen on time. Is that fair or reasonable?

That is why the previous Government is being condemned, as the first paragraph of the motion states. Is the Opposition saying that going from seven out of eight to one out of eight is a fabulous track record? How many people's lives were endangered as a result of that? The previous Government gave us a shiny new hospital building but did not supply any new nurses or doctors to support it. There is a shiny new building where patients can sit in emergency—if they can get a seat. It is one of the smallest emergency waiting rooms, which is why patients sit or lie on the floor. About 18,000 patients per quarter go through that emergency department, which is over 60,000 people a year.

Opposition members say that the people of Blacktown should be happy that there is a shiny new building, but there is more to a hospital than a building. It needs nurses. It needs support. That is why Labor has allocated \$120 million over the next four years to get 120 extra beds to unblock the problem. In his opening line the member for Ryde asked how the Government could dare to condemn the former Government and not come up with an alternative. But this Government has. The waiting time for elective surgery at Blacktown Hospital is down to zero from a previous list of a few thousand patients who were waiting beyond the recommended time. The first directive of the Minister for Health was to reduce it. We are moving forward. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government should be condemned for making the people of Blacktown wait and for possibly endangering their lives.

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

**The House divided.**

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

#### AYES

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

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

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

#### NOES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T

James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M

Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K

## NOES

Butler, R  
Clancy, J  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Davies, T  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M

Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Roberts, A

Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R

## PAIRS

Minns, C  
Park, R  
Warren, G  
Watson, A

Cross, M  
Toole, P  
Wilson, F  
Cooke, S

**Motion agreed to.**

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I acknowledge and welcome the member for Pittwater's mum, who is in the gallery today.

*Motions*

## SCHOOL RESOURCING

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:10):** I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1240.

**Leave granted.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** Accordingly, I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that currently three children in every public school classroom in Australia are effectively unfunded because of the shortfall in resourcing the minimum school resourcing standard.
- (2) Calls on the Minister for Education and Early Learning and the Premier to demand that Federal funding is immediately increased to bridge the shortfall in systemic funding for public schools in New South Wales.
- (3) Demands that the full 100 per cent school resourcing standard minimum is delivered for every public school and for every child.

I thank the Deputy Premier, and education Minister, and the Coalition for their support for this important motion. I hope every public school student in New South Wales is having a scholastic day, which is a very typical thing for a teacher to say, and I hope every school community is doing well. I thank every public school teacher in this State for their work, particularly over the past few years. I recognise the historic pay rise that the Government was able to give them, with The Greens' support. We will continue the work to improve pay and conditions. I also give a shout-out to Greens Senator Penny Allman-Payne for her incredible work on Federal funding, which unfortunately is very complex. I give a shout-out to the NSW Teachers Federation—of which I have been a proud member for over 20 years—and the Australian Education Union for their tireless work in that space.

Universal access to free, quality public education is not just the hallmark of an advanced society; it is the cornerstone of progressive countries, and it is absolutely our greatest treasure. There are plenty of former schoolteachers in the Chamber and in the other place, and we all know that teaching is a vocation and a dedication to the learning of young people. There is nothing more precious than an education. Some decades ago we inherited a thriving, well-funded system across the board, but today that has deteriorated. The short version is that we used to believe that every child in this country had the right to a free public school education. We have heard from all the former judges and Prime Ministers who had an amazing public education but then sadly gave in to lobbying from independent private schools.

The right to choose suddenly took over the zeitgeist. I do not care that privately owned schools became a thing; I have so much respect for the private schools in my electorate and across the board. But they should not

be publicly funded. Time went on and more and more Federal money went to private schools, with the States and Territories asked to pick up more of the tab. That brings us to today. While some private schools in New South Wales fret over delivering new swimming pools and \$12 million theatres, public schools face different challenges, like working in classrooms and staffrooms that are not fit for purpose, struggling to buy enough textbooks and scraping for pens and basic stationery. All teachers remember the negotiation with the front office for a couple of extra pens. The overfunding of private schools and the underfunding of public schools really is beyond the pale.

As it stands, only 1.3 per cent of public schools nationwide receive the government funding they are supposed to. Meanwhile, 98 per cent of private schools receive excess funding. Governments underfund government schools. But with a Labor Government at the Federal level and Labor governments across the States and Territories, we have an opportunity to right the wrong. The 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling—the Gonski review—had its flaws. But it set a minimum school resourcing standard, which we call the SRS. But, due to the pressure of lobbyists, Federal Labor at the time unfortunately lost its nerve. Out of that emerged a kind of Frankenstein funding arrangement where underfunded public schools were put on a pathway up to full funding while overfunded private schools were put on a pathway down. We find ourselves in an era of neglect.

The Greens believe that Federal funding for the school education system should be on the basis of need and equity, to ensure that all Australian children receive a world-class education. More than a decade on, we are in a position to right that wrong, and that is why I am so pleased that we have the support of Labor. Our incredible education Minister is determined to see that children in New South Wales public schools have the minimum resourcing standard, and then we can go from there. I very much welcome the support of the House and look forward to hearing from Government and Opposition members who value public education.

**Business interrupted.**

#### *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion, of which notice has not been given, to amend the resolution of the House of 5 June setting out the routine of business for this day, 6 June 2024.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That the resolution of the House of 5 June be amended by:

- (1) Omitting paragraph 6, which provided that 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 the conclusion of the petition debate.
- (2) Inserting the following new paragraphs:
  - (8) The House to consider at any time any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business, 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.
  - (9) If any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business are received before or during private members' statements, for business before the House to be interrupted for the consideration of the messages forthwith and to resume once the consideration of the messages has concluded.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Motions*

### **SCHOOL RESOURCING**

**Business resumed.**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:20):** I support the motion of the member for Ballina, my good friend. She knows the significance of good public education for our schoolchildren, and she is a huge supporter of teachers. The member can articulate very well—and has done so in the motion—the importance of funding public schools in New South Wales to the level they deserve. Along with the Government, I believe that every child has the right to an education of the highest quality. I note for the record that in May last year the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning jointly signed a pledge with the Federal Minister for Education at the NSW Teachers Federation conference. The pledge stated:

We are committed to ensuring every NSW public school is on a path to reach 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard – the fair funding level.

It was a momentous pledge. As did the member for Ballina, I give a shout-out to all the public schools in each electorate. I thank the members of those school communities for the hard work that they do every day. I thank every public school teacher. I was a public school teacher for nearly 30 years. It is tough work, day in and day out. A number of my colleagues have also been in the classroom during their careers over the past couple of decades. I am a proud member of the Teachers Federation, and have been for nearly three decades. I give a shout-out to the good work that union does for its members in the name of public education. The union supports the work of public schools and public school teachers, and students and families, who deserve the high-quality education we are speaking about.

I also take a moment to acknowledge all the schools in my electorate of Blue Mountains. We have some fantastic schools and teachers, many of whom have approached me in the past year to say thank you. They said, "Thank you for recognising our worth. Thank you for the biggest pay rise in a generation." Obviously there is still quite a lot of work to do to address the workload stress that teachers endure and to support them in their most important work. I acknowledge the Australian Education Union. I recently met with the AEU and the Teachers Federation outside Blaxland High School to discuss this very issue. The Government has committed to increasing its minimum funding share by nearly 3 per cent of the standard for the government school sector, to 75 per cent, two years earlier than the previous Government. In 2025, the government school system will be funded to at least 95 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard. Most importantly, we are demanding full and fair funding for our public schools, to 100 per cent.

The Government is currently negotiating a new reform and funding agreement with the Commonwealth Government, to start next year. We are working productively with our Commonwealth colleagues to ensure that families in New South Wales, Australia's largest State, are not short-changed. Securing that support will see all public school students guaranteed a world-class education, no matter their postcode. *Our Plan for NSW Public Education 2024-27* sets a new direction and a number of priorities. The Minister has made a number of statements in this place during question time outlining those priorities. The most important point I make in supporting the motion of the good member for Ballina is that the Government is committed to reaching full and fair funding levels for public schools. Go public schools!

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:24):** I indicate the Opposition's support for the member for Ballina's motion. I thank the member for bringing the motion before the House. She spoke about the importance of public education. I acknowledge that importance and the vocational calling of teaching. My son has dyslexia and dysgraphia. When I speak to friends in the public education system, we talk about the wraparound service and educational support provided to young people on their journey in life. Springdale Heights Public School is in my area and that school works really well for its community. The Opposition recognises the importance of funding. At this moment we have Labor governments across the Commonwealth and States. It is a good opportunity for those governments to come together and drive forward to reflect the 2011 Gonski review and achieve equitable school funding. I acknowledge that before the election the Minister committed to funding schools to 100 per cent of the School Resourcing Standard if the State Government could not come to an agreement with the Federal Government. It is extremely important that that occurs.

There are significant funding needs. As the local member, I am concerned about what I hear from local schools across my region, particularly in small regional areas such as Corowa. Parents have reached out to me to raise concerns about the loss to principals in their yearly budget and discretionary spending, and the loss of \$150 million in funding. There needs to be additional funding. The cuts are a concern. I welcome the member's motion.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:29):** I support the motion and thank the member for Ballina for moving it. Like many members before me, I came to this place straight from the classroom. I think I was literally teaching the day before election day. I am a passionate teacher. Not only have I taught every single age group, from preschool through to year 12, I have also taught in every type of school. I have taught in public schools, in the independent system and in the Catholic system. I have the lived experience to compare different schools.

When I read the motion, I instantly wanted to go back to when I first started teaching. It may be a shock to some members, but that was before the '90s. At that time, being a public school teacher meant being fully funded. Teachers were comfortable. Apart from needing to put in a code for photocopying, because paper was paramount—paper was life—if a teacher needed pens or books, they were able to get hold of those. Over the course of my teaching career, I have seen that change markedly. I found it interesting that as the disparity grew wider between the schools that get a lot of funding and parental input and the schools that do not, so did the gap between the students who are doing well and the students who are not.

It seems to be that, in the time since the Gonski report in particular, a big gap has opened up between the students who are doing well and have everything made easy for them and those who are not getting the same start in life. In teaching, getting to students early can be life changing. I wanted to make a brief contribution in support of the amended motion and to thank the member for Ballina for bringing it to the House. We demand that 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard minimum is delivered for every public school. It is time to reduce the gap. It is time to bring those schools back to where we want them to be.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:30):** I thank the member for Ballina for the great motion. The more that we discuss promoting public schools and teachers and fully funding public comprehensive schools—not select schools—the better. Every child has the right to an education of the highest quality, but not every child has that opportunity. I chose to be a public schoolteacher. I chose to remain in the public school system because I realised during my time in Walgett that we do not have equity. We talk about choice, but if a person is poor, they do not have choice or opportunity. I saw a three-tiered system in Walgett: the rich, cocky kids went to private boarding schools, the slightly less rich sent their children to the local Catholic school and the poorest kids, mostly Aboriginal kids, went to Walgett High School. Over 80 per cent of people from the poorest communities go to public schools.

Members spoke about books and pens. At Walgett High School, we kept the books and pens at the school because the children often shared them with people at home at the mission reserve—because it is a sharing culture—and they did not come back. Members can talk about how good we are doing, but we have to do a lot more. We have to do more for Walgett, Bourke, Wilcannia and the schools in the western suburbs. Those kids do not have the same opportunities. It is all good to talk about choice, but not everyone has that choice. Some people do not have the money and are just worried about paying the rent.

Finally, I thank every school cleaner and all school staff. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for reminding me. The most beautiful woman I have ever met was named Gloria, who was an Aboriginal support worker at Walgett. She saved me so many times when I was 21 with the way that she talked to the kids. She was terrific. I thank Gloria from Walgett. That was in the 1980s. It is a great motion that I fully support. We need more public comprehensive schools and more public school teachers, because a public education is a great education.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:33):** In reply: Before I thank members, I say that it would have been great to have had the full time available for debate, which we have not had, but I want the motion passed today. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for reminding the House that every child deserves to have the choice to go to a public school of the highest standard in their community. She also mentioned the commitment to fair funding. I give a shout-out to Hazelbrook Public School, where I went to school. It is a great public school in the electorate of the member for Blue Mountains. I thank the member for Albury for the Opposition's support. It was touching to hear his admiration for Springdale Heights Public School, which has supported his son and students with disabilities in the caring way that public school teachers and communities do.

I thank the member for Camden, who observed that she has seen a big change in the disparity between schools and the significance of the direct relationship between resourcing and student outcomes. It is not rocket science; it is an equation. Resourcing for school communities sets young people up for the rest of their lives. I thank the member for Wallsend, who was a lifelong educator before coming into Parliament. I thank her for working in hard-to-staff areas. I give a massive shout-out to every teacher west of the line. I spent five years in Broken Hill, and it was a wonderful experience. I encourage teachers to go out west. Kids in the bush do not have the immediate access that the kids in city and metropolitan areas do. It is wonderful that teachers become part of those communities. The member for Wallsend also talked about poverty and the impact that has. Over the past three or four years, we have seen thousands of students leaving the public school system each year. That is a terrible blight, and it has a knock-on effect.

In conclusion, over the past decade there has been a decline in resourcing, and we have seen the impact of that. Adding climate-fuelled extreme weather events to the mix, following the floods in my electorate, it was teachers who went in to try to rescue precious resources for their kids, even though their own houses were flooded. That is what teachers are like. There is no parent who does not absolutely worship the ground that teachers walk on because of their dedication to their young people. It is no secret what is happening. Public school kids are being robbed of \$6.6 billion a year across Australia. That has to end. I am pleased to be working with the Labor Government at the State level to see fair funding for public schools in New South Wales.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH SEA EAGLES**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (15:37):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles on their historic win over the South Sydney Rabbitohs in the first ever National Rugby League match played overseas.
- (2) Congratulates Reuben Garrick on scoring 16 points, the most ever in an overseas National Rugby League match.
- (3) Congratulates the National Rugby League on an outstanding initiative in hosting a round one double-header in Las Vegas.

It is only right and proper that the oldest and greatest Parliament in the nation devotes a swathe of time of its general business notices of motions to consider, in as much detail as possible, the wonder and majesty of the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles. It is without contest nor debate that the Sea Eagles, the maroon and white, are without equal in the annals of first grade rugby league since its establishment in 1908. Over its 117-year history, no former nor current club in the National Rugby League competition compares.

To properly assess the success of a club requires a multifactorial approach. One must consider a range of indicia to form a fair and proper analysis. By adopting a sophisticated regression analysis and other such approaches, we learn much. So let us take a little journey down Compare and Contrast Lane. First, in the history of all clubs, Manly has appeared in 19 grand finals, compared to Easts' and St George's 30 and Souths' 35. Second, Manly has won the fifth highest number of premierships, at eight. Their nearest rival, Souths, have won 21; Easts, 15; and the Dragons, 16. Third, Manly has won a premiership in each of the past seven decades since 1950. No other club has achieved this feat, meaning Manly is hailed as the most consistent club since World War II.

Fourth, on the basis of win-loss percentage of all time, of current clubs Manly sits at third, behind Melbourne and Brisbane. Of all 34 clubs to have ever competed, Manly sits fourth. Fifth, let us now turn to wooden spooners: Parramatta, 14; Souths, eight; and Dragons, six. And how many has Manly had? A doughnut—a big fat doughnut. Some people use doughnuts to make fun of people's dietary habits, but in this case a doughnut is a very good thing. Manly has received zero wooden spoons. That cannot be said of me as a child, when I received many wooden spoons across the back.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** It being 3.40 p.m. and in accordance with the resolution of the House on 5 June 2024, consideration of general business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills) is now interrupted for Government business.

#### *Bills*

### **CATHOLIC CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA TRUST BILL 2024**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Stephen Kamper, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (15:41):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024. I begin by acknowledging that today is the first anniversary of the passing of Mr Peter O'Meara. Peter served as the CEO of the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust [CMCT] for more than 12 years. During his tenure, he not only had to constantly fight against government pressure to keep his organisation going, but he also continued to improve the delivery and availability of affordable burial and cremation services to those of all faiths and none. I am pleased to say that this bill will bring the cemetery wars to a close and is a fitting tribute to Peter's memory.

From day one, this Government has been addressing the critical shortage of burial space in Sydney rather than continuing the fight over the control and management of Crown cemeteries. We have implemented the groundbreaking Interment Industry Scheme, ensuring strong consumer protections and standards of service across the sector. We committed up-front to a two-operator model for the Crown cemeteries sector and have taken major strides in implementing this reform. We are getting on with the job and ending the indecision of the past decade that has plagued the sector. This bill is a key pillar in the Government's actions to meet these pressing challenges. The bill provides the setting to implement the operating model for CMCT's successor.

This model acknowledges the Catholic Church's track record of delivering essential interment services on Crown land for over 150 years. The church remains committed to that mission. It is demonstrating its commitment through projects like the development of Macarthur Memorial Park at Varroville, the first new Crown cemetery in Sydney in perhaps eight decades. Macarthur Memorial Park will provide up to 136,000 burial plots, accessible to people of any or no faith, which will open in March next year.

There are reasons why this bill must progress as a matter of urgency. There is a statutory deadline, 1 July 2024, for implementing the new arrangements. CMCT was created under repealed legislation and now exists only under the transitional provisions of the Crown Land Management Act 2016. If new arrangements are not in place before 1 July 2024, then, by operation of schedule 7 of the Crown Land Management Act, all of CMCT's assets, rights and liabilities will vest in CMCT's corporate manager, the Catholic cemeteries board. This is a privately owned entity controlled by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

Further extension of CMCT's transition day beyond 1 July 2024 should be avoided as that has already occurred nine times. An additional layer of urgency has arisen in the light of a recent decision of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. In February, the Court of Appeal handed down its judgment in *Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust v Attorney General of New South Wales* [2024] NSWCA 30. It confirmed that a charitable trust does exist, which can be applied only towards burying the dead of the Roman Catholic denomination at the Rookwood Catholic cemetery. This narrow purpose will continue to exist past the transition day of 1 July if no action is taken.

The narrow terms of the trust mean that CMCT has inadvertently breached the trust in two ways: by interring the dead of all faiths and those without a faith; and by using proceeds from Rookwood to provide burial services at other sites. I may say that all that was done in good faith. In other words, the terms of the trust do not allow CMCT or its successor to operate in a way that serves the whole community. As a modern Crown cemetery operator, CMCT manages its cemeteries as a portfolio and for the benefit of all people in need of burial services. It is critical that CMCT's successor is empowered to continue to do so. The bill expands the trust's narrow purpose. CMCT's successor will be able to use those trust funds to bury people of all faiths, and those without a faith, across all its Crown cemeteries.

For the removal of all doubt, the bill also extinguishes any legacy equitable interests or charitable trusts that may exist over cemeteries or funds managed by CMCT, other than the Catholic charitable trust, or the other Crown operator, Metropolitan Memorial Parks [MMP]. The bill excuses prior breaches of charitable trusts by CMCT and MMP or their predecessors where the action was in line with the trust purposes expanded by this bill. At the same time, the bill makes clear that the land on which CMCT operates is Crown land, as will be any future land acquired by the new Catholic operator. The bill lays the foundation for the new operating structure for this entity. The bill appoints Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Limited as the trustee and confirms that the trust will continue to be subject to the Charitable Trusts Act 1993.

The bill also facilitates part of the Government's plan to increase the supply of burial space by enabling the portion of the Rookwood site that holds a crematorium operated by InvoCare to transition to MMP at the end of the current lease. The land surrounding the crematorium is intended to be made available for bodily interments, adding up to 5,000 plots at Rookwood. Our vision is clear: Every person in New South Wales deserves accessible, sustainable, and affordable burial and cremation services. The bill demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to partnering with cemetery operators across all faiths, and in both the public and private sectors. It is the Government's role to provide operators with the certainty they need to continue this essential work, and to plan to meet demand over decades to come. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **COFFS HARBOUR PINK LADIES**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:50):** Treatments at Coffs Harbour Community Health are now more comfortable for patients and staff thanks to the remarkable Coffs Harbour Pink Ladies. Two clinic chairs, each valued at \$8,950, were recently received with gratitude. The chairs can be adjusted to multiple positions and raised and lowered according to the needs of patients and staff safety. Nurse unit manager Rachel Baston said the chairs were practical and much needed. They have boosted team spirit at the community health centre. Pink Ladies President Helen Mears and Treasurer Linda Friend joined registered nurse Melinda Fardy at a recent presentation. Last year the Pink Ladies raised more than \$274,000 for equipment at the Coffs Harbour Health Campus. I thank them for their inspirational fundraising efforts.

#### **CHERYL BOSLER**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (15:51):** After prevailing through dark years, Cabramatta is now known as a vibrant and lively cultural hub with a close-knit, resilient and harmonious community. This incredible development has been made possible by the contribution of Ms Cheryl Bosler, a dedicated place manager for Cabramatta from 2007 until 2023. Cheryl was responsible for major events and activities, including the Moon Festival and Lunar New Year festival, which attract hundreds of thousands of people to recognise and celebrate the diversity of Asian culture within Cabramatta. By collaborating with the community, government and local



bodies, Cheryl addressed community concerns and improved community safety, expanded parking capacity and improved liveability through the enhancement of public spaces for parents and children. Cheryl's engagement with the community has gained Cabramatta recognition as a cultural destination, attracting residents across Sydney and tourists beyond our nation. I thank Cheryl, the Cabramatta Place Office team and the events team for their passion and dedication to build Cabramatta into what it is today—a place locals love and visitors admire.

#### **DARREN LATTY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (15:52):** I congratulate Mr Darren Latty on the unveiling of PRD Glenmore Park, his latest achievement in a highly successful career in the real estate industry. I commend him for his ongoing and extraordinary contribution to our community and region. Mr Latty is the owner of PRD Penrith, having taken over from his father, Michael Latty. Following the success of this office, Darren opened PRD Blue Mountains, where his wife, Angelina, and her cousin Angela currently operate as successful agents. PRD Glenmore Park is the third PRD office opened by the successful Latty family. Mr Latty brings a great depth of knowledge and experience to the field. He founded his own agency in Glebe at the age of 22 and is currently in his thirty-seventh year in the real estate industry. His passion and love for the region is further reflected through his position as chairman of the Penrith CBD Corporation, through which he diligently strives to progress the area for the better. I thank Mr Latty and his family for their contribution to our region and wish them the very best with this new venture in Glenmore Park.

#### **WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:53):** I acknowledge and pay tribute to all NSW State Emergency Service [SES] staff and volunteers and acknowledge Wear Orange Wednesday [WOW], which was held on 22 May. Residents were invited to wear orange to show their support and appreciation for the fantastic work our SES crews do in the community. In my electorate, the Camden SES has always been on the front lines when storms and flooding have impacted our community. The dedicated volunteers selflessly serve the community when called upon. They are ready to put themselves in danger to help others. WOW provides a platform to honour the unwavering commitment of SES volunteers. Through their tireless efforts, they safeguard lives, properties and livelihoods across our State. Their readiness to respond, regardless of the hour or the conditions, embodies the best of our community. I thank in particular the three SES guys who cut up and cleared the tree that fell across my driveway so I could leave. I extend deep appreciation to SES volunteers for their dedication and selflessness. Wearing orange symbolises our support for these everyday heroes who are always ready to help.

#### **RODNEY O'REGAN**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (15:54):** I recognise Rodney O'Regan, OAM, VA. Rodney is a familiar figure at remembrance services nationwide and is often seen in a Light Horse brigade uniform astride a horse. For more than 15 years, Rodney has been an active member of the Australian Light Horse Association [ALHA], serving as director and vice-president. Last month Rodney was appointed as joint patron of the ALHA, a valued position previously held by distinguished military officials. Rodney's commitment to the ALHA has included representing the association at major events such as the Centenary of Beersheba celebrations in Canberra. He has also travelled to Israel, Turkey, England and France to commemorate historic battlefields. Additionally, Rodney's assistance to veterans earned him the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2014. I congratulate Rodney on this well-deserved honour and thank him for keeping the history of the Australian Light Horse brigade alive in the community.

#### **GILDA PUSSICH**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (15:55):** Fairfield has a history of transforming children's lives for the better. That work is not possible without our dedicated teachers. One teacher who stands out is Gilda Pussich, principal of Mary MacKillop Catholic College Wakeley from 2018 to 2023. During her tenure, Gilda led the school to achieve its best ever HSC results in 2021, climbing 104 positions to 138th. That occurred again in 2022, with the school rising to the 134th position. Even more importantly, she has steered the school's students to focus on social impacts within Fairfield. Many of her former students now advocate for public policy reform in Western Sydney. Gilda is a credit to the education system in New South Wales. I thank her for her service to Fairfield and Mary MacKillop Catholic College and her contribution to the lives of its amazing female students.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES SECONDARY COLLEGE CROMER CAMPUS**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (15:56):** Last week, Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus, a comprehensive high school from Northern Sydney, won the under-16 division two Basketball NSW State Championships. This competition is open to all public and private schools across New South Wales. The coach of the team is the school principal, Mr Hong. He could not be prouder of the boys for this rare and

amazing achievement. Cromer Campus defeated a Newcastle independent school in the semifinal. Tumut High School defeated a Sydney independent school in the semifinal. Two of our amazing public schools, Tumut and Cromer, fought it out in the grand final. Tumut finished as the runner-up, with Cromer Campus taking home the gold medal. This is an incredible achievement considering Cromer Campus does not have a full-sized indoor basketball court. It has only outdoor concrete courts and a short indoor court to practice on. The school community revelled in this success, with the school's Facebook post instantly receiving more than 100 likes, comments and shares. This is a great story from a great public school that punches well above its weight. I congratulate the winning students and principal.

## 2168 COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:57):** Over the past 12 months many members of the public have highlighted the lack of coordinated services and amenities in the 2168 area of Liverpool by all levels of government. In response to this issue, I recently organised a 2168 community roundtable meeting to foster collaboration and partnerships between community support providers and bring together stakeholders from diverse sectors. Some of the key concerns raised included the lack of accessible activities for young people, community safety, the high demand for visible policing and the need for investment. Many stakeholders also highlighted how people fell through the cracks due to lack of service coordination and awareness. Going forward, all attendees prioritised strategic planning, consistent representation and building strong relationships. I am excited to share that we will come together on a bimonthly basis to work together to address these issues and help the 2168 community. I thank CORE Community Services for hosting the meeting and all the attendees for demonstrating a collective will to shift the needle on the long-term disregard for the needs of the 2168 area.

## KNITTING NANNAS

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (15:58):** Today I acknowledge the wonderful Knitting Nannas, who are part of an international band of warriors for our planet. These nannas come together to ensure our land, air and water are preserved for our children and grandchildren. They have taken up the cause against greedy, short-sighted corporations that are intent on destroying our land and dividing our communities in the name of profit. Yesterday a number of other crossbench members and I were fortunate to receive a knitted scarf as a thank you for supporting the nannas. But it is us who should be thanking the nannas for the important work they do to speak up for our planet, our children and future generations. I thank them for their principled stance in support of protest and their staunch opposition to the excesses of unsustainable resource exploitation. I particularly acknowledge Sydney nannas Janet Thompson, Elizabeth Morley and Heather Goodall for coming to visit me recently to discuss working together on climate advocacy locally and at a State level.

## HARMONY BOONAERTS

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:59):** I take this opportunity to recognise Harmony Boonaerts of Ulladulla. Harmony was recently named Sydney airport's recipient of the prestigious Trevor Gerber SYD100 Scholarship for 2024. That scholarship supports under-represented groups in the aviation industry, including people with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, women and Indigenous students. Harmony has been interested in aviation since she was a young girl, spending many hours watching planes take off and land during school holidays while camping near Moruya Airport. For Harmony, winning this scholarship means that the financial stress of studying away from her family and regional base is taken away, and she can focus on her studies without worry. I congratulate Harmony. She embodies everything the SYD100 stands for, and I am sure she will have a wonderful career as a woman working in the aviation industry.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 4.00 p.m., business is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate.

## *Petitions*

### CAMDEN HAVEN TRANSITIONAL ACCOMMODATION

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the House take note of the petition.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:01):** I begin this debate by acknowledging the 12,000-plus people who have signed the petition calling on the New South Wales Government to provide financial support to Camden Haven Community at 3 Inc. for the purchase of the decommissioned motel at Kew to be used for permanent transitional accommodation for those sleeping rough in Camden Haven. Camden Haven Community at 3 Inc. is a not-for-profit Christian organisation dedicated to providing essential needs to our homeless and the vulnerable in our community. In the early days of its inception, Community at 3 Inc. coordinated a weekly meal at the Laurieton United Services Club as a way of establishing connections with those doing it tough and to show them that they are not alone.

Today Community at 3 Inc. has transformed into what is best described as a huge hub of support services for our most disadvantaged in Camden Haven. It still offers weekly meal services and a chat over a barbeque or over lunch, which is so important, but with additional assistance options such as connections to transitional or permanent accommodation, laundry services, food relief, transport, domestic and family care, and health and general needs. What I find most commendable and praiseworthy about Community at 3 Inc. is that this now registered charity is run solely by volunteers, with a mix of dedicated men and women committed to service. I simply cannot speak more highly of the difference those dedicated members, all volunteers, make in transforming the lives of people in need every single day.

As we all know, the subject of housing is much debated in this House, with all sides of politics agreeing that more needs to be done to reduce homelessness. In the Port Macquarie-Hastings and Camden Haven regions alone, we know that over 700 people are on the general housing list with some 161 registered for priority housing. None of those people have a permanent home. Some reside in temporary motel accommodation, others couch-surf and the rest, sadly, are rough sleepers. The average waiting times for a one- to four-bedroom-plus property is more than 10 years, according to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice website.

The situation for people approved for priority housing is no better, with average waiting times of up to three years. That largely consists of people and families of all ages sleeping in their cars, in parks, streets, on benches, in toilet blocks and on our beaches. I can hardly fathom how those people will cope during the cold winter months ahead. According to the Government's annual rough sleeping street count, 53 people slept on the streets in the Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area between 1 February and 1 March 2024. When considering all of this, it is clear that more needs to be done to establish affordable, transitional and social housing in our regional communities.

Many members in this House can imagine how in awe I was earlier this year when Community at 3 Inc. member Hima Nelapati hand-delivered a petition to my electorate office with 12,400 signatures lobbying the New South Wales Government to purchase the decommissioned motel at Kew to be used for transitional accommodation. Other members in this House know that we often see communities banding together to find a solution that really suits their local needs. In particular, I acknowledge Theo Hazelgrove, one of the co-chairs of Community at 3 Inc., who instigated the petition late last year. I acknowledge that both the Minister in the other place and the Premier gave me a hearing to explain the approach of Community at 3 Inc. in supporting our rough sleepers and in seeking accommodation for them in Camden Haven. The members of Community at 3 Inc. are seeking short-term accommodation options on behalf of the community, and I can assure this House that their vision is well supported across our community.

The petition we are debating today clearly reflects that. Community at 3 Inc. is not asking for a government handout; it is asking for a government hand up so it can get on with the amazing work it does addressing homelessness in our local area. I am confident that if the Government agreed to purchase the motel for the purposes of short-term accommodation, the ongoing operating expenses would be covered by philanthropic donations and community support. Corporate and private donations have already been pledged. I single out the overwhelming generosity of the Catholic Dioceses of Lismore, the American Motorcycle Club and the Rotary Club of Laurieton for setting this project up for success. I look forward to hearing other contributions from members on both sides of the House, and I will have more to say in my reply.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:05):** I refer to the petition listed by the member for Port Macquarie, and I thank her for working with the New South Wales Government in identifying potential crisis accommodation solutions by sharing the concerns of the petitioners. There is no doubt that we are in the worst housing crisis this State has ever seen. We are in challenging times, and the cost-of-living and housing crises are causing people distress. Like the South Coast, it is clear that the Port Macquarie and Hastings areas are no exception. It is a situation made worse on the South Coast by the previous Government's decision to sell off over 100 public housing properties that were not replaced in and around Nowra.

In a former life, I worked for the State Government, and I understand the challenges faced when determining what is suitable housing for governments to purchase. All aspects of the property must be considered, including the cost of upgrades to meet current building requirements, fire and bushfire attack level ratings, access and distance to appropriate services and public transport. Analysis is conducted to determine the feasibility of those properties and whether they represent value to the taxpayer. In this case, while there was public transport out the front, Homes NSW considered the purchase of the property. However, the motel is in need of refurbishment, is on the outskirts of Laurieton, has limited access to educational services, hospitals and other services, and is a long distance from Port Macquarie. The Minister and the Government are committed to working with community housing providers, communities, councils, the private sector, the Commonwealth, and members of this Parliament. The aim is to ensure that there are more social and affordable homes across the State and to address the housing crisis in the longer term.

The Government has introduced a suite of reforms to support vulnerable people facing housing insecurity. That includes changes to temporary accommodation to better support people in crisis and focused efforts to deliver more social housing, which is essential to reducing homelessness. In 2023-24 the New South Wales Government dedicated \$11.9 million to the Mid North Coast area for the delivery of specialist homelessness services provided by four specialist organisations in the Port Macquarie and Hastings areas. This funding is currently committed to 30 June 2026. In the 2023-24 New South Wales budget, \$224 million was invested as part of the Essential Housing Package. That included \$11.3 million to extend the Together Home Program, which assists rough sleepers to sustain stable housing with wraparound supports. It included \$12 million to utilise modern methods of manufacturing to speed up housing delivery and \$70 million in debt financing for more social and affordable homes to be generated in regional New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government has also welcomed the Commonwealth Government's housing reforms and the opportunity that these present to significantly grow affordable and social housing in regional areas. Under the Housing Australia Future Fund, we estimate that around 7,000 social housing dwellings and 3,000 affordable homes could be delivered in New South Wales. Homes NSW has submitted an application to Housing Australia for consideration under round one of the Housing Australia Future Fund. One of the sites is in the Port Macquarie area. These partnership projects will potentially transform 65 existing social housing dwellings into 450 new homes in metro Sydney and regional New South Wales.

I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her advocacy on behalf of her community. I also thank the petitioners for bringing this matter to the Government's attention. Regional New South Wales is home to more than one-third of our State's population and we are grappling with significant issues. I want everyone to know that the Government is committed to making New South Wales a place where experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and not repeated. I look forward to hearing more about what will be delivered in the housing space over the coming weeks.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (16:10):** I make a contribution to the debate on this petition in my capacity as the shadow Assistant Minister for Housing. At the outset, I thank the member for Port Macquarie, who is shadow Minister for Women, shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, for bringing this important matter to the attention of the Government and this House. Whilst the member for Port Macquarie raises this matter in her capacity as a local member, it is a cause which benefits the most vulnerable within our community, many of whom are connected to her shadow portfolio responsibilities. Her steadfast support and unwavering commitment to this cause is no doubt instrumental in the journey of this matter so far, and the member's advocacy on behalf of her community has not only amplified their voices but also served as a beacon of hope for those who have felt forgotten or marginalised by the Government.

I thank Camden Haven Community at 3 Inc. for its herculean effort in putting this petition together. Members of this place, many of whom have engaged in community advocacy, know the effort and dedication it takes to galvanise a community behind any cause. I thank the current committee members: co-chairman Theo Hazelgrove, Alan Kilminster, Fran Burns, Glenn Maas, Hima Karnati, Ann Macinante, Cec Wasson, co-chairman Brian Giles-Browne, Philip Sutherland, Joanne Kaul, Tome Witte, Nathan Killick and Dr Sam Nelapati. Most importantly, I thank each and every one of the more than 12,400 individuals who signed on to this worthy cause. The Camden Haven region has over 18,000 individual residents and so securing 12,400 signatures is an amazing feat. To all involved, their work matters and I thank them for it.

In recent months Camden Haven Community at 3 Inc. has transported two people to oncology, one person to Coffs Harbour, two to Kempsey, found temporary accommodation for a family following a fire in their home, given assistance and support to three people in their new jobs, assisted in three mediations, and it is currently supporting a number of individuals with a terminal illness. This is all done on a voluntary basis. The impact of this work cannot be overstated. We will never know what these individuals will go on to do in their lives and how they may positively impact others. The proposal for transitional accommodation matters. The member for Port Macquarie set out, in great detail, the impact that the proposal to buy the motel will have. But I make the following observations. The land in question is five acres. The Government has been told it will need \$2.25 million to purchase the property. Initially it could house 30 people and then up to 100 at any time.

The member for South Coast, who has left the Chamber, said that Homes NSW had considered the proposal to purchase the motel. However, in a letter to the Clerk of this House, signed by the Minister for Housing, it is stated that Homes NSW is not able to consider the proposal to purchase a motel. That is quite different to what the member for South Coast told us. Was the member for South Coast telling a mistruth in this House or is the Minister for Housing telling a mistruth in the letter? The Minister's letter also indicates that \$610 million has been allocated for 1,500 homes in New South Wales, which is an average cost of over \$400,000 per dwelling. It is

proposed in this petition that for \$2.25 million per year, 30 dwellings could be provided at a cost of \$75,000 per dwelling or 100 dwellings provided at a cost of \$22,000 per dwelling. It is a very good use of funds.

I point out that there are many buckets of money around. We spend millions of dollars on community groups and community buildings at the drop of a hat. The Premier has his own discretionary fund from which he has handed out \$2 million since May last year. The total revenue for the State is over \$110 billion—\$2.25 million represents just 0.002045454 per cent of the State's entire budget for one year. This Government claims to be on the side of the disenfranchised, it claims to be on the side of fixing the housing crisis, but it will not allocate \$2.25 million for the acquisition of a motel which a community group will run for free, without any ongoing cost to the Government, to benefit many people over many years. I commend the petition and I call on the Government to act upon it.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:15):** I understand why the Camden Haven community has put forward this petition seeking transitional housing. When I was elected in 2019, I convened a housing forum across all of the local government areas. Local government, housing providers and people in dire need of housing were represented. It resulted in a coalesced submission. One thing we asked for on behalf of the homelessness forum that operates across the Northern Rivers was transitional housing, because there was none. The submission went forward in 2020. There had not been any transitional housing built for years and there were no regional targets. Regional targets are important, given that about 39 per cent of people live in regional New South Wales. The previous Government's *Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy* had no targets. I discussed that with the then Premier. I said to him, "There are some good things in there, but how can you have a housing strategy that doesn't have a target in it?"

**Mr Rory Amon:** The houses are built. They're there. There are roofs.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** What would you know about it? Seriously, get real. From 2012 there was the Housing Acceleration Fund, but nothing north of Port Macquarie. I am talking about my area now in the Northern Rivers. All of this is in my submission. I totally understand why Camden Haven residents are seeking transitional housing. I get it. We all get it. We understand. There is a huge backlog of need in New South Wales for all types of housing, and transitional happens to be one of them.

I recently held a housing round table in Murwillumbah with Minister Jackson in attendance. We have come up with some innovative ways to deal with the housing crisis. We will continue to advocate for more social housing and affordable housing, and we will get somewhere. St Vincent de Paul says that housing ends homelessness. It does, but there has to be supply. There was no commitment by the former Government to supply. There was nothing. This Government is committed to delivering housing in the regions and to dealing with the growing social housing waitlist. There were almost 58,000 households on the waitlist in February this year. That has grown dramatically over the past years. Twenty-two per cent of social housing homes are in regional in New South Wales. The regional communities program benefited from the \$70 million in the 2023-24 budget, accelerating the delivery of social and affordable homes. It will enable the delivery of new vacant lots and site infrastructure for around 1,280 future homes across about eight projects. That will include 380 social and affordable homes.

Homes NSW is also delivering 240 new and replacement homes in flood-affected local government areas in the Northern Rivers area. The Community Housing Innovation Fund and the Together Home transition program, in partnership with the community housing sector, delivered approximately 1,000 social and affordable homes, including 591 in regional New South Wales. I now come back to transitional homes, which is the subject matter of the petition. Social Futures has its head office in my electorate of Lismore but is Australia-wide. That organisation has been seized with the matter of transitional housing for years. It is part of what we are doing in regional New South Wales to end homelessness—and that is a big call—and deliver the houses that people need. That will include transitional housing.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:20):** I speak in debate on the petition brought to this House by the member for Port Macquarie. I recognise the important work that all members need to do to address the issue of transitional accommodation, because successive governments have failed to build adequate public housing to ensure that people in this State have a roof over their heads every night. It is important to remember that homelessness is not just a housing issue; it is also a health issue and a safety issue. We hear a lot of talk—and debates are currently happening in the other place—about strengthening bail laws and law-and-order approaches to knife crime. But as Jess Hill said at a recent meeting in Parliament House, when considering domestic violence in this State we need to look at housing and homelessness services as one of many homicide-prevention approaches.

The NSW Council of Social Service reports that in New South Wales, 4,812 women and children who leave households where there is a domestic and family violence incident become homeless and are forced to return

to violence because of a lack of housing. This is not only happening in the Camden Haven, Port Macquarie and Hastings regions; it is happening across the State. Last month reports emerged that women and children were being offered a car park to sleep in overnight, in the lead-up to winter, because shelters across the State are critically underfunded. In my electorate of Newtown, there are people sleeping in tents, in parks that are freezing cold overnight and sweltering in summer because they have nowhere else to go. That is not just a Newtown problem; it is happening across the State. It is also happening right across the road from Parliament House. People are using the awnings on construction sites in the CBD, in many cases outside empty office buildings, because this Government and past governments have failed to deliver important public housing investment in this State.

We are in a crisis. I acknowledge that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is in the Chamber. I appreciate that there is currently a lot of talk about planning reforms. But we know that those planning reforms will not deliver a single new home until after the next five to 10 years. What do we say to the people who are homeless right now? We could say to them that when Parliament resumes in two weeks, the budget will include a direct investment in the purchasing of properties that are already built and sitting vacant. That would allow the people who are currently sleeping rough under an awning across the road from this very Parliament, or in campsites, bushland and parks across our State, to move into safe and secure accommodation, albeit temporary and meanwhile use.

Since November 2023, the Queensland Government has been buying up empty hotels, motels and retirement villages across the State and transforming them into public housing. We need to increase the supply of new builds of affordable public and community housing in this State. I will say it again because people keep saying The Greens do not agree with that: We love the idea of increasing density in key places in an integrated approach to planning to deliver more homes. We love that. But that supply is not going to come for ages, and right now we have empty buildings in our communities. The member who brought the petition and the 12,000 people who signed it are supporting the purchase of just one empty building, but there are some in the electorate of Newtown. I am sure that there are some in the electorate of Lismore. There are certainly some in the electorate of South Coast, and no doubt there are empty places on the northern beaches.

With the budget to be delivered in two weeks, there could be an announcement of funds. The Government could say to every member in this place, "Show me your empty properties. We want to buy them and put people who are sleeping rough in them this very minute." We all know they are there. That is not to say we cannot plan to deliver other affordable housing measures in five to 10 years, because these are temporary measures. Right now, we are in the middle of winter, people are sleeping rough and there are vacant homes in our State. The State Government has the ability to buy them and house people. That is what we need to do.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:25):** In response: I thank the members who have participated in this petition debate. I provide the Government's response to this petition on behalf of Minister Park, in his role representing the Minister for Housing in the other place, the Hon. Rose Jackson. The current cost-of-living pressures and housing crisis are causing distress for people in New South Wales, and it is clear that the Port Macquarie and Hastings areas are no exception. The Minister for Housing is working with Homes NSW to improve existing services, to make sure that everyone has access to safe and secure housing so that experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and not repeated. The Specialist Homelessness Services program is the primary New South Wales government response to homelessness. Non-government organisations are funded to deliver support to people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless. That includes young people, families, single men and single women, with or without children.

In 2023-24 the New South Wales Government dedicated \$11.9 million to the Mid North Coast area for the delivery of specialist homelessness services, provided by four specialist organisations in the Port Macquarie and Hastings areas. That funding is currently committed to 30 June 2026. Homes NSW offers temporary accommodation, which is a form of crisis emergency accommodation available to clients who are homeless and are not able to be accommodated by the specialist homelessness services providers. I am aware of the specific request for financial assistance for Camden Haven Community at 3 Inc. to purchase a motel for transitional accommodation in the Camden Haven area. I appreciate the spirit of this community endeavour. However, Homes NSW in the Department of Communities and Justice is not able to consider the proposal to purchase a motel for transitional housing at this time.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Members opposite might take a moment to close their mouths and open their ears and listen to the reasons, because it is not always as simple as buying up a property. Some of the reasons include that substantial work would be needed to upgrade the property and meet the current certification, fire and housing standards required to make the property suitable. And, whilst there is a bus stop nearby, the motel is on the outskirts of

Laurieton-North Haven, a long distance from larger Port Macquarie, and has limited access to educational, health and other amenities.

The New South Wales Government is committed to working with community housing providers, communities, councils, the private sector and the Commonwealth Government. The aim is to ensure that there are more social and affordable homes across the State to address the housing crisis in the longer term. As the member for Port Macquarie can appreciate, the New South Wales Government is currently in the process of its next budget cycle. We will have more to say on what we are doing in the housing space over the coming weeks. I thank the member for Port Macquarie and the petitioners for bringing this matter to the Government's attention.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:28):** In reply: In the short time I have, I was going to thank all the committee members of Community at 3 Inc. for coordinating the petition, but my friend and colleague the member for Pittwater has done that. I thank those who participated in debate, including the member for South Coast, the member for Pittwater, the member for Lismore and the member for Newtown. I also thank the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, representing the Minister for Housing in the other place, for his response.

I will make a couple of comments. Firstly, there seems to be some confusion from those opposite. Maybe they need to clarify with the department, but I have a geography lesson first and foremost. Camden Haven and Kew are about 32 kilometres from Port Macquarie. It is a completely different community to Port Macquarie so I am not sure why that was put up as the excuse. Secondly, thankfully it was clarified in the end but it is actually quite close to transport. There is a public bus stop right out the front. Finally, it is not a long way from a school. Maybe they have plans to close it down but our local public school is about 200 metres away from the site that we are talking about. All those wonderful excuses do not apply to this situation.

I made it clear that the community is already on board. Not only are the volunteers who support the Community at 3 project, the current weekly drop-in sessions, and the local barbecue behind the Laurieton United Services Club on board, but people are already lining up to support the community to bring the decommissioned motel up to standard. It was used as a motel not so long ago so it is in no way derelict. It might need a bit of paint and some carpet but all of those things have already been committed to by the local community and the local tradies. Again, it is disappointing that there is a lot of confusion about the specific site from those opposite. What they have done instead is given us a standard answer from the department.

**Petition noted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **TRIBUTE TO THOMAS DOUGLAS PHILLIPS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:31):** I pay tribute to Thomas Douglas Phillips, a distinguished World War II veteran, who passed away peacefully on 16 May 2024 at the age of 98. Known fondly as Doug, Mr Phillips was a proud Australian who served with great pride in the 47th Infantry Battalion, fighting in Bougainville during the Second World War. Beyond his military service, Doug was a cherished member of the Corowa RSL Club. His contributions to the veteran community were significant and in 2023 the Department of Veterans Affairs honoured him with a commemorative medallion to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of World War II. That recognition symbolised the immense respect and gratitude that we hold for his generation's sacrifices. Doug Phillips will be remembered for not only his service to our nation but also his enduring love of life, his unwavering work ethic and his ability to face and overcome challenges. Mr Phillips is survived by his loving children, Russell, Anne-Marie and Christopher, as well as his cherished grandchildren. His memory will live on in their hearts and in the hearts of the community he so deeply loved. Vale, Thomas Douglas Phillips.

### **IAN STROMBORG PLAY SPACE**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:32):** I was happy to hear that my long-time friend and former Mayor of Bankstown, Ian Stromborg, will have a playground named in his honour to recognise his extraordinary work in local government. Ian spent an incredible 29 continuous years as a councillor for Bankstown council and five terms as mayor. He also served as a director of Revesby Workers Club for 16 years and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2015. Ian's commitment to our community has had an enduring impact on Bankstown and the surrounding cityscape, its open spaces and recreation and sports facilities. The new play space will be located within Paul Keating Park, a park that Ian helped to develop over 20 years ago. Ian is an inspiring example of a local working to make the community better for other locals. I congratulate Ian. He was a fantastic councillor, mayor and director and has truly left his mark on the former Bankstown council area.

### **COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION YASS BRANCH**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:34):** I recognise the Country Women's Association [CWA] Yass branch. I was honoured to recently attend the Yass branch's 100th anniversary celebrations at the

historic Cliftonwood in Yass. I was joined by the Mayor of Yass Valley, Allan McGrath; a patron of the Yass branch, Joyce Denny; the CWA of NSW president, Joy Beames; Southern Tablelands group president, Karen Pavey; and many other members of CWA branches from across New South Wales. It was a privilege to spend time with the members of the Yass branch and the many others in attendance to celebrate the wonderful occasion and to listen and reflect upon the work undertaken by the branch over the past century. I congratulate the CWA Yass branch on its momentous milestone and its longevity, and wish for its ongoing success in recruiting members to continue its outstanding work within the community.

#### **TATE'S TYRES AND BRAKE SERVICES**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:35):** I acknowledge a local legend of the Riverstone business community who this weekend ticked off 40 years of service. For four decades Tate's Tyres and Brake Services has been a cornerstone of the Riverstone community. It has grown into a trusted name from humble beginnings, providing local employment and keeping our families safe on the roads. In typical Tate's fashion to celebrate this incredible milestone, Tate's Tyres and Brake Services gave back. Throughout the month of May, it hosted a huge birthday sale, with a portion of proceeds going directly to local community charities. It was Tate's way of thanking the Riverstone community for its continued support. I wish a happy fortieth birthday to Tate's Tyres and Brake Services. What a fantastic achievement for a local business that truly cares! We look forward to many more years of service to our community.

#### **ALBION PARK HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS EVENTS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:36):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the sporting achievements of Albion Park High School. The Albion Park High School girls volleyball team recently participated in the northern division of the South Coast region knockout. Well done to the girls. The school hosted its athletics carnival in May. I congratulate Mackay Jones, who broke his own record in high jump when he cleared a whopping 1.9 metres to set a new record. The under-14s boys rugby league side recently made it all the way to the grand final in the Illawarra Steelers Shield only to lose by a try to Edmund Rice College. The team will progress to the next stage of the competition. Well done to the boys. Finally, I congratulate year 12 student Liam Covey, who was selected in the NSW Combined High Schools basketball team. All students who participated in these recent events did an excellent job. I acknowledge the principal of the school, Neal Reed, and the teachers, staff and parents who gave their own time to make the events happen. I congratulate Albion Park High School.

#### *Bills*

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT (POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (KNIFE CRIME) BILL 2024**

#### **Returned**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I direct that the Legislative Council amendment be taken into consideration forthwith.

#### **Consideration in Detail**

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

#### *Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 6 June 2024*

No. 1      LP c2024-083A

#### **Review of part**

Page 6, Schedule 1, proposed section 45Q(2) and (3), lines 34–37. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (2)      The review must be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 12 months from the assent date.
- (3)      A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 2 years after the assent date.
- (4)      In this section—

*assent date* means the date of assent of the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) and Other Legislation Amendment (Knife Crime) Act 2024*.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**



*Community Recognition Statements***TRIBUTE TO BRIAN HOWARD, AO, MC, ESM**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:38):** I offer my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Major General Brian "Hori" Howard, AO, MC, ESM [Rtd], who passed away on 16 May 2024. He was a good friend to all who knew him and he will be missed. Hori had a distinguished military career from 1959 to 1990. He commanded a battalion and an infantry brigade, was director-general of operations and plans for the Australian Army, instructed at the British army staff college and served in several overseas countries including Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Japan and Uganda, to name a few of his military appointments. He was awarded the Military Cross in recognition of his leadership in Vietnam. From 1989 to mid-2001, he was director-general of the NSW SES and was one of its longest serving directors-general. The current New South Wales emergency management system is largely his design, and he was awarded the Emergency Services Medal for his efforts. Hori was passionate about the welfare and support of veterans and those who are still serving. He was an active member of many organisations including the RSL. He also had a wicked sense of humour, which helped him establish rapport with other veterans and those from other walks of life. Hori served with distinction, leaving a lasting impact on those he led as well as our local community. I thank him for his service.

**GUNNEDAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:39):** The Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce is committed to making a significant contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the business sector and wider community. I recently met with the president, Ben Hennessy, who outlined its positive plan, "Beyond 2050". Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce's recent strategic planning session looked at a thriving, diverse economy and community; quality essential services; and a vibrant, cohesive community. That encompasses businesses, jobs, the economy, mining, agriculture, new money, youth pathways, arts and culture. It also looked at sporting facilities, town spirit, safety, entertainment, shopping and voluntary organisations. The Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce is to be commended for its vision, looking ahead to 2050 in its strategic planning session.

**PENRITH CITY AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (16:40):** Sunday 26 May was the eighteenth anniversary memorial and tribute-laying ceremony for Penrith City Australian National Servicemen's Association Incorporated, or the "Nashos", as we call them. Originally the Penrith City Sub-Branch, they received their charter and flag on 7 April 2002. In 2006 their memorial was erected at Victoria Park in St Marys. Penrith council allocated a space and the Nashos have held their memorial service there every year since. Council upgraded the memorial in 2020, which included better paving, a garden and a park bench dedicated to two founding members, Harry Morfoot and Tom Kelly. Unfortunately, this year the memorial was vandalised when the plaque was stolen from its sandstone base. Council quickly came to the rescue and replaced the plaque into a recessed base. I congratulate president Roy Young, secretary Harry May, Graham Larkham, bugler Tyler Watson, vice-president Angelina Young and the Ropes Crossing District Girl Guides. I give a special shout-out to the Lions Club of Emu Plains, which provided a barbecue lunch.

**AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (16:41):** I recognise the upcoming Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea that is taking place at St Paul the Apostle in Winston Hills later this month. The Biggest Morning Tea is an opportunity for the local community to come together and raise funds for the Cancer Council, which does important work in our community. This is the second year the event is being hosted in Winston Hills, and I acknowledge all the local businesses and community members that have donated towards the event. I particularly thank Jennean Bates, who is the host, for her tireless efforts in organising the day. Like so many of us, Jennean has a story where cancer has touched her life, which is a reminder to all of us to come together and support those important causes. I extend my best wishes to Jennean and all those involved with coordinating the Biggest Morning Tea, and I thank the Cancer Council for the work it does in our community.

**NEED A FEED**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:42):** I recognise the outstanding efforts of Need a Feed in Bulli. That remarkable charity has been a pillar of support for our community, dedicated to alleviating food insecurity amongst our most vulnerable residents. Through its tireless work, Need a Feed has provided thousands of meals to families and individuals in need, ensuring that no-one goes hungry. For the past 6½ years, Need a Feed has provided free coffee and connection for the homeless in Wollongong via its mobile coffee van. That initiative has offered warmth, nourishment and a sense of community and belonging among those who often feel marginalised. Its new initiative, the Breakfast Buddies program, builds on the relationships it has nurtured.

Recognising the need for a breakfast program in Wollongong, Need a Feed stepped in to bridge that gap. Many homeless individuals go without food during the weekends, so the program provides a hot meal on Monday mornings to start the week. Need a Feed's commitment goes beyond providing food. By fostering compassion and community, it has created a support network that extends far beyond the dinner table. I congratulate Need a Feed.

### **WOLLONDILLY KNITTING NANNAS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:43):** It was lovely to share a cuppa last week with the south-west Sydney branch of Knitting Nannas. Those dedicated and passionate volunteers advocate for meaningful change. Their work in Wollondilly is focused on the community vision of a Great Koala National Park and saving the koalas of south-west Sydney, the last chlamydia-free koala population in New South Wales, which is facing extinction. Their advocacy extends to halting the logging of State forests, which has a devastating impact on koala habitat across New South Wales. The Knitting Nannas aim to bring attention to threats to the environment and ensure accountability for the destruction of our most valuable asset—our natural surrounds. They peacefully and productively protest for those who are unable to, such as those with illness, the elderly, the infirm, workers and people with young children. Their selfless giving and commitment to those causes will yield benefits for the next generation. Knitting Nannas are a non-political organisation that stand by their Nannafesto to annoy all politicians equally—keep it up. I thank them for the work they do for the cause of saving the land, air and water for the kiddies.

### **U8F WELLNESS EXPO**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:44):** I had the pleasure of attending the U8F Wellness Expo, organised by U8F Ultim8 Fitness, on Saturday 1 June 2024. U8F, renowned for its dedication to community initiatives, hosted the remarkable event to emphasise its commitment to health, fitness and wellbeing goals. The expo featured over 30 local health and wellness businesses and one stall from the local member of Parliament. They came from across Liverpool and the south-west, creating an excellent opportunity for community members to explore a diverse range of wellness services, products and holistic practices. Attendees engaged with vendors who were offering everything from nutritional advice and fitness programs to mental health support and alternative therapies. The free event aimed to support small local businesses by providing a platform for them to showcase their offerings. Beyond promoting physical fitness, the expo focused on fostering connections within the community and emphasised the importance of holistic wellness, highlighting the connection between mind, body and spirit. I give a big congrats to Tanya, Paps and the whole U8F team.

### **CONCORD COMMUNITY CLUB**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:45):** Our community has celebrated a momentous occasion: the opening of the Concord Community Club. The magnificent facility is a testament to the hard work, dedication and passion of the Croatian community. After years of dreaming and striving, the community has created a vibrant hub where people from all walks of life can come together, connect and celebrate. The club is a symbol of unity, culture and heritage. The Concord Community Club offers state-of-the-art facilities perfect for events, gatherings and community activities. Friends and family can meet there and create lasting memories. I offer my warmest congratulations to the Croatian community. Their perseverance has paid off, and the club is a shining example of what can be achieved when people come together with a shared vision. I sincerely congratulate club president Zvonimir Kurtovic, vice-president Michael Rimac, treasurer David Matesic, CEO Kerrie Wadwell and all involved in the project. It is great for our area and I look forward to many visits in future.

### **THE ENTRANCE DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:46):** I congratulate The Entrance District Cricket Club on its achievements in the 2023-24 season. On Saturday 4 May I attended the club's annual presentation night to celebrate one of the most successful seasons the club has had, winning eight premierships. The club also won the Central Coast Cricket Association club championship, and its president, Robert Gray, won the Central Coast Cricket Association Volunteer of the Year award. Being such a prominent cricket club on the Central Coast, the list of award winners was extensive, and I congratulate every person awarded on their outstanding achievement. Particular mention goes to the major award winners: Skye Gallagher, who was awarded The Entrance District Cricket Club Kim Pond Women's Club Player of the Year, proudly named after the first captain of the club's women's team; and Jason Blackwood, who was awarded both the Brad Dyson Dedication to the Game Award and the Malcolm Chalmers Club Person of the Year. On behalf of our community, I thank the club and its executive team. It is a great contributor to sport on the Central Coast.

### **WESLEY UNITING CHURCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:47):** I recognise the candlelight vigil that was held at the Wesley Uniting Church in my electorate on 31 May 2024. The community was invited to attend the vigil to conclude a

series of events in the Hills for Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. A quiet space was provided for members of the community to come together to light a candle to honour those we have lost and to reflect on those who still suffer. One in four women and one in eight men experience violence by an intimate partner or family member, and those statistics are shockingly high. We need to come together across New South Wales to raise awareness and fight against domestic violence. I recognise and thank Bryan and Jan Mullan and Reverend Carmel Ieraci from the Wesley Uniting Church for hosting the event and creating a space for people of my electorate to come together to remember and reflect on the people whom they have lost.

#### ASSYRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL AUSTRALIA

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:48):** On Saturday 11 May 2024 I was honoured to attend the grand opening of the new office and community centre of the Assyrian National Council Australia [ANCA]. Assyrian Australians are an essential part of our diverse Western Sydney community, particularly in my local electorate of Prospect. More than 75 per cent of Australia's 60,000 Assyrians live in Western Sydney. The ANCA provides important advocacy for their many schools, churches, sporting clubs and other community organisations. It was great to be joined by Father Ramen Youkhanis of the Assyrian Church of the East, acting superintendent Robert Monaghan from the Fairfield Police Area Command, local community leaders and Federal and State parliamentary colleagues for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. I thank and congratulate president Hermiz Shahen, vice-president David David and all the Assyrian Australian volunteers at the ANCA on their amazing efforts supporting our local community.

#### TRENT MAXWELL

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:49):** I recognise lifeguard, firefighter, author and constituent Trent Maxwell for his contributions to our community. Trent—or Maxi, as he is known in our community—was the youngest ever professional lifeguard to work at Bondi Beach, which he has done for 17 years. In 2016 Trent became a firefighter for NSW Fire and Rescue. In 2018 he became a qualified rescue operator. In 2022 Trent was promoted to senior firefighter and is now part of the rescue team based at Bankstown Fire Station in Sydney. That unique career has positioned Trent as a much-needed young, positive, male role model for future generations. He is the director and co-founder of Live Learn Survive, a charity that educates and equips children with information so they are confident and know what to do in an emergency. Trent's career has been centred around helping others. We are proud of Trent. I thank him for his contributions.

#### THE SHIRE NEW HORIZONS BAND

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:50):** I recognise and celebrate the Shire New Horizons Band in Sutherland, an exceptional community of adult musicians, both beginners and those returning to their instruments. This remarkable group provides a welcoming space where over 50 members come together to share their love of music and support each other in their musical journeys. The Shire New Horizons Band is inclusive of all skill levels. Some members are picking up an instrument for the first time, others are learning new ones, and some are rediscovering their passion for playing after many years. In addition to their musical endeavours, the band fosters a sense of community and camaraderie, often taking time to enjoy morning tea together. That social aspect is as important as the music itself, creating a supportive and enjoyable environment for all. I extend my deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to the Shire New Horizons Band. I thank them for their dedication to music and for creating a vibrant, inclusive community. Their efforts bring joy and enrichment to us all.

#### BOMBER COMMAND COMMEMORATION

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:51):** On Sunday 26 May 2024 I had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition at the Bomber Command commemoration at the Cenotaph, Martin Place, Sydney. I commend the Air Force Association for its commitment to this annual commemoration. I also thank RAAF Base Richmond for its presence and contribution. In Bomber Command, approximately 10,000 Australians served from bases in the United Kingdom. More than 4,100 Australian aircrew died. Geoffrey Swindles of Bomber Command wrote a poem he called *Bomber Command—(High above Germany)*. The first paragraph is striking. He wrote:

Few survived. The ones who died went to the  
Well once too often—caught in the  
Roulette wheel of flack, fighters,  
mid-air collisions, engine failure. Sometimes it was their  
first raid, sometimes their last. Well I remember!

On this eightieth anniversary of the D-day landings, lest we forget.

*Private Members' Statements***HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:52):** I speak about an issue that impacts millions of people across New South Wales, including a large majority of people of all ages in my electorate of Terrigal. Housing affordability in Terrigal is an issue at the forefront of the majority of minds—not only young people, but young families, seniors and everyone in between. I will run through some of the recent changes in house prices in my electorate. In Terrigal, the median price for a home is \$1.6 million, which is an increase of 9.1 per cent in the past 12 months alone. In Kincumber, the median price for a home is \$1.1 million, an increase of 11.1 per cent in the past 12 months. In Springfield, the median price for a home is \$912,000, an increase of 4.2 per cent in the past 12 months. Springfield was recently identified as the ninth most popular place in Australia to live.

In Davistown, the median price for a home is \$1.325 million, an increase of an astonishing 32.5 per cent in the past 12 months. Frankly, a first home buyer in my electorate cannot afford a house. Future generations will be locked out of suburbs—not just in Terrigal. It is becoming more and more difficult on the Central Coast. People will be forced to move further away. The up-front costs are a massive impediment for young people trying to buy a home, and stamp duty is a major part of those costs. That means that when buying that \$912,000 house in Springfield, first home buyers would have to pay an enormous \$35,775 in stamp duty alone. That is no small sum and no easy task to achieve considering the continual cost-of-living increases and the lack of support from the New South Wales and Federal Labor governments.

Under the former Liberal-Nationals Government, the option was put in place for first home buyers to opt out of paying stamp duty and instead a smaller annual fee of \$400 plus 0.3 per cent of the land value for properties that owners live in. That was a significant reform that allowed for flexibility and choice for first home buyers, significantly reducing the up-front costs. It was a great win for buyers right across my electorate. Unfortunately, the Minns Labor Government removed that game-changing reform and replaced it with a stamp duty exemption for property purchases under \$800,000. That would not apply to the majority of freestanding properties in Terrigal.

It is true that first home buyers will continue to struggle to access the market, but there are also issues for existing home owners, such as seniors who are looking to downsize from their properties. After caring for their homes for years, with children now adults and having moved out, many seniors may look to downsize from two-level homes with four or five bedrooms to a single level detached home, apartment or villa. The problem is that the supply just is not there. Why would those seniors move from the five-bedroom homes that would be perfect for growing young families? They cannot do it. Of course, I am not calling for the forcible removal of seniors from their homes. That is not a policy I would ever want to pursue. I am calling for policies to encourage a healthy mix of housing developments in consultation with our communities.

With house prices moving faster than a Ferrari on an autobahn, prohibitive up-front costs like stamp duty and a lack of incentives for diversification of the housing mix, the onus is on us in this place to do more and do better for all buyers. It is often said that Sydney will become the city with no grandchildren. There is great concern among my community that the same can be said for the Central Coast. While I add my voice to calls for a more diversified housing mix and more support for young people wanting to move into the housing market, I stress the importance of building the right infrastructure to service the growing population. Under the previous Liberal-Nationals Government, the Central Coast received massive amounts of funding for major infrastructure projects to futureproof our region. That included \$500 million for the redevelopment of the hospitals at Gosford and Wyong and millions of dollars for road upgrades across our region.

Upgrades to local roads were a major cornerstone of the former Government's commitment to the Central Coast. There was a large commitment and allocation of funding for two major road projects in my electorate at Avoca Drive and the Central Coast Highway between Wamberal and Bateau Bay. Works have started on the Central Coast Highway, thanks to investment from the former Government. I will continue to call for adequate funding for that upgrade so we may futureproof our region for future growth. Avoca Drive must also receive the necessary funding in this year's budget as the road is a major commuter chokehold. Last year's pittance of funding has done minimal work, and early works are yet to begin. It is imperative that the Government recognises the challenges in my electorate and the wider Central Coast. We cannot be taken for granted.

**CENTRAL COAST AIRSHOW**

**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) (16:57):** On 25 and 26 May the Central Coast Airshow was on at the Central Coast airport at Warnervale. It was a really good day. I think the member for Terrigal was there on the Sunday afternoon. I am sorry I missed him; I lost my voice and I had to go home. Big crowds, particularly on the Sunday, gathered to watch the planes, visit

the different stalls and learn about all things flying. The Australian Defence Force was there, represented by the air force in particular. A lot of community groups had their wares on display. Whether a person is a diehard aviation enthusiast or just looking for a fun day out, the Central Coast Airshow is a real attraction. It was not long ago that some people on the former council and in the community wanted to shut the airport down. They said that we should not keep it open.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Shame on them.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Absolutely. But we are now seeing the benefits of the airport. We hope that the airport masterplan is approved and that site can become a general aviation asset not just for the Central Coast but for the wider region and for New South Wales. The award-winning Central Coast Aero Club is doing a fantastic job. One of the highlights was seeing young Trinity, who did the acknowledgement of country. Trinity is from The Entrance and is also getting her pilot's licence. She has been admitted into the Qantas program, which is great news. It goes against those who say that airports are for elites. The airport's training and tourism is for everyone and should be supported.

I love catching up with the girls from the Doyalson squadron of the Australian Air League. They had their wares on show. Many of those girls work through a whole lot of badges, just like the Girl Guides, but they are all to do with aircraft. Some of those girls start to train for their pilot licences when they get to the right age. It is a good way for people to learn and develop skills that they can use in employment later. I had a good chat with the head of maintenance. They have got some great projects looking after planes. They want to expand and take on TAFE students to do more maintenance and develop a better industry.

Back to the air show, Paul Bennet's plane was doing loop the loops. There was a parachutist who dropped with the Australian and Aboriginal flags. As they floated down to the airfield, Paul Bennet did circles and acrobatics around them, which was quite spectacular. The SkyAces were there, as well as a mark 9 Supermarine Spitfire that had been restored. It is currently being put back together at Scone. There was also a Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk, a CA-18 Mustang, a Grumman Avenger, a T-28 Trojan and a CAC Wirraway. The member for Terrigal's grandfather flew a CAC Wirraway, and I noticed that the member got a nice photo of himself in the cockpit of the plane. Flight Lieutenant Kris Sieczkowski, R5 of the Roulettes—who was originally from Bateau Bay on the Central Coast—said that it was good to be back as part of their demonstration, which conducted a formation fly-past and acrobatic displays that included their signature acrobatic moves, such as "the heart" and "the roulette wheel". It was a great spectacle.

This year the show got parking right, and people used shuttle buses to get to the site so that traffic was better. There were a lot of people and families enjoying themselves, sitting back and watching the skies. As I drove around the area on my way home, I saw quite a few people parked in the local industrial estate getting a bit of a freebie—and fair enough. Families were sitting on the bonnets of cars. It is a great attraction for the Central Coast. I say well done to everyone involved, particularly Central Coast Aero Club for the job that it does. I look forward to the airport reaching its potential and becoming one of the great general aviation airports in New South Wales.

#### NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (17:02):** From 27 May to 3 June we celebrated National Reconciliation Week. Those dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey—the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court's Mabo decision, respectively. The theme for 2024 was "Now More Than Ever". It is a reminder to all of us that, no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will, and must, continue. I share with the House how the important milestone was celebrated in the Penrith community. Firstly, it launched the opening of the bush food trail at Greygums Oval in Cranebrook, which is a wonderful and unique addition to the city. I thank Darug Elder Uncle Colin for his warm welcome to country on the day and for sharing his wisdom.

The trail itself sits on the Great West Walk, which stretches from Parramatta to the Blue Mountains across the lands of the Darug nation. Through Penrith, it includes Wianamatta Regional Park, a significant remnant of Cumberland Plain Woodland with populations of kangaroos and emus, the Great River Walk and now this unique space that offers the community and visitors a place to relax, learn and connect. The trail features bush plants with edible fruits, berries and grain, with signage that shares the knowledge and historical use of the plants by First Nations people in the area, continuing the passing down of knowledge for years to come. The trees planted will grow over time to create natural shade and provide habitat for the local fauna. The picnic and seating areas cater for families, community groups and schools to enjoy and learn more about First Nations heritage and the local environment.

I am proud that the New South Wales Government partnered with Penrith City Council to fund the project as part of its Greening the Great West Walk program. I am incredibly proud of the collaborative work that has

brought the project to life. The trail was co-designed by local Aboriginal organisation Muru Mittigar, Nepean Community and Neighbourhood Services [NCNS] and the council. It involved wide consultation within the community, which included presenting draft plans at NAIDOC week celebrations and at NCNS's mob connect day. It is a great example of us all working together to help shape our city and to design with country. I congratulate all those involved. I know the space will become a popular attraction for everyone to connect with country and with each other.

I also had the pleasure of participating in the Good Service Mob day at Koolyangarra Aboriginal Family Centre in Cranebrook, hosted by Nepean Community and Neighbourhood Services. It provided an opportunity for the community to talk about the free complaint-handling services available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Several community services participated on the day. It was great to see New South Wales government departments so visibly represented by Ryan and Wade from Service NSW and Narelle Hennessy, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander assistant community engagement officer from Anti-Discrimination NSW. Narelle arranges the Good Service Mob days throughout the area, and it is a fabulous initiative.

It was a great informal day for the community to access information, share a meal and just have a yarn. I give a special shout-out to Carolyn from NCNS, who made the best native garlic damper ever. Another fabulous local organisation, Platform Youth Services, also invited me to participate in its National Reconciliation Week celebration for young people, the yarning circle smoking ceremony. Platform Youth Services operates across Penrith, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury. It helps vulnerable young people aged 12 to 25 to have the opportunities, skills and support they need to actively participate in their social and economic communities.

Platform is part of a group of specialist services that offer youth crisis support, food and accommodation, together with personal and family support. I have personally seen the positive impact that Platform Youth Services has had in our area, and I know that the yarning circle will be another safe space for all young people to connect, learn and share culture. I thank Shane Laws for his acknowledgement of country. It was good to catch up with Uncle Wes, who is now 102 years old. It was uplifting to see the youth dance and didgeridoo performances, as well as all of the youth and community that came together to celebrate and further decorate that great space. We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and I take my role in that seriously. By playing our part, we collectively build relationships and communities that truly value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage.

## ROAD SAFETY

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (17:07):** Tonight I take some time to reflect on the road toll in New South Wales, particularly in regional and rural New South Wales. All members would agree that it is not good. Of the 1,273 people who lost their lives on Australian roads in 2023, some 351 were lost in New South Wales. So far this year, 157 people have lost their lives on New South Wales roads, which is up from 132 at the same time last year. The numbers are chilling and tragic. In addition to the road toll, people have been very seriously injured and those numbers are staggering. This year 10,021 people suffered serious injuries on New South Wales roads, which is up from 9,641 at the same time in the previous year. Road accident injuries are very serious injuries that require immediate hospitalisation and sometimes a lifetime of recovering.

Closer to home in my electorate of Clarence, I have to report to the House that it has been another tragic week. Up until 30 May this year there were 10 road deaths in the Coffs-Clarence Local Area Command. Sadly, in the past two days two more deaths occurred in my electorate. Tragically, two more lives have been lost and there will be two more empty chairs around the Christmas table and birthday celebrations this year. Sadly, in the Richmond Local Area Command, which also takes in my electorate, the numbers are just as high. Just a few weeks ago four lives were lost in a motor vehicle accident at Wardell, which is slightly outside my electorate in the Ballina electorate. Earlier this year two young lives were lost at Tabulam, which is slightly outside my electorate, in the Lismore electorate.

It has been a very tragic time in the bush on our roads. Although cars are getting safer, our road toll seems to be going up. I am the first to admit in this place and everywhere else that decreasing the road toll is not totally the job of government of any persuasion—Federal, State or local. It in fact is everybody's job, ranging from those who are learning to drive to those behind the wheel who make the decisions. They are decisions we make every day about speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, drink driving, drug driving, fatigue management and using a mobile phone while driving. All those actions are led by poor decisions which have the potential to result in an accident causing the death of the driver, someone in the car the driver cares about or somebody else using the road.

In the lead-up to the forthcoming King's birthday long weekend, I beg everybody to drive safely, slow down and wear a seatbelt. Double demerit points apply from tomorrow, so I urge everybody to take care on the roads. I also urge the Government to carry out a review of the strategies that the Government can use to drive

down the road toll. But I say, genuinely, that everybody has a responsibility on the roads. I wish everyone very safe travelling on our roads over this upcoming long weekend.

### FAIRFIELD FAITH FORUM

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (17:12):** Fairfield is one of Australia's most multicultural and multifaith communities. In fact, 87 per cent of Fairfield affiliates with a religion while our people are born in more than 108 different countries. That is why interfaith dialogue and collaboration is so important. In that regard, I recently hosted Fairfield's first faith forum, bringing together the Minister for Multiculturalism, Fairfield Police Commander Superintendent Robert Monaghan, Multiculturalism NSW, and faith leaders from local places of worship to discuss the emerging needs and challenges facing the religious members of our community. In particular, the forum allowed attendees to share their views on the challenges and funding needs faced by local faith communities, collaborative approaches to enhance safety and security for their places of worship, and to explore opportunities to promote inclusivity and social cohesion within the Fairfield community.

The feedback from our local faith leaders included, first, that improvements for security and infrastructure at places of worship be considered, especially in light of the recent incident at Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley. Recommendations discussed included public and non-public funding needs for security personnel at their places of worship, events, or festivals and additional security infrastructure, such as security gates, doors, closed circuit television systems, and alarm systems. Secondly, mental health support sensitive to the needs of the community of Fairfield is needed, especially its culturally and linguistically diverse community. Thirdly, faith-related teachings should be considered to be made available via free-to-air channels.

Fourthly, regular forum coordination between local faith leaders is critical. Local faith leaders expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet with others of various faiths to discuss the need for continuing open dialogue which is respectful, peaceful, and focused on creating harmony within the community. The recommendation was raised for the New South Wales Government to fund and appoint a coordinator from local places of worship to host forums more regularly to enable discussions more proactively. Fifthly, the impact of social media on users, specifically youth, was discussed, including its ability to spread misinformation quickly and prompt adverse reactionary behaviour.

The attendees raised the need for positive rhetoric on social media by leaders of all faiths to ensure social cohesion within the community. Through my office and me, this feedback was collated in a report and was sent to the New South Wales Government for consideration and comment. To the faith leaders and other stakeholders who participated, I sincerely thank you for your participation. This is exactly what good government is about: listening and working with the community to improve our society.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:16):** As the Government works towards building new apartments as part of its strategy to making buying a home more affordable, owners and renters in low-cost apartments are increasingly feeling insecure as developers buy into their buildings to redevelop them into luxury apartments. For decades, strata plans could not be terminated unless there was unanimous agreement among owners, but in 2015 the previous Government changed the rule to allow termination with 75 per cent support and the concerns that I raised at the time are now being realised. Apartments make up over 80 per cent of homes in my electorate, with over 40 per cent being studio and one-bedroom dwellings. The density and strong mix of low-cost housing is what makes the inner city an exciting place to live and provides a fine example of urban density done right. But as housing values rise rapidly, especially in the inner city, which is close to entertainment, jobs, services and transport, low-cost apartments are being seen as an opportunity for developers to make a profit by demolition and redevelopment into fewer, larger expensive apartments.

I am increasingly being contacted by owners and residents in buildings where developers are buying apartments. I am told that they start by buying a few lots and then approach owners with good offers. Some investors take the offers and use the price to reinvest in other ventures, little affected. But owner-occupiers, especially those with few means who want to stay in their home, face difficult decisions. If they take an offer, they will have to leave, even though they do not want to, and may not need to in the end. If they refuse, they risk being forced out and end up receiving less than the initial offer.

Many apartment owner-occupiers own their homes because they have saved long and hard to buy a home they could live and feel secure in forever. As they age, the prospect of being forced to sell and leave their home can be quite frightening. Older and frail people, who own studio and one-bedroom apartments in my electorate—of which there are many—are especially vulnerable when strata terminations are proposed. They are less likely to want to leave their homes or to have the ability to negotiate fair compensation, or to be capable of looking for and finding a new home. The law guarantees just terms compensation, but this is inadequate because it only guarantees

market value plus disturbance costs. As values have risen, new builds in the inner city are increasingly for larger high-end apartments that most existing owners and residents cannot afford. Low-cost housing is declining, making it almost impossible to find an affordable home of the same quality in one's neighbourhood.

Compensation is not just if owners are forced to leave the network of supports and services they have established over years. I am already hearing stories of owners being bullied into selling their homes with the threat of receiving less if they hold out in hope of being able to stay. When the laws were changed, we were told that changes were needed because dissenters were preventing the redevelopment of buildings that had become too costly to maintain. But that is not what is happening. I am increasingly hearing stories that developers are blocking investment in basic maintenance and repairs to ensure that buildings decay quickly so more owners will be persuaded to sell, and homes will be devalued. If the problem was truly about dealing with buildings beyond repair, laws could be designed to target that.

I have also read the stories of developers using the laws that require owners' corporations to pay the legal fees of dissenting owners as a loophole to get their legal fees paid if the owners' corporation wants to sell to a different developer. At a time when New South Wales is in a housing affordability crisis, with a critical shortage of affordable homes, we should not permit the forcible sale and redevelopment of low-cost apartments into luxury homes for the purpose of making a rich developer even richer. The City of Sydney is working with the Government to introduce a no-net loss policy in the local environment plan, but we also need to prevent vulnerable owners being forced to sell their affordable homes. When in opposition, Government members shared my concerns and voted against the 75 per cent rule. The rule is being used to circumvent plans to increase density close to transport and services and deliver affordable housing. I call on the Government to review the laws and limit them to buildings that have genuinely become uninhabitable and unaffordable to repair.

#### **TAMIL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:21):** On 18 May the Prospect community pauses to remember the Tamil Genocide. We mourn the tens of thousands of unarmed men, women and children who lost their lives over many decades during the Sri Lankan Civil War. This day is an important day of remembrance and respect for Tamil Australians throughout the electorate of Prospect, Western Sydney and Australia and wherever else the Tamil Eelam diaspora gather. On 18 May this year I joined our local Tamil community to remember their loved ones, their compatriots and fellow Tamil civilians who were brutally murdered in the final phases of the civil war and the Mullivaikkal massacre in May 2009.

During those terrible times, tens of thousands of unarmed Tamil civilians were directed to designated "no fire zones" by the Government and military of Sri Lanka. They were then subjected to heavy artillery fire, aerial bombings and subsequent executions. According to a United Nations panel of experts report published in 2013, civilian assembly locations, schools and hospitals were deliberately targeted for bombing under the pretext of military operations. The United Nations estimated that up to 70,000 unarmed men, women and children died in that massacre alone.

Although the persecution of the Tamil community was heightened during the final stages of the war, the Sri Lankan Government began its campaign much earlier. Ethnic Tamils were deliberately persecuted by the Sri Lankan Government with the intent of destroying Tamil identity. Discriminatory government policies and legislation began in post-colonial Sri Lanka and led to ethnic cleansing, pogroms and, finally, genocide. On 18 May I joined the Australian Tamil Congress and the wider Tamil community in Girraween in the electorate of Prospect to remember and pay respect to the tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children who suffered unspeakable cruelty over many years at the hands of the Sri Lankan state. Together, we gathered to pay tribute to all those who were persecuted deliberately with the intention of destroying Tamil ethnic, cultural, and religious identity.

On that day and every day, I stand in support of members of our Tamil community in the electorate of Prospect and across the world who are still living with the wounds and scars of that conflict. I also stand in support of those who faced trauma and lost their family members, and who are still seeking answers about the whereabouts and fate of their disappeared loved ones. To this day the Sri Lankan Government has made minimal effort to address past war crimes and has not reformed institutions that continue to violate the human rights of Tamils living in Sri Lanka. I commend the efforts of Tamil organisations across the world and in my local community, such as the Australian Tamil Congress, that work tirelessly towards building accountability, seeking reconciliation and justice, and strengthening Tamil diasporas across the world. The Tamil communities in the electorate of Prospect and across New South Wales are resilient.

They have rebuilt their lives and families, travelling across the world to start again. Our Tamil community has persevered through terrible hardship and become a vital part of modern Australia, especially in the electorate of Prospect and across Western Sydney. Through delicious cuisine, cherished culture and traditions, places of



worship, community language schools, beautiful artwork, engaging performances and vibrant festivals, the Tamil community is an integral part of the rich multicultural tapestry of Western Sydney. With values of acceptance, tolerance and inclusion, the Tamil community helps make everyone feel welcome and at home in New South Wales. Every year, 18 May is an important day for our Tamil community in Western Sydney, across Australia, and all over the world. I am honoured to stand in solidarity with the vibrant Tamil community to recognise Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day. I pay my respects, I remember, and I demand justice for all victims and survivors of the Tamil Genocide.

### **TWEED VALLEY HOSPITAL**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:26):** Members of Parliament wake up every day striving to make a difference in our communities and the lives of the people we are fortunate enough to represent. It is the driving force of how I approach my role as a member of Parliament and the reason I do this job. On Wednesday 22 May 2024 I stood alongside the Premier, health Minister and member for Lismore to officially open the brand-new \$723.3 million Tweed Valley Hospital. It was one of the proudest moments of my political career. As members are aware, the journey to a new hospital is not just bumpy, but turbulent. I put my political career on the line to do what I believed was best for the Tweed. We needed a new hospital to replace the ageing Tweed hospital and hard decisions needed to be made. Not everyone agreed with the location chosen by Health Infrastructure NSW and many still disagree to this day.

I faced the 2019 election accepting that I might have served my last day as the member for Tweed, but I knew the people of the Tweed were assured their new hospital. As I stood outside the state-of-the-art Tweed Valley Hospital and the official plaque was unveiled, with 22 May marked in history, the magnitude of what has been achieved to bring one of the largest regional hospital projects in New South Wales to fruition was not lost on me. Tweed Valley Hospital is transforming healthcare services in the region, saving lives and changing thousands more for the better.

This state-of-the-art facility provides 200 more beds than the old Tweed hospital and an additional 16 emergency department treatment spaces. It also includes two new services—an interventional cardiology service and an integrated cancer care service with radiotherapy and PET and CT scanners. This new cancer service ensures that some 5,000 patients no longer need to travel outside of the area for treatment. Unlike our Queensland counterparts—I must mention the Queensland Premier—here in New South Wales we build hospitals for all Australians. Queensland only builds hospitals for Queenslanders. It has been an honour and a privilege to be a small cog in the new hospital wheel.

I am incredibly grateful to the members of the former Liberal-Nationals Government who committed to the funding for the new hospital. I thank former Premier Gladys Berejiklian, former Deputy Premier John Barilaro, former health Minister Brad Hazzard and former regional health Minister Bronnie Taylor. I thank also the team at Health Infrastructure NSW, including Rebecca Wark, Linda, Tim, Sarah, Mark and Jacqui. I thank the Medical Staff Executive Council doctors who brought the project to life. I thank Dr Rob Davies, who is in charge of the emergency department, and Dr Mike Lindley-Jones, who is in charge of intensive care. I am also indebted to my electorate office staff, Amanda, Cheryl, Jill and Jennifer, who weathered the storm for many years while the project was underway.

Of course, the new hospital would be nothing without the doctors, nurses, paramedics, wardies, cleaners, security personnel, administration and hospital staff who are on the front line every day. I thank everyone involved for all they have done and continue to do. When I look back at my time in this place and ask myself if I am doing what I first set out to do—to make a positive difference to my community—I see the new Tweed Valley Hospital and know that I certainly gave it everything. Of that, I could not be prouder. It is a great honour. I thank the many people in that place, particularly the doctors and nurses, who work tirelessly day in and day out. We have achieved something great that will last for many years. I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:30):** I start by saying how proud I am to be a part of a government that listens and takes action. We are a government that accepts its responsibilities, especially when building infrastructure in growth areas. During my time as the member of Riverstone, I have hosted various Ministers for what has become fondly known as Warren's magical mystery tour. Driving from my electorate office in Stanhope Gardens through the tranquil suburbia of The Ponds—delivered under the last Labor Government—we turn onto Schofields Road towards the iconic arches of the Tallawong metro platforms. It is here the tranquillity is shattered.

As we prepare to turn right onto Cudgegong Road, the horror of inept planning decisions made by the former Liberal Government is laid bare and usually invokes a sharp intake of air by my ministerial passengers.

On the left-hand side of the street, parked cars fill every available surface, including the car park, the street, and the few remaining paddocks. Commuters cannot afford to be fussy; they must park wherever they can or continue the journey down Windsor Road. To the right, high-density housing fills the skyline of what was once farmland. It instantly becomes obvious that no-one in the previous Government had considered the damage that poor planning would do to the surrounding suburbs and roads or to the people who live there. The daily struggle intensifies with each passing metro station. Tallawong's car park buckles by 7.00 a.m., Rouse Hill only has the shopping centre car park and Kellyville is usually full by 8.00 a.m. Roads morph into a barely crawling mass. It is a daily purgatory for desperate commuters.

It was no secret that the North West Growth Area would undergo massive growth. Projections suggested it would see the largest population growth in the State. However, an over-reliance on private development and a failure to deliver public infrastructure shows an obvious lack of foresight by members opposite. Their flagship infrastructure project, Sydney Metro North West, adequately services well-established blue-ribbon suburbs. However, in my neck of the woods, the service delivered falls short—literally 2.7 kilometres short of connecting to the T1 line in Schofields. The unacceptable 2.7-kilometre gap between Tallawong station and the CityRail at Schofields limits the ability of people catching the T1 from the Hawkesbury to get to the metro, so they drive.

At Riverstone station, the cancellation of the rail duplication has left a single line, restricting train services to a pitiful 30-minute interval during peak hours. No express services on the heavy rail means residents are increasingly opting for Tallawong station due to its faster metro service, causing overwhelming congestion in the station's car parking facilities. Residents from under-resourced new growth area suburbs such as Melonba, Marsden Park, Pitt Town, Oakville, Box Hill, Rouse Hill, Gables and the northern parts of my electorate are forced to undertake long drives to access a reliable train service. That situation is untenable. It reflects a failure in planning and a disregard for the daily reality of our citizens. I regularly say, "I am sorry. We didn't cause this, but we will do our best to fix it." For my constituents, the symptom is no parking at Tallawong station. The multi-level car park promised by the previous Government was not delivered, and the one that was delivered has 500 fewer car spaces than it should have.

On-demand bus services that address last mile transport are now ineffective due to the burden of population growth with no strategic plan considered. Local buses will help with the last mile passengers from surrounding suburbs, but that is only part of the problem. A larger problem is that the residents of our neighbouring suburbs are forced to make the daily exodus to find employment elsewhere, choking local roads in search of adequate transport to get there. The North West Growth Area was designed with a strategy, with planned roads and infrastructure and, most significantly, with an employment precinct to eliminate the need to travel somewhere else for work. All but three of the growth area projects have been rezoned, and the population has exploded without anything to support the people living in those houses.

I will say it again: We did not cause this, but we will fix it. I am confident that this Government will end the neglect my community faced under the last Government, but 12 years of failure cannot be undone in a year. It would be naive to think so. This Government has already committed generous funds to the Riverstone electorate to get infrastructure back up to speed, and I will continue to advocate for more. It is my vision to see Riverstone again offer adequate local employment for residents. That is at the heart of any liveable city. With employment opportunity projects such as the Riverstone West Precinct and Riverstone Town Centre, many of the current issues faced will be significantly alleviated. A holistic approach to securing local employment hubs and robust and futureproof housing will ensure the best future for the families of Riverstone. We can fix it, but we must never forget what has been done to the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents. We must learn from the mistakes of the previous Liberal Government so that they never happen again.

### **RHODES PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:35):** I take this opportunity to talk about a thriving suburb that deserves our attention. Rhodes has a growing population and a vibrant community, but it needs infrastructure to support that growth. According to the 2021 census, our electorate has seen a population increase of 16.9 per cent in the past decade. Much of that came from Rhodes. Infrastructure has simply not been able to keep up with the ever-growing demand on public transport, schools and road networks. Strain on the public transport system is at an all-time high, and the Labor Government has done nothing to address the lack of ferry services continuing to impact our community. While I commend Transport for NSW for its initial concept designs for a new ferry wharf at Rhodes, I find it appalling that the Government is unable to commit to making those plans a reality. In the last budget, Rhodes wharf was removed as a line item. Today I call on the Government to put Rhodes wharf back into the upcoming budget and deliver a service for a suburb with a population that is growing and will continue to explode.

Added services on our transport network would also help alleviate the already bottlenecked road system, providing alternate transport options to access the CBD and beyond. We know that the Rhodes train station does

its fair share of heavy lifting, accommodating the population in Wentworth Point, whose constituents the member for Parramatta serves, and in Rhodes, whose constituents I serve. Rhodes station needs an upgrade to the platforms, and my community is telling me that they want to see those plans and a timeline as soon as possible. Wyn, a resident of my electorate and a healthcare worker at Concord hospital, shared her experience with me recently. With the apparent lack of transport options in the Rhodes area, she said that "staff parking has become a huge issue" and "a ferry terminal would not only ease congestion on the roads but would improve access options for the community". The Government has also been unable to provide any further commitment to the development of a primary school in Rhodes East. That project has seen no tangible progress in the past 12 months, while classes in nearby Concord West Public School and Strathfield North Public School continue to grow at an unsustainable rate.

In the past few weeks my office has been contacted by many constituents regarding a lack of pedestrian safety in our community. We are blessed to live in such a beautiful place, and our community should be free to enjoy public spaces without battling to cross the road. I specifically call on the Government to finally commit funding to pedestrian upgrades at the intersections of Concord Road and Averill Street as well as Homebush Bay Drive and Concord Road. I also call on Transport for NSW to remove roadblocks for the Rhodes footbridge between the station and Rhodes Central. That is something the community has been petitioning for in the name of safety for many years. Every time I am in Rhodes people tell me that the current arrangement is dangerous, adds foot traffic to an already busy station during peak times, and that Transport for NSW and council need to work together to address it.

The Rhodes Place Strategy will provide an additional 4,200 new homes and 1,100 new jobs. We know that supply is needed in a housing crisis, but how can we expect that sort of population increase to be sustained without the infrastructure to support it? And it does not stop there. This growing community needs parks, open spaces, a new fire station and a new police station. These developments have been postponed for far too long and our community will no longer accept plans that do not come to fruition. We need to deliver the roads, public transport, schools and community facilities that Rhodes deserves. We need to ensure that this wonderful suburb has the infrastructure it needs to thrive, not just for today but for generations to come. Infrastructure is not just about bricks and mortar; it is about people's lives. It is about the commute to work, the school run, the trip to the shops. It is about being part of the fabric of a community.

Rhodes is a shining example of what can be achieved when we invest in infrastructure, but there is still much more work to be done. Let us commit to delivering the infrastructure that Rhodes needs. I firmly commit to working with the Government to deliver that infrastructure for my community. Let us build a Rhodes that we can all be proud of, a beacon of what can be achieved when we prioritise infrastructure and community. I call on Transport for NSW, the planning department and the Government to commit to the overdue infrastructure upgrades that have been promised for the Rhodes community.

### **CAMDEN ELECTORATE AMBULANCE SERVICES**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:40):** My priority is fighting for the infrastructure and essential services that my community deserves. I have spoken before in this Chamber about the severe lack of infrastructure and services in my electorate and the surrounding region. Today I speak about the need for an additional ambulance station. The former Coalition Government did not invest in south-west Sydney. During its 12 years in office, it failed to open the schools, healthcare facilities and public transport required for residents of the area. Houses were built without any planning in place for the services people rely on. It was privatisation by stealth—something the former Government was obsessed with. The Camden electorate, along with the local government area, is one of the fastest growing in Greater Sydney, but is home to only one ambulance station, located in the Camden township. Campbelltown ambulances also service my electorate.

The growing population and lack of existing health infrastructure means an additional ambulance station is needed now more than ever, with increasing demand being put on Campbelltown Hospital. It is already under immense pressure. Greater development in the northern suburbs of the Camden local government area in anticipation of the new Western Sydney airport will further increase the population of the region and the pressure on existing infrastructure and essential services. Adequate services must be provided for the people who will live in these newly developed areas. I am pleased with the progress the Minns Labor Government has made in addressing the lack of investment in essential services by the previous Government. One year is not enough time to fully address the neglect of our region over the previous 12 years, but it is a start. Despite this progress, my point still stands: the people of Camden and south-western Sydney deserve a new ambulance station to be built in the heart of the region to serve the needs of our community.

Healthcare infrastructure is one of the many challenges of our community. Campbelltown Hospital, the nearest major hospital, serves a vast area and a significant population, leading to existing wards and the emergency department often being near or at capacity. Staff are often overworked due to patient demands. A new hospital

will help shoulder some of the existing load serviced by Campbelltown and Liverpool hospitals, while catering to new communities within the aerotropolis and surrounding regions. However, without adequate ambulance stations, response times will only worsen in my community. I am confident that the Minns Labor Government and the Minister for Health will ensure that vital health infrastructure is available for communities, so that they have access to the health care they deserve. Data from the Bureau of Health Information shows P1 urgent response times in Camden are some of the lowest in the Greater Sydney region, with 42.7 per cent of urgent responses arriving within 15 minutes compared with the Greater Sydney average of nearly 50 per cent.

An additional ambulance station would mean quicker response times and improved emergency health care for anyone requiring an ambulance. Patient demand is growing in the Camden region and across south-western Sydney. There will be further growth as new developments increase the population of the area. When speaking with members of my community, a lack of health infrastructure is one of the top issues brought to my attention. Residents understand the need for new infrastructure after years of neglect in south-west Sydney. An additional ambulance station is desperately needed in my electorate to service the ever-growing population of the region, to reduce response times and to provide the world-class healthcare system that everyone deserves.

I am pleased that the Minns Labor Government is building the essential services the community rely on. This campaign will continue until we secure an additional ambulance station in our region. I thank our paramedics for the vital work they do every day. Being a paramedic is an unforgiving and stressful job, and we cannot do without them serving our communities.

### **PUBLIC HOUSING MAINTENANCE**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:45):** Earlier this week, the community was rocked by news that a gas explosion at a public housing property in Whalan had tragically killed a trainee nurse in her thirties. Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with her family and all those who knew and loved her, as well as with the broader community at Waikanda Crescent. The absolute tragedy of this situation is compounded by the fact that by all accounts it could have been avoided. Other residents of Waikanda Crescent have come forward to say that a gas-like smell had emanated from the building for months leading up to the blast. One resident said that the smell was so bad that she had changed the route of her morning school run so that she and her children could avoid walking by the building entirely.

According to news reports, a contractor attended the property in November 2023 to replace the gas meter regulator, and further repairs to the meter were undertaken in April this year. Reports that tenants at Whalan had previously raised maintenance requests relating to the gas smell must be thoroughly investigated by the Land and Housing Corporation, and any findings must lead to accountability. The Whalan tragedy is a painful reminder of what too many living in public housing across our communities already know—properly maintaining public housing properties is a matter of life and death. Across the State, public housing tenants, many of whom are elderly or have underlying health conditions, are waiting months for outstanding maintenance issues that pose an immediate risk to their health and safety to be fixed.

In the Newtown electorate, where there are more than 1,600 public housing dwellings, we know that tenants face outrageous wait times for some of the most basic repairs and maintenance. Our office has directly supported tenants who have waited weeks for their broken hot water system to be fixed in the dead of winter, or who have tried for months to get Homes NSW to repair a sewage leak that has stained their carpet. We have worked with tenants who are at their wits' end after asking for weeks for their broken windows to be fixed, or for overflowing rubbish bins that turn into a feeding ground for rats and other vermin to be collected.

We know of people in wheelchairs who resorted to dragging themselves upstairs because they were not able to get accessibility upgrades or a transfer. Often it is only when our office intervenes to escalate a request that action is finally taken and a contractor sent. Getting basic maintenance carried out—especially by a private provider who is being paid millions of dollars annually—should not require the intervention of individual members of Parliament. Sadly, the reality is that it does, and all members of this place know it.

Even when a contractor finally attends a home to address a problem, sometimes only half the job is done. In one shocking case dealt with by our office, a tenant who had repairs done to their kitchen had to wait over a year for the hole made in the wall to access pipes to be patched over. In the meantime, the hole provided an entry point for cockroaches that were living inside the building's walls, leading to a horrific infestation inside the tenant's apartment, which understandably caused them great distress. I could go on, but there is no doubt that every other member in this place has similar stories from their own communities. We know how dire the maintenance crisis in public housing is. We knew this well before the first inquiry into maintenance contracts in 2016 and the second in 2020, which was even more damning. How many more inquiries and how many more tragedies like what happened at Whalan earlier this week are needed before the Government acts?

The current privatised model for public housing maintenance is not working. In the previous financial year, Homes NSW spent \$635 million paying private contractors to undertake maintenance at public housing properties across the State, at a huge profit. The year before it spent \$517 million. Our public money is being funnelled toward for-profit private companies that take months to respond to maintenance requests and often do the job badly when they finally turn up. They are pocketing the profits. Public housing tenants are suffering, and the State Government is facilitating that outrageous situation. We cannot allow it to continue. When the Government formed last year, the New South Wales Labor Party had the chance to roll back the Coalition's privatisation agenda, tear up the maintenance contracts with private providers and bring public housing maintenance back into public hands, creating more public service jobs. Instead, it chose to continue the contracts in a slightly different form. Let us make no mistake: Privatisation of public housing maintenance contracts is risking people's lives. We must bring public works and public maintenance back into public hands.

### TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:50):** This week I was disturbed to hear of the private member's bill moved by the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in the other place to abolish the Transport Oriented Development State environmental planning policy [SEPP]. That irresponsible decision, in the middle of a housing crisis, could put at risk the construction of over 130,000 new dwellings that are desperately needed in Sydney. While none of the Transport Oriented Development sites are in my electorate—because my electorate already has a lot of high-rise development around train stations—I am bewildered as to why the shadow Minister would undertake such an irresponsible decision.

I also reflect on the decisions Opposition members made about planning while they were in government. In many cases, they were very bad planning decisions that affected my community and, often, the communities we share. The previous Government put an additional 10,000 residents in 5,000 units next to Granville station. Concurrently, it took Granville off the western rail line and removed all the express trains and faster T1 services from Granville. So the previous Government potentially doubled the population of the suburb from 10,000 to 20,000, when it is all built, and yet it discontinued Granville as a major rail interchange, which it had been for 160 years.

In Westmead, a lot of units have been built and there is a current rezoning proposal on the Granville electorate side of the train station. Bizarrely, the rezoning proposal excludes the very old two- and three-storey walk-up units right next to the train station, which are coming to the end of their life. That is on the basis it is all too hard, even though the previous Government put in place legislation that should have facilitated the redevelopment of those properties. Instead, the area will have a lot of redevelopment that is a long walk from the station. That has put a huge strain on Parramatta High School. The boundary for the catchment of Parramatta High School moved about eight years ago from Bridge Road in Westmead to Hawkesbury Road in Westmead. It then moved at the start of this year to Joyner Street in Westmead, which is two streets west of Parramatta High School. If students do not live in that catchment, they need to go all the way to Pendle Hill High School, which is an hour by public transport. That is ridiculous. In the centre of Sydney, kids need to travel an hour to get to their local high school because the members of the previous Government had an idea in their heads that kids do not live in units.

There are also issues around Westmead Public School. In 2018 the previous Government promised to build a second public school in Westmead because at the time it was the biggest primary school in the State. But then it found a simpler solution—for the Government. It decided that everyone who lived in the northern half of the suburb, being the Parramatta electorate, needed to walk two or three kilometres to go to their primary schools, either to the other side of the Cumberland Highway or into Parramatta CBD. Even kids who live 200 metres from Westmead Public School cannot go there; they have to go a couple of kilometres away. Those were bizarre decisions made by the previous Government in its response to demands for additional housing in Sydney.

Then we see the ridiculous decision this week to try to overturn the Transport Oriented Development SEPP, which has been carefully worked through. Discussions are taking place with councils all across Sydney. I know that Cumberland City Council, which covers most of my electorate, has some concerns about Berala. There are some concerns about how to work with heritage conservation zones, but the SEPP is not overriding heritage listings. It is trying to get housing where the existing transport infrastructure will support it. In the middle of a housing crisis, for the shadow Minister to decide that we are not going to do that and to try to abolish the SEPP is irresponsible and ridiculous. I hope this is not a sign of things to come, where the Opposition does not assist us in developing housing for people who need it.

### TRIBUTE TO GEOFF SELIG

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:55):** I rise to deliver a tribute to a former North Shore businessman, Geoff Selig, who is one of the best people I have ever known. Geoff unfortunately passed away

recently in tragic circumstances in Spain, too young at only 59 years of age. Over a thousand people attended a service in memory of Geoff at Doltone House at Jones Bay Wharf last week, on 27 May 2024. It was a great celebration of an extraordinary life, organised by Geoff's family. Even a legendary no-nonsense character like Geoff was probably impressed as he sat on a rainbow observing proceedings.

The people in attendance were a who's who of Geoff's life and the broader community. Outside of Geoff's family, people in attendance included the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency General David and Mrs Hurley. In addition, there were many significant political figures including former Prime Minister John Howard; Premiers Gladys Berejiklian and Barry O'Farrell; Geoff's very close friends Brendan Nelson and his wife, Gillian, who flew from London especially to attend; Rhondda Vanzella; Paul Fletcher; Di Woods; and many more people from all of the aspects of Geoff's life that I will refer to. The event had Geoff's old friend Rob Lloyd as master of ceremonies and Lloydie did a great job.

Geoff's parents and his brothers and their children were in attendance. Geoff's brother Paul told us about Geoff's life growing up in Normanhurst, in my electorate, where he attended Normanhurst Boys High School, being elected school vice-captain. Geoff's early life included piano playing, tennis, skiing and camping holidays. Paul and Geoff and their father worked together for many years in the family business, which had many different manifestations over the four decades Geoff worked there, after filling in for a few weeks as a qualified accountant while they recruited a new chief financial officer.

Geoff met his wife, Jane, at Macquarie University when he was studying accounting. Jane and Geoff shared a great and happy life together and produced three wonderful daughters, Steph, Sarah and Amy, who had the most wonderfully close relationship with their father right up to his death. It was hard not to admire the way that his daughters spoke and their beautiful tribute to their father. Even after the end of their marriage, Jane and Geoff had an incredible relationship, holidaying together and being great parents to their daughters. One of the songs that Geoff sang to the girls when going to bed while they were young was The Muppets song *Rainbow Connection*, which Marcus Hurley performed. A rainbow was on the wall of the hospital where Geoff left this world in Barcelona, just a few weeks ago.

Long-time friend Craig Karpin spoke of the great times that their group of friends had at university and afterwards, which continued up until Geoff's death. He told some great stories, including that Geoff was a registered Australian tennis professional in his late teen years and at one tournament won the singles and doubles after beating a nine-year-old Pat Rafter in straight sets in the singles final. In Geoff's adult life, he was incredibly successful as a business leader. Matt Aitken, who is the CEO of the IVE Group, shared many stories, including the incredible growth that Geoff was able to drive in gross earnings and staff numbers after the company went public. Matt also explained how the family printing company grew, was taken over by Bluestar Printing, was purchased back by the Selig family and was then floated again as a public company, with Geoff as the executive chair.

Gladys Berejiklian spoke of Geoff's contribution to political life. Gladys served with Geoff on the executive of the Bradfield Federal Electorate Conference [FEC], which is the context in which I met Geoff in the early 2000s, after Gladys had gone to become the member for Willoughby. Geoff and Rhonda Vanzella were very supportive of my membership in the Liberal Party and, although there was no plan, I reflect that it was Geoff who asked me to be part of a secret Reform the Liberal Party group when he was State President of the Liberal Party from 2005 to 2008, after three years as the Bradfield FEC president.

He then appointed me to the party's disputes panel where I made rulings against every group in the party and ultimately, after several attempts, convinced me to become the Federal electorate conference president of Bradfield. Without any of that encouragement, I would not be speaking in this Chamber today, and that says nothing about the way that Geoff supported me since being elected to Parliament. Jeff Weeden spoke about Geoff's incredible philanthropy over the years to numerous causes including the Heart Foundation, the Lysicrates Foundation, led by John Azarias, who also attended the memorial and other major charities. After coming out in late 2014 as a gay man, Geoff became involved in the gay marriage campaign of 2017 and the Pinnacle Foundation which provides scholarships, mentoring and opportunities for the gay community. Those are just some of the remarkable dimensions of the man and his incredible life. We will all remember Geoff. He had a way of improving the life of everyone that he knew. Vale, Geoff Selig.

#### GAZA CONFLICT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:00):** I acknowledge the Australians standing in solidarity with the people of Gaza and the support my community has offered to those in need. Those Australians are motivated by a collective horror at the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe and want to see a stop to the nightmare. On 27 May 2024 the bombing of humanitarian camps in Rafah by the Israeli Government reportedly

killed 45 people. The attacks killed displaced Palestinians who were told by the Israeli Government to shelter in Rafah as a place of safety. Following the bombing, a fire tore through tents, leading to further casualties including children.

The world was rightly outraged. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu described it as a tragic mistake but the tent massacre followed the so-called flour massacre, which was also labelled by Israel as a mistake. The targeting of an aid convoy that killed an Australian aid worker was also labelled a grave mistake, and the previous month two Palestinians were killed when a bicycle was somehow mistaken for a grenade. The Israel Defense Forces said it "regrets the marking error". In January a four-year-old was shot at a West Bank checkpoint. Israeli emergency services said it was an accident.

When do mistakes cease being mistakes? When does a leader get held to account? At least 26 hospitals have been destroyed. Where are the wounded meant to go? What treatment can they possibly receive? How are Gazans meant to receive aid when restrictions on aid are oppressive? Every day is a poor reflection of our global humanity and even more heartbreaking are the reports of children taking care of other children because the adults have been killed. In Gaza no-one is safe—no child, no man and no woman. In Gaza no place is safe—not the shelters, the hospitals, the schools or the so-called humanitarian zones. Nowhere is safe. The recent attacks came days after the International Court of Justice, invoking the genocide convention, ordered Israel to stop its assault. I echo the call from the Jewish Council of Australia for compassion to the people of Gaza and protection for those in Rafah. That is another voice added to the growing list demanding justice. I pray that the Netanyahu Government is responsive to those urgent pleas from around the globe.

Every hour we bear witness to actions that tear at our souls. The death and destruction inspire horror but people in my community, whilst hurting and in pain at what they see, feel compassion. My community is supporting Palestinian refugees. I am proud to represent a constituency that time and again shows empathy and support for others. I am proud of the generosity shown by my community, many of whom know firsthand the struggles that refugees face when they arrive in a new country. Those individuals, community groups, places of worship and non-government organisations are making a real difference in the lives of the individuals and families who have been lucky enough to escape the horror of what is occurring in Gaza. We must continue to do everything in our power to alleviate the suffering of the people in Gaza and the West Bank. We honour our democracy by preserving our incredible social cohesion. Islamophobia and antisemitism are deplorable and there is no place for them. We must also be able to advocate the cause of people suffering without fear of imputation.

Enough of the killing. Our grandchildren will look back on this chapter of time in the future and ask how it ever got to this. How did the world allow the horror to unfold before its eyes? We must continue to use our voices on the global stage to support an end to the war. We must continue to call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and a just peace with a two-state solution. With all that has happened and with over 36,000 deaths and so many thousands of people injured and so much social infrastructure destroyed—and more that is yet to come—it is ever more clear that we need to make changes. Like everybody else I acknowledge that, right now, all eyes are on Rafah.

#### **AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:04):** For over 14 years I have been incredibly proud to host the Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea every year. It is an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for Cancer Council NSW. Unfortunately most people will be impacted by cancer in some way during their lifetime. For some it is losing a friend or loved one—like my mum who passed away at the young age of 42—to cancer. For others it is being diagnosed with the horrible disease. Cancer is currently the leading cause of death in Australia. From the most recent statistics available, in one year alone just under 150,000 new cases were diagnosed. That is an alarming statistic.

That is why I have been a tireless advocate for Cancer Council NSW for so long. I believe the work it does to support individuals and families impacted by cancer is second to none. This year I set out with a target to raise over \$3,000 in much-needed funding. I am proud to say that we have absolutely smashed that target, raising just under \$3,500 in donations with more still coming in. It was an amazing turnout on the day with over 140 members of my community attending the morning tea at Mortdale RSL, many bringing their own tasty treats and baked goods. Even my kids and I got involved by baking chocolate cupcakes, and some of my staff helped out by baking delicious and colourful cookies. There was truly something on offer for everyone. From small businesses to school principals and community groups to councillors, it was so wonderful to see so many members of my community coming together to make a real difference. Everyone donated what they could with funds going towards supporting the Cancer Council Helpline, with over 36,000 callers receiving support and information, patient transport, subsidised accommodation services and, of course, world-class research projects.

My community never fails to inspire me through their generosity and creativity. There were many individuals and organisations who donated prizes for the raffle, which was heartwarming to see. I particularly thank Lyndon Mitchell and the ladies from IRT Peakhurst, Linda Pritchard and the team behind the Knit2gether project, and Victor from House of Style in Hurstville. Their donations were much appreciated. In addition to the fundraising efforts, we also had the privilege of hearing from Joanne Fergusson, who has worked in the medical sector with survivors and those impacted by cancer for many years. Her story illustrates the critical role that the Cancer Council plays in providing emotional support and practical resources to patients and their families. I also thank Maddi McEnaney from the Cancer Council, who also spoke to us on the day. She has been working with us to run our Biggest Morning Tea for several years now. It is always such a pleasure to work alongside Maddi. Her presentation was a reminder of the impact that fundraising efforts have on people's lives and the difference it can make.

Just 40-odd years ago, the survival rate for cancer was less than 50 per cent. Today nearly seven out of 10 Australians will go on to survive for five years—at the very least—after their diagnosis. Many others will go on to lead strong, healthy lives, with a survival rate as high as 90 per cent for a number of cancers. In part, that is thanks to the hard work and advocacy of the Cancer Council and the wonderful work it does. I will continue to advocate for Cancer Council NSW until we see an end to that terrible disease. I am so thankful that we continue to move ever closer to a cancer-free future for all Australians. I encourage everyone to get involved with the Cancer Council in any way that they can. Whether that be donating or even hosting a morning tea of their own, any support is not only valuable but also necessary. I look forward to seeing our community come together again for next year's Biggest Morning Tea.

### **WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:09):** It is a great honour to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, or WSROC. WSROC was a Whitlam Government initiative that was set up in November 1973. The then Prime Minister saw the importance of Western Sydney and by 13 December 1973 announced a pilot program of \$5 million for local governments in Sydney's west to upgrade roads, parks and welfare services. Academics have described WSROC as "one of the longest surviving and best known ROCs". Its mission is to bring together the councils of Western Sydney to collaborate on common issues, share resources and advocate for the interests of the region. Since its inception, WSROC has played a pivotal role in shaping the development and growth of Western Sydney. Through strategic partnerships, innovative programs and community engagement efforts, it has advocated for improved infrastructure, sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Achievements include advocating for the Beds to the West hospital campaign in the 1970s, the Western Sydney University in 1987, the regional public transport strategic policy in 1995, a Minister for Western Sydney in 1997 and the Light Years Ahead program in 2017. In 1996 WSROC established the Western Sydney Waste Board and created Team West, a collaborative forum between Western Sydney councils, the Western Sydney Economic Development Board, the Catchment Management Trust, the Water Board, the Western Sydney Chamber of Commerce and Western Sydney University. WSROC facilitates cooperation between government, business and community sectors that embraces the region. Today WSROC partners with Resilient Sydney to produce Australia's first comprehensive plan to prepare for and respond to extreme heat events. The WSROC Western Sydney Energy Program is saving councils \$54 million and reducing CO2 emissions by almost 100,000 tonnes.

WSROC has also had its rogue characters over the years, and ongoing arguments with both State and Federal governments. Alderman Peter Quirk, WSROC president in 1979, published an article entitled, "How the West was Blundered", which caught the ire of Federal Chifley MP John Armitage. Peter Quirk said that the area needed "a wonder boy—a hustler—to promote the area". I assume there are a few characters around today who could claim that title. In 2004 a Federal parliamentary inquiry into sustainable cities was searching for a workable, collaborative model until the committee chair, Mr Billson, said:

Western Sydney did it. They had a very organic process where WSROC ... got together and had everybody around the table, including the nonexperts like Joe and Mary from down the street, to actually describe what their aspirations were for their region. That interaction spat out a remarkable plan that the ANU oversaw.

Ms Janice Crosio, Federal member for Prospect, said in Parliament on 13 February 2002:

For the entire term of this government—  
it was a Liberal government—



the issues which I believe are most important to the people in my electorate have been cut out completely, starved of funds or just plain ignored. Recently ... WSROC ... published a study entitled *Who cares about Western Sydney?* which reported on what the people of Western Sydney are most concerned about in their region. Crime, community safety, unemployment and drugs and alcohol abuse were very high on the list but better funding for health services, more available child care and better access to high-quality education facilities were also a main priority.

It sounds like nothing has changed. Many issues remain the same, and politicians and community and business leaders may come and go. But we are lucky to have had WSROC as a strong voice and advocate for Western Sydney for over 50 years. WSROC has had presidents from all political persuasions, including Chris Bowen, Mark Greenhill, Helen Westwood, Alison McLaren, Tony Hadchiti and me. It has recently been led by Barry Calvert. I thank the staff for their commitment, including Judith Bruinsma, Kelly Gee, Amanda Bombaci, Chris Parsons, Melissa Randall, Wendy Xing, Siobhan Andrei and former member of this place Charles Casuscelli, as the WSROC CEO. I applaud the remarkable journey of WSROC, celebrate its achievements thus far and reaffirm our commitment to working together for a brighter future for Western Sydney.

### ELECTRICAL ENERGY

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:14):** Just last week, polling by RedBridge found that 68 per cent of Australians think the next generation will have a lower standard of living than current generations. RedBridge director Tony Barry, a veteran of political analysis, was quoted as saying he had "never seen it like this". That depth of pessimism about the future in the community is very sad, and I am very sympathetic. On so many issues—housing, climate, inequality and global tensions—that is a rational response to the evidence. Pessimism of the intellect may be warranted, but I am a firm believer that we must always reach for optimism of the will.

That leads me to a topic that gives me hope about the future, which is the electrification of everything. I reflect on some encouraging progress in the journey towards a cleaner, cheaper and more efficient electric future, which can make people's lives better and slash the emissions that are cooking our atmosphere. The Government's announcement of subsidies of \$1,600 to \$2,400 to incentivise uptake of household batteries is a good start. I have recently installed a home battery, so I will miss out, but I am pleased it will be available to others from 1 November. It is a welcome step to help people towards household energy independence. I very much hope an interest-free solar loans scheme will follow.

I recently met with the dedicated staff leading the Government's Zero Emission Buses program. Brookvale bus depot will be the first in Greater Sydney to go all electric, and work is expected to start later this year on installing 16 charging bays for 229 battery-electric buses, which will start rolling out of the depot from March next year. The buses will be a powerful symbol of the clean, green future that awaits us if we make the right decisions and investments. Jay, Mark and the whole team at Keolis Downer, a bus operator on the northern beaches, are working very hard to help make that momentous change. In my regular meetings with them, I have made it very clear that I want to see the first electric buses on suburban routes, which will benefit most from the reduction in noise and air pollution. Uptake of electric vehicles for personal use is also getting a boost, with a trial kicking off on the northern beaches last week of seven charging stations attached to kerbside power poles, including three in Wakehurst, at Frenchs Forest, Collaroy and Allambie Heights.

We need more innovation to massively upscale the accessibility of personal electric vehicle charging, of course. That is why I am so supportive of a local startup based out of "Silicon Brooky", as it is affectionately known, called Alchemy Charge. Its game-changing SmartPoint product and app allows cheap installation of level 1 trickle-charge points that allow the user to be directly billed for the power they use. That technology is transformative for electric vehicle charging in existing strata complexes and avoids the need for expensive upgrades to install fast chargers. I was glad to bring Alchemy Charge and relevant New South Wales Government staff together earlier this year. We need to see a plan to scale up level 1 trickle-charging in the next iteration of New South Wales's electric vehicle strategy, which I understand is due later this year.

Back to the powerhouse that is Brookvale, just across the road from the bus depot is Brookvale TAFE, which I recently visited for an afternoon with head teachers across a range of faculties. I was so impressed by the passion and commitment of the staff that I met. Many of them could be earning far more money working as experts in their industry trades, but they choose to teach instead. They must be paid more. At the heart of our vocational skills and training system, TAFE is absolutely integral to accelerating the electrification and sustainable building revolution. That brings me to one particular legend, Dwane Stockini, who is the TAFE NSW carpentry and joinery head teacher based out of Brookvale. When I met Dwane, he was overflowing with enthusiasm about the need and opportunity to teach his construction students the best and latest construction techniques. After a study tour to the British Columbia Institute of Technology's dedicated Zero Energy/Emissions Buildings Learning Centre a few years ago, Dwane wants to establish one at Brookvale TAFE—another exciting, future-focused idea that I look forward to championing.

As politicians, we are in the hope business. All Australians can and should feel excited about the household electrification, rooftop solar and energy efficiency revolution and the savings, amenity and climate benefits it can and will unlock. We can all be more like Dwane from Brooky TAFE. As local MPs, we have an important role in communicating that opportunity and imperative to our electorates. In my latest *Wakehurst Matters* newsletter, which lands each quarter in every letterbox in the electorate, I have provided updates on the initiatives I have mentioned tonight. With the Consumer Energy Strategy to be released later this year and announcements in the coming budget, that role will only become more important. I am keen to work with the office of the Minister for Energy and other MPs to help spread the positive message of hope and progress to our communities and explain how we can all be part of it.

### FAIRFIELD MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:19):** Fairfield is one of the State's most multicultural and multi-faith communities, but it is also the State's most socio-economically disadvantaged local government area. That is why a discussion about Fairfield's emerging mental health needs and challenges is desperately needed. I recently hosted a mental health forum in Fairfield, bringing together the Minister for Mental Health, Rose Jackson, Federal Minister Chris Bowen, and leaders from NSW Health, schools, community groups and places of worship to discuss the emerging mental health needs and challenges facing the Fairfield community.

I submitted 13 recommendations to the New South Wales Government as part of my report from the forum, and I will highlight six of them. One recommendation is for the delivery of mental health and counselling skills training for faith leaders, given their direct and frequent contact with youth and culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] community members who need mental health support. A second recommendation is the development and execution of a strategy to reduce the stigma of mental health support, specifically amongst CALD communities. That may include targeted advertising campaigns, engagement activities and financial and non-financial measures to incentivise the recruitment and retention of multi-lingual mental health support clinicians who may serve to normalise the seeking of mental health support rather than it being regarded as taboo.

A third recommendation is for mental health navigational support for young people in the transition period post high school. The increase in mental health issues observed among young people transitioning from high school to adult life is significant. Forum attendees raised the inability of schools to address mental health in isolation, given the number of cases, the limited number of counsellors available at schools and the months-long wait for students to access external psychologists. The discussion highlighted that the transition period from high school to adulthood was a period when mental health issues may become acute. That is especially the case where there is a school support network whilst young people are studying, but it dissipates when graduating. Long-term support was therefore stressed as a weakness, as there is no localised dedicated mental health support available for youth once they graduate from high school.

A fourth recommendation is to remove the financial barriers to accessing mental health support. For example, there is an inability for members from the low socio-economic backgrounds prevalent in Fairfield to access bulk-billing psychologists and related clinicians. Forum attendees suggested that Medicare could cover a higher proportion of the cost of mental health support to reduce the financial barrier to access. A fifth recommendation is for strategic funding for culturally appropriate community hubs to serve as a referral base and localised directory for mental health support alongside other support services. A suggestion was made for government subsidies to assist with trauma-informed, light-touch support services such as community hubs that connect vulnerable members of the community with mental health support, employment opportunities and other members of their cultural group who have sought similar services.

The final recommendation I highlight is the development and employment of a synchronisation strategy to build mental health referral triage capacity across key government and non-government sectors. Individuals present to different government and non-government organisations for an array of reasons not related to mental health support despite presenting symptoms suggesting the need for such support. The current system lacks efficient referral and case management synchronisation, making it difficult to seamlessly direct individuals to seek mental health support, including the most appropriate services. That gap should be covered. I sincerely thank the stakeholders who participated in the Fairfield Mental Health Forum for their participation. That is exactly what good government is about: listening to and working with the community to improve our society.

### PITTWATER ELECTORATE FUNDING

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (18:24):** The Newport Public School P&C recently sought government funding for upgrades to its playground and community infrastructure. I was very pleased to advocate for that worthy project and am extra excited to announce \$60,000 in funding. I congratulate the Newport P&C vice-president, Fiona Peschardt, and the president, Georgia Chadwick. Recently the Bilgola Plateau Public School P&C sought government funding for a project to create an all-weather shade and shelter structure and a kitchen

facility, which is not currently available. I am very pleased to announce, having advocated for that project, that \$41,000 in funding will be provided to the Bilgola Plateau Public School P&C. I congratulate Joanna Dalby-Ball and Lorna Molam on their efforts in relation to that project.

The Northern Beaches Indoor Sports Centre [NBISC] recently sought funding for a grandstand and storage upgrade that will provide extra seating and have added benefits for Narrabeen Sports High School, which will utilise the storage. I was very pleased to advocate for that project and am pleased to announce \$35,000 in funding for NBISC. I congratulate Alex McTaggart on his efforts as president. The Narrabeen Sports High School P&C recently sought government funding for a project to replace some seating and concrete near the courts. I was pleased to strongly advocate for that worthy project and am very excited to announce \$29,192 in funding. I congratulate Dr Peter McDonald, Suzie Stanford and Alison Guy.

St Faith's church recently sought government funding for \$25,000 to update the kitchen. I was pleased to advocate for the project and am very excited to announce \$25,000 in funding. I congratulate Pastor Ben Molyneux, who advocated strongly on the matter. MWP Community Care recently sought government funding of \$45,000 for a new vehicle to help it serve the senior community. Having advocated for that project with the member for Wakehurst, I am very pleased to announce joint funding from each electorate of about \$22,900 each. I congratulate Chloe Feris and Matt Adderton on their efforts. The Belrose-Terrey Hill Raiders recently sought government funding for some clubhouse upgrades. I was very pleased to strongly advocate for that worthy project and am excited to announce \$20,577 for it. I congratulate Justine Delgrant on all her efforts on the project.

The First Serbian Orthodox Church in Ingleside recently sought funding for a bathroom upgrade with disability access. The church has never received a government grant before, so I was very pleased to advocate for that project and to announce \$20,000 in funding to make it a reality. I congratulate Father Sasha on his efforts. The Garigal Gorillas recently sought \$20,000 in government funding for equipment to build and maintain a mountain and trail bike skill park. I was pleased to advocate for that project and am very excited to announce \$20,000 in funding. I congratulate Mathieu Taris and Karl Brown on all their efforts.

The Pittwater RSL Football Club recently sought government funding of \$7,639 for some soccer club equipment. I was very pleased to advocate for that project and am excited to announce that every dollar of that funding has been awarded. I congratulate Anita van Aken and Karen Parsons on their efforts. I congratulate the Peninsula Junior Cricket Club, the Avalon Beach Surf Life Saving Club and the Bilgola Surf Life Saving Club on receiving grants of \$6,800, \$6,380 and \$5,501 for sun shelters for the cricket club, an inflatable rescue boat for the Avalon Beach surf club and the installation of air conditioning and seating in the training room for the Bilgola surf club. I congratulate Darren Read from the cricket club, Bernadette McKay from Avalon Beach surf club, and Owen Heywood and Peter Fenley from Bilgola surf club.

### TRIBUTE TO U TIN OO

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:29):** Tonight I speak about Burma, also known as Myanmar. Colleagues know of my longstanding engagement of some 30 years with Burma, working alongside ethnic nationalities, civilian and defence institutions, political parties, the health and education professions and the National League for Democracy. To this day I have many friends and colleagues, and a large and diverse network across all levels of society, in Burma. That includes people from Burma who have made Australia their home and are now Australian citizens.

I start by acknowledging Daw Zin Mar Aung's visit to Australia. She is the National Unity Government's foreign affairs Minister, and she visited this place on Monday. I had the opportunity to catch up with her, and it was great to be able to see each other in person after many years. I wish her well on her visit to Australia. I also talk about U Tin Oo, who was another near and dear colleague of mine. He was also known as Baba Tin Oo, meaning a father or a father figure. He was a general in the Myanmar armed forces. He passed away on 1 June at the ripe old age of 97. I posted on Facebook, saying:

My dear friend, democracy warrior, comrade, lawyer and former high ranking soldier, U Tin Oo has passed at 97 years. I said my heart would break when his time come and it has.

We shared many conversations on democracy, federalism, constitutionalism, law, politics, global affairs and Burma's history. He allowed me to record some. The Depayin Massacre—

which he lived through with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, when people were killed and there were attempts on their lives—

living in Arakan/Rakhine State as a Tatmadaw soldier, his embracing of CEDAW, his deep respect and admiration for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi whom he always called his political leader and his hopes for peace and a federal democratic union. The last time we met was at his home in Rangoon that he shared with his lifelong partner and beloved wife, Aunty Shwe and family. We had as always lively conversation despite the impact on his speech from a stroke—

which he had in 2019. I said, "Much metta"—which means loving kindness—"my beloved friend." He had an interesting career. He was often called "the smiling general", as opposed to another general with the same name who did not smile. He was very popular with the rank and file and the people. He joined the Burma defence army to fight in World War II against fascism and the Japanese occupation at the time. He also fought against the Mujahideen invasion in Rakhine State, or Arakan State, on the border of Bangladesh. Burma has a conflicted history, and the centre has been at war for a long time with the ethnic nationalities of Myanmar, which pained him terribly.

He was sacked by dictator Ne Win and was then jailed. Some other people were jailed, and one lost their life, because people wanted to put him in charge of the army. At that time, he was chief commander of the army. He was imprisoned and came out of prison. He then studied law as a mature-age student. A lot of my lawyer friends were at university with him and said that he was the only law student who wore shiny black shoes. In Burma, everyone wears thongs, which they call slippers. He was the only one with shiny black shoes on, which came from his years in the army. I visited him when he was in hospital, and we had funny, lively conversations. I was attuned to his speech, and he to mine, so we could still continue that. I say rest in peace, my dear friend.

### BIRTH TRAUMA

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:34):** At the end of May, the Select Committee on Birth Trauma released a comprehensive report shedding light on the prevalence of systemic issues and the necessary reforms required in our maternity care system. The issue of birth trauma for parents and families is often overlooked across New South Wales. Every member of this place no doubt knows someone within their network of family or friends who has suffered a difficult or traumatic birth. A study by Western Sydney University found that 28 per cent of women in New South Wales said their last birth was traumatic. It is not just about physical pain; it also includes emotional and mental suffering, which leads to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and financial problems.

The birth of my first child, Nia, was a traumatic birth. Forewarning us of her very stubborn ways, she refused to be born via a natural birth. Drugs to speed up contractions, forceps and, finally, a ventouse—or vacuum cup—all failed to do the trick. Doctors were then forced to undertake an emergency caesarean. Due to its urgent nature, I was not permitted in the operating theatre and sat alone in the corridors of Fairfield Hospital to await the birth of my first child. At some point in the early hours of Anzac Day in 2007, some 24 hours after my wife's water broke, my daughter was rushed out of surgery in an incubator to the neonatal intensive care unit [NICU]. She had a low Apgar score and required urgent care, as did my wife following the caesarean.

I was reassured by medical staff that both mother and child were in good care and that I should go home and get some rest. I did so, returning to an empty house, not knowing if I would ever see my wife or daughter alive again. It goes without saying that traumatic births have a much more devastating impact on the mother. One local mother recently told me of her own similar experience of a traumatic birth. She went into labour two months premature and also gave birth via emergency caesarean. Upon the baby's birth, his lungs started to collapse, and he was taken to the NICU while the mother was taken to recovery on her own. Having a caesarean meant that the mother could not go into the nursery to check on the baby. The midwives were unable to reassure her of her newborn's status, leading the mother to beg for a FaceTime call so she could see that her baby was alive and well.

The select committee's report found that the current system has several critical issues. Foremost among them is the lack of continuity of care. Many women have to interact with multiple providers, leading to a lack of trust and increased anxiety. Frequently, women do not receive comprehensive information to make informed decisions, and medical interventions often occur without proper explanation or consent, leading to feelings of disempowerment. Our maternity care system also often overlooks the unique needs of First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, refugees and young parents. Poor communication, past traumas and workforce constraints are also major factors.

The report makes several key recommendations to address the issues, including enhancing continuity of care, improving antenatal education, enhancing informed consent practices and addressing workforce issues. Among the reforms, the Government has implemented minimum and enforceable safe staffing levels in emergency departments, intensive care units, high-dependency units and general wards, with appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios. The Government has begun that work by trialling the new arrangements at Liverpool Hospital, which is local to me, and Royal North Shore Hospital. The Government also increased healthcare workers' pay by 4.5 per cent. It has provided healthcare worker study subsidies to support 12,000 healthcare students, ensuring that there is a steady stream of midwives coming through the system. That is a priority for me, and it should be a priority for every member in this place. I echo the words of the health Minister when he marked International Day of the Midwife last month. He said:

I thank every midwife across the NSW Health system for their ongoing commitment to providing safe and high-quality midwifery care to keep mothers and babies healthy across the state.

The Minns Labor Government takes the findings of the report seriously. I look forward to ensuring that all women receive the care, respect and support they deserve during one of the most significant moments of their lives.

### RYDE ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:39):** I have seen two main themes emerge in the last 12 months of this Government—two very interesting things. One is ignorance of what makes for a sustainable city. The other is the exponential growth of broken promises. Tonight I will talk about something that brings the two together in my electorate of Ryde, which is buses. This Government has made no secret of its desire to build more housing—a noble pursuit, but not a panacea. Without sustaining infrastructure, these ambitions are destined for failure. A government cannot sustain a city or the confidence of its people if it builds without any regard for their future. Goodhart's law is that "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure." When pursuit of numbers of houses is the only measure of success, it is time to reframe the measure.

As this Government seeks to impose more growth on communities like Ryde, it is failing to plan, let alone deliver, the requisite hard and social infrastructure required to make it sustainable. Ryde is on track to exceeding its housing target by over 300 per cent, yet it is not on track for 300 per cent more infrastructure. In fact, the opposite is true. In just the last 12 months Ryde has been betrayed by a government that is making the deliberate choice to deprive its community of what it needs. Before the election the Government promised to save the TG Millner Field, but it has actively intervened to stop the land being made public. Before the election the Government promised to match the previous Liberal Government's rebuild of Ryde Hospital, but now it has scrapped the birthing unit. Before the election the Government promised to deliver a cultural centre for our Korean community but has not delivered any funding. Before the election the Government promised to make schools a priority, but now it has cut \$150 million from public schools. Before the election Government members were ferocious in their campaign against development in Ryde, but after the election the Government tried to flog off the North Ryde Common and Macquarie Hospital site for—you guessed it—development.

There is a theme here of broken promises and an exacerbation of pressure that comes from a growing city. The pressure was already there, but the Government is making it worse. Bus service cuts are just the latest in the litany of government-driven betrayals in Ryde. Before the election, Labor was emphatic: Elect us and we will fix the buses in Sydney. In Ryde they went even further. They said, "Elect us and we will restore the M52," which is a route that once ran through Ryde connecting Parramatta and the CBD along Victoria Road. I was recently informed that Transport for NSW had not even consulted local bus operator, Busways, on the Government's election commitment to restore that particular route. The Government banked it at the election, yet the organisation responsible for its delivery literally did not know. This ordeal has filled many in Ryde with dread. If a government will not talk to its operators, how can we expect it to talk to its citizens?

While I hold out hope for a correction of this particular error, I have been floored by the announced betrayal of local students and commuters with the most recent bus timetable changes. For an area doing so much heavy lifting on housing supply, it beggars belief that we would be the worst impacted area as a result of the changes. Two full routes have been scrapped around our busiest commercial and education precinct—Macquarie University and Macquarie Centre. The 259 and 294 are both set for the chopping block. Those services are the mainstay for students all across Ryde and many who work or live around Macquarie Centre.

The Government's logic is that people will just catch the metro. However, anyone living on Fontenoy Road, which this bus traverses, knows the walk to the nearest metro takes at least 20 minutes. This simply is not an adequate alternative, especially in an environment where the Government wants even more people. The decision must be changed. I call on the Minister to protect our services from this punitive timetable carve-up. Additionally, the changes cut the destinations of the N91, which will mean that late-night travellers, especially young people residing on campus, cannot make their way to and from Bondi. This is counterintuitive to helping young people get around Sydney cheaply, safely and in an environmentally friendly manner.

Finally, I note the Government has flagged modifications of the 500X with a requirement that this route be exclusively serviced by articulated, or bendy, buses. Nobody seems to know whether this will improve the situation in Ryde, but the community can be forgiven for their concerns. Fewer bendy buses are available for service and, given their extended size, it can be much harder to find suitable drivers. Beyond the examples I have given, I have been inundated by people being let down by unreliable bus services. They were not perfect in the last term of Parliament, but now they are worse than ever before. I call on the Government to honour its commitment. The people of Ryde are not unrealistic in their expectations but they are principled. They believe that if you make a promise you should stick to it. Please fix the buses.

### LIVERPOOL COUNCIL CANCER CLUSTER

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:44):** This evening I bring to the attention of the House an issue causing great distress and concern within my community, particularly to the workers of Liverpool City Council and their families. This morning media outlets started reporting that three employees of Liverpool council working on a single floor of the council's former offices at 33 Moore Street had been diagnosed with thyroid cancer in the last five years. The cluster was reported to NSW Health, which is currently conducting an epidemiological investigation. The council has engaged a third-party environmental health consultant, and staff occupying level six of the building have been relocated to level four. Although Liverpool council has released a statement denying that there is a link between the building and the cancer diagnoses, I understand that over the course of the day the number of current or former staff impacted by the cancer cluster now stands at double the initial number. Late this afternoon Channel 7 and Channel 9 reported that six staff, and possibly more, have been diagnosed with the same type of cancer.

I am advised that prior to the council purchasing 33 Moore Street in May 2011 to house council's administrative building, it was occupied by the police and it was colloquially called "the sick building". Why was this the case? What research and due diligence into the potential occupational health and safety hazards within the building were conducted by Liverpool council prior to purchasing 33 Moore Street? The building was purchased when Farooq Portelli, who is currently Liverpool council's director of corporate support, was the CEO. I understand that the United Services Union, which represent the council's workforce, raised concerns about the probity process during the purchase of the building as it violated a number of building and safety standards.

A report to the July 2014 Liverpool council meeting—by which time Carl Wulff was the CEO—presented plans to upgrade and replace ageing plant and equipment, including cooling tower supports, at the former administrative building. It is unclear exactly what the scope or final costs of the works were and what reports or information were held by council at the time. The report identified that council was aware three years previously, when it bought the building, that plant and equipment would need to be replaced and upgraded within five years. The due diligence report that was prepared at the time of the purchase outlined the condition of plant and equipment located within the building, but it made no mention of any occupational health and safety hazards.

On Tuesday this week all staff received an email that they must immediately report to council chambers. That caused mass panic among the workforce given the recent events at Liverpool council as well as rumours circulating of job losses, that the CEO's contract was terminated, and that multiple investigations into a range of issues within the organisation are running concurrently. Everyone thought they would be sacked. As I am sure members can appreciate, this has been an incredibly difficult time for Liverpool council's workforce and their families. The acting CEO advised staff that only level six was dangerous and would be temporarily shut down whilst the investigation was taking place. Staff were then relocated to a different level of the same building.

I am flabbergasted that staff are being directed to work in any part of the building until the NSW Health and third-party investigations are completed, given that the air-conditioning system within the building connects all floors. Furthermore, the University of Wollongong occupies four floors of the building and has a substantial student and staff presence. I am advised that the current and former staff who have been diagnosed with thyroid cancer are largely younger women. According to Professor Bernard Stewart of the University of New South Wales, thyroid cancer has ionising radiation as its only proven cause. As I am sure the House can appreciate, staff are terrified. I call on Liverpool council to be comprehensive in its investigation and to make all attempts to get to the heart of the issue. I am sure the council will put the health and safety of staff at the heart of its response. However, given the overarching context of these events, my thoughts are with the staff, their families and other workers of Liverpool council who, I am sure, are going through an extremely stressful and difficult period.

### RENT CHOICE START SAFELY PROGRAM

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:48):** We all know that domestic violence is a systemic issue in this country. Addressing it will require a collaborative and bipartisan effort across all levels of government. It will require investment in education in our schools and workplaces and the continued reform of our justice system. All of those changes will be imperative to deal with the underlying social drivers of violence against women in all parts of society. But we know that implementing many of these largely preventive measures will take time—time that many women and children do not have when they are experiencing domestic violence.

Domestic violence against women is a crisis and, as such, demands a crisis response. In combatting this issue, we must be reactive as well as proactive. It will also require government departments to start thinking outside the box. The Rent Choice Start Safely program provides short- to medium-term financial support for people escaping domestic or family violence. The subsidy helps people secure private rental accommodation so they do not have to return to a violent situation. A portion of a person's rent is paid for up to three years to enable survivors to re-establish stability for themselves and their families following domestic and family violence.

Currently the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Manly is \$900 per week. A cursory look on realestate.com.au did not provide any results for anything less than \$600 per week. That is a real issue when the maximum affordability limit for a one-bedroom subsidy under the Rent Choice Start Safely program is \$350 per week. The Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] website clearly states that the amount of assistance provided under the subsidy cannot be appealed, hence why I am raising this issue in Parliament. A trusted, respected and renowned provider of women's domestic violence support and crisis services in my area provided feedback on the program. She said:

The start safely package that the government approves for women leaving violence is a great program. However, the issue is there is nothing in our area for those amounts for rental housing, and the DCJ says that it cannot budge on the amounts allocated. To get approved and not be able to find suitable accommodation means it isn't being utilised at present in the Northern Beaches LGA. If the benchmarks could be increased, we would get a lot more people housed in their own places, and we could reduce homelessness for DV victims.

We have heard regularly that ensuring crisis accommodation and housing is accessible and sufficiently funded is a vital part of dealing with domestic violence. Delivering affordable crisis accommodation is critical not only to protect the lives of women exposed to domestic violence but also to ensure those women have the support and means to rebuild their lives. The Rent Choice Start Safely program is successful, but only insofar as it can keep up with the rental market. Under the current scheme, it is simply not doing that. This is a perverse and unique situation because it is not the case that no funding is available. It is worse: The funding is available but cannot be accessed. Organisations such as the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter simply cannot utilise what has otherwise proven to be a critical program that has real potential to save the lives of women and families in our communities.

In light of this, I call on the Government to rethink the maximum rental affordability limits and implement more contemporary allocations. The Government must work with private rental providers and community housing providers to make this change. It is not only the right thing to do but also commonsense. A person's access to refuge from domestic violence should not be dictated by the postcode area where they seek it. This is a small change that will make a massive impact. It does not require a new budget line item; it just requires common sense. If the Government can change the bracket and increase the limit from \$350 to a more contemporary amount of \$600, the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, for example, can house more women who need it, when they need it. I call on the Government to consider this simple proposal and provide more support for women who need it.

*[The Temporary Speaker (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua) left the chair, pursuant to resolution, at 18:55. The House resumed at 19:31.]*

#### *Bills*

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

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 19:31 until  
Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 12:00.**

#### *Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

#### **NARELLE EVANS, 20 YEARS WITH NSW FIRE AND RESCUE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The disastrous 2019-2020 bushfire season left a lasting impression on so many in our communities, not only of the hardships and damage of the fires but of the courage and commitment of our first responders, whose service we will be forever thankful for. One of those standout firefighters is recently retired Senior Firefighter Narelle Evans. A firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW for over 20 years, Narelle's years of service culminated in the NSW Premiers Bushfire Citation acknowledging her invaluable contribution during that devastating bushfires season. Narelle commenced her career at Fire and Rescue NSW College on August 8th 2003, and has worked at Fairfield, Cabramatta and Narellan stations. Narelle was also an accredited General Land Rescue Operator and has been recognised with a number of awards including the Long Service award, Good Conduct Medal and the prestigious National Medal. These awards reflect the core values of the Fire and Rescue NSW – Respect, Integrity, Service and Courage and an unwavering commitment to protecting lives and property, values that Narelle has held up consistently. Narelle you are an inspiration to many and I am honoured to recognise your career and significant achievements.

### **BOWRAL DRESSAGE CLUB AWARDED GRANT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Bowral Dressage Club has been awarded a Level the Playing Field grant of \$1,119,041 from the NSW government for a new club house. Bowral Dressage Club has played a vital role in our community for over 40 years, and the proposed clubhouse project is a commendable initiative that aligns with the Club's dedication to fostering inclusivity and accessibility. The consolidation of facilities on the Bong Bong Racecourse not only enhances the convenience for members, but will also increase the capacity of the Club to host a range of events and provide better access for riders with physical or intellectual disabilities attending para-equestrian classes. I am particularly pleased to see the Club's dedication to supporting the broader community by opening the clubhouse as an evacuation centre during emergencies, with Bong Bong Racecourse used as a large animal evacuation point. The Bowral Dressage Club is actively contributing to promote gender equality in sports, support disabled athletes and LGBTIQ+ communities, with 80 per cent of the committee being female, and the club providing a welcoming environment for all members.

### **THINK OF THE FIVE ARRIVE ALIVE WINNERS AT CAMDEN SHOW**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The death of five Wollondilly teenagers in 2022 due to dangerous driving hit our community hard. From the sadness and shock of the event, came the driver safety campaign 'Think of the Five Arrive Alive', which aims to create a generational shift in attitudes towards driving violence. Motivated by their loss, the Think of the Five Arrive Alive organisation has worked tirelessly to create awareness of what driving violence is: speeding, driving to cause harm or discomfort, arguing by or with the driver of the car, anger or rage, driving under the influence, reckless driving and distractions. Their campaigning efforts were recognised at the Camden Show in April 2024 where they were awarded the President's Award for Educational Display - a great achievement for their first time exhibiting at the Show. Run on the day by volunteers including Linda McCarthy, a co-founder and director, the message was communicated to thousands of show-goers who showed their interest and support of the campaign. I offer my thanks to the members of the organisation who have put aside their own grief and suffering to make a difference in the lives of others.

### **CASTLE HILL PLAYERS, PRODUCTION OF 'ALMOST MAINE'**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Pavilion Theatre is located within the grounds of the Castle Hill Showground. I recently attended the performance of 'Almost Maine' at the Pavilion Theatre. Almost Maine, written by John Cariani, is a series of short plays highlighting the quirkiness and awkwardness surrounding love and relationship dynamics. The production of Almost Maine was directed by Castle Hill Players Life Member and 2022 Pavilion Award Winner Meredith Jacobs. Meredith's Directors Note records, "I love his play and I am truly grateful to all the folks who's talent and perseverance makes this performance possible." There were eight scenes which took the audience to completely different perspectives of the awkwardness of human relationships. The cast members were terrific, and I acknowledge and commend the cast for wonderful performances. I commend the cast members Holky Bramble, Toby Rowe, Jessie Peake, Chris Scarpellino, Kate Gandy and Nick Roberts. Thank you to Meredith Jacobs and to the entire crew at the Castle Hill Players for continuing the tradition of bringing wonderful performing arts to the Castle Hill Pavilion Theatre.

### **THE HILLS VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Hills Shire Council recently held the Council's Annual Volunteer Awards. The Awards recognise those members of the community who have put up their hand and served the community each year. The Awards provide the opportunity to recognise the extraordinary contribution made by volunteers over many years. Whilst there are many volunteers in our community, I recognise those who have served our community for more than twenty-five years. I recognise Lesley Waite for twenty-five years' service given as part of the Community Environment Centre, Diane Herriot for thirty years service with Hills Community Care; Patricia Crane for forty years' service with Hills Community Care; Marilyn Stoneham for forty-five years' service with Hills Community Care, The Hills Shire Library, Heritage Park and the Castle Hill Showground Committee; and finally, Barbara Stewart for fifty years' service with Hills Community Care. Thank you to all volunteers who have served our community.

### **POWERFUL EMPOWERED WOMEN COMMUNITY, 'BREAK THE SILENCE'**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise and commend Pratibha Bhanushali, President of the Powerful Empowered Women Community for organising the screening of three short films all concerning domestic violence. We have witnessed of recent times an increase in domestic and personal violence in our community and as such proactive action by the community to raise awareness as to the harm resulting from any form of domestic violence in our society is to be commended. Pratibha selected three compelling films produced by Euphony Films, each addressing different aspects of domestic violence. The films were screened at the Pioneer Theatre, Castle Hill on 30 May 2024. The three films, namely, "Migrant Bride"; "Aussie Victim" and "Broken



Shelter" aim to bring into the light domestic violence and in the harmful effects of coercive control. It is only by raising awareness as to the harm caused by domestic violence that we can bring about meaningful and positive changes for the betterment of society. Well done to the Powerful Empowered Women Community.

#### **NATIONAL SORRY DAY**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On National Sorry Day we honour the resilience and strength of Indigenous communities across New South Wales. This day serves as a reminder of the injustices endured by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and stands as a commitment to reconciliation and healing. We acknowledge the importance of acknowledging past wrongs, fostering understanding, and working towards a future of unity and respect. We pledge to continue supporting initiatives that promote reconciliation and amplify Indigenous voices. On this National Sorry Day, let us reflect on the journey towards reconciliation and reaffirm our dedication to building a more just and equitable society for all.

#### **GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—June 1 every year is designated as Global Day of Parents. This year's theme is the promise of playful parenting. Throughout June, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners will advocate for expert advice and support for parents, based on engaging activities for the entire family. In recognition of the increasing prevalence of online play, they will also provide parents with comprehensive guides and detailed explanations to ensure their children's online experiences are both safe and positive. From nurturing childhood dreams to offering unwavering support through life's challenges, parents play an indispensable role in our lives. Today, we recognize and appreciate their immeasurable contributions to families and society. Let us celebrate and express gratitude for the endless love and devotion of parents, recognizing their profound impact on shaping a better world for all.

#### **VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR NOMINEE - AMPLE VOLUNTEERS TEAM**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Ample Volunteers Team, nominated for the Ryde Group Volunteer of the Year at the 2024 Volunteer Recognition Awards. Since 2019, the Volunteers Team at Ample Abilities Inc. has been an invaluable asset to the community, supporting people with disabilities and their carers by facilitating ongoing social programs. Their dedicated efforts include organizing sporting events like badminton, engaging in art projects, practical skills workshops, dining experiences, fundraising activities, tree planting, and social support groups. These programs have provided vital support, engagement, and enrichment to many individuals and their families. The annual Volunteer Recognition Awards aim to acknowledge the contributions made by these unsung heroes, and the Ample Volunteers Team's nomination is a testament to their impactful work. Their commitment and passion have made a significant difference in the lives of many, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community in Ryde. Thank you, Ample Volunteers Team, for your outstanding service and dedication. You have made our community a better place, and we are all deeply grateful for your contributions.

#### **VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR NOMINEE - CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AID**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Ryde Group Volunteer of the Year Nominee, Christian Community Aid. The volunteers at CCA have significantly impacted our community in Ryde. Three dedicated volunteer Financial Counsellors from CCA provided 12 hours weekly to support individuals, families, and groups facing debt problems or financial distress. Their tireless work in Eastwood involved offering crucial advice on debt management, negotiating with creditors, budgeting, bankruptcy, credit laws, and government assistance. These volunteers have been instrumental in helping many community members regain financial stability and confidence, significantly enhancing the quality of life for countless residents. Their efforts embody the spirit of volunteerism that the City of Ryde cherishes. They have given their time and expertise selflessly, making a substantial difference in the lives of those they have assisted. The annual Volunteer Recognition Awards rightly celebrate such unsung heroes, and CCA nomination highlights the vital role they play in our community. Please join me in congratulating CCA NSW Ltd for their outstanding service and dedication. Their invaluable contributions have left an indelible mark on the Ryde community, exemplifying the profound impact of volunteer work.

#### **FITA - RYDE GROUP VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR NOMINEE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Ryde Group Volunteer of the Year Nominee, FITA / St. Andrews Socio-Religious Justice Inc. The Fraternity In Truth Association (FITA), established 22 years ago with the simple yet impactful idea of "take one plastic bag," has significantly contributed to the City of Ryde. FITA's unwavering commitment to conserving our local environment through regular clean-up events has led to a notable reduction in community waste, aiming for a reduction of 20 to 30 percent annually. This remarkable effort is primarily driven by a dedicated group of retirees who tirelessly work to keep

our surroundings clean and educate new migrants about waste management and recycling. The 2024 Volunteer Recognition Awards provided a fitting platform to acknowledge these unsung heroes. FITA's persistent efforts have enhanced our community's aesthetic and environmental quality and fostered a culture of sustainability and civic responsibility. Let us commend FITA for their exceptional service and dedication. Their work exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism that strengthens our community. Thank you to FITA and all volunteers for their invaluable contributions to making Ryde a better place for all.

#### **HUMMINGBIRD MUSIC STUDIO**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate the Hummingbird Music Studio on their outstanding rendition of "Popstars," a dukebox musical showcasing 90s tunes. Following five months of rehearsals, five performances took place at Tuncurry Beach Bowling Club. Students aged 11 – 18 delighted audiences with iconic songs from the 90's and early 00's providing a nostalgic journey through hits from the Spice Girls, Backstreet Boys, and Britney Spears. A huge thank you to the production team for their hard work bringing this musical to life: Jess Evans (Musical Director), Travis Cross (Drama Director), Dave Evans (Band Director), Joe Tandy (Band Mentor), Tanaya Wrigley (Choreographer), and Sam Dorahy (Set Design & Costumes) for creating such an incredible opportunity for our young performers. I also thank our local business sponsors and the community for their invaluable support. Their contributions have been important in making this musical a success. Again, thank you Jess, for bringing an amazing youth musical to our regional area – showcasing the talents of our young people and creating opportunities for growth, development and friendships.

#### **LEAHA'S HAIR STUDIO**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Leaha Stephens, owner of Leaha's Hair Studio for recently celebrating 15 years in business. Leaha's Hair Studio is a luxury hair salon based in Tuncurry. The salon is friendly and welcoming with qualified stylists – Leaha, Ruby, Hollie and emerging stylists Charli & Bell. Leaha's Hair Studio offers extended opening hours by appointment to cater to busy schedules and provides wine and chocolate for afternoon clients, now that's service! To celebrate the milestone, Leaha and her staff thanked their clients by offering \$15 shampoo blow dry pampers and discounted gift vouchers. It was wonderful to see the studio buzzing! Congratulations to Leaha and your team on 15 years of success and outstanding service. Thank you for making our community look and feel fabulous!

#### **MANNING VALLEY NATURALLY BEEF**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Manning Valley Naturally Beef on their gold medal at the 2024 Royal Queensland Branded Beef Awards. Manning Valley Naturally has long set the benchmark for Australian grassfed beef, becoming synonymous with excellence in quality and taste. With an impressive 26 medals since the launch of their brand, they have solidified their position as Australia's most awarded grassfed beef brand. The history of Manning Valley Naturally dates back over a decade – their commitment to producing top-tier grassfed beef is commendable. Their beef is 100 per cent grassfed in the Manning Valley, never treated with antibiotics and never treated with hormone growth promotants! Congratulations Manning Valley Naturally Beef on this well-deserved recognition! I wish you many more accolades and continued success in the future.

#### **ARTS OUTWEST - 50 YEARS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, the Central West of our state boasts a thriving cultural community and to a large extent, Arts OutWest has fostered that vibe. With that in mind, I would like to acknowledge the 50-year milestone passed by the influential advocacy group this year. Formed in 1974, the not-for-profit works within 12 council areas, covers 73,752 square kilometres and services a population over 200,000. Arts OutWest opens a window for just about every cultural pursuit from classical music to indigenous works and theater to film festivals, drawing from the central west's own rich culture. Highlights of Arts OutWest's contributions to our community include the Central West Short Play Festival, a showcase for local talent, and the Aboriginal Arts Development program, which has been instrumental in preserving and celebrating Indigenous culture. The stunning murals in our towns, which beautify our communities and foster a sense of pride, are also front of mind. I look forward to another 50 years of this amazing cultural outfit.

#### **PARKES DANCE CO**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr. Speaker, Jess Kinsela and her dancing troupe at Parkes Dance Co are to be commended for their amazing effort in support of Ronald McDonald House recently. Ronald McDonald House has become an integral part in the treatment of sick children from rural and regional areas, who benefit enormously from having their family close by while in hospital care. Dance for Sick Kids runs for a week in May and during that week, the Parkes Dance Co troupe raised \$13,500 for the Ronald McDonald House charity. That money represents 83 nights' accommodation at a Ronald McDonald House. It also places Parkes Dance Co in the

top five studios who took up the challenge this year. To take part in Dance for Sick Kids, dancers logged their hours through the seven-day event. Led by the Parkes Dance Co, the community logged 10,126 minutes or about a week, of dance. For Jess, Dance for Sick Kids was also a great way for the studio to bring the community together and that was certainly achieved with local businesses again demonstrating their generosity with prizes for the accompanying raffle. I thank Parkes Dance Co for backing this important charity.

#### **BARB BLOOMFIELD**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to shine a light on a quiet achiever and an incredible volunteer, Lucknow's Barbara Bloomfield. Mrs Bloomfield, or Barb as she is affectionately known, was named Ronald McDonald House Charities Central West volunteer of the year. After a chat with RMHC Central West's CEO Rebecca Walsh, it's not hard to understand why. One of 130 volunteers, Barb has racked up an amazing 816 official hours at the Central West RMH, situated in Orange, and she has done many more at home. It's Barb's work behind the scenes that has endeared her to the Central West house's community. Involved in administration, Barb's work goes largely unnoticed by the families RMH's helps but it's invaluable to its day-to-day management. Before RMH Central West began taking families in April 2015, Barb was already helping set up administrative structure and has since been pivotal in the smooth introduction of two financial systems. Barb has also worked with the charity's national body to ensure a seamless transition and helps to prepare for audit. In Ms Walsh's words, "Barb has gone above and beyond". I thank Barb for her almost-a-decade of commitment to a vital cog for children's health.

#### **RANDA KATTAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF ARAB COUNCIL FAREWELL EVENT**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to attend the farewell event to honour Randa Kattan's immense contribution and celebrate her legacy. Randa decided to resign after twenty-six years as the head of Arab Council. I was joined by fellow parliamentarians, councillors, community leaders, staff, friends and supporters. The attendance by a host of distinguished guests was a testament to the profound impact Randa has on the organisation and the broader community. Randa's unwavering commitment to the community and the progressive values of the organisation was on display. Randa was a fearless advocate for all the challenges met by the community. She never shied away from a fight even when the topic was difficult or unpopular, always fighting for what is right with unwavering fearless determination. Randa will be succeeded by Mr Hassan Moussa in the role of Chief Executive Officer of Arab Council. I wish Randa all the best in her future endeavours and look forwards to fruitful collaboration in the future with Hassan at the realm.

#### **ASHFIELD PIRATE - MAT MURPHY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr Mat Murphy, a player with Ashfield Pirates FC, for his heroic act at a recent game. On May 20 during an Ashfield Pirates game at Rudd Park an opposition player collapsed suddenly and it appeared that his heart had stopped. Mr Murphy, an Inner West firefighter when he isn't playing for the Pirates, launched into action, working on the collapsed player for several minutes until the paramedics arrived. Mr. Murphy administered CPR and used the defibrillator paddles on the gentleman suffering the medical episode, managing to start his heart again before the paramedics arrived and the gentleman was taken to hospital. One of the teammates of the collapsed player later thanked Mr. Murphy for keeping a cool head and stepping in, saying that he believed Mr. Murphy had saved his teammate's life. Thank you so much Mat for your heroic life-saving actions, we all owe you a debt of gratitude!

#### **YOUTH 4 DIFFERENCE - INNER WEST**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations to Maggie Zhang, Jenna Aylett, and Calleigh Chow, the Inner West division executives for Youth 4 Difference. Youth 4 Difference was founded two years ago by Kevin Hao and Kevin Wang from Knox Grammar School and have since been expanding across Sydney! Youth 4 Difference is a youth led organisation which helps organise volunteering events for high schoolers. The volunteering includes working with local charities, organisations in volunteering activities such as cleanups, fun runs, tree and native vegetation planting and fundraisers. This is a fantastic opportunity for high schoolers to become more involved, make friends and contribute positively and socially to the community, whilst having fun! Thank you Maggie, Jenna and Calleigh for putting your time and energy into creating and running such a wonderful and dedicated initiative for young people across the Inner West!

#### **THE INFANTS' HOME – 150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations to the Infants' Home on achieving 150 years of operation this year. Established in 1874, The Infant's Home was the first institution dedicated to caring for abandoned children and providing accommodation for unmarried mothers and their babies. The Infant's Home was incorporated by an Act of NSW Parliament in 1924 and has grown from its initial controversial beginnings to the multi-faceted early childhood education operation of today. Initially located in

Darlinghurst, Mr Thomas Walker, an early supporter and philanthropist, purchased a house in what was then rural Ashfield and gifted it to the charity. Key to continuing over such a long period has been The Infant's Home commitment to continuously improving and providing innovative services; over time adding kindergarten classes, long day care, family day care, speech pathology and occupational therapy for children with special needs. I am proud to have The Infant's Home in the Inner West, providing such critical services for children and families. Congratulations to current Board President Mary Verschuier, Chief Executive Officer Elizabeth Robinson, and all the team for your ongoing dedication to championing the rights of children, women and families.

#### **RODERICK AXFORD**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Roderick Axford 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 Roderick and his service as a Justice of the Peace. This year, Roderick 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 Roderick for his dedication to our community.

#### **SARAH HOFFMAN**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Sarah Hoffman for making the America's Cup team. The America's Cup is the oldest international sporting trophy and stands as one of the hardest sporting endeavours. This year tens of thousands of spectators will gather in Barcelona, Spain to watch as the very best female and youth athletes from around the world compete in a series of events. Sarah is the youngest female member of the team at the age of 21 and has been chosen to fly the sail for the women in Australia's bid for the Cup. Sarah began sailing competitively at Belmont 16ft Sailing Club at the age of 7 and competed in state and national championships at 11. She further represented Australia when she was 16 and began her bid to make the Olympics two years later. I congratulate Sarah on your remarkable determination and skill in sailing. I look forward to watching you compete in the Cup and continue your trajectory to the Olympics. You are a credit to your club and community.

#### **DR DAVID DURRHEIM AM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Dr David Durrheim AM for being honoured the title of Freeman of the City of Lake Macquarie. Dr Durrheim is a world-renowned public health physician who was appointed to the role of Director of Health Protection with Hunter New England Health in 2004. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Durrheim undertook an unprecedented role in the Swansea community as the Public Health Controller for the region. In this role, Dr Durrheim exemplified outstanding guidance and organisation in coordinating the district's response. Dr Durrheim was also named Lake Macquarie Ambassador in 2022 to recognise his remarkable work throughout the pandemic. I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude for Dr Durrheim's work in ensuring our community remains healthy and safe. His leadership and compassion are unparalleled, and he is a worthy recipient of the Freeman of the City title.

#### **SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)**—I would like to acknowledge that students from Kanahooka High School and Smith's Hill were part of the Secondary Student Leadership Program. Lauren Lin and Anna Neill from Smith's Hill High School, and Lahnee Attwell and Jack Cox from Kanahooka High School were part of the program that gives students an opportunity to Members of Parliament and to develop their knowledge of constitutional and parliamentary processes of the NSW Parliament. I would like to recognise the work of the Education and Engagement team at that Parliament who deliver this program and ones like it. Many of the members in this place, including myself, started in leadership roles during their time in high school and it's a great to see that we are investing in the potential future leaders of NSW. I hope that Lauren, Anna, Lahnee and Jack enjoyed their experience and I wish them all the very best in completing the program, in their upcoming HSC exams and in whatever the future holds for them.

#### **WOLLONGONG JPS 50 YEARS SERVICE**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)**—In April, Mr Derek Houlison, Mr Michael Tobin and Mrs Judith Baker were recognised in services held by the Attorney General for reaching the milestone of 50 years as a Justice of the Peace. To put that length of service in context, in the same

time that these justices of the peace have been serving our community there have been 17 Premiers of New South Wales. It is hard to imagine the dedication to take to volunteer for over 50 years to deliver a vital service to the NSW Community. It is highly admirable and has had a positive impact on many people's lives. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to for their continued service to the community and again congratulate them on this achievement.

#### **JACK MCLEOD**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I pay tribute to local golfer, Jack McLeod. Put simply, Jack is an inspiration. Despite being born profoundly deaf, this did not stop Jack from pursuing his dream to become a full-time professional golfer. Jack fell in love with golf at a young age and is the youngest ever winner of the World Deaf Gold Championships individual men's event at age 16. Jack is a long-term player in the Australian Men's Team at the deaf golf events, including when the team won the world championships in Ireland in 2018. Jack has won the Australian Men's Deaf Golf Championships on three occasions. Now, at just 28, Jack has earned a place on the Australasian PGA Tour, commencing at the WA Open in October 2024. Jack is a Northern Beaches local through and through, growing up in Newport, attending school at Northern Beaches Christian School, is the PGA professional at the Mona Vale Golf Club and runs their junior golf program, Jack, you have made your community so proud. We will be cheering you on every step of the way!

#### **GWENYTH SNEESBY**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Gwenyth Sneesby is a living treasure. Born on 17 June 1924, Gwenyth will shortly turn 100. Gwenyth attended primary school in Mona Vale, and it has been home all her life. Inscribed on the WWII Honour Roll at Mona Vale Public School are the 122 names of young women and men who enlisted to serve our nation. Gwenyth is the only one of those 122 brave souls still with us. She joined the Navy on 9 December 1942 and was stationed at HMS Penguin and then HMS Kuttabul. She served in what was known as the "Deguassing Range", contributing to the process which helped keep our naval ships safe, repelling magnetic sea mines. After the war, Gwenyth had her two daughters with her husband Gordon, who sadly died in 1974. Gwenyth has spent her recent years volunteering for Meals on Wheels, as Activities Officer at her retirement village and, no doubt, much more. What is striking about Gwenyth is how she lives her life and, to quote Gwenyth, her life motto is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Our world would certainly be a better place with more Gwenyth's! Thank you, Gwenyth.

#### **NARRABEEN LAKES PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Mr Speaker, I pay tribute to Narrabeen Lakes Probus Club (NL Probus). NL Probus is a Club for women and men alike, opening the door for new friendships, hearing and learning from interesting speakers, and plenty of fun. Meeting at Narrabeen Baptist Church, NL Probus has over 80 members. It's an active and busy Club and is now well over 30 years old! Clubs like this provide a wonderful platform for connecting individuals from all walks of life and providing a strong support network and social activity. Congratulations all NL Probus office bearers on their efforts supporting the Club and its members: President - Paul Hrones, Vice President and Treasurer – Norma Moran, Secretary / Member officer / Public Officer – Liz Waring, Assistant Secretary – Pat Axford, Speakers Organiser – Martin Bes, Web Officer and Ambassador – Ron Allars, Event Co-ordinator and Past President – Helen Howes, Assistant Co-ordinator – Peta Welch, Visitor Liaison - Pauline Pallister and J Bentley, Welfare Officer – Lyn Johnson, Newsletter Organiser – Carol Vincent. Thank you and congratulations to all involved with NL Probus. I am pleased that acknowledgement of the NL Probus' contributions is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **COMMUNITY LEADERS SUMMIT BY THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTHEAST ASIAN NETWORK (ASEAN)**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 13th January 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the Australian South East Asian Network's (ASEAN) Inaugural Summit for Leaders and Organisations at the Lao Community Advancement Cooperative Centre in Edensor Park. At this Summit there were many special guests including members from the: Lao Community, Khmer Krom Centre, Cambodian community, Assyrian community, Indian community, Vietnamese community, Afghanistani-Hazara community, Indigenous Australian, South African community, Filipino community, CBCC, SOHAS Charity, Zen Tea Lounge Foundation, Hong Kong-Malaysian community, Tamil community, Burmese community, Youth Human Rights International, SBS TV, other community media, and more. I like to congratulate ASEAN for this initiative, a milestone journey with wonderful collaborations between the many local communities, and creating opportunities for young people to be involved in events that promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue amongst diverse community. This event was thoughtfully organized with the leadership of Mr Sawathey Ek OAM, a known personality in many ethnic community groups, a former refugee from Cambodia, a lawyer and legal educator with a vision to promote

Australian values. This Summit was a great opportunity for many members of the community to discuss ways to promote social cohesion.

#### **ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING AT THE BONNYRIGG SOCIAL HOUSING SITE**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 26th March 2024, I had the great honour of meeting the representatives of St. George Community Housing at the Bonnyrigg Renewal project in my electorate. This site was originally designed for 830 concentrated social housing properties and a small number of private dwellings. Once completed the whole project is now expected to include about 3,000 new homes, providing a mix of about 30 per cent social and 70 per cent private housing. The redevelopment endeavours to address the housing demand in my electorate by creating greater access to social housing for those in need. I extend my appreciation to the project representatives for the dedication that has been made to the project and I thank them for their insights. I also extend my appreciation to the NSW Treasurer the Hon Daniel Mookhey for his time and engagement with us at the project site. It was a great opportunity for us to hear from the representatives from St George Community Housing and to better understand the project, the relevant issues and hopefully to better serve our local area and community.

#### **LES POWELL SCHOOL IN MOUNT PRITCHARD**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 6 May 2024, I had the pleasure of visiting Les Powell School in Mount Pritchard. I received a warm welcome by Ms Greta McCann, the Principal of Les Powell, who was evidently dedicated and compassionate towards every student. Les Powell employs multiple interventions and has a number of facilities dedicated to a supportive learning such as numerous play areas, a heated hydrotherapy pool, a calming sensory library, a liberty swing and walking tracks. Les Powell participates in the Mini Woollies program, which allows students to develop and practice life skills including interpersonal communication, money handling and register operation. This program simulates a real environment, which builds confidence, independence and prepares students to excel in tasks beyond the classroom setting. Parents and guardians play an integral role in student learning and progression at Les Powell. They are not only well-informed but are encouraged to contribute their suggestions to ensure their child's individual needs are being met. Les Powell is an impressive school, and I would like to express my gratitude to Greta for being a wonderful host and the Hon Prue Car for extending the kind invitation to visit the School.

#### **CHRIS BROSOLO - RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Chris Brosolo of Albury, who has reached a truly remarkable milestone of providing 25 continuous years of service for the local football community through his AFL umpiring. As the Australian Football League (AFL) celebrates the Recognition of Service of umpiring, it's worth noting that Chris joins the ranks of 17,000 community umpires across Australia. All these dedicated men and women are acknowledged on an Honour Roll that publicly thanks each umpire for their important contributions — both in maintaining the spirit of the game and in surviving the occasional heckle. Congratulations, Chris Brosolo! Here's to 25 years of blowing whistles, making tough calls, and keeping the peace on the field. Your passion for the game is truly inspiring. Keep up the fantastic work!

#### **SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT PARLIAMENT NSW**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend recognition to the exemplary students from our electorate who participated in the Secondary School Leadership Program held at Parliament House on May 16. Grace, Cooper, Gibb, Daisy, James, Ashley, Harry, Callie, Kenan, Alanah, Hunter, and Lela showed remarkable leadership qualities. Well done to our schools Albury High School, James Fallon High School, Murray High School, Corowa High School, and Billabong High School, for embracing such a program and to share their experiences with the local member. The Secondary Student Leadership Program has been instrumental in nurturing students with essential skills such as effective communication, teamwork, responsibility, and ethical decision-making among our youth. The visit to Sydney, coupled with interactive sessions and meetings with distinguished personalities like Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, has provided invaluable exposure and learning experiences. I commend these young leaders for their dedication and contributions to shaping a brighter future for our community. Congratulations on your achievements!

#### **SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER FOR TUMBARUMBA AND DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Tumba Bikes and Blooms, along with the Tumbarumba & District Garden Club, for its tremendously successful day of festivities and fundraising on April 26. The community responded with overwhelming generosity, contributing \$788 in donations towards the Club's Harvest Haven Community Garden project. Additionally, \$410 was raised through the sale of pavers, further boosting the fundraising efforts. A heartfelt thanks to those who contributed to the success of this

fundraiser. Together, you are making a significant impact on your community and laying the foundation for a greener, vibrant future in Tumbarumba. Your efforts are not just about today, but they are planting the seeds for a legacy of sustainability and community pride that will flourish for generations to come. Here's to the remarkable people of Tumbarumba—your dedication and unity are truly inspiring.

#### **HOBIE PORTER'S MONUMENTAL ART AT UKI**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Tweed Valley artist Hobie Porter's monumental painting, Mountain Shadow, is being exhibited at Art Post Uki's 50th show at the Uki Post Office until July 3. Hobie teaches visual art at TAFE NSW's Murwillumbah Campus and his works are held in many public and private collections throughout Australia. Mountain Shadow is big; its two-metre-long, 1.13-metre-high widescreen cinematic format covers the entire exhibiting wall. The majestic painting takes the viewer up into the mountains of the Tweed Caldera to contemplate the beauty of the natural world. Hobie explained his painting style to The Tweed Valley Weekly newspaper thus: "When I was an artist in my twenties, I explored different painting styles but they all reached a dead end. They felt arbitrary. I felt I needed to ground myself in something substantial so I turned to observational realism. "I like to emphasise ethereal, transcendent, emotive qualities in my paintings as I ponder a sense of floating amidst the mountains. My intention is to try to visually communicate this feeling as a remarkable characteristic of belonging to this country," Hobie told The Tweed Valley Weekly. Hobie Porter is represented by Art House Gallery in Sydney's Rushcutters Bay.

#### **TENTERFIELD ROTARY DONATES TO OUR HOUSE CHARITY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—THE Tenterfield Rotary Club recently made a \$10,000 donation to upgrade the laundry at Our House, a purpose-built 20-unit accommodation for people and their families who must travel to Lismore for medical care. Significantly, 21 per cent of Our House residents come from Tenterfield Shire, so it's a home away from home for many Tenterfield locals during tough and challenging times. As the then Federal Member for Page, I secured a \$3.6-million grant towards establishing Our House. The then state government contributed \$500,000 and Cancer Council \$500,000. The Northern Rivers community raised a further \$1 million and continues to give generously to this project, run jointly by the Northern Rivers Community Cancer Foundation and Our Kids. Our House representatives Rebekka Battista and Brian Henry OAM visited Rotary Tenterfield to accept the donation and spread the word about their wonderful work. In other fundraising news, Incoming Rotary Tenterfield President Yvonne Horn, together with Ralph and Lee Manser, recently presented Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School with a \$1,000 donation. This will support the school's breakfast program for students who may not have eaten before school. The school awarded the club with a certificate of appreciation.

#### **MARGARET OLLEY PAINTING GIFTED TO TWEED REGIONAL GALLERY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—A 1948 painting by the late Australian artist Margaret Olley, Still Life with Pink Paper and Plums, recently was gifted to the Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Arts Centre. The gift to the gallery's collection was made by the Margaret Olley Art Trust in recognition of former gallery director Susi Muddiman OAM's service from 2007 to last year. Susi oversaw the construction and opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre, a suite of three rooms recreating Olley's home studio in Sydney's Paddington. Tweed Regional Gallery Director Ingrid Hedgcock told The Tweed Valley Weekly newspaper she was thrilled for this rare work to join other Olley artworks in their collection. Trustee of the Margaret Olley Art Trust, Philip Bacon AO, says the Trust was delighted by the opportunity to acquire the new painting which had been in private ownership for many decades. For her part, Susi says she was honoured that Still Life with Pink Paper and Plums had been gifted in her name. She was genuinely delighted and surprised. The painting will be on display until August 11 this year as part of a new exhibition, Margaret Olley: from the collection.

#### **JEANINE KIMM**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Jeanine Kimm. Jeanine grew up in Hill End on her family farm. Jeanine's parents never held expectations of her undertake a particular career pathway, knowing that she was well able to make good decisions and succeed at whatever she chose to do. Jeanine chose a pathway into shearing and has now accumulated eleven years of experience. Never discouraged to undertake challenging work and continually improve and learn more about her skilled trade, Jeanine did not shy away from an intense training regime to set a challenge for herself to set a shearing world record. With determination, great preparation, a wonderful support team and sponsors behind her, Jeanine has successfully set a world record at the first Women's Merino Sheep Shearing World Record attempt. Jeanine sheared three hundred and fifty-eight sheep in eight hours, seeing an output of 1.2 tonnes of fine wool, being the first woman to set this record with merinos. I congratulate Jeanine on this wonderful achievement in an industry that once saw women unable to enter shearing sheds. An awesome accomplishment.

**PAUL CASSIMATIS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Mr Paul Cassimatis. Paul came from the Greek Island of Kythira, setting sail on the Orion for Australia in January 1955. Paul started working for his uncles at their cafe in Armidale. Paul was diligent with his money, saving up to purchase his first business a cafe in Binnaway, later seeing the purchase of a second cafe in Glen Innes with his brother who arrived in Australia in 1961. Paul met his wife Georgia in Wollongong, marrying, then moving to Crockwell to open Paul's Cafe, investing in their business and two daughters, who were taught from an early age the importance of an excellent work ethic. Paul and Georgia moved to Goulburn buying the Auburn Street Cafe. The Takeaway Fresh Food Spot otherwise known as the Original Australian Kythiran Cafe. Paul has now closed-up shop, to spend time with family, take another trip home to Greece and reflect upon all the demanding work and long hours after sixty-seven years in business, generating many friendships and having the enjoyment of serving people. I congratulate Paul on his business success and the pivotal role that he has played within many communities.

**RACHAEL GRANGER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Rachael Granger, in Year 9 at Goulburn High School. Rachael has been awarded the prestigious Harding Miller Education Foundation Scholarship. With aspirations to pursue Veterinary Science, Rachael aims to specialise in large animal veterinary services. Her upbringing in rural surroundings has instilled in her a deep caring for animals. Rachael's commitment to veterinary care extends beyond her own interests, as she generously lends her expertise to care for others' animals in their absence. The Harding Miller Education Foundation Scholarship is a testament to Rachael's potential. It equips recipients with essential tools for success, including a new laptop, high-speed internet access, personalised tutoring both in-person and online, homework assistance, prepaid expense cards for school essentials, and invaluable personal coaching throughout the scholarship's duration. In extending my heartfelt congratulations to Rachael, I express my sincerest wishes for her continued success in her academic journey and the fulfilment of her dreams. With her determination and talent, I do not doubt that Rachael will excel in her studies and make significant contributions to the field of veterinary science.

**SYDNEY SICK KIDS DAY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Today is Sydney Sick Kids Day and I thank and commend everyone in my community of Badgerys Creek and beyond who is assisting this important initiative of supporting sick kids. This is Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation's fourth annual Sydney Sick Kids Appeal. The appeal runs from 6 May 2024 to 30 June 2024 with an ambitious goal of raising \$15 million. I encourage all to support the cause in whatever capacity one may assist, whether it be through a donation, through volunteering, via raising awareness or any other form of assistance that may help sick kids. Throughout the appeal, there will be the sharing of inspiring stories showing the resilience of these brave and extraordinary kids. I wish all children who are sick the best for their recovery and we must continue to support them in any way we can.

**BRITTANIE SHIPWAY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend Mulgoa local Brittanie Shipway on winning the prestigious Mike Walsh Fellowship for her extraordinary work in the arts. As part of the fellowship, Brittanie will be travelling to New York to further her writing, the same city she had studied in almost a decade ago. The Fellowship assists young theatre artists with the potential to make a significant contribution to Australian arts and entertainment and enables the recipient to travel abroad, with the intent that they bring the lessons learnt back to Australia. During her time in New York, Brittanie will be seconding with the Michael Cassel Group, an Australian theatre company who have skyrocketed with some smash hits in recent years. Before Brittany travels to New York, she will be performing a concert at the Riverside Theatre called 'Beyond Broadway'. I congratulate Brittanie on the fellowship and wish her the very best with her upcoming show and time in New York.

**NEPEAN FOOD SERVICES**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I had the privilege of joining Nepean Food Services for their National Volunteer Week luncheon as we took part in Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering. It was a fun time of celebration as we recognised the transformative impact of volunteers. It was wonderful to see the passion and dedication that each of the volunteers has in serving their community and others. This year's theme is 'Something for Everyone', recognising the diverse passions and talents everyone brings to the act of volunteering. I encourage all in my community who are considering volunteering to do so. Everyone can find their role in volunteering and make a difference through a myriad of opportunities that are available. I thank Nepean Food Services and all volunteers in our community for their strong commitment to helping others and I encourage them to continue their vital work.



### LUCY MENTORING PROGRAM AT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the Lucy Mentoring Program at the Macquarie University Business School. It was established to provide female and gender diverse students the opportunity to connect with professionals. The program aims to enrich students with the skills and knowledge to exercise leadership professionally. Since 2019, I have been privileged to serve as a mentor, and I recognise those who I have been privileged to help reach their full potential – Dulguunzul (Bella) Battsengel, Rochelle Chand, Alexa Swientek, Sladjana Kuridza and Ankeeta Raja. I look forward to following their very high achieving careers. I also recognise the many people who over the years have contributed to the Lucy Mentoring Program – Christine Nichols, Dai Yin Lee, Sophie Widmer, Eliza Carter, Vanessa Chu, Professor Eric Knight and Professor Leonie Tickle, as well as the hundreds of mentors who selflessly give their time. I commend the Lucy Mentoring Program and I look forward to supporting the important work it does in contributing to our society.

### ALBERT LIM AND EVA LIM – WOODLANDS IN KILLARA

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the historic place, Woodlands in Killara. It was once the home of author Ethel Turner, who wrote many books, including *Seven Little Australians* when living at Woodlands in 1893. In 2022, Woodlands was awarded a NSW Government Blue Plaque, established by then Treasurer Dominic Perrottet MP and Heritage Minister Don Harwin MLC. I was pleased to attend the unveiling with then Member for Davidson Jonathan O'Dea MP and Davidson Electorate Officer Richard Tilden. I recognise Woodlands owners Albert Lim and Eva Lim, who have faithfully recreated parts of the house to reflect the time when Turner lived and wrote here. They help honour Ethel Turner's memory by holding regular educational tours of the house and gardens in conjunction with the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival. Thank you, Albert and Eva. Held annually in May, the Ku-ring-gai Heritage Festival explores the history of our local community through several events promoting and celebrating the Aboriginal, cultural, natural and built heritage. May we continue to celebrate, honour and invest in our local heritage.

### DAVIDSON 50 YEAR SERVICE – JUSTICES OF PEACE

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In 2024, we mark and recognise the remarkable and dedicated service of Justices of the Peace in our local community who have served for more than 50 years. Thank you to Brian Austin, Lindsay Barlow, Stephen Creet, Arthur Huxtable, Brian Manuel and Geoffrey Stanwell for your ongoing community service. Justices of the Peace provide citizens and residents an important service by witnessing and certifying documents. Every single Justice of the Peace is a volunteer. They come from diverse backgrounds, taking the time out of their busy lives to serve our communities with integrity. I was pleased to join the NSW Attorney General on 10 April 2024 at the Parliament of NSW to recognise, thank and pay tribute to the 50 years of service.

### KEMPSEY'S OWN HITS DEFENCE WARRIOR GAMES

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Kempsey Damien Batty is set to represent Australia at the Department of Defence Warrior games. The event is held from June 21 to June 30th at the ESPN wide world of sports complex at Walt Disney World Resort near Orlando, Florida. Since 2010, the occasion has been held annually to honour the tenacity and devotion of active duty and retired US military personnel who have suffered illnesses or injuries. It brings together participants from different branches of military to compete in various sports. The games' objective is to improve injured soldiers' recuperation and rehabilitation by introducing them to adapted sports. Damien is expected to participate in wheelchair rugby, swimming, seated volleyball, and archery. Damien served in the Australian Army from January 15, 1996, to December 1, 2021, in Army Health services, with deployments to Bougainville in 1999, Solomon Islands in 2009 and Afghanistan in 2012. Damien's journey into adaptive sports begun after his retirement from active team participation due to multiple limb injuries, PTSD, and other conditions. He has found solace and purpose in adaptive sports, which played a vital role in his recovery and rehabilitation.

### QUICK THINKING BOATERS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—A quick thinking and compassionate deed by some local recreational fisherman recently resulted in the rescue of an osprey family from the Bellinger River. Two ospreys, a breeding couple, were hovering above the Bellinger River in search of fish. Unfortunately, the desired fish were hooked in fishing line, causing both large ospreys to become entangled with the fish and unable to fly away from the surface of the water, likely to drown. Pete Denham and Dave Mayo from Hungry Head, who were fishing nearby in a small boat, saw the birds' fate and set out to keep them afloat with lifejackets aided by the boat's oars. The fishermen then began the difficult task of guiding the entangled birds to land. Pete and Dave were able to efficiently transport the birds to the vets thanks to their quick-thinking skills. Despite one of the ospreys not able to be saved, the actions of the fishers, Joe Stephens, the staff at the Mid Coast Vets Urunga and the dedication of the WIRES volunteers resulted in the rest of the osprey family surviving.

### **HIDDEN TREASURE, DEE HUNTER**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today, commemorating one of the best kept secret jewels in the Nambucca Valley, Dee Hunter. Dee was named a Hidden Treasure on the 2023 Honour Role, a government program which aims to support, promote and give public recognition to women in regional, remote and rural areas. This prestigious recognition highlights Dee's voluntary contributions for more than 20 years with the Bowra Macksville United Hospital Auxiliary. In 2010, Dee was rostered at the Macksville District Hospital Cafe, working in the UHA-operated eatery every week. Since then, Dee stepped into leadership roles including the Regional Representative North East for the UHA of NSW, a title she has held for six years. Dee was also elected State Treasurer of the organisation, while continuing grassroots volunteering at the Hospital and within the local community. In the past financial year, Dee's branch has donated \$100,000 in medical equipment for Macksville Hospital. We are immensely proud to have a generous, hardworking and dedicated member in our region like Dee. This recognition is a testament to her selflessness and compassion especially for those at their most vulnerable. Well done, Dee!

### **MATILDA – OAK FLATS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Oak Flats High Year 12 student, Matilda, who is making great strides in the sport of target shooting. Matilda is currently representing NSW in the Shooting Australia opens and junior women's Australian circuit for 10 metre air rifle and is ranking 2nd in New South Wales. Although Matilda is new to the sport, her talent, skill, training, focus and determination have seen her flying from state to state representing New South Wales at high level competitions. She has set her sights on joining the National Australian Team and ultimately to compete in the Olympics. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I congratulate Matilda and wish her well in her future sporting endeavours.

### **MACLEAY KESBY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Oak Flats runner, Macleay Kesby, recently crowned Australian Junior Champion in the 2000 metre steeplechase, after winning the event in Adelaide on April 17 2024. The talented teen beat home some runners who were almost two years older than him, with the victory earning the youngster family and friends call Macca, a spot in the Australian team for next month's Oceania Athletics Championships in Fiji. The Corpus Christi High School student's success in Adelaide was a long time coming, with Macleay placing third and second in the two previous years before breaking through for gold last month. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I congratulate Macleay and wish him well at the upcoming Oceania Athletics Championships in Fiji and with all his future sporting endeavours.

### **UNDER 19S WOMEN'S COUNTRY RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I congratulate the Under 19's New South Wales Women's Country Rugby League team, champions of this year's City Country clash at Leichhardt Oval on 19 May 2024. The Country team had an astounding 12 of its 18 squad members from the Illawarra Steelers. This should come as no surprise, considering the dominance of the Steelers in the recently completed Tarsha Gale Cup, not only winning the Premiership, but remaining undefeated throughout the entire season. Women's rugby league is incredibly strong in the Illawarra, and the future is now looking even brighter, with almost \$2 million in funding on its way for the Stingrays of Shellharbour to improve facilities for their female players at Flinders Oval under the 'Level the Playing Field' program. I thank the Under 19's Country coach, Courtney Crawford, and congratulate all the staff, parents, carers and volunteers who give up their nights and weekends to ensure that these talented young women can chase their dreams.

### **CRONULLA JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the hard work by organisers of the Cronulla Jazz and Blues Festival last weekend. The heavy rain kept the Festival team busy making alternative plans, with most of the outdoor program running indoors thanks to the many fantastic Cronulla venues who got behind the event. There were 12 indoor venues full and thriving over the weekend, with capacity crowds enjoying more than 80 live performances. The Festival is an initiative of the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce. Since 2021 it's been an annual event bringing the local Shire community together and attracting visitors from further afield in a welcome boost for small business in Cronulla. The Festival organisers are big supporters of the live music scene and the event offers hundreds of artists the opportunity to play gigs at a time when cost of living pressures are impacting the industry. Congratulations to organisers Robyn Adamski, Jad Nakhle and Geoff Trio from Shire Events Live, Brad Lord and the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce team, together with the venues and performers who made the event a success in difficult conditions.

**ALAN STANGER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Alan Stanger for winning this year's open section of the Waste2Art competition with his 3D sculpture titled 'Porch Pirate'. Inspired by a surge in parcel thefts and the excessive waste generated by packaging, Alan wanted to make a comment about how we are constantly being swamped by packaging materials. As part of his research, Alan looked at the stats and found that in the USA, 44 million packages were stolen in just over 3 months. A staggering amount of waste, especially when that packaging of cardboard or styrofoam needs to be replaced and re-sent. Described as a mix of making, fixing and inventing things, Alan's approach to art is about using discarded materials to create thought provoking pieces. He fits creative time in around work and life commitments and finds it a wonderful way to destress. Alan is quickly becoming synonymous with Waste2Art and has the people of Dubbo eagerly waiting to see what he will create each year! Congratulations on the win Alan, and well done for using such creativity to bring environmental issues to the forefront of the minds of your audience!

**MAT SKINNER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mat Skinner on receiving life membership to the Newton Cricket Club. A family-oriented club, Mat now joins his dad and brother who have also had the honour of being made life members. Mat's lifelong commitment to Newtown began when he signed up for the under-10s. Remarkably, he even played a first-grade game at age 11 alongside his dad, Don. This early start and unique experience underscored Mat's deep connection and dedication to the club. His club statistics have him ranked in the clubs Top Five in every category and he is the second highest wicket taker in Newtown's first grade history. Mat has excelled in the T20 and Night cricket and has earned representative selection for both the city and region. He was also part of the first ever successful team that won the NSW Country Championships on the famous Sydney Cricket Ground. Mat has been part of six premierships teams and has served on the committee for ten years, with the last three being as Vice President. His leadership and dedication are admirable, and he has greatly contributed to the success of the club. Congratulations Mat!

**NATHANIEL ROBINSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Nathaniel Robinson on his recent rugby league achievements. Nathaniel is a student at Wellington High School and a member of the Wellington Clontarf Academy. After attending and succeeding in three separate trials, Nathaniel earned a spot in the Greater Western Rugby League Team. Nathaniel has also been selected in the Under 17 State of Origin Clontarf squad. The Under 17 State of Origin squad will feature the top young talents from New South Wales and Queensland as they compete in an exciting match. The event will showcase the skills and potential of these emerging players and will be live streamed on Kayo. The Clontarf Foundation State of Origin is fast becoming one of the most highly anticipated events on the Clontarf calendar. The event not only offers an exceptional opportunity for the boys to showcase their skills but also provides a memorable experience fostering development both on and off the field. Congratulations Nathaniel, these achievements certainly highlight your commitment, dedication, passion, and bright future in rugby league! Keep up the great work!

**MULTILINGUAL CHOIR – SOUTH SPOKEN**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—Keira constituent and composer, Dr Ekrem Eli Phoenix who specialises in voice, choral music, innovative sound technologies and ethnomusicology dreamed of bringing together a choir utilising various languages. His dream was realised through a workshop held by Wollongong City Council, which invited participants of all different backgrounds and who spoke a variety of languages to be a part of a unique choir opportunity. Dr Phoenix knowing that not everyone is comfortable singing, encouraged the participants to undertake various articulation challenges like tongue twisters, storytelling and counting in their language of choice. By putting these recordings together, they ended up creating something quite special. The participants described the experience as enjoyable, engaging, and highly rewarding. Support for the arts is crucial because it fosters creativity, cultural diversity, and social connection which enriches our communities. Dr Phoenix is hoping to form a multilingual speech choir next year, and I am excited for our community to have the opportunity to collaborate in this special way.

**MAITLAND CITY HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—The Maitland City Hall of Fame, last month, acknowledged four citizens for their service to the community. Henry Chamberlain Russell serving as government astronomer at the Sydney Observatory from 1870 to 1905. He established a network of weather stations in NSW, set data collection standards and advocated for a national approach to meteorology and pioneered the idea of climate cycles. Robert Fletcher Watson gained fame as a remarkable

athlete, winning numerous foot races, including the Sydney Cup in 1873. His race times along Belmore Road and Belmore Track still stand as world records today. Colonel Alexander Wilkinson VD joined the Northumberland Volunteer Rifle Company in 1860 serving until 1893. Colonel Wilkinson served as an Alderman of West Maitland for 21 years and was mayor multiple times between 1883 and 1904, passing away while in office. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Scobie VD MID attended Maitland Boys High School joining the School Cadet Corps and the local militia unit. Lieutenant Colonel Scobie served in the military for 31 years, including the militia, Boer War and WWI, until his death at Lone Pine in 1915. Thank you for your service to the Maitland community.

#### **MICHELLE HARVEY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Michelle Harvey who will once again this year coordinate Maitland's reverse calendar campaign. Last year 200 families participated in Maitland's reverse advent calendar collecting over two tonnes of food for distribution. This year Michelle is hoping to support 300 families. The drive asks supporters to fill a box with 24 items for a family in need. It reverses the traditional advent calendar tradition to support those that most need it during the festive season. The boxes are then distributed by the team at Maitland Region Community Support (MRCS). Michelle borrowed the reverse advent calendar idea from Ballarat's Heather Luttrell, who wanted to change Christmas from being about receiving and put the focus back on giving. Lots of communities across Australia now take part in the initiative. By working with MRCS, Michelle is so pleased that the boxes get to exactly who most needs them in the community. Thank you Michelle, and congratulations Maitland for your support of this great initiative.

#### **NATIONAL SERVICE AND COMBINED FORCES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA MAITLAND AND DISTRICT BRANCH**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—To be asked by your country to serve in its armed forces is the ultimate request. Chosen to serve, they did so with distinction during some of our most challenging conflicts. On Monday 20th May I was honoured to speak at the 25th Anniversary of The National Service and Combined Forces Association of Australia Maitland and District Branch. Some 287,000 young Australian men were called up in 2 separate schemes for compulsory training in the Navy, Army and Air Force between 1951 and 1972. Of them, 212 died on active service in Borneo and Vietnam. We are forever thankful for their service and so grateful that organisations such as theirs support those who gave so much. Whilst all service personnel are intrinsically impacted by their service to some degree, the Nashos—particularly those who served in Vietnam—sometimes felt under appreciated by their country. Today they are afforded the respect, support and acknowledgement that they earned and deserved. I thank them again for the honour of joining them for the celebration.

#### **MR REX WORRELL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the late Rex Worrell of Shoalhaven Heads. Rex's dedication to protecting shorebirds led to him being known simply as "the bird man" among Shoalhaven Heads residents. Birds would actually walk up to him when he arrived at the Shorebird Park, that formed part of Gumley Reserve. That area is now to be known as the Rex Worrell Shorebird Park, in honour of Mr Worrell's work to protect the many species that nested in the area, some coming from as far away as Siberia and Alaska. Rex spent plenty of time carrying out bird counts, with the numbers passed on to the NPWS and scientific researchers. In fact, Rex dedicated 30 years of his life to the protection and conservation of migratory and resident shorebirds and their environment. In 2012, Rex was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to conservation and the environment through the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program. Rex contributed to the dune area at the eastern end of the Shoalhaven River becoming one of the most significant coastal wetlands in New South Wales. I acknowledge and thank Rex's son Richard Worrell.

#### **JESAJAH CREEK**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to recognise and acknowledge the efforts of St George Christian School student, Mr Jesaiah Creek. Mr Creek won the Apple 2024 Worldwide Developer Community Swift Student Challenge. What started out as a bedroom hobby has now turned into a realistic yet challenging career option for Mr Creek, who is being scouted as a rising tech-star by Apple. The Apple Swift Student Challenge first commenced in 2011 and was launched as an opportunity for student developers to showcase their love of coding. Jesaiah impressed judges when he introduced his concept of 'PocketsSax', which enables anyone to play an instrument regardless of financial constraints or disabilities. Described as a "tech genius" by competition organisers, Jesaiah has taken the top prize for two years in a row. Beyond his exceptional coding skills, which also includes running a lunchtime course at school where he teaches other students how to code, Mr Creek plays the saxophone and bass guitar and enjoys sharing his passion for music education. I would like to congratulate Mr Creek on his wonderful recent achievements and I wish him great success in his future endeavours.

### EVANS HEAD-CASINO SLSC

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate the Evans Head-Casino Surf Life Saving Club on its annual presentation night which I attended last weekend. The night highlighted the incredible efforts of the club members and the thousands of volunteer hours spent on the beach keeping all beachgoers safe while we all swim between the flags. I offer my congratulations to all the award winners including: Club Person/s of the Year, Jack and Elyse McMaster; President's Award, Teena Redman; Junior Club Person of the Year - JF Beytell; Rookies of the Year, Max Ticknor and Shae Fuller; Rollover award, Red Rock/Corindi SLSC, and the famous Wombat award winners Emily Morcom and JF Beytell. Club members who completed 100 per cent patrol attendance and 75 per cent patrol attendance were also awarded certificates along with surf rescue certificates, bronze medallion awards, resuscitation certificates, and many other awards on the night. My sincere thanks to everyone who attended the event, your support and participation are truly valued by our community. And a special congratulations to all our award winners for their outstanding contributions!

### SIR EARLE PAGE LIBRARY AND EDUCATION CENTRE

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate the staff at Grafton Library on 10 years of providing an outstanding service for the community at the Sir Earl Page Library and Education Centre. While the first Grafton Library was opened in 1944 and operated in the Clarence Valley all these years, the new facility which opened a decade ago really changed the way the library functioned in the community. The library boasts an impressive collection of books, however it's not just about reading. They have a modern facility that delivers a place to study, access to e-books, opportunity to experience gaming as well as an interactive floor and a local oral history sound dome. For our young people the library is a safe space where they can study, explore new ideas, and engage in recreational activities. For older members of the community the library staff are there to help them navigate technology and access internet, printing and photocopying that they might not be able to do at home. I applaud the staff at Grafton Library on their wonderful service over the 10 years in the new facility and wish them all the best for the future.

### YAMBA WELDING AND ENGINEERING

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to local manufacturing business Yamba Welding and Engineering on celebrating its 50th Birthday. Founded in 1974 by Bill Collingburn, an entrepreneur, naval maritime engineer and former Maclean Shire Councillor, Yamba Welding has grown from humble beginnings building fishing boats in a garage to forging a reputation as one of Australia's most trusted partners in building state-of-the-art rescue vessels equal to those produced anywhere in the world. Over the years, Bill and his wife Kathie have invested in their staff, their community and the region's future. YWE is one of the Clarence Valley's largest employers of apprentices providing a number of locals with secure, stable and skilled jobs. Four years ago, Bill handed the batten over to Darren Schuback and Ryan Carmichael co- founders of The Whiskey Project Group, an Australian veteran owned military and specialist watercraft company. Both Darren and Ryan had successful careers in the Navy and are experienced maritime operators so it was the perfect match giving Bill and his wife, Kathie peace of mind their much-loved business and staff were in good hands as well as sharing their vision for the future. Congratulations YWE on reaching this wonderful milestone.

### AUNTIE BERYL CARMICHAEL

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Vale Dr Beryl Carmichael. Beryl was born at Menindee Mission Station in 1935 to Jack and Louisa Kelly (nee Briggs) and remained after the mission closed in 1949. Beryl lived mostly in the Menindee area. Her traditional name is Yungha-Dhu, she was an Elder of the Ngiyampaa people. Passionate about teaching aboriginal children, Beryl's lessons in Aboriginal culture were highly regarded and she worked in schools for over forty years. Beryl achieved so much. She began the Nyampa Housing Company in Menindee, was part of the first committee for the Wiimpatja Rehabilitation Centre in Broken Hill, a Director for the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service and later the Western Aboriginal Legal Service. She was also involved in the Menindee Central School Mother's Club and worked towards setting up a pre-school in Menindee and Bugdlie in Broken Hill. For decades of service to her community, Beryl has received many awards, including the New South Wales Heritage Award, a meritorious award from the Minister of Education, and a Centenary of Federation award for community service. I had the pleasure of meeting Beryl several times. She was an amazing woman, a role model and advocate for the Aboriginal community.

### LIVERPOOL GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL HARMONY DAY

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Harmony Day is a time to celebrate what makes Liverpool such a wonderful place to live: our community's cultural and linguistic diversity. I joined the fantastic students and staff at Liverpool Girls High School for one of the highlights of their school year, their annual Harmony Day celebration. The day began with a flag ceremony, fashion parade, and concert involving students,

staff and parents. Students sang, danced and shared their reflections on how they express their cultural identity and pride in their family history. This is just one of the many channels by which the students at Liverpool Girls can express and take pride in their culture. At a time when some would use the cultural differences within our community to sow division, I am so proud of the Liverpool Girls school community who stand strong and connected! The school is proudly home to students who speak over 65 different languages from every corner of the globe. I thank the students and the staff – ably led by Principal Kristine Gonano – for sharing their Harmony Day celebrations with me, and I applaud their dedication to a school environment that fosters inclusivity and celebrates diversity.

#### **LIVERPOOL PLAZA PHYSIO HEALTHCARE CLINIC**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Liverpool Plaza is now buzzing with activity and energy! Over the last few months, several new shops and services drawing new customers have opened and I have seen the area revitalised and reenergised. Last week I had the pleasure of cutting the ribbon on the Plaza's newest addition: Physio Healthcare Clinic. May 30 marked the beginning of a healthier, stronger Liverpool, with a welcoming team ready to assist Liverpool residents to get moving. Physio Healthcare Clinic is not just about treating aches and pains. They're all about total body wellness. They offer a wide range of services including physiotherapy, exercise physiology, work injuries, and sporting injuries – and all in a beautifully fitted out space. Svetlana, the owner and practice manager, is no stranger to operating a business in Liverpool, as she and her husband have operated the nearby Bona Fides Café for a number of years. I am so pleased that they have continued to back Liverpool because they see our potential. The revitalisation of Liverpool Plaza would not be possible without the hard work of Tony, Sharaf and Kapil. I look forward to seeing the hustle and bustle at the Plaza continue!

#### **ST RITA'S MELKITE CHURCH 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—The 22nd of May marked the feast of St Rita, who was bestowed the title 'Patroness of Impossible Causes' at her canonisation ceremony. She is known for supporting those in their time of need, no matter how hopeless it seems. This year's celebration was particularly special, marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of St Rita's Melkite Catholic Parish in Ashcroft. Located on the corner of Elizabeth Drive and Maxwells Avenue, St Rita's is a gathering place for many who practice the Melkite faith, and the parish community put on their best annual fete yet to mark the occasion! The fete included rides, entertainment and food stalls and brought so many from across the community together, despite the chilly and windy weather! I was also privileged to be invited to attend a special mass with His Grace Bishop Robert Rabbat to mark the Novena of St Rita. My sincerest thanks to Rev Fr Fady Salameh and Rev Fr Antonios Chaouki Ibrahim for their stewardship of St Rita's Parish and for their dedication to the local community in Ashcroft. I look forward to seeing St Rita's continue to flourish in the years to come.

#### **TAKIYAH JAMES**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the incredible achievements of Takiyah James, a young local Bundjalung sportswoman, who has been selected to represent the Budgies Australian Indigenous Schoolgirls Netball Team in New Zealand at the International Netball Festival later this year. Takiyah has been representing our shire in netball since she was ten years old, when she competed in the under 13s Indigenous Budgies Blue team on the Gold Coast at the 2019 International Netball Festival. Takiyah's involvement in netball has been nothing short of outstanding. This is evident in all her accomplishments so far, which are a clear reflection of her talent and dedication. Sport is pivotal to the fabric of a community and teaches our young people the importance of working as a team and what they can achieve through hard work. I offer my best wishes to Takiyah at the International Netball Festival, as well as her fellow teammates in the Budgies Australian Indigenous Schoolgirls Netball Team. Congratulations on such a great achievement.

#### **NORTHERN RIVERS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the incredible work of the team at the Northern Rivers Community Foundation's (NRCF) Women's Giving Circle and recognise the extraordinary fundraising that they have conducted to support vulnerable women in the Northern Rivers. Through this important initiative, the NRCF's Women's Giving Circle aims to raise money each year to donate to a local grassroots project, as well as support women and girls directly in our community. Recently, the donations went towards a postpartum care program specifically geared towards expanding culturally safe resources for our First Nations women. The dedication and perseverance of the Women's Giving Circle has empowered locals to come together and support women of our community. I commend their hard work and extend my sincerest thank you to the entire team.

### DYLAN WRIGHT

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the outstanding achievement of Bangalow dad Dylan Wright in winning the Australian Idol 2024 music competition. Dylan has put in the hard work needed to earn such a success, busking on the streets of Sutherland Shire, where he grew up, playing at local council music festivals, honing his craft in the music industry, and painting houses between gigs. The win represents a dream come true for the father of two young daughters, who has followed the television series since Year 3. He caught the eye of teachers in the music department at his high school with his outstanding ability as a singer and guitarist, pushed himself to succeed and has secured a recording contract with a major music company since the victory. The Ballina electorate is home to a large number of creative individuals and is in a region that full-heartedly shows its support for artists and the arts, so Dylan is right at home here. I am sure he has an exciting career ahead of him and I wish him the very best.

### U14S GIRLS FIELD STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to the eight young hockey stars from the Port Macquarie electorate who made their inaugural appearance at the NSW Under-14 Girls Field State Championship held from 17-19 May 2024 in Wagga Wagga. The team of talented young women representing the Port Macquarie Hastings Hockey Association converged on Jubilee Park, Wagga Wagga to compete at the 2024 NSW Hockey Championships. Nothing could stop this formidable team, as the Mid North Coast side dominated the indoor courts, knocking out Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and Albury -Wodonga before steamrolling their way to the Grand Final, drawing with Sydney East and Goulbourn. The Final match saw Port Macquarie Hastings Hockey Association compete against Northwest Sydney Hockey Association, with both teams declared joint Premiers after neither side could not be separated in extra time. I congratulate Macey Walker, Alanna Walker, Eliza Stuart, Sophia Wilmot, Chloe Chilko, Charlie Walsh, Lalita Sen Gupta, Haidyn Taylor, Bailee Taylor, Maya Sanghi, Grace Dahlenburg, Ruby Cole and Tayla Fancett. I also single out Coach Rob Walker, Assistant Coach, Eve Walker and Manager Lisa Chilko for supporting the team to secure this victory.

### PORT CITY BREAKERS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I am pleased to share with the House the exciting news that the Port City Breakers Junior Rugby League Football Club has been successful in securing a grant through the Local Sport Grant Program. A wonderful sporting organisation which invests so much into their junior members, the Port City Breakers were recently successful with their grant application for \$4,769.46 to enhance player safety through the purchase of new equipment. The Local Sport Grant Program supports grassroots sporting clubs to increase participation, improve access to sport, host events and improve recreation facilities. A sporting organisation boasting of a rich history of competition and victory, the Port City Breakers are one of the leading footy clubs on the Mid North Coast, nurturing a field of talented and aspiring junior and senior members. Last year, the Port City Breakers fought exceptionally hard to achieve three grand finals in the Reserve Grade, Women's League and the Under-18's side. The results saw both Women's team and Reserve Grade finish first in the season and the Under-18's securing a second place. I congratulate the Junior Club on their success through the Local Sports Grant Program and wish them every success for the season.

### PORT MACQUARIE SAINTS NETBALL CLUB

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I'm pleased to report to the House that the Port Macquarie Saints Netball Club were recently successful in securing funding through the Local Sport Grant Program. An focussed and active organisation in the local sporting community, the Port Macquarie Saints Netball Club were recently notified of their success in obtaining a grant for \$6,863.79 to purchase inclusive uniforms, upgrade and replace aging equipment as well as funding for professional development of coaches and umpires. The Local Sport Grant Program seeks to support grassroots sporting clubs to increase participation, improve access to sport, host events and improve recreation facilities. The Port Macquarie Saints Netball Club is home to many elite sporting champions and netball lovers alike. Formed in the early 1980's, the Club offers membership to all ages and levels and sets a high standard of fair play, good sportsmanship and quality competition. A Club that lives and breathes community, the Saints are also known for their community fundraising endeavours, having raised funds for Headspace thereby supporting young people aged 12-25 years impacted by mental health and the provision of general health advice. Congratulations!

### MARRINAWI COVE HERITAGE AWARD

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group on receiving the National Trust's Advocacy Award at this year's Heritage Awards for their successful campaign to open Marrinawi Cove Barangaroo, Sydney Harbour's first new natural swimming hole in over 50 years. The Community Resident Action Group worked with government agencies, the

community and local leaders to build support and show the benefits of allowing swimming at this location. Marrinawi Cove continues to be very popular and showcases our harbour to locals and visitors alike. Local residents like Yasmina Bonnet worked hard advocating for this facility and continue to look for ways to make the swimming hole more accessible and to improve its amenity. I commend all those involved with the campaign. The National Trust Heritage Awards celebrate outstanding practice, awarding excellence in conservation of our heritage and the Marrinawi campaign team well deserves this recognition.

#### **WILLOUGHBY FIRE STATION OPEN DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Saturday 11 May, I visited Willoughby Fire Station for their annual Open Day. It was a great opportunity to chat with the firefighters, understand equipment and learn how to stay safe this Winter. There were plenty of activities for adults and children, with our son loving the fire truck and holding a fire hose. It was not only fun but very educational with firefighters teaching us about fire safety and the everyday safety precautions households can take to keep their homes and families safe. This year there was the added focus on lithium-ion batteries, which are the fastest growing fire risk in NSW. The Open Day was a great chance for members of the public to get a look behind the scenes and appreciate the variety of work that firefighters do. I commend all the firefighting staff of the Willoughby Fire Station for hosting such a fun and informative open day for our local community.

#### **NORTH SYDNEY BOMBERS BENEFACTORS' LUNCH**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was honoured to join the North Shore Bombers AFL club for their benefactors' lunch at Norths Cammeray on Friday 10 May. It was a valuable opportunity to recognise and appreciate the club's community and supporters. Founded in 1903, the Bombers have a proud and decorated history, winning a total of thirteen premierships. Over the past decade, the Bombers have emerged as a premier club not only within the Willoughby electorate but across Australia. They proudly have the most competitive teams of any AFL club in Australia. I was delighted to recently support and help facilitate funding to the club through the Local Sports Grants Program 2024. This funding is contributing towards uniforms and community engagement. I offer my special thanks to Club President John Goode for his ongoing hard work and dedication in making the Bombers a trailblazer in men's and women's sport and a shining light in the community. I look forward to supporting the Club in the years ahead and seeing it go from strength to strength.

#### **CHATSWOOD CHAMBER FEDERAL BUDGET BREAKFAST**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was pleased to be a guest of the Chatswood Chamber of Commerce for their annual Federal Budget Breakfast at the Chatswood Club on Wednesday 29 May. As always, it was a great morning of networking with the leaders of local businesses, community groups and institutions in Willoughby. Sponsored by Judo Bank, the Breakfast featured the Bank's Chief Economic Advisor, Warren Hogan, who gave an excellent address explaining the recent Federal Budget. As the Managing Director and Founder of EQ Economics, Warren is regarded as one of Australia's top economic analysts and commentators, with regular columns in *The Australian Financial Review*. His focus is on the Australian economy and supporting business decision-making. In what was his fourth Budget Breakfast, his assessment and analysis of the Budget was very well received by the business leaders and guests in attendance. I commend the Chatswood Chamber of Commerce for hosting another informative and valuable Budget Breakfast.

#### **AUNTY GAIL MANDERSON**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It was my honour to recently recognise one of Wagga Wagga's most respected and beloved Aboriginal leaders, Aunty Gail Manderson, with a special award. Aunty Gail, a Wiradjuri woman, received a NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award recognising her many years of service to the community. She is a great champion of the Wiradjuri language and devotes many hours of her time teaching this ancient tongue to children. Adopted as a child, she began to investigate her Wiradjuri heritage when she had children of her own and studied to learn her people's language. In 2019, she published a Wiradjuri dictionary with the help of children at Turvey Park Primary School who created the illustrations. Aunty Gail teaches children of all backgrounds because she believes understanding and respect for cultures is the way towards harmony. It's her dream to create a big yarning circle with people from all nations sharing food and stories. Few have done more to share the ancient words of the Wiradjuri people, so I say: 'Dhiraamarra-gu Ngamur Gail Manderson, Mandaang guwu-gu buram-ba-birra ngiyang-bu yambuwan-bu mayiny-dhi-bu' – loosely translated as 'Praise to Aunty Gail Manderson, thank you for sharing language and knowledge about your people.'

#### **ASPIRE LEADERSHIP NETWORK**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Aspire Leadership Network, in my electorate of Bankstown, is an exciting venture borne out of the unifying desire to empower and transform both individuals and



communities through the application of leadership principles. Through their programs, seminars, and workshops, they enable individuals to create lasting, positive change in their communities and themselves by harnessing the insights and resources they provide to help achieve transformation at every level. Recently I had the opportunity to attend a networking group session with local women in business to share insights on the importance of women's leadership and empowerment. Through our discussions I was able to highlight government initiatives and policies available to support women in leadership roles. I would like to acknowledge, founder, Dr Rawaa El Ayoubi for her leadership in providing this platform for candidates to develop and excel as leaders in business and in the community. Programs like the Aspire Leadership Network offer significant opportunities for women in business and emerging leaders to collaborate and exchange ideas. I look forward to participating in further networking sessions to continue to engage in discussions and contribute insights on government initiatives for women in leadership positions.

#### **LITTLE WINGS RETURN AND EARN CHARITY PARTNER LAUNCH**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Recently I had the pleasure of attending the launch of the partnership between Little Wings and their new state-wide Return and Earn donation partner. In support of Little Wings, Return and Earn aim to raise \$100,000 in container refunds over the next six months. This initiative will significantly support Little Wings' mission of providing free, professional, safe flight and ground transport services for seriously ill children in rural and regional NSW. Little Wings play an invaluable role in easing the journey for these children and their families to have access to specialised medical treatment. Their dedicated team of volunteer pilots and drivers work tirelessly to alleviate the financial and emotional burden that these families may face. I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of Australian strongman Troy Conley-Magnusson for his work in promoting this partnership. Troy pulled a truck loaded with bottles and cans weighing 14 tonnes, a feat that symbolises the dedication of the community in supporting this cause. With our help and support, Little Wings can reach their goal of recycling 1,000,000 cans and bottles to ensure that every child receives the care they need.

#### **RENAME COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN HONOUR OF FORMER MAYORS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Over the past few decades, our community has made significant progress thanks to the contributions of several mayors who have made notable differences within Canterbury Bankstown, including Ian Stromborg OAM and Kevin Hill OAM. The plan to rename community facilities in honour of former mayors is a meaningful gesture to acknowledge and celebrate their significant contributions to the development of Bankstown. As mayors, Mr Stromborg and Mr Hill were the driving force behind several council initiatives. As a result, it is wonderful to see their contributions being recognised today with the naming of the new playground in Paul Keating Park to 'Ian Stromborg Playground' and the Roberts Park Community Hub to be renamed to 'Kevin Hill Roberts Park Community Hub.' The transformation in the city of Bankstown has been remarkable, and I'm inspired to witness our community evolve into a vibrant and unique city, enriching both our economy and our social and cultural landscape. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Mr Stromborg and Mr Hill for their contributions to the city's progress. Their names will now be honoured and remembered for generations to come.

#### **SYDNEY CHINESE SCHOOL**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate, I would like to acknowledge the Sydney Chinese School in Alexandria, who are celebrating their 50th Anniversary later this year. The Sydney Chinese School is a not-for-profit organisation offering high quality education in Chinese languages, history and culture. For many students, particularly those from Chinese backgrounds, the Sydney Chinese School offers the invaluable opportunity to reconnect with their family and culture. For the growing number of students from families where Chinese is not spoken at home, the school provides a gateway to stronger cultural appreciation and connectivity. The school does a crucial job in connecting a community together, and today the Sydney Chinese School is one of the oldest and most well-respected language institutions. The organisation operates on Saturdays thanks to a group of hard-working volunteers who contribute significantly to the school's community impact. I thank all the volunteers for their special contributions to the Sydney Chinese School. Congratulations to the Sydney Chinese School for five decades of important community building and cultural education and best wishes for many more years to come.

#### **DR GARETH BRYANT AND DR SOPHIE WEBBER**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate, I would like to congratulate Dr Gareth Bryant and Dr Sophie Webber on the recent publication of their remarkable book *Climate Finance: Taking a Position on Climate Futures* at Gleebooks. The book follows a shift taking place in global capitalism: climate

change is becoming increasingly central to the operation of finance. Simultaneously, finance is becoming increasingly central to climate change. We must all be equipped to engage with these discussions but so often debates around climate and finance are framed in inaccessible, exclusive and complex language such that many of us feel it is not our place to weigh in. Gareth and Sophie's book seeks to remedy this problem and in so doing help the next generation of thinkers, researchers, political economists and indeed even Members of Parliament to grasp the complex history of how we got here in order to better navigate us out of this mess. I want to congratulate Gareth and Sophie on an extraordinary piece of work. The Electorate of Newtown is grateful for your contribution to political economy and your efforts to make the world a better place through research. Thank you both.

#### **COLIN HESSE**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate I want to congratulate Colin Hesse on a sparkling decade-long contribution to local radio in the inner west. In May Colin broadcast his final episode for Close to Home on Radio Skid Row after ten years as a presenter. Over those years Colin has used this platform to amplify the voices of local activists, community organisations and political movements. With local history and community at the forefront of his broadcasting, he has been a true champion for community radio and Australian music. Outside of his work on Radio Skid Row, Colin has served our community as a Greens Councillor on Marrickville then Inner West Council. As it was put recently in the City Hub, he has lived a rich cultural and political life! After 39 years in Marrickville, Colin is returning to live in his hometown of Nowra. We wish him the very best and thank him for his wonderful contribution to our community. Col, you'll be missed on the airwaves and in the inner west.

#### **LEICHHARDT SAINTS FOOTBALL CLUB VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I want to acknowledge the award-winning volunteers at Leichhardt Saints Football Club. With over 200 locals in the community involved as committee members, age coordinators, coaches and managers working to deliver a quality football season to around 1,200 players, ranging from 3 to 60 years old, across 82 teams, this club is truly an example of a community working together for common goals. This amazing team of volunteers works behind the scenes to provide an inclusive, family-friendly club that promotes participation in the game and equal opportunity for all players. They have recently been recognised at the Inner West Council Volunteer Awards, receiving the Amy Large volunteer team award for 2024. I also want to give special thanks to Matt Bowen, President, Registrar, Women's Coordinator, Women's Division 1 Coach and U12/6B Coach for Leichhardt Saints Football Club, and deserving recipient of the Amy Large sports volunteer award for 2024. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities, and we are truly grateful for all that you do.

#### **KEGWORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL AUTUMN FAIR**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I recognise the Kegworth Public School Autumn Fair on the 26th of May, an event that brings together members of our local community in a spirit of celebration and support for public education. After several years off, the Autumn Fair was eagerly anticipated by students, families and residents alike, and it did not disappoint! Through food stalls, live entertainment, carnival rides, pre-loved stalls and a raffle, the Fair is a key support for the P&C and directly benefits the students, this year raising over \$39,000 to fund critical teacher professional development and a specialised Sport and Fundamental Movement Teacher. School community events like this one are only possible due to the hard work of the P&C, family members, volunteers, teachers, and school staff who give up their time. In particular, I would like to thank Principal Philip Toovey, Fair Sub-Committee members Olivia Rohanek, Meredith Cranmer, Leighton Aurelius, Kristy Nicholson, Cassandra Wolf, Ligita Millar, John Robbins and Catherine Tubb, the Stall Coordinators and Sustainability Team, and MC Sally Stanton, for all of their brilliant work. Congratulations to all on another successful event.

#### **JOE SALIBA**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—Joe Saliba is one of the Hornsby electorates most loved residents. I have had the privilege to know Joe for several decades. He is a unique person of exceptional merit, commitment, humility and leadership. From a young age Joe worked tirelessly and successfully from selling newspapers to running fish and chip shops in Hornsby. Then as a smash repairer and owner of a respected towing business. For over three decades Joe owned and ran Martins Building & Landscape Supplies at Dural. Throughout his life Joe's quiet, compassionate manner made him a much sought-after figure in his local community and highly respected by authorities such as police. Everything he did to assist local community groups, particularly the Australian-Lebanese community in the Normanhurst-Thornleigh-Pennant Hills area, was done without thought of reward. With a family of five children, Joe continued to expand his business interests, but never neglected his deep community involvement. He remains a leading figure, particularly within the Australian-Lebanese community, which still looks to him for guidance and support. The harmony which the local community enjoys can trace its existence in no small measure to the values, goals and example provided by Joe Saliba.

**TONY BRAY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—Tony Bray has been associated with Berowra Waters for 70 years and is much loved by his community. In 1980, Tony and his lovely wife Yvette bought their river cottage, THISLDOME, and his home has been the social centre since. Tony is described as the "ultimate neighbour", always available to lend a hand with whatever needed to be done or solve one of the various problems that occurs on the river. Tony was very active fundraiser for Legacy and through this role he became a highly valued affiliate member of the Berowra RSL sub-branch. Also active with the Maritime Service Board and the local police. They would always come to him whenever they want to find out what was happening on Berowra Creek or if they need to get into a tricky part of the Creek. Just as he has taken care of his community over the years, recently the Berowra Waters community have looked after Tony and Yvette Bray. Especially as they have been struggling through their various health issues. Tony Bray is simply loved by everyone on Berowra Creek and he genuinely loves them back. I am fortunate to count him as a great friend.

**CHARLES MOUYAT**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—Today it is my pleasure to recognize a talented in artist from Dural and a great friend, Charles Mouyat. Charles is a greatly respected community leader in the Hornsby electorate. He is also a creative director, musician and highly talented artist. In recent years Charles Mouyat has refocused his career on producing quality artwork through his painting, with some outstanding results. This includes two of his paintings earning him finalists in the prestigious Archibald Prize. He was a first-time finalist in the 2020 Archibald Prize with his portrait painting of myself, as the then Environment Minister. In 2023, another of Charles' terrific portraits earned him his second Archibald finalist. This time his subject was a celebrated role model for young women, committed to STEM research, Michelle Simmons. Michelle is also a professor of quantum physics and global leader in quantum computing research, who was the 2018 Australian of the Year. For the 2024 Archibald, Charles has painted Dr Meganne Christian, the first Australian female astronaut. I am certain it will do very well. I have had the pleasure of knowing Charles Mouyat and his lovely wife Lara for many years. They are both outstanding and inspirational individuals.

**OATLEY 101 SOCIETY OF ARTISTS VISIT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—The arts are such an important cornerstone within my community and today, I would like to acknowledge a group who is doing incredible things for our local scene. A big congratulations and thank you to the Oatley 101 Society of Artists! The Oatley 101 Society of Artists have been active in our community since 1997, giving amateur artists the chance to exhibit their work. I recently had the opportunity visit their June Art Sale and I must say, there were some fantastic pieces on display. There were certainly bargains to be had and plenty of happy customers who had picked out some wonderful artworks to take home with them, all of which were original and genuine. A big thank you to the executive committee, including President Jill Hamilton, Vice President and Secretary, Robyn Riley, and Treasurer Julie Izzard. I'd also like to thank all of the general committee members and the artists who continue to support the organisation. I look forward to seeing what the talented artists at Oatley 101 come up with over the coming months and years.

**SETTE GIUGNO COMMEMORATION - MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NSW**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the Maltese Community Council of NSW, who recently hosted their Sette Giugno Commemoration. This is an event I have had the privilege of attending for several years now. Sette Giugno is such an important part of Malta's history as a nation, where the Maltese revolted against the British on June 7, 1919. We commemorate the six brave Maltese heroes that lost their lives that day and Malta's strides towards independence and freedom. I believe that Multiculturalism is our strength here in New South Wales. We are simply better when we work together. As a patron member, I know that the Maltese Community Council of NSW are evidence of this, assisting Maltese Australians and affiliated organisations since 1967. I would like to thank President Miriam Friggieri, Secretary Annemarie Thind and Treasurer, Michael Zammit, for all their efforts with Maltese Community Council of NSW over the years. They consistently go above and beyond for the Maltese community right here in New South Wales. I look forward to continuing to support the Maltese Community Council of NSW for many years to come.

**3BRIDGES PENSURST PARK YOUTH FACILITY VISIT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, it was a privilege to catch up with the team from 3Bridges at their Penshurst Park Youth Facility. I have had a close working relationship with 3Bridges for many years - they are among the best at what they do. The Penshurst Park Youth Facility was purpose built in 2022 to accommodate for youth programs, aimed at 8 to 21-year-olds. There are often as many as 50 young people in attendance at their afternoon Youth Zone sessions. It was so great to see the space and hear about what sort of exciting things are happening week to week. They recently hosted a 'Battle of the Beats' competition as a part of Youth Week 2024.

This was well attended, with young local musicians battling it out for some amazing prizes. I would like to thank Chief Executive Officer, Raj Nair, as well as Jen Mackinder and Leighton Pollard, who were all incredibly welcoming. You can tell that the team are so very committed to the youth in our local community. I look forward to working alongside the team well into the future.

#### **CENTRAL COAST 2024 RECONCILIATION GATHERING**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—As part of National Reconciliation Week 2024, I was deeply honored to join thousands of locals of all ages, participating in Coast Shelter's Reconciliation Gathering at Industree Group Stadium on the 28th of May. This remarkable event brought our community together in a spirit of unity and reflection. The event included a united walk from the Coast Shelter Community Centre through Gosford's town centre to Industree Group Stadium. This was followed by a sharing of First nations People culture with a powerful acknowledgement of country, song, dance and Yidaki (didgeridoo). I extend my congratulations to Coast Shelter, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, Girri Girra Aboriginal Experiences, and The Glen Rehab for creating such a memorable experience for everyone who attended. Your dedication and efforts made this gathering a special experience. Thank you to Coast Shelter and all the wonderful sponsors and partners for their unwavering support of this amazing community event. Your contributions have fostered an environment where understanding and reconciliation can flourish.

#### **CANCER COUNCIL BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—The Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea turns 31 this year and here on the Central Coast businesses, community groups and residents have heeded the call and gathered friends, family and workmates for a cup of tea and a bite to eat while raising money to fund cancer research, new treatments and education. With the fundraiser continuing throughout May and June, I have been fortunate to be invited and to attend a number of morning tea events which I would like to acknowledge and thank the organisers: The Empire Bay Progress Association, Empire Bay; Killy Cares community group, Killcare; Hope Unlimited Church, Gosford; Broadlands over 50's community, Green Point; Copa Beachside Café, Copacabana. Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea is a great fundraising initiative and opportunity to bring together people living on the Central Coast over a cup of tea in support of those affected by cancer. Importantly Funds raised by these events ensure Cancer Council can continue its lifesaving cancer research, prevention, advocacy and local support programs. Congratulations to Cancer Council Central Coast and everyone who has participated in this years Biggest Morning Tea events across the Central Coast.

#### **SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to acknowledge the ongoing advocacy by the Springfield Residents Association in putting Bushlands Reserve forward for an upgrade. Following collaboration with Central Coast Council to identify a local playground for an upgrade, I was proud to announce Bushlands Reserve in Springfield would receive a \$50,000 upgrade towards a drinking fountain and new flying fox from the NSW Government. After speaking with Council and the community to identify a suitable playground for an upgrade, it was clear that Bushlands Reserve would be a great investment for the Springfield community which is home to many young families. Without the strong advocacy of the of Glenys Rae and Gail Santi from the Springfield Residents Association who have consistently lobbied for a drinking fountain at the park, this project would not have come to fruition. I am pleased to confirm that the bubbler has now been installed and works on the flying fox are due to start in July. I will continue to advocate on behalf of the community, calling for upgraded play equipment at the park.

#### **CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—The Parramatta Cumberland Domestic Prevention Committee held a Candlelight Vigil on 23rd May at Parramatta Centenary Square. The escalation in domestic violence necessitates our collective action as a community and requires support to demonstrate our shared commitment to combat this issue. It was an honour to attend and witness the collective community gather in the memory of those we lost as a result violence within the home. The candlelight vigil is a call to action to speak up, with the intent to lift the veil of silence that surrounds domestic violence. Violence against women and families is a preventable issue that can be tackled through fundraising towards primary prevention service, further advocating to challenge the social context in which violence is facilitated. Together we strive to promote a message of zero tolerance of family abuse. I would like to also recognise the works of Salwa Al Baz, the Chair and Convener of the committee in contributing to the organisation of this event.

#### **ST JOHN AMBULANCE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to send a huge thank you to the Coastal Waters combined division of St John Ambulance for their service to the community and continued support for young Australians.

St John Ambulance has been operating in NSW for over 135 years as a charitable organization providing event first aid care, community first aid support and courses and youth cadet programs. The Central Coast is home to the Coast Waters Division of St John Ambulance of which adult and cadet volunteer members are educated in first aid and responder care and provide community event first aid support. You might see them at events such as your local markets and school athletics carnivals, or even larger events held on the coast such as football matches and Gosford Fair. It's vital that such organisations are acknowledged and supported so that they can continue to support our community and make our events safer for all. What an amazing organization that has been supporting our coast in first aid, as well as youth and adult life saving education for so long.

#### **VICTORIA FITZMAURICE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—In the midst of rising rates of family and domestic violence, a shining light coming to our community is award winning photographer Victoria Fitzmaurice who is bringing her second social commentary exhibition to the Central Coast. Victoria's newest exhibition called Women Empowering Women acts upon the sentiment that "it takes a village" I want to acknowledge Victoria's amazing vision to inspire courage and resilience in the community to spark proactive change. I want to highlight the importance of her message that women have proved that they can make it in male dominated professions and the extension of how she wishes to highlight those women who have battled and survived such things as breast cancer, mental health issues or domestic violence. The opening of this exhibition on the Central Coast in June is an exciting opportunity for all who many attend, thank you Victoria for your commitment for the promotion many fights in our lives and your impressive use of your craft to reach out into our community!

#### **PRINCIPAL ONA BUCKLEY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—On behalf of generations of Central Coast students, I sincerely thank Woy Woy Public School Principal, Ms Ona Buckley, who after 48 years bids farewell to our public education system. Starting her career as a young enthusiastic teacher with a passion to support and inspire children to become who they want to be, Ms Buckley's focus had always been to make a difference for every child. With an impressive teaching career path, Ms Buckley accumulated her teaching experience through roles such as executive teacher, Assistant Principal, English curriculum facilitator, double district art consultant and eventually, Principal at different schools across NSW. Ms Buckley was appointed as the Principal for Woy Woy Public School in 2006, and since then, has been the anchor that supported the learning journey of more than 4,500 children. Putting her heart and soul into leading the school with kindness and inclusivity, Woy Woy Public School is emblematic of all that is joyous in our public education system. I wholeheartedly applaud Principal Buckley for establishing a strong educational and inclusive system at Woy Woy Public School. On behalf of our community, I wish you all the very best for a well-deserved retirement.

#### **OYSTER BAY ART AND CRAFT FESTIVAL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—Another incredible Oyster Bay Art and Craft Festival was held between 24 and 26 May, continuing the tradition of raising money for Oyster Bay Public School. Since 1970 the festival has grown into a cherished event, drawing crowds of attendees, artists and stallholders. This annual gathering is eagerly awaited by families each year and is the largest of its kind in southern Sydney. It was great to enjoy the fabulous live music from "This is Prototype" and see the art exhibition featuring talented local artist Nicole Southworth, who is a favourite of mine. Special acknowledgment must go to the amazing organising team. I acknowledge Wanita Bowles, Rhiannon Wall, Andrea Ford, Laura Petch, Ben Prest, Marnie Fulmer, Karina Cox-Ruddell, Miranda Moir, Fiona Morrison, Josie Barron, Belinda Stevens, Larna Cooper, Vickie Hinton, Helen Maddern, Monica Villacorta, Mat Egan, Charley Jones, Sian Monkley, Peta Sankey, Cassie Stubbs, Frankie Balfour, Kita Kemp, Bonnie Beacroft, Laura Stafford, Bruce Balfour, Brendan Ford, Emily Davis, Kylie Shadlow, Alison Bransdon, Diane Da Rocha, Ursula McGeown and Sophie Brooke for their efforts. Congratulations to all involved on another fun-filled Oyster Bay Art and Craft Festival.

#### **NATHAN PAES**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Nathan Paes on being selected in the DownUnder Travellers for a world cup styled baseball tournament in February 2024. Nathan has had a love of baseball for many years. Locally, Nathan is a member of the Illawong Marlins Baseball Club. He has demonstrated his baseball prowess over many years, with this greatest sporting achievement to date being a silver medallist at the Australian Senior League Nationals in 2022. As a result of Nathan's extensive dedication and training, Nathan joined other baseball players from Australia in Puerto Rico with teams from 9 other counties. This is an incredible achievement, especially given Nathan is currently completing year 12 at Menai High School. By way of background, the tournament allowed players like Nathan to be evaluated for college scholarships, gain valuable mentorship from international coaches and trainers and develop his personal skills. I congratulate Nathan on his outstanding sporting achievements and wish him every success on his baseball journey.

### ENDS AND HOPS BAR OPENING

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—The drinks are now flowing at GyMEA Bowls' new Ends and Hops Bar, which successfully launched on 23 May 2024. The name "Ends and Hops Bar" honours the club's tradition of lawn bowls, which has been the foundation of GyMEA Bowls. It is the Club's hope that more 'ends' of bowls played there in the future while the reference to 'hops' is integral to beer and symbolizes stability, reflecting the club's commitment to our community. With GyMEA Bowls celebrating its 65th anniversary last month, the \$1.5 million significant upgrade is a well-timed tribute that has created a stunning community space that can host everything from school formals, events and live entertainment to corporate meetings. I was pleased to attend the opening of the Ends and Hops Bar and see the transformed area including the centrepiece communal table, which is designed for inclusiveness. I acknowledge GyMEA Bowls' visionary CEO Jason Fullerton and dedicated Board of Directors including Kevin Jeffree, Debbie Brooking, Greg Letch, Terry Bougass, Kathy Baker, John Ferguson for their efforts. Congratulations to all involved at GyMEA Bowls on the successful launch of the Ends and Hops Bar.

### ATHLETICS NSW'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—With the countdown to the Paris Olympics I'm sure I'm not the only one here associating Paris 2024 with the story of Eric Liddell who won the 400m 100 years ago, after refusing to run the 100m because it was scheduled on a Sunday. The story of his faith and his athletic ability was immortalised in the movie "Chariots of Fire" - made even more powerful by the musical score of Greek composer Vangelis. I thought of the powerful and unifying force of sport when I officially opened Athletics NSW's new Centre of Excellence at Sydney Olympic Park on Saturday 27 April, on behalf of the Minister for Sport. Thanks to Athletics NSW's CEO, Christian Renford, and Chair, Matt Whitbread, for their invitation and all they do to support our athletes. Congratulations Athletics NSW for delivering a facility that is the first of its kind in Australia supporting the talent pathways for athletes participating at the elite level, emerging athletes and coaches, alongside aspiring athletes from the wider community. The quality strength and conditioning facilities, sports science and sports medicine services integrated into this facility will also help stimulate the local economy through job creation.

### GREYSTANES CRICKET CLUB

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was wonderful to join the Greystanes Cricket Club Junior Presentation at Roberta Street Park, on the 1st of June 2024. Greystanes Cricket Club is a pillar of our local sporting community. Since its establishment in 1971, Greystanes CC has strived to improve the sporting experience for all players, through social events and improvements to the pitch. The Junior Presentation recognised incredible skill and sportsmanship from young cricketers in our community. It also celebrated naming of the Tom Adams Oval, after life member Tom Adams. As Treasurer, and a member for over 40 years, Tom advocated for the benefits of sport in our community. The oval stands as a reminder of Tom's dedication to the sport he loved, honouring his legacy of encouraging more young people to take up bat and ball. During the presentation, I awarded a \$7,950 Local Sport Grant. This Grant will support Greystanes CC to introduce more female players to the sport, by funding come and try days and structured training programs with accredited coaches. Thank you to David Mandic President, Sean Fahy Treasurer, the Club's Committee, volunteers, and players for offering a fun and inclusive cricket hub to our Western Sydney community.

### GREYSTANES FC

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was fantastic to join the Greystanes Football Club on 1st June 2024 at Bathurst Street Park for their Club Appreciation Breakfast and White Ribbon Support Day. Greystanes FC is a pillar of our local sporting community. Since establishment in 1970, Greystanes FC has become one of the largest football clubs servicing families in Western Sydney. The Club has over 750 members, including 250 female athletes. As a volunteer organisation, I commend Greystanes FC on their dedication to the Club's long-term viability. The Committee and volunteers strive to improve the sporting experience for its players, through initiatives such as philanthropic events and improvements to the playing field. As a Club Patron, I celebrated their fantastic achievements and enjoyed a famous Greystanes FC bacon and egg roll with Greystanes FC sporting community. The Club also set a strong example for their members, hosting a White Ribbon Day event to support this important campaign. Devastated by recent tragedies, Greystanes FC are raising awareness to end the cycle of men's violence in our community. Thank you to David Apps, President, Eamonn Donohoe, Secretary, the Club Committee, volunteers, and families for offering our community a fun and wholistic football hub.

### VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD OF AUSTRALIA

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was a privilege to join the Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia (VHP) at the 7th World Hindu Conference on 20th April 2024, in Parramatta. VHP is a grassroots community organisation that provides community language schools, youth services, religious education and integration

support to people with disabilities. Through diverse social programs and schools, VHP are preserving and sharing beautiful language, history and traditions. I commend VHP for the stewardship they provide our Hindu Community in Western Sydney. Promoting the principles of unity, social cohesion, multiculturalism, harmony, inclusiveness and pluralism, they are integral to achieving progress and prosperity. VHP's Conference connected over 250 delegates, including local and global leaders, entrepreneurs, businesses and media representatives to celebrate Hindu traditions, and the continued growth of our vibrant Hindu community. It was wonderful to speak at the Conference and share workshops with dynamic Hindu leaders. The Conference served as a testament to the strength and unity of the Hindu community in Western Sydney, and across wider Australia. Thank you to Ramamoorthi Subramanian, Shri Ramarathinam Conference Coordinator and all members of the Vishva Hindu Parishad Australia for the support and advocacy you provide to our Hindu community in Western Sydney.

#### **CITY CAVE RICHMOND FLOAT AND WELLNESS CENTRE**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I am a big supporter of new businesses establishing themselves in Hawkesbury. On Friday the 24th May 2024, I was fortunate to be shown City Cave Richmond Float and Wellness Centre that officially commenced on the 25th May. This facility is one of 77 sites across the country. They offer float therapy, infrared sauna and massage. I can see a big demand for people needing some rejuvenation and wellness treatment. I would like to commend Bridget and Craig for their vote of confidence in establishing their business in Richmond. I wish City Cave Richmond Float and Wellness Centre the very best for their future and thank Craig and Bridget for the advance inspection of this great new business. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **COURTNEY NEVIN**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Hawkesbury football superstar, Courtney Nevin. Courtney plays full back for English Women's Super League club, Leicester City and represents Australia on the Matildas team and she is now preparing for the Paris Olympics. Courtney started her stellar career with the Oakville Ravens, before joining the Blacktown Spartans in the NPL. Nevin is contracted to the Western Sydney Wanderers in the Women's League. In Hawkesbury, we claim Courtney and we are super proud of her sporting prowess culminating in her national representation. I would like to acknowledge Courtney's parent's Angelica and Phil, who must be very proud of their daughter. Courtney is a Defender, and the first Olympic match for the Matildas is 3am our time on the 26th July taking on the formidable German team in Marseille. Mr Speaker, like many Australians and her legions of Hawkesbury fans, I will be cheering Courtney Nevin and the Matildas on their Olympic journey. Go Courtney !! Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **TRENT MAXWELL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to recognise lifeguard, firefighter, author, and constituent Trent Maxwell for his contributions to our community. Trent or Maxi, as he is known in our community, was the youngest ever Professional Lifeguard to work at Bondi Beach and has done so for 17 years. In 2016 Trent became a Firefighter for NSW Fire and Rescue. In 2018 he became a Qualified Rescue Operator. In 2022 Trent was promoted to Senior Firefighter and is now part of the rescue team based at Bankstown Fire Station in Sydney. This unique career has positioned Trent as a much-needed young, positive, male role model for future generations. He is the director and co-founder of Live Learn Survive, a Charity that educates and equips children with information, so they are confident and know what to do in an emergency. Trent is the co-author of the award-winning Maxi the Lifeguard children's book series, and the Maxi's Beach Rescue picture book, Trent is also the co-host of the Live Learn Survive podcast. Trent's career has been centred around helping others and our community has been the main beneficiary of this. We are proud of Trent and I thank him for his contributions.

#### **NSW FIRE AND RESCUE**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to thank Chief Superintendent Darryl Dunbar, Area Commander for Metropolitan East and Acting Zone Commander for Metropolitan East Scott Dodson, for looking after our community. Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) is one of the world's largest urban fire and rescue services and is the busiest in Australia. Their overriding purpose is to enhance community safety, quality of life, and confidence by minimising the impact of hazards and emergency incidents on the people, property, environment, and economy of NSW. Their highly skilled fire officers and support staff provide rapid, reliable help in emergencies, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As Winter settles in, it is a great time to get your fire alarms checked. You can do this for free by contacting your local Fire and Rescue Unit. Thankyou Darryl, Scott and NSW Fire and Rescue.

#### **VALE ALAN LAMBERT**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to pay my respects to the late Alan Lambert – a respected and admired member of The Scots College Community. Alan Sydney Morrison Lambert arrived at the

College from Goulburn during the war in 1944. The war years were hard, and Alan remembered announcements in Assembly about Scots boys missing or killed overseas. Always looking to serve, Alan and his friends took cigarettes and chocolate to returning prisoners of war (POW) arriving on sea planes at Rose Bay. In his Senior years, Alan was Aspinall House Prefect, he played 2nd XV Rugby, 4th XI Cricket team and won a silver medal in the Open 120yards hurdles. Alan married Silvia in 1954 and his school friends, Colton Lamon and John Brigstock officiated the wedding. Alan never lost touch with Scots. He was frequently spotted at college events, and was a catalyst for engagement. When two of his grandsons, Jackson ('08) and Shannon ('09) joined Scots, Alan could not be prouder. I extend my deepest sympathy and prayers for Dr Lambert, Mrs Lambert and their children, Jackson, Shannon and Kristina, Olivia and all the family at this time. The Scots community has lost a fine Scots Boy.

#### **OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE BURRANEER – MERCY ACTION GROUP**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the efforts of students from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College in Burraneer who are knitting beanies in support of the Vinnies Winter Appeal. The girls are from the school's Mercy Action Group and they've been spending their lunchtimes together with knitting needles in hand to make beanies for distribution through Vinnies Vans outreach service to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The students have also lovingly crafted handmade cards to send off with the beanies. Practical service in ministering to the needs of the disenfranchised and marginalised is fundamental to the authentic expression of mission of the College and the Mercy Action Group has over the years supported a variety of charitable initiatives, organisations, and community events. I acknowledge the caring young women from the Mercy Action Group for their efforts to help others, Jana Nikolakopolous, Olivia Wellington, Amber Govindrulu, Mia Rajkovic, Sarah Barrett, Sophie Hammon, Jessica Hammon, Alejandra McKinnon, Cyan McKinnon, Diana Turutina, Lauren Cuddihy, Tamarli Haydon, Kadee Kordovolos, Alanah Krizmanic, Mia You, Amelia Gray, Peta Gover, Ella Paff, Hayley Stewart and Mia Paige Russell.

#### **NEW CITIZENS FOR HAWKESBURY**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, On the 21st May 2024, I had the privilege to witness eleven new citizens swear allegiance to Australia. The ceremony was conducted by Hawkesbury City Council with Mayor Sarah McMahon welcoming the new Australians. The new citizens came from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Thailand, Peru, Belgium and the Irish Republic. They were joined by family and new friends as they started their journey as full citizens of this country. Australia is a land of social and economic opportunity. It is peaceful and law abiding country. We value and respect our institutions. Free and open debate is encouraged. Our politicians are accessible and open to fair minded challenge. We don't tolerate corruption. Everyone is entitled to a fair go. We fight to defend our values and our country. We are blessed with a unique environment that we must fight to protect. I sincerely thank the new citizens for taking this important step in Hawkesbury. They and their families are very welcome in our beautiful community. I wish them the best for their futures. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **MOSMAN LOCAL NOMINATED FOR BROADWAY AWARD**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate north shore local Marina Tamayo, the Mosman-based flamenco artist who has been nominated for the prestigious Chita Rivera Awards for Dance and Choreography in New York. Marina was nominated alongside choreographer Benjamin Millepied in the category 'Outstanding Choreography in Theatrical Release' for their work in the film Carmen. Marina played main character Carmen's mother and had a dancing role in the film. She also collaborated on the outstanding choreography. The awards took place at the Skirball Center for Performing Arts in late May, with Jennifer White for Barbie being announced the winner. Although Marina Tamayo didn't win, her achievement in being nominated is truly incredible. It's so inspiring to see a local Mosman artist's name recognised in Hollywood at such a prestigious event. Congratulations Marina on your well-deserved nomination, as well as on your role in creating such a cinematic one-of-a-kind film.

#### **VENLA REACHES INCREDIBLE MILESTONE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate VENLA resell+relove who in just over three years they have recycled an incredible 106,000 items with the VENLA community. VENLA founders Minna and Satu who are originally from Finland have been living and working in Australia for the past 25 years and at the height of the Covid pandemic decided to launch a new business with the aim of doing good for our local community and the environment. VENLA is a place where you can give a new life to your clothes and find new loves. Minna and Satu are passionate about providing a sustainable way to shop for second hand designer clothes and accessories. They opened their first store in Mosman in 2021 and have subsequently opened stores in Balmain, Bondi, Cronulla and Manly. Excitingly they have just moved into a new space in Mosman which is larger and brighter than their former space. Congratulations Minna and Satu on this incredible



achievement and I wish you and the VENLA team all the best on creating a world where recycling and rocking preloved fashion is the norm.

### **MAJORS BAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I wish to acknowledge the Majors Bay Chamber of Commerce for the recent achievement at the City of Canada Bay Council Business and Sustainability Awards in the Community Partner category. The Majors Bay Chamber of Commerce has acted as a representative group bringing together over 40 local businesses in our community. The Chamber supports local corporations providing networking events such as by hosting regular breakfast functions and community events in Concord. It is always so great to see local business thriving and I extend my congratulations to the entire executive of the Majors Bay Chamber of Commerce that work tirelessly to support our community and small businesses. I would like to acknowledge and thank President Christian Bracci, Vice President Natalino Bongiorno, Treasurer Carla Capraro, Membership and Communication Officer Daniel Karamaneas, Executive Member Marie Piccin and Secretary Ken Wright. Your service is appreciated. I thank the Major's Bay Chamber of Commerce for their continued service to our community and look forward to growing a strong relationship to support the great work they do for our electorate.

### **DRUMMOYNE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the Drummoyne Community Centre on its recent achievement at the City of Canada Bay Council Business and Sustainability Awards winning the Customer Experience category. The Drummoyne Community Centre acts as a pivotal hub for our community, providing a community meeting place to deliver programs and services for over 45 years. The centre hosts wonderful services ranging from parent education and support, community transport, English classes, exercise and wellness services, arts and hobby services and information and help for our community with the primary objective of increasing community participation. This award is a testament to the Drummoyne Community Centre's dedication to providing an independent, not-for-profit organisation with community at its heart. I would like to acknowledge the Board of the Drummoyne Community Centre led by President Adele Henty, Vice President Christina Vine-Hall, Treasurer Kirsten Liljeqvist, Secretary Ella Gould and Committee Members Penny, Virginia, Catherine, Snehil and Lynn. I thank and acknowledge the hardworking staff led by Manager Tracey Sweetman, and includes Shani, Roberta, Daila, David and Paul. I thank the Drummoyne Community Centre team for providing such outstanding opportunities and services to the people of our community.

### **TULLIMBAH LANDCARE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises local Landcare and Bushcare groups across the Kiama electorate. Currently, there are seven Bushcare and Landcare groups operating in Shellharbour, including Warilla Dunes Bushcare and Tullimbah Landcare, working to rehabilitate and preserve native bushland. Although Kiama does not have an active Bushcare program, it does have multiple Landcare groups, stretching from Jamberoo to Foxground. Bushcare groups are supported by funding and resources from local Councils. In May 2022, Shellharbour City Council's Environment Team successfully secured \$160,000 in grant funding, as part of the Flying-Fox Habitat Restoration Program. This funding will support the planting of 30,000 trees. Most Landcare and Bushcare groups across the Kiama electorate meet once a month, on a Saturday or Sunday, with projects that suit different capabilities. For children, they can learn by doing. I acknowledge Ruth Jenkins and the hardworking group of Tullimbah Landcare volunteers who meet on the fourth Saturday of the month usually in the morning around 9:30am in Elizabeth Brownlee Reserve in Albion Park. The Tullimbah Landcare Group (TLC) was formed in 1999 by local residents, concerned for the management of this remnant vegetation patch of Illawarra Subtropical Rainforest.

### **SHOALHAVEN HEADS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises and congratulates the students, teachers, parents, grandparents and caregivers at Shoalhaven Heads Public School. Shoalhaven Heads Public School is celebrating Grandparents Day on Friday 7th June 2024 from 10am to 11am. Our grandparents play a huge role in our lives. They are at the top of our family trees. They provide us with guidance and many of us have fond memories of family occasions with our grandparents. Grandparents Day at Shoalhaven Heads Public School provides students with the perfect opportunity to honour their grandmothers and grandfathers. Grandparents come in all shapes and sizes; you have paternal grandparents, step-grandparents, and those grandparents that are not blood-related but hold a very special place in our hearts. All grandparents have one thing in common, and this is the happiness that they experience knowing that they can support their grandchildren. Grandparent's Day is a day that is dedicated to celebrating and acknowledging the vital contribution that our grandparents make when it comes to the education and well-being of younger people within their families. I acknowledge the Principal Sarah Baker and the wonderful Shoalhaven Heads Public School community.

**TRIBUTE TO GREG TURNER**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker - Tonight I would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary work of Greg Turner. Over many years, Greg has reported on local issues for the Weekly Times. As an old school journalist, Greg always focussed on stories that mattered to the community. He not only kept local residents informed - he kept them engaged. Up until a few years ago, he manned the media desk during Hunters Hill Council meetings in my electorate of Lane Cove. Mr Speaker, I want to thank Greg Turner for the commitment he has shown to the community I have the honor to represent. Greg - you have told our local stories. You have shared our ups and downs. You embody everything a local journalist should be. I hope you're feeling better soon, because there are more local stories that need to be told. God Bless you mate, and thank you for your service to our community.

**TRIBUTE TO SENIOR SERGEANT LEONIE ABBERFIELD**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – Last week Senior Sergeant Leonie Abberfield hung up her chevrons after an incredible 36 years of continuous service with the NSW Police Force. Joining the Force in 1988, Sergeant Abberfield has spent the last 18 years posted to Gladesville Station, becoming a popular and well-respected officer in the Ryde Area Command. Sergeant Abberfield will be sorely missed by both her colleagues and the boarder community. I wish her all the best for her retirement.

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