

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 18 June 2024**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Gregory Michael Piper)** took the chair at 12:00.

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

## *Bills*

### **APPROPRIATION BILL 2024**

### **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2024**

### **REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

#### **First Reading**

**Bills introduced on motion by Mr Paul Scully, on behalf of Mr Chris Minns, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:03):** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### **Budget Speech**

*[The Hon. Daniel Mookhey was conducted by the Serjeant-at-Arms onto the floor of the Chamber.]*

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the resolution of the House of 5 June 2024, I admit the Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, to the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of giving a speech in relation to the New South Wales budget 2024-2025. In accordance with the practice of the House on such occasions, the usual courtesies are to be afforded to the Treasurer, particularly that his speech should be heard without interruption.

I welcome to the gallery family members of the Treasurer: his mother, Neelam Mookhey; his wife, Tamsin Lloyd; his son Ari; his sister, Sheena; and his brother, Tarun Mookhey.

**The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (12:05):** I am on the land of the Gadigal. So I offer my respect to their Elders past and present, as well as to the First Nations leaders of tomorrow.

Speaker,

I have returned to the people's House to deliver this new Government's second budget.

Rather than reciting all that this young Government has already achieved, I prefer to start with all the work we still have to do.

The work we still have to do for the millions of families and businesses burdened by decades-high levels of inflation.

The duty we still owe to the tens of thousands of patients who turn to our public hospitals for urgent care.

The task that remains: to provide the hundreds of thousands of students attending our public schools with a world-beating education.

The responsibility we have to protect every community against crime, tragedy and terror.

And the job we have not yet finished: to back every citizen striving to own a home, rent a home, or who needs social housing.

These challenges are this Government's causes.

We do not expect to overcome them in a single budget.

But in each Labor budget, we make progress. We pair the public's resources with the people's priorities so real change can happen.

In this Labor budget we continue with our plans to bust the wages cap, reform tolls, back first home buyers, build new and better public schools and hospitals, speed up the renewables revolution, rebuild rural and regional roads, help small businesses and wrangle debt back under control.

But I can report to this House that more progress is possible.

Careful management of the public's finances means we can afford to accelerate change.

We can do more to prevent family violence. And we can do more to support the victim-survivors of family violence.

We can do more to help people visit their GP. And we can surge more resources into our emergency departments.

As for housing—

We can expand homelessness services to curb growth in the number of people who are unhoused.

We can build homes for key workers to rent. Homes close to the schools, hospitals and police stations where they work.

And we can make the biggest ever investment in social housing, by New South Wales, in the State's history.

Especially for women and children needing to escape family violence.

While also making the biggest investment ever in fixing the homes people are already living in.

The Minns Labor Government is determined to build a better New South Wales. To deliver the fresh start this State voted for.

Today I intend to set forth the next steps we will take to fulfil that mission.

Beginning with the housing crisis.

## **HOUSING**

Speaker,

Why should the dream of home ownership be possible for some of us, but not all of us?

Why should we let inheritance matter more than work in determining who gets a home to call their own?

Above all, why would we risk a future that bars our children from ever owning a home when home ownership has been the birthright of every other generation of Australians?

New South Wales needs more homes.

More homes for renters. More homes for key workers. More homes for people escaping violence at home. More homes in metropolitan New South Wales. More homes in regional New South Wales. More homes close to public transport. More homes in the neighbourhoods people love living in.

So budget 2024-2025 builds more homes.

In fact, the program we fund today directly supports 30,000 new homes. More homes for key workers to rent. More homes for the next generation to buy.

And, Speaker, more homes for those needing to escape violence at home.

### *Social Housing*

I remind the House—

There are currently 5,013 women and children in urgent need of a safe place to live.

But those 5,013 women and children are yet to find a permanent home because for too long, New South Wales did not invest enough in public housing.

Instead the number of homes owned by the State's Land and Housing Corporation has fallen compared to 2011.

The number fell because the former Government's main method of funding the basic maintenance and repair of the State's publicly owned housing stock was to sell the State's publicly owned housing stock.

Put simply, to fix one person's house, the previous Government's preference was to sell another's.

New South Wales can do better. So I am announcing—

The Minns Labor Government will make the biggest single investment in social housing any New South Wales government has made in the Federation's history.

We will build 8,400 new social homes.

6,200 are brand new homes. At least half of those are for the victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. They will have the first right to move in.

2,200 homes in disrepair will be knocked down, rebuilt and then put back to use.

And a further 33,500 social homes are getting upgrades—part of a \$1 billion maintenance blitz.

In addition, the State's emergency housing and homelessness services are getting an additional \$527.6 million over four years.

By the end of the forward estimates, Labor will have invested \$6.6 billion on social housing and homelessness services.

#### *Using Surplus Government Land*

I can also announce—

The Government will soon begin releasing parcels of surplus government land.

*Homes NSW*, *Landcom* and the private sector can use them to build 21,000 new homes.

Social housing, affordable housing, key worker housing, market housing—all close to public transport and other infrastructure that is already built.

It took our land audit to find these sites. Having now found these sites, we will mobilise them to build more housing for a State that needs it.

And we will set aside a further \$5 million to keep the audit going.

#### *Key Workers*

For key workers in metropolitan Sydney, the budget provides *Landcom* with \$450 million to build homes for them to rent.

The people's developer building homes for the State's essential workers—workers the public cannot do without.

For regional and rural health workers, NSW Health gets \$200 million more to find and build more homes for them to live in.

Another step forward in staffing regional hospitals. So our rural and regional citizens get the health care they deserve.

#### *Communities*

We also need more homes people can buy or rent.

We need them in areas where we are building world-class public transport. In neighbourhoods people love to live in.

So to those communities stepping up to solve the housing crisis:

- Your councils will get access to a \$200 million incentive fund. Money to expand the critical services.
- The Building Commission will get \$35 million more to enforce the State's buildings standards in your neighbourhood and in all our neighbourhoods.
- And the planning department will get another \$254 million so it can do its job faster too.

#### *TODS*

There is also \$520 million of infrastructure spending available for communities that are part of the Government's Transport Oriented Development program.

This program sees more homes built near public transport. The public transport we have borrowed and spent billions of dollars building.

Some people oppose this initiative. They would cancel it. Those people should answer these questions:

If we are not building homes near public transport, then where should we build those homes? And if not now, when?

## **COST-OF-LIVING**

Speaker,

This Government is acting to alleviate the pressure New South Wales families feel from the rising cost of living.

Budget 2023 began the hard work of reform. Especially for people needing help to pay their power bills, or needing help to pay their toll bills in the most tolled city in the world.

Budget 2024 offers more help, especially so more people can afford to see a doctor.

### *Bulk-Billing*

Doctors that bulk-bill are getting harder to find. Free health care is supposed to be the birthright of every Australian. But until the Albanese Government recently increased payments to GPs, bulk-billing rates have been in freefall.

GPs are facing other pressures too.

Especially the pressure arising from uncertain payroll tax obligations. The uncertainty which in turn stems from decisions courts made years before this Government came to office. Their implications not addressed by our predecessors.

So the health Minister and the finance Minister have been working with the State's doctors.

Their efforts mean today I can announce New South Wales's first ever bulk-billing support initiative. An initiative worth \$188.8 million.

From 4 September, GP practices that bulk-bill 80 per cent of their patients in metropolitan Sydney—and 70 per cent in the rest of the State—can claim a complete tax rebate for the payroll tax they otherwise would have had to pay for the wages of contractor GPs.

Not an amnesty. Not a moratorium. A full rebate.

Additionally, no GP clinic will have to pay any back taxes they might owe on a contractor GP's wage.

Extinguished through legislation: That is our plan. New South Wales—the only State that will.

Because we prefer GPs to spend more time with their patients than with their accountants.

### *Tolls*

As for tolls, I can report relief is rolling out and reform is underway.

The \$60 toll cap that began on 1 January will continue, providing total relief worth \$561.0 million over two years.

720,000 people are eligible to get money back from the New South Wales Government's toll cap.

Commuters in Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Marsden Park, Auburn and Merrylands are the biggest winners so far. More commuters will win as this program enters its second year.

## **ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

Speaker,

Budget 2024-2025 continues Labor's plan to rebuild the State's essential services.

### *Health*

The health system is getting a big boost:

- \$481 million extra is going to our hard-pressed, under-pressure emergency departments—money invested to reduce wait times and improve patient outcomes.
- A further \$275 million will go to hospitals and health services including those in the Tweed, Sutherland, Cooma, Bowral, Glen Innes, Griffith, Randwick, Cowra and Wentworth. Allowing them to hire 250 health care workers like cleaners, allied health workers, nurses and doctors.
- We are allocating \$130.9 million for the Family Start Package. Expanding early intervention programs to give mums and bubs the best start to life we can. Including more funding for Tresillian and Karitane. More funding to support vulnerable children in their first 2,000 days. And—in a first—

funding for the Waminda birth centre, so First Nations women on the South Coast can give birth according to traditional cultural practice.

- Finally, there is a \$111.8 million investment in mental health, including investment in services that reduce long-stay hospitalisation, the creation of a dedicated mental health single front door and a boost for community mental health teams.

As for the bricks and mortar of the New South Wales health system:

- The money announced in budget 2023-2024 to upgrade Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals, Canterbury Hospital, Fairfield Hospital, and to rebuild Bankstown hospital on a new site remains in budget 2024-2025.
- Port Macquarie hospital is getting \$265 million for a critical upgrade.
- \$250 million more will go to hospitals across New South Wales to bolster critical maintenance.
- While hospitals in Eurobodalla, Ryde, Temora, Liverpool, Moree, Nepean, Cessnock, Shellharbour, as well the mental health complex at Westmead Hospital, will share in an additional \$395.3 million. So their upgrades can continue apace.

The extra money going to our hospitals statewide will strengthen a health system handling tremendous pressure.

But it would all have been for nought had we allowed 1,112 nurses to lose their jobs.

Those nurses were all set to be fired in 12 days. Because the previous Government failed to fund their positions in their final budget.

Healthcare workers are not "optional extras".

Healthcare workers are the health system's heart and soul. Our hospital cleaners and security guards; our allied health professionals and paramedics; our nurses and doctors—they make the health system go.

So we will continue to partner with them in reform. We now pay our paramedics like the professionals they are.

Safe staffing ratios for our nurses are rolling out.

And those 1,112 nurses—their jobs are safe, their positions funded permanently.

### *Education*

Budget 2024-25 also progresses our plans to turn around a decade of declining education outcomes.

So our children get the education they need:

- We are budgeting an extra \$481.1 million so the New South Wales Government funds its share of the resources kids need to get the world-class education they deserve—two years earlier than the former Government's schedule. Canberra now needs to do the same.
- The community of Box Hill will get a new primary school and a new high school. Huntlee will too. Calderwood will get a new primary school. Those communities were promised new schools, but those schools were never budgeted for—let alone built. They are budgeted for now. They will be built. Part of our massive \$8.9 billion pipeline for public schools and preschools. Continuing our record spend.
- Schools in Riverbank, The Ponds, Austral, Leppington, Googong, the northern beaches, Yennora—and even a school in fair Verona—are getting upgrades!
- While \$1 billion will go towards tackling the maintenance backlog afflicting our public schools statewide. Because flushing toilets, leakproof roofs, and working bubblers make for decent schools.
- Finally our plan to build 100 public preschools—half in Western Sydney, half in regional New South Wales—continues to roll out, with the preschool at Gulyangarri Public the first to open, later this year.

Labor is the party of education. Labor will always be the party of education.

### *Transport and Infrastructure*

Turning to public transport and roads:

- Stage two of the Parramatta Light Rail project is morphing from being a project that was no more than a pipedream, into a project that is in the pipeline. This Government is setting aside a further \$2.1 billion to finally begin building the second stage of the Parramatta Light Rail.
- We are also upgrading the Tangara fleet. A \$447 million investment so commuters get a better ride, while we get set to build trains in New South Wales again.
- We are spending \$24.7 million to expand bus transport to cover more of growing north-west Sydney—areas expanded but that have been poorly serviced by buses, or have had no bus services at all.
- And \$10 million is going towards developing the next stage of the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan, mapping options to rebuild rail along the South Coast line after recent extreme weather events.

Budget 2024-2025 also builds the roads New South Wales needs to connect people to jobs and opportunities.

- There is an extra \$1.1 billion to build the roads for the new Western Sydney airport and its surrounding communities—taking our total investment in Western Sydney roads to \$5.2 billion.
- \$1 billion is for stage two of the Mamre Road project—the section between Erskine Park and the thriving Kemps Creek.
- \$800 million more is going towards widening key parts of Elizabeth Drive.
- And we will spend \$520 million widening the Richmond Road-M7 to Townson Road link.
- Outside of Sydney:
  - \$1.4 billion is going to continue construction of the M1 to Raymond Terrace extension and the Hexham Straight widening projects.
  - \$1.1 billion is going to continue Princes Highway projects including construction of the Milton Ulladulla bypass, the Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade and the Jervis Bay Road to Hawken Road upgrade.
  - There is \$275 million for the Nelson Bay Road to Bobs Farm upgrade.
  - \$128.5 million for regional road upgrades and infrastructure at the Newcastle port to enable the transport of equipment components to renewable energy zone projects.
  - The Nowra bypass and network planning project is getting \$105 million.

#### *Disaster Relief*

\$5.7 billion is being provided to disaster-stricken communities so they can build back faster.

There is more than \$632.4 million set aside for the Northern Rivers and Central West.

This includes \$525 million for the Resilient Homes Program—funding voluntary buybacks, raisings, repairs and retrofits.

And there is \$3.3 billion to fix State and local roads, damaged by floods and fires, that regional communities rely on.

#### *Keeping Our Communities Safe*

So every community feels safe, budget 2024-2025:

- Funds the Government's \$245.6 million emergency intervention package to support and protect the victim-survivors of family and domestic violence.
  - It includes \$45 million so the justice system can improve its response to domestic violence, and so it is harder for those accused of serious domestic violence offences to get bail.
  - \$38.3 million is for New South Wales's first dedicated Primary Prevention Strategy.
  - And \$48 million is to expand the Staying Home Leaving Violence program and the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service. Staying Home Leaving Violence will be expanded to include the remaining 37 local government areas, two-thirds of which are in regional New South Wales.

- We are also spending \$66.9 million on intervention programs to divert young people away from the criminal justice system and towards community programs shown to reduce crime.
- \$20.8 million is going towards building the National Firearms Register to track the movement of firearms throughout the Federation, jointly funded by the Commonwealth.
- And Waverley and Rose Bay police stations are getting a \$22.9 million upgrade as well.

#### *Environment and the Climate Crisis*

To care for our environment, and to combat the climate crisis:

- We will spend \$25 million extra to continue restoring the Darling-Baaka River—the site of too many mass fish kills.
- \$75.1 million will go towards maintaining and improving our national parks, protecting nature, improving the visitor experience and boosting tourism too.
- Over the next four years, we are investing \$3.1 billion in building the clean power we need for an emissions-free energy future. A future cheaper for New South Wales families and businesses than a nuclear future.
- And I am proud to announce we will buy the land which is home to the ancient Butterfly Caves. A sacred site for the Aboriginal women of the Awabakal nation. Its purchase the result of their decade-long campaign to protect the site for generations to come.

#### *And That's Just the Start*

Budget 2024-2025 also:

- Adds a further \$50 million to the \$350 million we set aside for the Regional Development Trust last September. Ending the pork-barrelling that shrouded regional development funding for too long.
- \$5 million more is going to Service NSW's business bureau, help for them to help more of New South Wales's small businesses.
- And \$13.5 million will go to Netball NSW ahead of New South Wales hosting the Netball World Cup.

These are commonsense decisions. But they lead to future-shaping outcomes.

### **FIXING THE STATE'S FINANCES**

Speaker,

Countering the housing crisis. Supporting the victim-survivors of family violence. Fixing our schools and hospitals. Building the roads and public transport of the future. Preventing youth crime. Combating the climate crisis.

Above all, backing families living through New South Wales's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation: This is the progress we make in budget 2024-25.

This is the progress we have made despite New South Wales having billions taken from us by the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

#### *The GST Rip-Off*

If New South Wales was still getting back 92 cents from every dollar in GST paid in this State, the budget would be returning to surplus next year.

In fact, New South Wales could have expected cumulative surpluses over the forward estimates worth \$1.9 billion.

But New South Wales is not getting back 92 cents per dollar. New South Wales will only get 87 cents.

The Treasury calculated that this cut will cost New South Wales \$11.9 billion over the next four years.

Here is a way to comprehend the impact of the Grants Commission's decision on the New South Wales budget:

The Grants Commission has cost New South Wales more in lost revenue than COVID-19 did.

Here is how to appreciate the magnitude of the commission's decision for our essential services:

\$11.9 billion is enough money to hire an additional 16,000 police officers.

Here is why I say the system is unfair:

For every dollar that Victoria will give to the smaller States next year, New South Wales will give upwards of four.

Then Treasurer Perrottet said this in 2018, the last time the Grants Commission cut New South Wales GST funding:

This outcome reinforces the fact that the current GST model is broken. Yet again, we are seeing the hardworking taxpayers of NSW being ripped off by a perverse and unfair distribution model.

True then. True now.

There is plenty that divides the parties in this place. And—believe me—there is even more that divides the parties sitting in the other place!

But this can unite us all:

New South Wales deserves its fair share of the GST. It is time New South Wales got its fair share of the GST.

#### *The Budget Result*

The Government will absorb the \$11.9 billion hit from the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

I prefer that than hitting families or businesses for an extra \$11.9 billion.

Hence the New South Wales budget remains in deficit over the forward estimates.

Our careful spending will see the deficit fall from \$9.7 billion in 2023-2024 to \$3.6 billion in 2024-2025. A \$6 billion improvement.

In 2025-26 tight spending discipline will see the deficit fall again to \$2.5 billion. Then in 2026-27, it is likely to be \$2.4 billion. Finally, in 2027-28, it drops to \$1.5 billion.

Overall, \$9 billion better than 2022-23.

Helping families is our most important mission during New South Wales's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

That is why the Government is carefully absorbing the \$11.9 billion cut.

We refuse to respond to the Grants Commission's absurdity by imposing austerity on New South Wales. That would lead to misery.

#### *Debt Under Control*

This Labor Government can afford to make that choice because this Labor Government has acted to stabilise the State's levels of debt.

Let no-one forget—

The Government inherited gross debt set to rise to \$188.2 billion by June 2026.

Gross debt, by June 2026, will be \$9.3 billion lower under this Government. That is after absorbing the \$11.9 billion GST hit, and the miscounting of \$1 billion of Sydney Metro asset sales that didn't happen.

New South Wales is stabilising its debt because New South Wales will stop borrowing money to pay our day-to-day bills. The State is on track for a \$4.9 billion cash-operating surplus in the coming financial year.

The first cash-operating surplus since 2020-21.

New South Wales can also stabilise its debt trajectory because the Government is discontinuing the previous Government's plans to borrow vast sums of money to artificially enlarge the NSW Generations Fund [NGF].

Put simply, we will put an end to the fiction that by plunging the State further into debt we will eventually get the State out of debt.

So rather than risking billions to bankroll this risky strategy, the Government is instead shaking up its own funds under management.

I can announce:

Soon TCorp will create One-Fund. A new fund structure that manages several current investment funds worth \$46.7 billion as a single pool, rather than treating each fund as a separate silo.

One-Fund delivers more income than the NGF strategy it will supersede. But it exposes New South Wales to far less balance-sheet risk.

And One-Fund—combined with the cash-operating surplus—also means I can announce:

New South Wales will be lowering its borrowings by nearly \$1 billion over the five years to 2027-28, one of the few States to do so.

Proof that our sound balance-sheet management is sparing our kids and grandkids from avoidable debt.

#### *The Economic Outlook*

Our strong balance sheet also equips us to support the New South Wales economy come what may. Especially since the State's economic outlook remains challenging.

The Treasury's analysis shows that inflationary pressures are easing; but inflation still lingers. Lower levels of inflation than previously forecast are expected for the coming year.

Cost-of-living pressures have also weighed on household spending, slowing growth in the New South Wales domestic economy.

The slowdown in economic activity is expected to continue in the short term. The unemployment rate will likely hew closely to the national projections.

Momentum in activity is anticipated to recover in 2024-25 as cost-of-living pressures ease.

Especially since real wages are likely to rise every year over the forward estimates. Ending a decade of real wage stagnation. Beginning the recovery of a decade's worth of lost purchasing power.

#### *Federal-State Agreements*

A stronger economy will lead to a stronger budget.

So strengthening the economy is the best long-term strategy to fortify the State's finances, return the budget to surpluses, and then to sustain them.

That is even more likely if Canberra lifts its contribution to New South Wales schools and New South Wales hospitals—as they said they would do.

The States and Territories are all currently renegotiating the national agreements that will govern the nation's schools and hospitals for the next five years.

Much turns on the outcome of these discussions. Especially for our ability to provide the world-class public services our citizens rightly expect and deserve.

So we have not rushed to resolve those negotiations ahead of this budget. Even though that might temporarily have made the budget results look better.

Our focus is on making sure New South Wales gets its fair share.

Because getting New South Wales a fair deal from Canberra is far more important than getting New South Wales a quick deal from Canberra.

## **CONCLUSION**

Speaker,

The upper House is calling.

So I leave you mindful of this State's true character.

Here in New South Wales, we have always combined to advance the common good, so each of us are better equipped to pursue our individual ambitions.

I have always felt that what makes New South Wales the premier State is not the prodigious scale of our ambitions; nor is it our dogged pertinacity; it is the preternatural depths of our resilience.

This State has always decided its own destiny. We choose our future by always reinventing ourselves. Especially in the wake of great crises.

Choosing our future right now means coming back from a once-in-a-century global pandemic and the once-in-a-generation cost-of-living crisis it led to.

It means making decisions today so that the next generation can have homes to call their own tomorrow.

It means supporting the victim-survivors of family violence with our solidarity right now, as we strive to stamp out family violence altogether.

And it means always prizing the public realm: the schools, hospitals and other public services that are the jet fuel for our future prosperity.

Budget 2024 does not seek to transform New South Wales immediately. I am not claiming that.

But I do say that budget 2024 builds the foundations of a better New South Wales.

Edging New South Wales further towards a brighter future.

I thank the House for your courtesies.

I promise to return next year if you will have me, and if the Premier lets me!

And I commend these bills to the House.

#### **APPROPRIATION BILL 2024**

#### **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2024**

#### **REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:41):** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I commend the Budget Speech by the Treasurer and commend the bills to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Documents*

#### **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024-2025**

#### **Tabling**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I table copies of the following papers:

- (1) Budget Statement 2024-25 (*Budget Paper No. 1*)
- (2) Agency Financial Statements 2024-25 (*Budget Paper No. 2*)
- (3) Infrastructure Statement 2024-25 (*Budget Paper No. 3*)
- (4) Appropriation Bills 2024-25 (*Budget Paper No. 4*)

I move:

That the papers be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I warmly welcome Anne Bali, the partner of the member for Blacktown. I welcome guests of the member for Wollongong from the Illawarra Young Labor Association. I welcome Andriana Lossifov, a guest of the member for Coogee, and Jess Collins, a guest of the member for Lane Cove. I acknowledge my guests, who are residents of Lake Macquarie. I hope they have had a pleasant day so far. I acknowledge Adrian Piccoli, a guest of the member for Port Macquarie and a former member and Minister of this House.

#### *Members*

#### **PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I inform the House that on 14 June 2024 Ms Charishma Kaliyanda, MP, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Customer Service and Digital Government, Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services and Parliamentary Secretary for Youth Justice.

*Governor*

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

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

*Question Time*

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (14:35):** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. What is the Government's current estimate of the number of new homes that will be completed by June 2025 and by June 2026?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:35):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Attorney General will come to order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** On budget day, you would think that the first question might be in relation to the budget. So what I might do, given that the Leader of the Opposition asked about home building—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Wahroonga will come to order. The member for Kiama will come to order. Members will not behave in a disorderly manner during question time.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I am surprised that the member is so interested in and fascinated by housing, given he is the leader of the party that introduced a bill to overturn and ban housing in New South Wales. But there is an internal war going on over on the other side of the Chamber. When it comes to housing, I think the Leader of the Opposition sniffs the breeze each day he comes into question time. Right now there are about 73,000 homes under construction in New South Wales—with no thanks to him, I might add. As a result of today's budget and the planning reforms that we have introduced, there will be even more under construction. Why?

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is because the Minns Government is undertaking the biggest social housing build in the history of this State. In stark contrast to the members opposite, whose sole approach was to sell off \$3.6 billion worth of social homes, we are not only building 8,400 social homes but also repairing 33,500 social homes. We have done the land audit. We have done the work to identify—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, about direct relevance. Does the Minister have an estimate of the number of completions by 2025 and 2026? Or is it all smoke and mirrors?

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Part of the problem is that the Leader of the Opposition clearly does not understand how housing construction works. A whole range of different houses is built. Some are for—

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. Does the Minister have a number or an estimate of the number of houses to be completed by June 2025 and by June 2026?

**The SPEAKER:** I would appreciate it if the Minister would be directly relevant.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I am trying to be directly relevant, but I keep being interrupted.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Earlier today the Treasurer stood at this lectern and announced that we will be building a further 31,000 houses as a result of this budget. There are 70-odd thousand houses under construction right now. Our planning reforms and the other reforms in this budget will lead us to delivering on our National Housing Accord target of 377,000 homes over the next five years.

### STATE BUDGET AND HOUSING

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (14:38):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the State budget continues the Minns Labor Government's work to address the housing crisis and build a better New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (14:38):** I thank the member for her question. Many members would have seen a report that came out of America last week that ranked Sydney, for the second year in a row, as the second least affordable city in the world when it comes to housing, after Hong Kong and before Vancouver. The *Demographia International Housing Affordability 2024* report warned of an existential threat when it comes to the next generation of people living in this city. As a result of that report, undeniable field evidence from people in all communities and the experience of the next generation of young Australians, I am pleased to report that this budget is all about housing, the most critical threat affecting the people of New South Wales and the next generation of young Australians.

As a result of this budget, this Government will build, over the next four years, an additional 30,000 homes. That is as a result of the land audit across New South Wales, as well as significant investment in essential housing for those who work in our public services and the largest spend in social housing in the State's history. We have found that to be necessary because over the past 12 years the previous Government sold off assets or oversaw a net reduction of 13 per cent in public and social housing at the same time, as undeniable evidence suggests, that Sydney has become even more unaffordable, if that was even possible. This Government has made a decision to invest in housing—whether it is private housing, social housing, affordable housing or essential housing—for the people of this State.

Sixty per cent of the people on the priority social housing waiting list are women and children. One-third of people seeking urgent frontline homelessness services are there, in part, because of domestic violence in the home, and 18,000 people, or 38 per cent, seeking specialist homeless services in particular faced family and domestic violence in their home. At least 50 per cent of the new social housing build in this State will go exclusively to domestic violence victim-survivors. It is a necessary investment for New South Wales and it cannot wait another year. If you take into consideration that 13 per cent net reduction in social housing over 12 years, this Government has not got a moment to lose. The Productivity Commission reported several weeks ago that Sydney is at risk of losing 7,000 people between the ages of 30 and 40. [*Extension of time*]

In fact, the Productivity Commissioner warned that young people who would ordinarily stay in New South Wales and raise families, start businesses, join communities, coach soccer teams and join our public services are leaving the State and going to other jurisdictions. What they need is housing. The Government is making provision in this budget to build new houses for the next generation of young Australians, build social housing for those that fall through the social safety net and provide for those who are fleeing domestic and family violence.

A wise person who had worked for decades in domestic and family violence prevention in the State made the point to me and the Government that the single best intervention made by a government in 50 years when it comes to the prevention of domestic violence was the Whitlam Government's decision to introduce the single parent pension, because for the first time many women in particular felt that they had some money to leave the household and an unsafe situation. Undeniably the question facing many people in the same situation today is whether they will have a roof over their head. The Government initiatives in this budget will make a major difference to those families. I urge its passage in the Parliament this week.

#### STATE BUDGET AND NSW POLICE FORCE

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:43):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Page 4-17 of *Budget Paper No. 01* shows that the Minister is cutting real spending on police. Where will the Minister make up the savings?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (14:43):** I am having déjà vu. That is exactly the same question that those opposite asked me last time. Not to worry—I looked it up and I will answer it the same way. There are no cuts in this budget for the police. In fact, the police in New South Wales have never been more supported than they are by this Government. Where was the member for Dubbo at the Cabinet table when the previous Government was sending wages backwards? Where was the member for Dubbo when they were looking at retention plans? There was no retention plan and they had no ideas.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** How many vacancies?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The member for Canterbury is right. There were more than 1,500, I advise the House. That is the legacy of those opposite. They left the Police Force in a worse state than they found it. They should not lecture me about funding or numbers for police in this State. What about paying the recruits down in Goulburn? Hasn't that made a difference! In fact this Friday I will be—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: As much as I am enjoying this furphy, it was a very specific question: Where will the Minister make the savings for the cuts?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has been directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I will not be lectured by those opposite on policing in this State because they left our police in an absolutely disgraceful state.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** This Government has come up with some innovative ideas to fill the short gap that was left by the previous Government and that we inherited. I find it extraordinary that those opposite have the guts to ask me a question about policing and the police budget.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Quite frankly, it is the best Dixer that any member could possibly want, particularly the police Minister. The shadow police Minister is not even in the Chamber. He clearly did not want to ask that question because he would be too embarrassed.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I will be at the attestation this Friday with the Premier and we will see a large number of recruits coming through. They are the first recruits who have been paid for the whole four months that they have been in Goulburn. An extraordinary—

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order relates to direct relevance. The question was where the savings are being made. We have not heard anything about savings.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The same point of order was raised earlier and I ruled that the Minister was being directly relevant. It is difficult to answer some questions directly due to the way the Opposition phrases them. The Opposition might not like the response, but the Minister has answered the question. She said that there are no cuts; that is implicit in the answer. The Minister has been directly relevant. I will not entertain another point of order on relevance.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Thank goodness you were listening, Mr Speaker. I did answer the question in few initial remarks: There are no cuts. The New South Wales police have got the best support here. Why don't those opposite start backing them and stop bagging them!

**The SPEAKER:** I see that the member for Davidson is back in the Chamber. I was aware that he might be returning but I missed seeing him earlier. It is wonderful to have him back.

#### STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:48):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the State budget continues the Government's work to rebuild public education in New South Wales?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:48):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning for that important question. I can inform the House, as we heard from the Treasurer when he gave his very entertaining Budget Speech earlier today, that this is a government that is dedicated and committed 100 per cent to public education. In fact, what we have delivered in this budget is a record investment in education—more money has been spent in this budget than has ever before been spent on public education in New South Wales. We are spending more on public education than the Liberals and The Nationals ever did in 12 years in government. I am proud to inform the House that the total investment comes to \$27.9 billion.

That is our investment in getting teachers in our classrooms, addressing the root cause of the teacher shortage crisis that we inherited from those opposite. That is our investment in building schools where they are needed, particularly in growing parts of north-west and south-west Sydney and in regional New South Wales. In short, the right of every child in this State to quality, free public education is one step closer, thanks to this investment in the New South Wales budget. The Government has made that investment, I must say, despite being robbed of \$12 billion by the Commonwealth Grants Commission in terms of GST revenue. Of course, this budget continues to deliver historic pay rises for New South Wales teachers, making them the highest paid in the country.

Now we are starting see the green shoots of our investment in teachers and in rebuilding public education through the prism of the wonderful teaching profession. Those green shoots were evident as we started this year with a 20 per cent drop in vacancies compared with last year. For first time in many years, teacher vacancies are

going down, not up. For that reason, the Government is proud that its investment is starting to pay dividends. We know that there is much more work to do to address the teacher shortage crisis, but with this historic investment in public education, we are committed to doing it. We are well armed to go to the Commonwealth Government and argue for full and fair funding because, in the budget delivered today, we lifted the State's contribution to the Schooling Resource Standard from 72 per cent to 75 per cent. [*Extension of time*]

That means that the New South Wales Government has lifted its share of the Gonski funding—the funding that was always supposed to go to our kids—to meet the minimum level of resourcing in schools two years earlier than those opposite had planned. That means that kids are more likely to be able to realise their full potential in our public schools because of the significant lift in funding that the Government has delivered. At the same time, the Government is also investing in school infrastructure, which is so important to make sure that each one of our children has the opportunity to learn in a state-of-the-art classroom. The Government is investing \$8.9 billion in a pipeline of infrastructure. Many of the school upgrades are in areas where Government members know—because we have fought for them, alongside our communities—that investment had not been made in growing communities. I particularly call out the north-west and the south-west of Sydney. A significantly expanded upgrade will be provided at Riverbank and The Ponds, one of the most overcrowded school communities in the State and one which was consistently denied an upgrade by those opposite.

There will be a new public school and a high school in the growing community of Box Hill. The member for Hawkesbury recently said in the media that she was not sure why those were never delivered by the former Government. I am proud to say that we are finally coming good on the commitment to deliver not just one school, but three schools for that community: a public school, a high school and a public school in The Gables. I remind members that, under this Labor Government, every public school will come with a public preschool. We are delivering new schools in Huntlee, Googong and Medowie, where they are needed, because this Government believes in the life-changing power of public education.

#### SOLAR ENERGY

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (14:53):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice, representing the Minister for Energy. Whilst solar battery subsidies are welcome, the cheapest battery is \$15,000 to purchase and install, while the subsidy is a maximum of \$2,000 and the rebate does not kick in until November. Will the Government commit to increasing the rebate and hastening the rollout?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (14:53):** I thank the member for Ballina. She is an excellent member. Every time I visit her electorate, I enjoy seeing the member in action. She is passionate, well-connected and always advocating for her community. I am representing the Minister for Energy in this place. The Government is acutely aware of the impact that energy has on local businesses and communities. That is why we went to the election with a commitment of \$650 in support for local businesses and small businesses. Those opposite went to the election with nothing.

The Government is also very much focused on supporting households and businesses in the take-up of renewable energy. To that point, I will talk about a few things. The Government will not only look at things that are good for energy bills and for the environment, but will also make sure that those things are implemented properly so we do not have a situation where anything is unsafe. Last month the Minister for Energy announced an expansion of the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme, with incentives to make the installation of household batteries more affordable for people. I really appreciate that.

A battery allows people to better harness their solar and to make better use of it. During the day they can use the solar power. That energy is also stored in a battery so that at night, when there is no sun shining, they can use that. The Government recognises that we need to do better at harnessing the solar energy we collect. We collect a lot of energy during the day, but the storage of energy for households is something we are not good at. The Government also knows that the process is cost prohibitive. Particularly in the Ballina area, a lot of people are off grid and run on their own solar power. This will support them and also support local businesses. I am pleased that that is the case. It will not only reduce energy bills, but will make energy supply more reliable.

The difference in approach is interesting. This Government sees the benefit of action. The Federal Liberal Government spent a decade dithering about climate change and the need to act on energy. At the moment, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr Dutton, is saying, "We're just going to abandon those 2030 targets." Not only is this Government sticking to those targets, but it will meet the targets and will also make sure that all communities are supported in doing so. This policy will mean that homes and businesses with solar can apply for rebates between \$1,600 and \$2,400 for a system up to 13 kilowatts. That will help people to install solar. [*Extension of time*]

There has been a lot of consultation with industry to make sure that this is done right and is done fairly. We want a situation where consumers are protected, small businesses can act and we can harness that solar power. IPART is going through an accreditation process at the moment. The Minister's office has informed me that where possible—where there are no safety concerns, and where we know that things are being done in the correct format—there is consideration of bringing it forward. That discussion will continue, but we need to allow the process to accredit people correctly so that IPART is satisfied. We also need people who are trained to install the batteries. The last thing we want is installation that could be potentially dangerous.

The Government has carried out extensive consultation. One of the things that came from that consultation is that people, particularly people from the industry, want to see the scheme regulated so that it is done properly. That will happen. Where possible, the scheme will be brought forward. There need to be regulations so that not only are we harnessing solar power, but the safety element is also covered. This Government, as the fine member would know, will really act on this transition. Only recently, we introduced the energy security corporation legislation that will support household solar and batteries. The Government will continue to support local businesses, but it is essential that this scheme operates safely and properly. The Government recognises the importance of household batteries. I will wait for members to stop talking.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Port Macquarie and the member for Dubbo were the chief culprits. The Minister was probably being overly sensitive.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** It is not about being overly sensitive; it is about respect. A question was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** In light of the noise that was coming from both sides of the Chamber, I think the Minister was being overly sensitive. That is how I see it and it is my call.

#### STATE BUDGET AND HEALTH CARE

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (14:59):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the State budget delivers better access to health care for New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (14:59):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, the member for Bega, for the question. There is more money for the Eurobodalla region. There will be a wing named after the member for Bega. That is good. This budget is about must-haves, not nice-to-haves. A must-have is delivering essential health care to the communities that all members love and represent across New South Wales. A record \$35.1 billion investment in health care will ensure that communities, whether in remote, regional, rural or metropolitan areas, get the health care they need and deserve.

We face serious challenges, particularly in relation to emergency departments. That is why the Government is investing \$480 million in an emergency department rescue package that is about making sure that people are diverted on the way in and that, if they do get stuck in an emergency department, they are able to get out as quickly as possible. It includes investment in the Single Front Door Program, which enables people to make a phone call through Healthdirect to access a GP, a mental health nurse, a nurse, a geriatrician or a specialist to get care without having to go into an emergency department. It includes investment in urgent care services. It includes additional short stay units across emergency departments to ensure that emergency departments can continue to flow and operate.

Importantly, the budget honours the major commitments that the Government made around staffing the health and hospital system across New South Wales. The Government is embarking on a reform the likes of which has never been seen, moving to a ratio-based model in nursing that will see one to three nurses to patients in emergency departments. That will require at least 2,500 additional nurses and midwives. The Government is moving to an additional 500 paramedics in rural and regional locations. I acknowledge the secretary of the Health Services Union, Gerard Hayes, for his recent award as part of the King's Birthday Honours in recognition of his advocacy for healthcare workers. [*Extension of time*]

What surprises me is that most members would agree that we need to properly staff and resource hospitals at the moment but, in a little over 12 days time, 1,112 nurses would have been cut from the system. This Government is not doing that. The budget makes those nurses permanent and ensures that the Government will continue to roll out record levels of staffing across the New South Wales health and hospital system. The Government makes no apology for investing in the men and women who deliver health care to the regions, the remote and rural communities and the metropolitan cities. They are the people the Government is investing in with this budget. They need a hand at the moment, which is why this record investment into emergency departments is so critical.

The Government is also investing in infrastructure right across New South Wales hospitals, whether that is in places like Eurobodalla, Shellharbour, Port Macquarie, Bowral or the Prince of Wales Hospital in the member for Coogee's electorate. The Government is determined to make sure that it is not only resourcing hospitals but, wherever it can, upgrading the infrastructure to deliver the care that communities need. This budget is focused on building stronger communities by delivering stronger health care to the communities that we love and that members are given the privilege of representing in this place. The Government makes no apology for putting healthcare workers first, second and third when it comes to prioritising them in the budget. The Government will continue to invest in frontline healthcare workers because they deliver the services that our communities need and deserve.

### NSW POLICE FORCE WAGES

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:04):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The Police Association of New South Wales is seeking a 25 per cent wage increase for police over four years. What assumption is made in the budget about the size of wage increases for police?

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:05):** Again, it is a brave question from the Opposition, which capped police wages for 12 years.

**The SPEAKER:** Government members, including the Leader of the House, will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** That meant that their wages went backwards and backwards and backwards. Labor came into government on the back of telling the people who work for this State that it would remove the wages cap. I am proud to be part of a government that did just that. It was one of the most significant reasons those workers voted for a Labor Government. It is taking a while for members opposite to understand how important workers are and how important wages are to them. Members opposite still want to bring the cap back. We know that; they have admitted it. Part of that was bringing negotiations back to the table. I applaud the Minister for Industrial Relations—

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was about what assumption has been made in the budget. Will the Minister return to the question?

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Goulburn. I uphold the point of order. The Minister has indicated that she is about to answer the question. I ask her do so as quickly as possible.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** For members opposite, who clearly have no understanding about this, it is about the Government and the agency negotiating with the workforce. The Government is in that process. There is no secret about that whatsoever. Respectful negotiations are underway as we speak. The association put forward its log of claims. It will bring that to the table, and the Government and the agency will look at it and determine where they land on those negotiations.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. I appreciate the lecture on how to negotiate—

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will be directly relevant to the question.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I am speaking about the negotiations, but they have not concluded. It goes to the point about how those opposite used to budget: They just made it up. I make it very clear that the Government is in negotiations. Those negotiations are respectful. The Police Association and the agency are working closely together to make sure those negotiations have a positive outcome. [*Extension of time*]

I have answered the question succinctly. The negotiations have not finished. How can one budget for something that they have not gotten to a conclusion on? Members opposite have not got used to the fact that they are in opposition.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order relates to direct relevance. The budget has assumptions within it. The question asks what the assumption is.

**The SPEAKER:** I upheld the previous point of order. The Minister will articulate her answer more clearly.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It is interesting that the Opposition asked for an extension of time and then called a point of order. That is so typical of the members opposite. As I say, it is a brave move getting me on my feet when the Opposition members want to talk about the cops. They left us 1,500 cops short and now they want to pretend to be the people who support police. They had the opportunity. They should have done that when they were at the Cabinet table. When they were at the Cabinet table they had the opportunity to stick up for the police. Did they ever stand there and say, "I don't support the wages cap"?

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Dubbo that he is on two calls to order. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** No, they did not. They sent their wages backwards. Now we have police leaving the force in droves, and that is on those opposite.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the second time. What is the point of order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 74. The Minister is clearly inviting quarrels, but she is also flouting your ruling. The Speaker has asked the Minister to be directly relevant, and she has not answered the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the first part of the point of order. The Minister is being quarrelsome. The Minister will direct her answer through the Chair.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I will not be lectured to by members opposite when it comes to the police. They should stop bagging the cops. That is all they do. They should back them like the Government does.

### STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister please update the House on how the State budget continues the Government's work to build better communities by ensuring access to reliable public transport close to where people live?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (15:11):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, and member for Coogee. I am very pleased to report to the House that our Government is delivering reliable public transport services for the growing communities that need it. We are delivering public transport close to homes and helping to deliver the homes that are desperately needed across our State. This will ensure that we do not continue to create suburbs that do not have the public transport services they need. That is what those opposite did; our approach is the absolute opposite of that. I begin with bus services because they are the forgotten mode of public transport. Buses transport 40 per cent of our public transport passengers. In fact, over 300 million trips are taken on our buses each year.

Under those opposite, they were completely neglected for 12 years. In fact, those opposite created Uber-only suburbs with rapidly growing populations, particularly in Western Sydney, without the services that they needed. That is why \$25 million has been dedicated in our budget to improve the frequency and reliability of bus routes in those growing communities. For example, the 780 bus between St Marys and Tregear will now also go to Penrith, and it will operate on weekends. Those are the kinds of services that those communities deserve and need, and our investment in the budget will see that happen. We are also planning for the future—something that those opposite completely failed to do. When I became the Minister for Transport, I looked through the drawers and there was not a single plan for buses.

Our Bus Industry Taskforce said the number one thing that we needed to do was to create a medium-term bus plan—a blueprint for the future—so that our communities across New South Wales have the bus services that they need. That is exactly what we are doing. We are also building the public transport infrastructure of the future. There is \$2 billion in our budget today to make Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 a reality. We promised it once and delivered it—not 17 times like those opposite. We delivered it in this budget. We are making our train services more reliable as well, with a \$447 million commitment to refurbish our Tangaras. Those opposite outsourced the contract, failed and wasted hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Not true.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It is absolutely true.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Instead, we have faith in the Sydney Trains workforce. We have faith in our people to deliver essential public transport services and to upgrade those trains. They are the same people and the same skills we will need to build the future trains here as well. [*Extension of time*]

It is not just about building future trains; it is about ensuring we back Australian made. We know what members opposite did. They were obsessed with privatisation. They were obsessed with overseas made. What did we get? We got ferries that could not fit under bridges, crashed trams and trains that did not fit the tracks. In fact, we got so-called congestion-busting roads with queues of traffic for miles. Let us remember that the now shadow transport Minister was the roads Minister at the time. The Hon. Natalie Ward, in the other place—I know we

invited the Treasurer here today, but we are not inviting her—likes to be at places where there are announcements. But, unfortunately, when things go awry, she is not there. Let us take the Rozelle interchange as an example. There was a very interesting piece of work by my favourite transport editor, Mr Matt O'Sullivan, in *The Sydney Morning Herald* last week, and its title was, "Secret warnings were given about Rozelle traffic chaos three years ago. They were ignored." When asked about whether or not the shadow transport Minister was briefed, she said, "No. I cannot recall."

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: My point of order relates to direct relevance. We are talking specifically about public transport. We are now off onto the Rozelle interchange. That is not public transport.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Dubbo. The Minister has been directly relevant but she is now straying a little from public transport.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Indeed, when she was asked on 2GB, she said, "I don't recall every single briefing I was given ... it was not top of mind." I will tell you what the shadow Minister has now done. She has put herself in charge of an inquiry into WestConnex, the very debacle that she oversaw. I have to say, she does not need an inquiry; she needs a mirror.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, the Minister is flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not uphold the previous point of order. I brought the issue of relevance to the Minister's attention. The time for the answer has expired.

### STATE BUDGET AND HEALTH CARE

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (15:16):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. The Australian Medical Association (NSW) vice-president, Dr Fred Betros, says that the 2024-25 health budget "falls below actual health CPI, meaning that after health inflation, this is an effective loss." Why is the Minister cutting health spending after inflation for the second year in a row?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (15:17):** This is probably a warning for all new MPs.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order, particularly the member for Port Macquarie.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I will not lie, it happened to me once or twice in 2011 when I might have been on the end of the little bit of bruising from former Minister Piccoli. Especially for the brains trust opposite, the last thing they should do when the knock comes is to take the question, put it in their pocket, go down to question time, stand up and ask it. I brought a copy of the budget in here with me. People know I am a slight micromanager, a bit of a nerd and all of those things that I am teased about. On page 7-1 of *Budget Paper No.02*—for the National Party members, it does not have pictures; be wary of that—under the Ministry of Health, the total excluding impact of one-off factors change percentage is five per cent. That answers that. Interestingly, today in the budget we have delivered an important reform for the Australian Medical Association, and I am glad you mentioned the AMA. That is the other crazy thing not to do—mention someone who has backed the Government in today. I am not going to say what the AMA said about me, the Minister for Finance, the Treasurer and the Premier. I will not go on about that; it's a bit over the top.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister says he has dealt with the question, but clearly he has not. The question is about cutting health spending after inflation. He has quoted a budget figure, but—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. That is a debating point.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** You do not get more relevant—

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister could not have been more directly relevant.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The AMA said:

The Minns Government will be the first state to offer this guarantee in legislation. ... Legislating "no retrospectivity" ...

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The AMA continued:

Unfortunately, general practice continues to struggle with decades of underfunding from the previous Commonwealth Government.

That is the lesson: This Government has delivered 5 per cent growth, built the hospitals that those opposite wanted, invested in staff and is delivering for communities across New South Wales.

## STATE BUDGET AND HOUSING

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:20):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the Building Homes for NSW program, announced in the budget, will help address the State's housing crisis? Also, what advice would he give to a couple celebrating their thirtieth wedding anniversary?

**The SPEAKER:** I would not normally allow a question to be phrased in that way. I congratulate the member for Blacktown on his wedding anniversary.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (15:20):** Speaking as someone who has only recently celebrated his sixteenth wedding anniversary—I wish my wife, Alison, happy anniversary for a couple of weeks ago—I suggest the member should have planned well for his thirtieth. I congratulate the member for Blacktown on his 30 years with Anne; my commiserations to Anne for enduring 30 years with Steve. There are some great restaurants in Sydney. I know the member for Blacktown has a booking at one of them to celebrate with you, Anne. Run up his credit card!

The Government is confronting the housing crisis in New South Wales with this budget, in stark contrast to the Opposition's plan, which is to have no plan when it comes to housing. We are getting on with the job of tackling the biggest cost-of-living issue facing New South Wales households right now. Under the Building Homes for NSW program, more than 30,000 new homes will be delivered across the State. These are in addition to the homes that will be delivered as part and parcel of our planning reforms—those that members opposite are trying to stop. The Building Homes for NSW program includes up to 21,000 new market and affordable homes to directly address the housing crisis. It includes 8,400 social housing homes, to ensure that we are addressing that part of the market as well.

In a first for New South Wales, the Government is also investing in a program dedicated to key worker housing. This Government is providing \$450 million to Landcom, the public's home builder, to build more affordable key worker housing for nurses, firefighters, police and paramedics, who often find themselves priced out of the housing market in the areas in which they are providing services to our community. We all rely on them in times of need. We rely on them to give our kids the finest education through our public schools. This Government is going to help them into homes near to where they work, to end their hours of commuting back and forth across Sydney. New build-to-rent apartments will be designated for key workers.

Spending a couple of hours commuting across the city at the beginning and end of each work day and working a 12-hour shift in between is not only productivity sapping but it is lifestyle sapping. As the Premier said, key workers cannot get involved in the communities in which they live—in the P&C, the sporting clubs, the community organisations—because they do not have the time to commit to them. That is why this Government is undertaking programs to make sure that homes will be available for people. [*Extension of time*]

This is the biggest investment in the housing market in the State's history, on top of our planning reforms, which are delivering more choices of type of home for people of all incomes and stages of life. We are investing in social, affordable and key worker housing, and in the enabling infrastructure to support it. It raises the question, as the Treasurer did earlier, that if those opposite do not want homes built near transport hubs and they do not want homes built now, where and when do they want homes built? There is a real pitched battle within the Opposition about housing. It is not about how much further to go; it is about how much further those opposite can drag things backwards. But there have been some good interventions recently. I never thought there would come a day when I would be quoting Senator Andrew Bragg twice during question time, but he has pointed out:

If we are pro-NIMBY, it is impossible to deliver intergenerational fairness.

Intergenerational fairness is exactly what this Government will be delivering through our Building Homes for NSW program. The following comment was also reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* yesterday:

We are in a crisis and we have to throw everything at this problem because we cannot keep moving further and further out west.

That was not said by me or the Premier, although we have both said very similar things; it was said by Jenny Wares, the Liberal member for Hughes. She gets it. She should talk to her neighbouring member, the Leader of the Opposition, and perhaps give him some insights into how it is that intergenerational fairness, fairness for key workers, fairness for the most vulnerable, fairness for people escaping family and domestic violence, is served best by building more homes. That is what this budget delivers. That is the task we will get on with, because we understand that the biggest cost-of-living pressure at the moment is housing affordability and the way to deal with that is by delivering a sensible budget that delivers more homes for people into the future.

### LAND TAX AND SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:25):** My question is directed to the Minister for Small Business. The Government is discontinuing the indexation of land tax thresholds. Why is it hitting struggling small businesses with more land tax and no relief from other State taxes?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (15:26):** I thank the member for Miranda for her question. There was an assumption made by the member in that question that all land tax cost gets passed onto small business; that is not correct. It is a very small component of land tax that gets passed on. It depends on the lease agreement, the type of property—it depends on many things. I think it is a bit rich of the member for Miranda to throw that statement around. Given the history, the land tax measure in the budget is modest.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

Don't you like to listen? How about you sit back and listen? Listen to some facts.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Dubbo that he is on three calls to order.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The modest land tax measures in the budget will raise \$1.5 billion over four years, which will be used for measures in the budget to address the housing crisis—a crisis that those opposite helped to create over 12 years of inaction. We are doing the hard yards by creating—

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** This is a really good fact the member for Miranda might enjoy, if she is really concerned about small business. The former Government introduced or increased taxes, removed concessions or adjusted thresholds 22 times while in office—22 times. Revenues in its budgets raised a total of \$35 billion. That is a fact.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** How about those opposite take that on board and talk about their representation in this—

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

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. Mr Speaker, I ask that you return the Minister to the question, which is about the impact of indexed land tax on small businesses, which are struggling at record levels of insolvency in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will resume her seat. It is not the time for a speech. I am not sure whether the Minister has been directly relevant, but I will give him the benefit of the doubt.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I have been directly relevant. The question was based on the assumption that all small businesses are going to cop the land tax threshold impact. The adjustment to threshold indexation will bring New South Wales in line with all other States except South Australia and will improve the efficiency of the tax base over the long term, to quote Mike Baird when he froze the payroll tax threshold in 2018. Members opposite do not want to remember that. That hit heavily on small business, because it had a direct impact. It is also worth noting that the New South Wales land tax threshold remains around 50 per cent higher than the next nearest State, which is South Australia.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The time for the answer has expired. The Minister has concluded his answer.

### STATE BUDGET AND NSW POLICE FORCE

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on how the State budget invests in our police, ensuring they have what they need to investigate crime and keep our communities safe?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:30):** I would be delighted to do that. I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question. He is an exceptional Parliamentary Secretary, and he is very concerned about and active in looking after his community. Unlike those opposite, this Government is serious about investing in our essential services and the workers who provide those services in our wonderful communities. Our essential service workers are doing it tough because of the cost of living, especially after enduring 12 years of a Liberal government that drove their wages backwards

and their living standards into the ground. That is why our Labor Government scrapped the former Government's savage wages cap.

Our essential service workers are finding it difficult to secure housing. That is why we are proudly investing \$450 million to build homes for police, health workers and teachers. We want our police to have secure roofs over their heads, and we want those roofs to be near where they work. Police are dealing with a domestic violence epidemic. That is why we are investing \$230 million in our domestic and family violence emergency package, supporting victims of domestic and family violence. Helping victim-survivors remain safe will assist police who carry a traumatic burden when responding to that insidious crime around the clock in our State.

One of the biggest challenges I faced coming into my role was the disastrous recruitment and retention problems left by the unfinished mob opposite. It is an absolutely horrendous legacy, but one they own. Those opposite put up barrier after barrier to becoming a police officer. There was the wage cap, four months of unpaid training at the Goulburn Academy and a housing crisis. I could go on; there is much more. We are tearing down those barriers to make sure that police have a better working life. It is why we made our historic decision to pay recruits. [*Extension of time*]

We have launched our professional mobility program to allow cops from other States and across the Tasman to join the NSW Police Force at their existing rank. We recently launched our innovative regional recruitment strategy to allow regional students who may not want to transfer to the city to stay in or close to their communities. If any person wants to become a cop in this State, I want nothing in their way. We are also committed to making sure that the NSW Police Force has access to everything it needs to solve crimes and keep our communities safe. Some \$14.2 million will improve the capability of the Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command, specifically in the high-tech command. In addition, \$10.4 million will fund the State's component of the National Firearms Register, a long-awaited reform that is finally happening because a Federal Labor government worked with the States. There is \$1.6 million to upgrade 3,000 police radio terminals. And to support the fantastic work of the NSW Police Force's Youth Command, we are injecting \$1.4 million to help fund PCYC club manager wages so the organisation can continue to guide young people towards fulfilling lives.

We are also making sure that police have the modern, fit-for-purpose facilities that they need. That includes \$18.2 million over two years for major upgrades to modernise Waverley Police Station; \$4.7 million over three years for upgrades and repairs to Rose Bay Police Station; \$6.3 million over four years to replace cladding at Raymond Terrace, Liverpool, Granville and Wyong police stations; and \$14.5 million over two years to continue upgrades at the Goulburn Police Academy. In addition, \$3 million will be spent this year completing the new police station at Helensburgh, which was promised for years and delivered by Labor.

#### STATE BUDGET AND HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:35):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given today's budget announcement that Landcom will deliver up to 21,000 new homes on public land identified by the surplus public land audit, will the Premier tell the House and the people of New South Wales what percentage of those homes will be public housing or genuinely affordable housing, and how many on that public land will be privatised?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (15:35):** I thank the member for Newtown for an important question in today's context. Today's announcement includes 30,000 homes across New South Wales, with 21,000 as part of the land audit. I confirm that 9,000 will be social and affordable, which is roughly 30 per cent. We have taken a decision that the best way to get social housing into the system as soon as possible, without waiting for a private developer to build on government land, is to have direct government spend as part of this budget. We have listened to advocacy groups, those in the sector and those who are desperate for an intervention from the New South Wales Government to make it easier for people on the social housing waiting list, many of whom are fleeing domestic and family violence, to get help sooner.

In addition to that announcement, \$1 billion will be set aside for 33,000 existing homes. Investment in the dilapidated stock of social housing in New South Wales is long overdue. Many of those homes are completely uninhabitable, notwithstanding that they are on the Government's books. They are in desperate need of rehabilitation. The Government has begun that process. We have rehabilitated existing stock and got families in particular into those houses as soon as possible. All of that is rendered necessary—not an opt-in but a must-have—as a result of the past 10 years of chronic, systemic underinvestment in social housing, particularly for domestic and family violence survivors in our community. The numbers do not lie. There has been a net reduction of 15,000 social houses in New South Wales.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That 15,000 reduction was at exactly the same time as housing skyrocketed as a percentage of take-home pay for individuals in our community. That is a 13 per cent reduction in the social housing

in our communities. Even the most cold-hearted economic reactionary in this House would say that it is money well spent for our most vulnerable, who need to live and work in one of the most expensive cities in the entire world, according to international independent analysis. I will say I have probably been a little bit hard on The Greens in the past. It is important to note credit where it is due. They have been passionate supporters of social housing in our community for a long time. I do not know whether the member for Newtown wants to give me an extension of time.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** It is not too late.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Mr Speaker, I seek an extension of time. I was waiting to see whether there was going to be a "but".

**The SPEAKER:** I grant a two-minute extension. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I timed my run. I have to say, the flatterer is seldom interrupted. That is certainly the history of the New South Wales Greens and a lot of Independents. A lot of country members have been passionate supporters. Even the National Party recognises there is a strong role for social housing, particularly in regional communities, because they do not like seeing families busted up as a result of housing costs going through the roof. There is a conspicuous absence and that is the New South Wales Liberal Party members, who are in the midst of an attempt to close down housing opportunities for young people in New South Wales with the abandonment of the Transport Oriented Development Program, which is about density close to public transport. It is a straightforward, easy to do, important part of New South Wales housing architecture.

There is another initiative that is being spruiked by the member for Hornsby, who was on *Q+A* when he said, "I think we need to look at a range of measures when it comes to housing, and the one that we're talking about aggressively is allowing young people to access superannuation to be able to own their own slice of the Australian dream." I quote the transcript, "Audience: Boo! Boo!" and "Patricia Karvelas: Sounds like everyone's not a fan of that here, Matt." Then Matt goes on to say, "But it's about helping people." Then Karvelas said, "I know what you're saying, but it's not very popular." I was interested to see that that exchange was on Matt's TikTok and social media. That is great and very interesting, but of course he edited out all of the boos and Patricia Karvelas's commentary. That is how he has so much confidence for someone who is so disliked in our community—he edits out the boos.

#### STATE BUDGET AND DEBT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:41):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General in his capacity representing the Minister for Finance. Will the Attorney General update the House on how the State budget continues to responsibly reduce debt?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (15:41):** I thank the member for Granville for her question and for her ongoing interest in this very important issue—how the Government is cleaning up the debt mess left behind by the previous Government. I say at the start that while members opposite should apologise, but they do not, while they should show remorse, and they will not, for the damage they inflicted upon New South Wales, members on the Government side of the House are rolling up our sleeves and getting on with the task of putting the State's finances back together. Before I get to the specific measures in the budget to reduce debt, I take a moment to remind the House at how we arrived at this point.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Just how much debt are we in?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I will tell the planning Minister. The previous Government delivered the two biggest deficits in the State's history—over \$15 billion in 2021-22 and over \$10 billion in 2022-23.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** If that is not bad enough, in just nine months leading up to the election in March 2023, the former Treasurer and member for Hornsby, also known as the "Spending Machine", who is not in the House again—he keeps dodging me—added \$27 billion of new policy measures to the budget in just nine months. That is surely a record and not one that any member in this place, even as shameless as he is, could be proud of. It goes without saying that the State's fiscal position would be significantly better today if the "Spending Machine" had not gone on that reckless \$27 billion spending spree in the former Government's dying days. That was bold-faced, irresponsible, shameless electioneering.

If that is not enough, the former Government left behind the biggest debt ever handed from one government to another in the history of New South Wales. I will say that again: the biggest debt ever handed from an outgoing government to the next in the history of this State. What a legacy! Now New South Wales taxpayers are paying

for the former Government's mistakes, like the \$1.1 billion double count of asset sales by Sydney Metro and their wages cap that meant that thousands of teachers, nurses, healthcare workers and police roles were left vacant. Yet they have the gall to ask the police Minister questions about rising crime rates. If there is one thing we could do to guarantee rising crime rates, it would be to leave the biggest hole in the ranks of the New South Wales police and the biggest hole in the budget. Still, members opposite are shameless. This Government is dealing with the consequences of record public debt. [*Extension of time*]

All I can say in the limited time left to me is that Government members will remain calm, measured and will get on with our job, like the adults that we are.

#### *Documents*

### **INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Shortland Correctional Centre and Cessnock Correctional Centre 2023*, dated June 2024 and received on 13 June 2024. I order that the report be printed.

### **AUDITOR-GENERAL**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following:

- (1) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Oversight of the child protection system*, dated 6 June 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Safeguarding the rights of Aboriginal children in the child protection system*, dated 6 June 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Universities 2023*, dated 12 June 2024, received out of session on 12 June 2024 and authorised to be printed.

### **COERCIVE CONTROL IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION TASKFORCE**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Crimes Act 1900, I announce receipt of the report of the Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce entitled *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022: Statutory Report*, dated 1 June 2024, received out of session on 17 June 2024 and authorised to be printed.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 15/58*, dated 18 June 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

#### **Inquiry**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** On behalf of the Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters has resolved to conduct an inquiry into proposals to increase voter engagement, participation and confidence, the full details of which are available on the Committee's home page.

#### *Petitions*

### **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to paper petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Ron Hoenig—Goulburn Mulwaree Council—lodged 7 May 2024 (Mrs Wendy Tuckerman)

The Hon. Prue Car—Broadwater Public School—lodged 8 May 2024 (Mr Richie Williamson)

The Hon. Ryan Park—Batemans Bay Emergency Department—lodged 9 May 2024 (Mr Mark Speakman)

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to ePetitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Penny Sharpe—Waste-to-Energy Incinerators—lodged 7 May 2024 (Ms Janelle Saffin)

The Hon. Prue Car—Scripture and Ethics Lessons—lodged 7 May 2024 (Mr David Mehan)

*Business of the House*

### **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1238 to 1324 have lapsed.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

*Bills*

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

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 6 June 2024.**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:03):** On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024 and confirm that the Coalition will support the legislation. We join the Government in acknowledging the critical need for more capacity to meet demand for burial and cremation services in Sydney over the coming years, providing certainty to public and not-for-profit cemetery operators, and making services accessible and affordable for people of all faiths as well as those who are not religious, without compromising the beauty and utility of our cemeteries, crematoria and memorial parks.

The bill seeks to enshrine a two-operator model for managing Crown cemeteries in Sydney—a public metropolitan memorial parks and a charitable trust, which will be the successor to the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [CMCT]. The Opposition supports the implementation of the reform, which represents a conclusion to a process of consolidation that began under the previous Coalition Government. The bill will bring an end to transitional arrangements whereby the CMCT has continued to operate under the provisions of an Act repealed by the Cemeteries and Crematorium Act 2013. There have been nine extensions to those transitional arrangements. The next statutory deadline expires on 1 July 2024, which adds some timeliness to this legislation.

The bill will put settings in place to establish an operating model for the CMCT's successor. The model will permit the successor to the CMCT to continue working as a charitable trust, replacing the CMCT with a three-tiered governance structure, which will allow the Catholic Church to deliver interment services—as it has done for more than 150 years on Crown land—to people of all faiths and beliefs and, indeed, to those with none. The new governance structure will involve a land manager appointed by the Minister, a charitable trust responsible for the proceeds and non-Crown assets, and a licensee responsible for cemetery operations. As the Minister noted in his second reading speech, the Catholic Church is committed to the delivery of burial and cremation services to those of all faiths and none, as demonstrated by the Macarthur Memorial Park at Varroville. It will be the first new Crown cemetery in Sydney in many decades and will provide up to 136,000 burial plots when it opens in March 2025. The cemetery will be accessible to people of all faiths. Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust CEO, Lauren Hardgrove, has said of the development:

Macarthur Memorial Park will be an innovative, sustainable multi-denominational memorial parkland destination.

There will be modern function spaces to accommodate both intimate gatherings and larger groups surrounded by scenic open landscape.

The bill also addresses the February 2024 decision of the New South Wales Court of Appeal confirming the CMCT's status as a charitable trust for the purpose of burying people of the Catholic faith in the Rookwood Catholic Cemetery alone. The legislation will address those limitations. The CMCT buries non-Catholics and does so at cemeteries other than Rookwood. As the Minister highlighted, that has been done in good faith in service to the whole community and its successor will continue the practice. The bill will excuse breaches of the CMCT's registered purpose, which was the burial of Catholics in the Catholic section of Rookwood cemetery only. Plainly speaking, the purpose of the trust was too narrow and the bill will empower the CMCT's successor to serve the entire community across all its Crown cemeteries.

Further, the bill seeks to clarify the status of any land currently managed by the CMCT as Crown lands and any acquired by its successor as automatically designated Crown lands. Lastly, the bill extinguishes outstanding or potential financial obligations of Metropolitan Memorial Parks to organisations that had funds absorbed during the 2012 trust amalgamations. The bill will also facilitate the removal of usage limitations on the InvoCare site at Rookwood, which was formerly reserved for cremations only, freeing up an additional 5,000 burial plots. The bipartisan approach removes the uncertainty that has characterised the industry for some time now. It will allow operators to get on with the essential services they are best equipped to provide, which is what the community and stakeholders want and deserve.

I thank the various faith groups and communities that have engaged on the issue and lent their support to the legislation, including the Muslim Cemeteries Board, representing 24 mosques and Muslim groups; the Coptic Orthodox Church Sydney; the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania; the Russian Orthodox Australian and New Zealand Diocese; the Armenian community; the Al-Zahra Muslim community; the Dharawal Indigenous community; the Polish community; the Campbelltown and Region Filipino Community Council; the Australian Devotees of Our Lady of Penafancia; Grief Australia; and the Lebanese Muslim Association.

I look forward to engaging further with them all in the future and welcome their input, going forward, on how we can best strengthen and support the sector in a way that aligns with their faiths, cultures and practices. The Opposition believes in providing certainty to cemetery operators, both public and not for profit, to ensure that residents of Sydney across all faiths and those of no faith have access to affordable burial and cremation services of their choosing. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:10):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024, which aims to provide a comprehensive framework for managing Catholic cemeteries and crematoria in New South Wales. The bill was introduced by the Minister for Lands and Property and is intended to address longstanding issues and modernise the operation of those facilities. The Minister has outlined the reasons the bill must progress as a matter of urgency. There is a statutory deadline of 1 July 2024 for implementing the new arrangements. The Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [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, under schedule 7 to the Crown Land Management Act, all CMCT's assets, rights and liabilities will vest in its corporate manager, the Catholic Cemeteries Board.

That privately owned entity is controlled by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. Given the importance of ensuring that burial and cremation services are accessible, sustainable and affordable going forward, there is a need for reform to accommodate Sydney's growing population and the increasing demand for burial spaces. The Government's strategy aims to enhance the overall efficiency and sustainability of cemetery management across the State by Catholic cemeteries and crematoria. Catholic cemeteries and crematoria hold significant importance within the Catholic faith for several reasons, encompassing theological, cultural and communal aspects. Catholic cemeteries are consecrated, reflecting the belief in the sanctity of the human body and its future resurrection. The cemeteries often serve as places where families can be buried together, maintaining a sense of community and continuity with past generations. They reflect the communal aspect of the faith, where the deceased are still considered part of the church.

Catholic cemeteries provide dedicated spaces for the performance of burial rites, prayers and memorial masses. They are places the faithful can visit to pray for the souls of the deceased, reflecting the practice of praying for the dead. Catholic cemeteries often preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the Catholic community, maintaining the history and memories of past generations. While the church traditionally preferred burial, it now accepts cremation, provided it is not chosen for reasons contrary to Christian teachings. Crematoria facilitate that option, ensuring that it aligns with Catholic beliefs and practices. Catholic crematoria ensure that the cremation process is handled with the same respect and dignity as burial.

The church stipulates that ashes should be kept in a sacred place, such as a cemetery or a columbarium, rather than scattered or kept at home. Crematoria provide spaces for Catholic rituals and ceremonies associated with cremation, ensuring that the rites of the church are undertaken and respected during the cremation process. Catholic crematoria offer pastoral support to grieving families, helping them navigate the process in a way that aligns with their faith and provides comfort and spiritual support. By providing facilities for the respectful cremation of remains, Catholic crematoria help maintain the church's traditions and teachings while adapting to modern practices. Together, Catholic cemeteries and crematoria provide a comprehensive approach to handling the deceased in a manner consistent with Catholic beliefs. They offer options that respect both traditional burial and cremation, ensuring that all practices are conducted within the framework of church teachings.

In essence, Catholic cemeteries and crematoria play crucial roles in supporting the faithful through their practices surrounding death, reflecting core beliefs, providing pastoral care and maintaining traditions that honour the deceased with dignity and respect. The bill will address the critical shortage of burial space in Sydney and end the continuing fight over control and management of Crown cemeteries. The bill lays the foundation for the new operating structure, appoints Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Limited as trustee and confirms that the trust will continue to be subject to the Charitable Trusts Act 1993. The bill demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to partnering with cemetery operators across all faiths and in both the public and private sectors. The bill aims to establish a consistent regulatory framework for the operation of Catholic cemeteries and crematoria. That helps ensure that the institutions operate under clear and uniform guidelines. It provides mechanisms for oversight and enforcement, ensuring that cemetery and crematorium operators comply with legal and ethical standards.

The bill will promote environmentally sustainable practices in cemetery and crematorium operations, such as eco-friendly burials and the management of land use. It ensures that the land used for cemeteries and crematoria is managed respectfully and responsibly, balancing the need for burial space. By regulating the industry, the bill helps maintain economic stability for organisations managing cemeteries and crematoria, ensuring that they can continue to operate and serve their communities. It fosters good relations between cemetery operators and local communities by addressing concerns such as land use, environmental impact and cultural heritage. The bill encourages long-term planning and development of cemeteries and crematoria to meet future needs, considering demographic changes and societal trends.

Overall, the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Bill 2024 is essential for ensuring that Catholic cemeteries and crematoria are managed in a way that respects religious traditions, preserves cultural heritage, protects the rights of individuals and promotes sustainable and ethical practices. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:18):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024. I thank the Minister for the work that has been done to introduce the bill to the House. In March 2024 the New South Wales Government released a strategic statement for cemeteries and crematoria, *Delivering strong consumer outcomes for Cemeteries and Crematoria in NSW*. That statement is a transformative blueprint for the sector and shares the Government's vision:

... that all people in NSW have access to sustainable and affordable burial and cremation services ...

These services should be respectful of culture and faith, and provided in a consistent, transparent and accountable way. The strategic statement addresses key challenges and issues raised in the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 statutory report entitled *The 11th Hour*, and IPART's report on interment costs and pricing in New South Wales. It focuses on three priority action areas: delivering strong consumer protection for customers and communities, supporting sustainable practices to promote new supply and providing certainty for Crown cemetery operators. In particular, the bill is a key action in delivering the Government's commitment to a two-operator model for Crown cemeteries.

The bill provides certainty for our Crown operators. As members have heard, one operator is Metropolitan Memorial Parks [MMP], created in July 2023 through the merger of three former Crown cemetery operators. Its inaugural skills-based board commenced in December 2023, and the inaugural CEO commenced in February 2024, following a competitive recruitment process. MMP is in a stronger financial and operational position. The organisation has reported that it is able to fund its perpetual maintenance obligations from funds that are now under management. MMP can therefore focus on generating new supply options to meet customer and community needs into the future. The other Crown operator will be the successor to the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [CMCT], and it is this operator that is the main focus of the current bill.

Expanding the purpose of the existing charitable trust will enable the CMCT's successor to continue the work of interring people of all faiths and also those without a faith. The reforms in the bill build on the significant progress made by Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW [CCNSW] in regulating the sector. A new interment industry scheme that requires all cemetery operators to apply for a licence by no later than 30 September 2024 has been introduced by CCNSW, with over 125 licences already issued. From 1 October 2024, industry standards to benefit customers will be implemented across the interment industry for the very first time. Strong consumer protections and high customer care standards are important so that people will have less to worry about during what is ordinarily an extraordinarily difficult time in their life. Recognising that this is a period of transition for much of the industry, CCNSW is working with operators to help them understand and implement the standards and deliver consistent service outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

Both MMP and the successor to the CMCT will be required to be fully compliant with the licence conditions once commenced. CCNSW reports that Crown operators have been extremely helpful in providing input into the development of the scheme and setting model practices across the sector. Importantly, the bill will

unlock barriers to new burial supply. Burial supply is of particular importance to four major faith groups. Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish faith groups all require burial as part of the afterlife ceremony, as do Indigenous Australians. The CMCT is currently developing the first new Crown cemetery in decades, Macarthur Memorial Park, located at Varroville in Sydney's south-west. It will provide up to 136,000 burial plots. The cemetery is due to open in March 2025. The bill clarifies that the CMCT's successor will be able to use trust proceeds to develop and operate that cemetery for people of any faith or of no faith. That provides the certainty the operator will need to continue with that critical project.

The bill will also unlock burial space at Rookwood cemetery. It will revoke a restrictive proclamation over the crematorium site currently leased by InvoCare and allow it to be used for bodily interments. That will add up to 5,000 burial plots at Rookwood. As I said in my opening remarks, I am pleased to speak in support of the bill because it aligns with the ongoing strategic reform of the sector. It provides certainty for people who have major concerns about burial space and ensures that their loved ones are cared for once they leave this life. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:24):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024. It is a very important bill that has been a long time coming, as have the reforms. The bill responds to the chronic inaction and neglect of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government, which led to prolonged uncertainty for Crown cemetery operators and a shortage of burial space throughout New South Wales, particularly in Western Sydney and the Sydney basin. The bill is a critical step towards creating a sustainable and inclusive two-operator model for Sydney's Crown cemeteries, delivering on a commitment made in April 2023 and affirmed by this Government in its March 2024 strategic statement. Discussions were had for many months prior to the election. The issue was vigorously pursued by the Sydney Archdiocese and many other faith groups, because time and again they were not able to find burial space for their loved ones and members of their community.

It is imperative that the Crown cemetery operators have certainty for their future operations. That is an absolute priority, as their services are provided to all people of New South Wales in times of great vulnerability and grief, regardless of their faith or background. By creating certainty for the two large Crown cemetery operators, the bill provides the foundation and framework for Crown cemetery operators to continue sustainably into the future. As other speakers have mentioned, the New South Wales Court of Appeal decision in February confirmed the presence of a Catholic charitable trust. While the Court's decision provided clarity on the status of the trust, it also brought about a need for urgent legislative action. The current purpose of the Catholic charitable trust is very narrow and applies only to Catholic burials at Rookwood Catholic Cemetery. That means that Catholic trust proceeds cannot presently be used towards burying people of other faiths and those without a faith, or any other cemetery managed by the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, or CMCT. Modifying the purposes of the Catholic trust will enable the CMCT's successor to continue the important work of interring people of all faiths.

The bill also provides certainty for the other Crown operator, Metropolitan Memorial Parks, or MMP, by abolishing any other charitable trusts that may exist in equity over MMP's assets. Those changes deal with any lingering uncertainty and limit the possibility of future legal action brought in respect of other claimed trusts that may exist over the proceeds that MMP and the CMCT manage. That certainty is critical for the future operation of MMP's and the CMCT's successor. By acting now, we are providing both Crown cemetery operators with a clear and certain operating environment for the future. Another important aspect of the bill is that it clearly identifies that the land managed by the CMCT and its successor is Crown land, as will be any future land acquired by the new Catholic operator. That is equivalent to the lands managed by MMP. As a statutory land manager, all land managed by MMP is Crown land. All future land acquisitions will need to be approved by the Minister, providing State oversight of any new cemetery land coming into the Crown estate. That will ensure that the New South Wales Government retains Crown cemetery land as public land now and into the future.

The bill also offers greater certainty for not only the operators but also the consumers and the wider community. The CMCT has provided interment services to the people of New South Wales to a very high standard for the past 160 years. Both the CMCT and MMP, as Crown operators, are in a strong financial position and are able to self-fund their respective perpetual maintenance requirements for the cemeteries they operate. They are in a strong operating position, and the bill locks that in by setting the framework for continuity of service. That is critical to families now and, even more so, into the future as demand for interment services increases. People will continue to have the option of being buried in Crown cemeteries managed by MMP or cemeteries managed on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, regardless of their faith or beliefs.

As an MP from Western Sydney who represents a multicultural community, it is extremely important to me that all faith groups are looked after when it comes to burial services. It is important that people from Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist or different Christian backgrounds have certainty when burying their loved ones. There is a

large Chaldean community in my electorate, and they opened a cemetery in the past few years because they were so concerned about new generations coming from Iraq after the war with ISIS and where those people would be buried. The Assyrian Church of the East has had similar problems, as has the Orthodox community and the Coptic community, which has a cathedral within the electoral district of Prospect. The bill helps to solve those issues.

We still need to find more land for cemeteries and areas that we can inter our loved ones, but the bill helps that along. As I said in my opening remarks, I am pleased to speak in support of the bill because it addresses the need for certainty in the Crown cemeteries sector going forward. Every person in New South Wales deserves accessible, sustainable and affordable burial and cremation services. The bill is a step towards achieving that objective. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:32):** I speak in support of the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024. My colleagues in this place have spoken well about some of the detail and set out what the bill does. I note the bipartisan support of the bill. In summary, the bill gives certainty for the future operations of the two largest Crown cemetery operators in New South Wales, the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [CMCT] and the Metropolitan Memorial Parks [MMP] land manager. It also creates the setting to implement the operating model for the CMCT's successor. It lays the foundation for a two-operator model for the Crown cemeteries sector in Greater Sydney. I frequently ask my colleagues to back me in the regions, so it is important that I back them on issues that primarily relate to Sydney, and I am happy to do that.

The bill addresses the outcome of the New South Wales Court of Appeal decision by affirming the existence of a Catholic charitable trust and expanding its purpose to allow interment of people of any faith or no faith across all cemeteries managed by the CMCT. It allows the use of funds derived from the cemeteries managed by the CMCT across all of those cemeteries, not limited to just one. It allows for the future acquisition of cemetery land for the State, with the Minister's consent. The bill also confirms the operational structure of the CMCT's successor, confirms State ownership of the CMCT-managed cemetery land and abolishes all other charitable trusts and equitable interests for Metropolitan Memorial Parks. The bill covers off on breaches by MMP and the CMCT, and their predecessor entities. In a sense, it sets right the past and gets right the organisational structure for the future. It is also about the financial sustainability of the model facilitated by the bill.

The Minister for Lands and Property spoke about the importance of Crown cemetery operators and their role in ensuring that government meets its commitment to enduring, affordable and accessible burial and cremation services for the people of New South Wales. I would call it an essential obligation. The two Crown cemetery operators are critical providers, and the bill allows them to remain active service providers for decades to come. The terms of the trust were previously too narrow to allow the CMCT or its successor to continue to utilise the trust proceeds in the way that they wanted it used. This must, and will, be remedied. The existing legislative provisions governing the CMCT expire on 1 July. That is only a couple of weeks away, meaning that the Government must act now to provide a clear and certain operating environment and future for the CMCT's successor. That is exactly what the bill does. The new arrangements recognise the equitable charitable trust that was found to exist by the Court of Appeal. I note that the Minister for Lands and Property is in the Chamber.

In summary, the Government has committed to a two-operator model. The bill recognises that the Government has a role in ensuring the provision of cemeteries as essential social infrastructure. The structural model approved by the Government will see the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust and All Faiths replace the CMCT for future management of CMCT cemeteries. If the two-public-operator model is not implemented prior to 1 July, all of the assets, rights and liabilities will vest in the CMCT's corporate manager, but it is being done in time and will create certainty. We cannot operate with uncertainty. An important and often overlooked point is that page 37 of the *Legislation Review Digest No. 15/58* states that the committee makes no comment on the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:37):** On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024. I say from the outset that The Greens categorically oppose the bill. We have serious concerns about the bill and believe that it is being rushed through in an unacceptable way on a day when everybody is focused on the budget. The bill purports to provide certainty for the future operations of the two largest Crown cemetery operators in New South Wales, the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and the Metropolitan Memorial Parks land manager. That sound innocuous enough, but the bill would provide far more than mere certainty to those two operators; it would also hand over billions of dollars of income from burials on public land to the Catholic Church.

The Greens absolutely agree with the Government's assertion that every person in New South Wales deserves accessible, sustainable and affordable burial and cremation services. We believe all people should be equal in all aspects and at all stages of their life, including their final stage. But we cannot support this bill, which is far from equitable. The bill establishes the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust—successor to the existing Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust—in law. This comes after the Crown Land Management Act 2016

abolished all trusts established by other faiths for the purpose of burials. Not only that, the bill also expands the purpose of the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust beyond "burying the dead of the Roman Catholic Church" to encompass conducting burials for people of all faiths or those without a faith. In practice, it gives the Catholic Church the two-operator model for which it has lobbied the major parties and successive governments for the better part of a decade.

The bill ensures that only two operators will be allowed to provide burial services on Crown land: Metropolitan Memorial Parks and the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust. The latter will be managed by a company wholly owned by the Catholic Church—Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Limited—which in turn will be controlled by a board solely appointed by the Catholic archbishop. The Minister will have absolutely no input. The Greens have serious issues with handing over to a private entity the management of any public land and the chance to profit from it. In fact, it might even sound like privatisation. We have concerns about religious organisations that have chequered histories—to say the least—when it comes to ensuring the best interests of the community. Most other jurisdictions are moving toward State control of cemeteries. Why is the New South Wales Labor Government running in the opposite direction and strengthening the ability of companies owned and controlled by religious organisations to manage key social infrastructure? Why is the New South Wales Government not, at the very least, ensuring strong regulatory oversight of such companies?

The 2020 statutory review into the cemeteries and crematoria sector, *The 11th Hour* report, found a number of issues with the management of the sector and recommended a range of ways to address this through proper oversight—most of which were ignored. I note that in December 2021 then property Minister Melinda Pavey asked the Auditor-General to undertake a financial and performance audit of the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust to determine whether it was using funds for their proper purpose. To date, the trust has not met its statutory obligations to prepare financial statements and provide them to the Auditor-General despite repeated requests to do so, and it has not provided oversight of its records for the purposes of a financial audit. If this is any indication of the kind of behaviour we can expect from the trust's successor, then it is cause for serious concern.

Equally concerning is the Minister's insistence that this bill must be passed into law by 1 July 2024. The Greens would like to remind the Minister that he has the power to extend the transitional arrangements under the Crown Land Management Act to allow the careful, close consideration and consultation that a bill of this significance requires. Those arrangements have already been extended nine times. We ask: What is one more, and why the rush now? Any bill that would see public land handed over for private profit must be subject to the utmost parliamentary scrutiny. Rushing through legislation of this importance in the last sitting week before the winter break, let alone on budget day, sends a dangerous message that parliamentary scrutiny and debate can be circumvented by simply declaring a bill urgent and attempting to ram it through. The Greens absolutely reject this notion, and we cannot support the bill. As such, we will move to refer the bill for inquiry to ensure that it is subject to the level of oversight it requires. Accordingly, I move:

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

"the bill be referred to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development for inquiry and report with particular reference to:

- (1) The provisions of the bill.
- (2) Any other related matter."

Members may be wondering why, in the wake of the Budget Speech we heard today, The Greens oppose the bill so strongly. I make it clear that we wanted to see so much more funded in our communities, whether it is upgrades to our schools, hospitals, public services or community sector. We know that our neighbourhood centres do not get the ongoing core funding they need. Back in 2017 the Minister responsible received an unsolicited bid from a giant funeral, coffin and cremation company called InvoCare, in partnership with the Catholic Church, to privatise Sydney's cemeteries. It was ruled out by the then lands Minister.

The legislation before Parliament today seeks to do exactly the same thing but with no financial return by handing over the control of public land to a specific entity that will allow no oversight or control. The Greens believe we have a responsibility to, at the very least, provide some oversight and scrutiny, given we know that scrutiny has not been forthcoming today. I urge all members who have not seen it to read very closely the article in today's edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* that raises serious concerns about this approach. I urge all members to pause and realise we are talking about something that is of great significance. We should support the bill's referral to a committee so we have the chance to have proper oversight of the process and the interests that it addresses.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:46):** I make a short, unscheduled contribution to debate on the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024. I listened carefully to the contribution from the member for Newtown, and the entirety of her concerns about the lack of proper controls

around funds and the use of public land are completely ill founded. I take exception to—and I did not catch the exact words—the suggestion that, under the cloak of budget day, the Minister introduced the bill to circumvent parliamentary scrutiny. I remind the House that the Minister gave a second reading speech on the bill in this place two weeks ago. It has been sitting on the table of the House for 14 days for all the world to see. There has been no attempt to circumvent parliamentary scrutiny whatsoever. That is an astounding claim.

I commend the bill to the House, and I congratulate the Minister, who is finally putting to bed an issue that has been of great concern to the people of Sydney. In the context of us running out of burial space, which has been coming for a decade, former Minister Pavey and others left the Minister with a monumental shemuzzle. The Minister has consulted widely on the bill, which has had an excellent landing. I commend the work of the Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (16:48):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria Trust Bill 2024, including the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Prospect, the member for Riverstone, the member for Lismore, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Maroubra and the member for Newtown. I confirm that I gave the second reading speech on the bill two weeks ago. Additionally, I thank those in the department who have contributed to the preparation of the bill, in particular Harriet O'Donnell, Sarah Berry, Daniel Gray, Eliza Cook, Madeline Thomas and Cathrine Coren.

From this debate, we should now all have a keen appreciation of why operational certainty for the Crown cemeteries is so important. It is reassuring to know that so many members share my regard for the value of interment services in New South Wales and understand the importance of taking measures to shore up future operation of the sector. Many members understand that through their personal experience of bereavement. I thank the member for Cootamundra and those opposite for putting people before politics by supporting the bill. I acknowledge their support to help the Government in delivering certainty to the cemetery sector.

I understand that The Greens seek to delay the bill and push it to a committee. I want to explain why that is not possible. There is a statutory deadline, 1 July 2024, for implementing the new arrangements. The Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [CMCT] was created under now repealed legislation and still exists due to the transitional provisions of the Crown Land Management Act 2016, which have been extended multiple times. A permanent arrangement is needed. Further extensions are not appropriate or necessary, as we can resolve this now. If new arrangements are not in place before 1 July 2024, then by operation of schedule 7 to the Crown Land Management Act 2016, all of the CMCT's assets, rights and liabilities will vest in the CMCT's corporate manager, the Catholic Cemeteries Board. That is a privately owned entity controlled by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. The Government will oppose the amendment.

The bill responds to the inaction that has created chronic uncertainty for Crown cemetery operators and exacerbated a critical shortage of burial space. For more than 150 years, Catholic-run cemeteries in Sydney have been managed responsibly to provide services to people at their time of greatest need. That track record of service continues to the present day with the development of the first new major cemetery in 80 years, Macarthur Memorial Park at Varroville, which will create more than 130,000 new burial plots. The Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has come to the end of its time as a cemetery provider and Crown land manager. Through the bill, the new successor, the Catholic cemeteries operator, will be empowered to continue the CMCT's critical work.

As I mentioned in my second reading speech earlier this year, the Supreme Court ruled that a charitable trust did exist. The bill ensures that the resources of the Catholic charitable trust must be used to provide interment services for people of any faith, or no faith, at any of the Catholic-operated cemeteries. The bill similarly removes any legacy trusts that may act as a barrier to the other Crown operator, Metropolitan Memorial Parks, using its assets to provide interment services to all who need them. The bill makes clear that the land on which the Catholic provider operates will be government-owned Crown land, with all the protections that brings under the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

Under the new arrangements, both cemetery operators will remain subject to regulation by Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW under the Interment Industry Scheme. They must be licensed and meet obligations in relation to, among other things, customer protection and reporting, and, importantly, auditing. Through the bill, the Government achieves a breakthrough in fixing the cemeteries mess. It lays the foundation for two strong Crown operators, both well placed to provide affordable, compassionate, accessible interment services for decades to come to all people, regardless of faith or belief. We are working against the clock to implement the new arrangements before 1 July 2024. Every person in New South Wales deserves accessible, sustainable and affordable burial and cremation services. This bill is a necessary step to achieve that. I commend the bill to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time, to which the member for Newtown has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....7  
 Noes .....76  
 Majority.....69

**AYES**

Dalton, H  
 Greenwich, A  
 Hannan, J

Leong, J (teller)  
 Shetty, K (teller)

Smith, T  
 Ward, G

**NOES**

Aitchison, J  
 Amon, R  
 Anderson, K  
 Atalla, E  
 Ayyad, T  
 Bali, S  
 Butler, L  
 Car, P  
 Catley, Y  
 Chanthivong, A  
 Clancy, J  
 Cooke, S  
 Cotsis, S  
 Coure, M  
 Crakanthorp, T  
 Cross, M  
 Crouch, A  
 Daley, M  
 Davies, T  
 Davis, D  
 Di Pasqua, S  
 Dib, J  
 Doyle, T  
 Finn, J  
 Griffin, J  
 Hagarty, N (teller)

Harris, D  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Henskens, A  
 Hodges, M  
 Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 James, T  
 Kaliyanda, C  
 Kamper, S  
 Kean, M  
 Kemp, M  
 Kirby, W  
 Lane, J  
 Layzell, D  
 McDermott, H  
 McKeown, K  
 Mehan, D  
 Minns, C  
 O'Neill, M  
 Park, R  
 Perrottet, D  
 Petinos, E  
 Preston, R  
 Provest, G

Quinnell, S  
 Roberts, A  
 Saffin, J (teller)  
 Saliba, D  
 Saunders, D  
 Scully, P  
 Singh, G  
 Sloane, K  
 Speakman, M  
 Stuart, M  
 Taylor, M  
 Tesch, L  
 Thompson, T  
 Toole, P  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Vo, T  
 Voltz, L  
 Warren, G  
 Washington, K  
 Watson, A  
 Whan, S  
 Wilkinson, K  
 Williams, L  
 Williams, R  
 Wilson, F

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** A division has been called for. There being fewer than five members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Noes, 3**

Ms J. Leong  
 Ms K. Shetty  
 Ms T. Smith

**Motion agreed to.***Public Interest Debate***PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:06):** I move:

That this House supports the New South Wales Government's decision to remove the wages cap that has allowed New South Wales to retain experienced public sector workers and recruit new police officers, nurses, paramedics, hospital staff, teachers, firefighters, child protection workers and other vital professions.

In moving the motion, I point out a very long list of workers were affected by the wages cap that was put on by the previous Coalition Government. In fact, one thing I found interesting upon being elected to this place is that it seems that the biggest deficit in New South Wales history was passed to the Minns Labor Government, and it was paid for by our public sector workers. Putting a cap on their wages did nothing but decimate our education and health systems. There were 1,112 nurses whose roles were unfunded; they would have lost their jobs in 12 days. There were 286 firefighters whose roles were left unfunded by the former Government, including the entire force at Oran Park Fire Station, which is a very important fire station to my local community.

**Mr David Mehan:** Why do they hate Oran Park?

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** Indeed. We could go into that ad nauseam. In 2022 conditions for teachers were so poor that, for the first time in history, resignations outstripped retirement. People were walking away from teaching due to the conditions and pay under the frozen wages that they were offered. In the Coalition Government's final year in office, the number of senior executives increased by 9.4 per cent—more than double the 4 per cent growth rate of the overall public sector workforce. That followed an increase of 379 senior executives in 2022 and 347 in 2021. The Coalition Government promised to cut consultant expenses by 20 per cent each year from 2019-20. Instead, it hired one new consultant every hour—10,000 times—and spent over \$1 billion in five years. That led to a complete breakdown of our education and health systems.

We had buildings being built and no-one to staff them. We had nurses, teachers, firefighters and police officers leaving the industry in record numbers—not just unusual numbers, not just slightly higher than we would like numbers; record numbers. What is very interesting about that is after we had COVID there was a need for people to get more regular work, yet people were leaving those sectors to go somewhere else. That "somewhere else" often involved moving interstate and overseas. What it involved was somewhere other than New South Wales. We were bleeding these workers out of our areas at record rates. One of the first things we did when elected as a government was abolish the wages cap. I think it is very important to focus on the word "cap".

Basically, a wages cap means that a person's wage cannot go any higher than a certain point because it has a top point. What we changed was that we said, "We're going to negotiate with you"—something that I think is a dirty word to the Opposition—"and discuss with you what are some of the pays and conditions we can talk about." In that talking, we have managed to deliver some pay rises. Last year we delivered the largest wage increase in over a decade: 4.5 per cent in 2023-24. That is a real pay rise, above forecasted inflation, for essential workers every year of the pay offer. We introduced a new mutual gains bargaining framework to link better pay and conditions for essential workers to the delivery of high quality essential workers.

Something that I was very proud to stand up and shout from the rooftops about is that we have given teachers their largest pay rise in a generation, taking them from among the worst paid to the best paid in the country. As someone who came into teaching right at the end of the 1990s, I can say that when I started teaching, teachers could quite comfortably get themselves a little home—a little starter house. But what happened over the 12 years those opposite were in office is not only that teaching positions were not permanent positions, which this Government has also changed, but also that teachers could not afford to live in New South Wales.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Not on a teacher's wage.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** Yes, not on a teacher's wage. This Government has delivered a boost to take-home pay for more than 50,000 healthcare workers through increased salary packaging benefits. We have funded safe staffing in our hospitals by permanently funding 1,112 nurses that the former Government would have sacked and by recruiting an additional 1,200 nurses on top of that. What this Government has done is made sure that in this State the people we called on, those who became the frontline people during COVID, those we needed the most to keep our State going, those who went out every day to work—like me; I still went to work every day and I taught the children of those workers every day during COVID—very quickly are thanked. Now we are saying to them, "You are worth more money. You are worth a bigger rate of pay, and you are worth coming to the table, having a conversation and negotiating about your own pay, with respect and with dignity." That is why I am very pleased to support demolition of the wages cap by this Government.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:13):** I propose to amend the motion. I move:

That all words after "House" be omitted inserting instead:

- (1) Notes that the Government broke its promise to the people of New South Wales that public sector wage increases would be funded completely from productivity offsets and instead handed the keys to the Treasury over to its trade union masters.
- (2) Notes that as a result the Government has failed the people of New South Wales and slashed cost-of-living support and real spending on health, education, police, other frontline services and infrastructure.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** So you're saying nurses and firies?

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** And teachers?

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** Excuse me, Madam Deputy Speaker. We listened to the member for Camden in silence.

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

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I think it is interesting that Labor would have a debate on the wages cap for the public interest debate on budget day. I say thank you. The Opposition is very pleased about having this debate because it provides us with an opportunity to call out Labor's black hole budget lie. The Government is shifting blame for its broken promises. Government members talked about breaking promises, but that is what Opposition members will talk about as well as wrong priorities and public sector union wage deals' cost blowouts. Opposition members are not suggesting for one minute—members opposite suggest otherwise, which is simply misleading—that we do not support our essential workers. We absolutely do support them. As a former nurse and as a former teacher, and as many other members on the Opposition side of the House were essential workers prior to their time in this place, we know very well about the very important work they do.

But what the Government has not done today is share with the New South Wales public what the Government cut in the budget to achieve the wages cap. We already knew well before budget day that they slashed the vital cost-of-living measures that the former Government put in place, such as Active Kids, Creative Kids, First Lap vouchers, regional seniors travel cards, energy relief for New South Wales households, and risked vital infrastructure projects to deliver on unfunded election promises. This is Labor's budget black hole and Government members need to own it.

Attempts to sheet responsibility back to the former Government simply do not pass the pub test. They certainly did not fool anybody. The cause of Labor's budget black hole is its unfunded public sector wages deal. Before the election, Labor said that any public sector wage increase would be paid for through productivity gains. Its submission to the independent Parliamentary Budget Office showed a cost of zero over the forward estimates, but of course Labor has now revealed that its 4.5 per cent pay rise, which is yet to be accepted by all unions, will cost \$618 million in 2023-24 and \$2.5 billion over the forward estimates. As I said, Labor has not fooled the public. After the budget, a lot of people had a lot to say. The Australian Medical Association vice-president, Dr Fred Betros, said:

This government claims to have fixed elective surgery but the number of patients on elective surgery waiting lists are going up. According to the most recent figures from the Bureau of Health Information at the end of the last quarter ... there were 93,839 patients on the waiting list up from 88,618 on the December 2023 quarter. Without further funding this number will continue to grow.

In regards to the New South Wales Government's second State budget, the Property Council of Australia said:

... it will leave the NSW property sector facing a massive \$6.38 billion cost hike in the middle of a housing construction crisis.

Property Council executive Katie Stevenson said:

This Budget bombshell beggars belief.

She went on to say:

But now is not the time to increase property costs or cut off access to vital investment in housing. Subjecting more Mum and Dad investors to increased land taxes—

[*Time expired.*]

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:18):** I start by commending the member for Camden for moving the motion. Members on the Government side of the House have absolutely no problem with paying our public sector workers what they deserve. That is why we are delivering on our commitment to lift wages and improve the lives of everyone in this State. That is why we have scrapped the cap, delivering the largest wage increases in over a decade to our public sector workers, because they deserve a wage increase. We have offered a 10.5 per cent baseline pay increase over the next three years. This is a real wage increase, above forecast inflation, for our essential workers. We all know that we are in a cost-of-living crisis. Our public sector workers need and deserve to be paid more so that they can maintain decent standards of living.

Those on this side of the House are committed to supporting our essential workers. It is absolutely critical that our public sector workers have competitive, fair wages. It is vital so that we can retain those workers and keep them in our public sector. When you pay your public sector workers more money, when they have equitable wages and a little bit more left in their back pockets, you stimulate the local economy. When they have disposable income they will spend it in local communities, supporting local businesses and generating economic growth. When you lift public sector wages and conditions, you lift the wages and conditions of all workers. When the Government is an employer of choice, with the best wages and conditions, the private sector must come to the table to be competitive. We are here to be the employer of choice and to lift the standards of all workers in this State, not only our public sector workers.

So much is still to be done. But, in just one year, we have delivered to our teachers the largest wage increase in 30 years. As someone who comes from a family of teachers, I know that they are all cheering. They are now the most paid educators in the country. Paying our teachers what they deserve is long overdue. How do we know this? We now have the lowest vacancy in over a decade. The vacancy is not increasing, as it was when those opposite were in government. It is decreasing. People now want to work as public teachers. They are not going to Queensland or Victoria, where they were being paid more. They are staying in this State to make sure that young students, our future leaders, have access to the best education.

We have also delivered a boost to take-home pay for more than 50,000 healthcare workers. There are increased salary-packaging benefits and funded safe staffing in our hospitals, and we have delivered record pay increases that recognise the professional status of paramedics in New South Wales. We have abolished the wages cap, delivering the largest wage increase in over a decade. We have transformed the industrial relations system as well. The New South Wales Government is righting the wrongs of the previous Government. Those opposite suppressed wages, which saw workers go backwards. By the time they left, wages were actually lower in real terms than when they were elected. We were losing essential workers left, right and centre. In 2022 we lost 12.6 per cent of our nursing workforce, and our teacher vacancies tripled. Bus drivers are close to my heart. We have been working hard to undo what those opposite did. We now need 370 bus drivers to avoid cancellations because of decisions of those opposite. This side of the House supports a fairer and brighter future for all people in this State.

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

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** We have scrapped the cap. We are delivering the largest wage increase in over a decade and paying our public sector workers what they deserve. By doing this, we are improving the lives of all people in this State. Only those on this side of the House have the backs of essential workers. We are here for all workers in our State.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:23):** A budget, be it the State budget, the Federal budget or your own household budget, is about choices. We must make choices and trade-offs. If you spend on one thing, you cannot spend on the other, unless you are building and generating. There are consequences when that does not work and trade-offs cannot be made. Good State budgets make decisions that are good for the people of New South Wales not only in the moment but also down the track. They build and generate revenue through productivity, create jobs and prosperity, and invest in the potential of people.

The former Coalition Government helped people to build futures and prosperity. It did that through opportunity and through investment in early learning for children, to build clever, capable and resilient young learners. Productivity was achieved by helping women to return to the workforce, through improvements in affordable, accessible child care. The Coalition invested in infrastructure that delivered jobs and better roads for people to get home faster on and services that were more accessible. Those policies delighted the credit agencies and they rewarded the former Coalition Government and, more importantly, the people of New South Wales, with a triple-A credit rating. At least one "A" is likely to be lost under Labor. Despite the Treasurer and the Premier stating time and time again that the abolition of the wages cap would come with productivity gains, we have not seen that. There is zero effect on the budget. We know that they were false claims.

Wages as a proportion of government expenditure were around 40 per cent to 41 per cent under the former Coalition Government. They have risen to 45 per cent. I am seeing heads shake on the opposite side. They need to read their own budget and look at the baked-in increase, which is a cost to the people of New South Wales not only now but to their children and grandchildren. It cannot be budgeted. It has not come with productivity gains, which is critical. If you will not trust me, trust Moody's, which today warned there were negative risks to New South Wales's financial position due to lower GST revenue, higher infrastructure spending and the removal of the public sector wages cap. Moody's has New South Wales clinging to a triple-A rating but will review this over the coming weeks—watch this space. It comes down to choices and trade-offs. There is less money to spend on vital services. We have seen that. NSW Labor is slashing the vital cost-of-living services, as my colleague has

just said. It is proof that Labor cannot manage money. When Labor cannot manage money, it comes for your money. That is Labor over and over again.

The Labor Party can stand here with masks of sincerity and say sincerely that it supports essential workers. All in this place support essential workers. But let us take today's example of Labor's essential workers package, which promises 400 houses for essential workers—the kind of workers we are talking about here today, the important ones, the frontline service workers we all want to see achieve housing in this State. There are 280,000 essential workers in this State. That equates to 0.1 per cent of essential workers being offered this great deal. I acknowledge that Labor is not good at maths; this is another false promise. Labor's essential workers package today is a Claytons policy that gives false hope to essential workers and provides houses for 0.1 per cent of those workers. It is breadcrumbs in a cost-of-living crisis. This is Labor over and over again.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Bankstown will come to order. The member for Leppington will come to order.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** Let us talk about schools and teachers, who were given a record increase in wages. Then, on the other hand, Labor with its Claytons promise turns around and rips that away from schools. There are massive budget cuts of \$148 million to schools. They take from Paul to give to Peter.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. Government members will come to order. I will call Government members to order if they continue to interject.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** They do not want to hear the truth; the truth hurts. They say that they are the party that supports essential workers, but they do not. The former Coalition Government was a building government that created prosperity. Unfortunately, that prosperity is being lost under this disastrous Labor Government and this disastrous Labor budget.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:28):** The way the State values and pays its workers sends a message to all employers of labour about how they should treat their workers. The former Government's wages cap, a legislated cap on the wages paid to public sector workers in the State of New South Wales, sent a message to all employers that they did not have to negotiate with their workforce and that they could tell their workers, "I will offer you a pay rise. It's on a take-it-or-leave-it basis and if you don't like it, you're out the door"—and they were out the door. It was part of an industrial relations system imposed via the State using all the powers of the State and all the powers of this Parliament when those opposite had the numbers to say to their workforce, "We will not talk to you about the things that matter to you. Here is the wage that we're going to give you. Everything else is off the table. The managers of our public service business enterprises and services in hospitals and schools will manage, and you will just do your job and not ask for any more."

The consequences of that policy were investigated at some length by the Australia Institute in a report delivered in November 2022 on behalf of the nurses and midwives of New South Wales. The institute found:

The arbitrary pay cap system in NSW has contributed to falling real wages, made it more difficult to attract workers to vital service roles, and undermines wage growth across the broader labour market.

The broader labour market has consequences for the whole State in terms of what workers have in their hands and what they can spend in the economy. The consequences for and impact on the 581 nurses who reside in The Entrance electorate is detailed in the report. It found that by 2022 their weekly wage was \$335 lower per week as a consequence of the cap and, equally importantly, that they will carry that for the rest of their life. An experienced nurse midwife will have lost \$12,000 in superannuation as a consequence of the cap imposed by the former Government.

As a consequence, people left the State employment sector. By 2022, 7,678 nurses had exited the system. Teacher vacancies had tripled. Teachers were no longer teaching our kids; they were managing merged classes. Principals were no longer making sure that their teachers had the necessary skills or that there was a program in place to offer the best education in the world; they were managing shortages on the front line. There were not enough drivers to drive buses around our suburbs and, as a consequence, our public transport system was in disarray. The only sector that grew under the former Government was the senior executive service, which grew like Topsy—and so did the wages, which were above the cap.

When we were elected last year, Labor was faced with a difficult budget position. We were handed the largest budget deficit in the history of this State, but we were determined to scrap the cap and do something to rebuild our essential services. We did that by re-profiling the debt that we inherited and by instituting a comprehensive expenditure review, which found \$13 billion in savings. Re-profiling that debt saved \$2 billion in interest, which we channelled into the \$3.6 billion Essential Services Fund. That enabled us, in our first year in office, to offer public servants in this State a pay rise of 4½ per cent—the largest pay rise that they had been offered in the last 10 years. In our second budget, we are now offering public sector workers 10½ per cent over

three years, which makes 15 per cent over the first term of a Labor government in this State. We can do it because budget revenue is scheduled to increase by 3.4 per cent by 2027 but expenses are expected to increase by only 1.7 per cent. We can do it. It is within budget. We need to do it to rebuild the essential services of this State.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I make members aware that the speaker after the member for Cootamundra will be from the crossbench. If no crossbench member seeks the call, the member for Camden will speak in reply.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:34):** If ever we needed proof of the true cost of Labor's broken promise on public sector wage increases, today's abysmal State budget is it. Not only have we seen investment opportunities overlooked, but also the Government seems to have reheated previous spending announcements in its budget papers to improve what is overall a terrible budget for the State of New South Wales—and particularly for those of us in the regions. This Government promised, hand on heart, that it would find the extra money for wage increases from productivity offsets, but instead it has handed over the keys to the Treasury to its trade union masters. That has resulted in a complete lack of investment across the board. Households are struggling. They are dealing with some of the toughest cost-of-living pressures in recent memory. Instead of offering cost-of-living support or real spending on health, education, frontline services, our police or infrastructure, the Government is dealing with a runaway wages bill.

Do not just take my word for it. Some sobering statistics in today's budget illustrate my point. There is a \$300 million cut to education infrastructure statewide, a \$400 million cut to hospitals and health, and a \$9.4 billion cut to transport infrastructure, not to mention cutting the regional seniors travel card to fund toll relief for those in the city. On top of all that, there is the \$1.5 billion land tax that the Government has announced, which, again, is a blatant about-face on an election promise not to increase taxes. That is the kind of measure that has a ripple effect when it comes to the economy. When we look at this budget through the lens of those of us in the regions, we see that the Coalition had a strong record of investing in our rural and regional communities. The last thing we want is for that hard-fought growth and progress in the regions to stagnate under the Minns Labor Government.

Today we got the news that the budget will remain in the red for the next four years, with a \$3.6 billion deficit forecast in the 2024-25 financial year. The Government is crying poor but we cannot afford to neglect the regions. Regional New South Wales is the engine room of the State's economy, and we are so proud of that. The last thing we want is for the regions, and therefore the State, to lose the momentum that was created by the previous Coalition Government. On this side of the House we believe the Government can only blame financial woes on the Commonwealth and previous State governments for so long. At some point the Minns Labor Government must take responsibility for the decisions it is making. Take the example of water infrastructure. The Government has been in office for two budgets and all it has done is cancel visionary projects like raising the Wyangala Dam wall, signing up the State to a sham, highly opaque Murray-Darling Basin Plan deal and kicking key water security projects further down the road all because it has had to divert money elsewhere.

Let us take education. The Coalition's last budget delivered eight new school projects in the bush to give students in rural and regional areas access to high-quality education. But instead of replicating that kind of infrastructure and investment in the future of our young generations in the bush, the Minns Labor Government has only managed to stump up for one new school. When it comes to our most vulnerable, today the Ageing on the Edge Coalition said:

Older people who are experiencing homelessness, couch surfing and housing insecurity will continue to miss out on critical support that could prevent and end instances of homelessness, the latest NSW budget reveals.

Considering the dire state of the New South Wales budget, we can only imagine how disastrous the level of investment will get in the vital areas of health, education, infrastructure and roads for our future generations. I encourage all members of the House to support the amendment moved by the member for Port Macquarie. I thank her for bringing forward a practical and sensible amendment to the motion, and I encourage all members to support it.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I seek leave to make a contribution to the public interest debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:39):** In reply: I am very disappointed that the Minister for Industrial Relations was not given leave to make a contribution, but here we are. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her contribution, but the Government will oppose her amendment. It was interesting that she thanked us for the debate, yet all three members opposite went nowhere near the subject of public sector wages except to let us know that they do not really understand how budgeting works. There are two ways to fix a budget: one is to give out handouts and the other is to lift the original income going into people's pockets. That is how

budgeting works. The cost of living, which members opposite claim is not being fixed, is exactly what Government members are working on.

The member for Port Macquarie said that removing the wages cap does not pass the pub test, but I would be interested to have a conversation in a pub with the nearly 4,000 people in her electorate who have benefited from the lifting of the cap. Government members have never claimed that abolishing the wages cap would fix everything, like a magic pill. We know it will involve work over many years. The member for Coogee talked about how a pay rise for public sector workers helps stimulate the economy and lifts the standards of the private sector too. She spoke quite well about how the private sector matches the standards and remuneration of public sector workers.

The member for Vaucluse gave us a very lengthy lecture on how budgets work. She mentioned that members opposite built stuff, but I would say that they built debt. The member for The Entrance talked about the message sent to all employers about the treatment of employees, which was a really important and well-made point. Money is not the only thing that matters to people. The member for The Entrance spoke about the conditions that are brought to the table and discussed during negotiations. That is also important. The member for Cootamundra talked about trade union groups, and I blow that up and say that Government members are standing up for all workers in New South Wales. That is why we will reject the amendment and support the motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Before I put the question on the amendment, I clarify that the standing orders allow for six speakers in a public interest debate, but the sixth speaker is always from the crossbench. If there is no crossbench speaker the procedure is for additional speakers to seek leave to make a contribution. I was not trying to deny any member the chance to contribute to the debate, and the Minister for Industrial Relations did the right thing by seeking leave to make a contribution.

The member for Camden has moved a motion, to which the member for Port Macquarie has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....28  
Noes .....52  
Majority.....24

**AYES**

Amon, R	Griffin, J	Saunders, D
Anderson, K	Henskens, A	Singh, G (teller)
Ayyad, T	Hodges, M	Sloane, K
Clancy, J	James, T	Speakman, M
Cooke, S	Kemp, M	Thompson, T
Coure, M	Lane, J	Tuckerman, W
Cross, M	Layzell, D	Williams, L
Crouch, A (teller)	Petinos, E	Williams, R
Davies, T	Roberts, A	Wilson, F
Di Pasqua, S		

**NOES**

Aitchison, J	Greenwich, A	Park, R
Atalla, E	Hagarty, N (teller)	Piper, G
Bali, S	Hannan, J	Quinnell, S
Barr, C	Harris, D	Saffin, J (teller)
Butler, L	Harrison, J	Saliba, D
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Scully, P
Car, P	Hoenig, R	Shetty, K
Catley, Y	Holland, M	Smith, T
Chanthivong, A	Kaliyanda, C	Stuart, M
Cotsis, S	Kamper, S	Tesch, L
Crakanthorp, T	Kirby, W	Vo, T
Daley, M	Leong, J	Voltz, L
Dalton, H	McDermott, H	Warren, G
Davis, D	McGirr, J	Washington, K
Dib, J	McKeown, K	Watson, A

## NOES

Donato, P  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M

Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

## PAIRS

Preston, R  
Williamson, R

Minns, C  
Li, J

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE) BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 5 June 2024.**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:51):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024. This legislation, as set out by the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice, who is now present in the Chamber, seeks to make a number of miscellaneous amendments across five Acts relating to the supply of energy in New South Wales. Those Acts are the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020, the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Pipelines Act 1967 [PA], the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987 and the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.

While the substance of the legislation is somewhat dry, it reinforces the urgency of the task at hand, which is to provide clean, reliable and cheap energy to households and businesses right across New South Wales. For that reason, the Opposition supports the bill. I will address a number of clauses and schedules that are worth pointing out. Schedule 2 seeks to amend the Electricity Supply Act 1995. Schedule 2 [2] allows regulations to provide for a scheme that limits the recovery by a network service provider of charges from a person who uses or intends to use electricity to produce green hydrogen. Schedule 2 [3] provides that the regulations may deal with specifying whether electricity is taken to be used to produce green hydrogen.

The Opposition supports the consideration and the work that the Government is undertaking to investigate how green hydrogen will assist in the energy transition, and the opportunities it provides for the industry and economy of New South Wales. It is good to see that various amendments are being made to help propel that along. Schedule 3 [4] provides that a person who does not hold a licence to construct or operate a pipeline does not commit an offence if the person carries out an act:

- (a) in an emergency in which there is a likelihood of loss or injury, the act is carried out to avoid the loss or injury, and the person notifies the Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Secretary) of the act as soon as is practicable, or
- (b) for the purpose of maintaining a pipeline in good order or repair and notifies the Secretary of the act as soon as is practicable, or
- (c) in compliance with a direction under the PA or the regulations.

The Opposition supports this important element of the bill, noting that all members in this place support ensuring safe work on pipelines and major infrastructure around the State. I note that schedule 3 [31] sets out the directions the Minister and secretary may give to certain persons and public authorities in relation to pipelines. I now turn to schedule 3 [36] and schedule 3 [37], which the Opposition thinks are important because they authorise the Governor to make regulations about a number of matters. I will not list all of those, other than to say that they include the construction, maintenance and operation of pipelines, the inspection of pipelines and other such important matters. Again, that goes to ensuring that we have good, working infrastructure around the State.

Schedule 4 amends the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987. I note that there is impending legislation regarding the energy corporation that has been put forward by the Government. The Opposition acknowledges the work being done on that front. I have made clear that the Opposition's view is that it would prefer to see an investment mandate for the Energy Security Corporation, but that can be addressed more fully at

a later date. I acknowledge the various elements in the bill that will bring forward the work of the corporation, the structure of its board and its good governance.

Finally, schedule 5 concerns amendments relating to financial benefits to landowners for transmission infrastructure. I particularly note schedule 5.1 [3], schedule 5.1 [4] and schedule 5.1 [5]. Those schedules ensure the appropriate payment of landowners who are hosting electricity transmission. That is an incredibly important issue, given the burden placed on rural and regional communities, which many of us in this place are aware of. We cannot shy away from it and, in fact, need to embrace it. I acknowledge the importance of ensuring that there is an appropriate fund available to provide for landowners who have transmission lines on their property. That is one way that the Opposition would seek to encourage the Government to more effectively and urgently work with landowners across the State as the transmission lines are rolled out. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:56):** I speak in support of the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024, which is about ensuring that the legislation keeps pace with the speed of the energy transition. It is so good to be part of a government that prioritises action on climate change and renewable energy. The Minns Labor Government has made action on climate change a whole-of-government priority. Climate change drives what we are doing. We are being responsible humans—and a responsible government—for the future. We are taking strong action on climate change to reduce our emissions; make our communities and environment more resilient to extreme weather events; and ensure that our economy is strong, robust and built on good, secure jobs.

The effects of climate change are already apparent from the severity of extreme weather events which pose a risk to our health, environment and economy. New South Wales must play its part to minimise the harm. While climate change is an environmental challenge, it poses an economic opportunity. The Government's climate change policies give certainty to businesses and investors who will help New South Wales build a new base of economic prosperity. The policies maximise opportunities from new technologies and industries. The amendments in the bill are necessary to ensure key pieces of New South Wales legislation keep pace with the energy transition so that we can support a clean energy future for the State. That transition is well underway.

Last year, the Government legislated its emissions reduction targets. It is delivering the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, which is a 20-year plan to ensure that New South Wales households and businesses have the low-cost, reliable energy they need. As part of that plan, the Government is delivering five new renewable energy zones, which will be our modern-day power stations, bringing together wind, solar and storage projects to power our State. New transmission infrastructure is vital to the future of the State's electricity reliability as coal-fired power stations retire. The renewable energy zones will deliver large amounts of new renewable energy to power our regions and cities. The Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone is the first of those five zones, and the Government has made significant progress on it in just under a year.

In its first year, the Government signed a commitment deed with the network operator that will build and operate the transmission infrastructure for the renewable energy zone. As the Government moves forward with this and other projects, it is important that network operators are properly licensed to ensure the safe and reliable operation of the State's transmission network. That is critical to ensuring New South Wales has the reliable power it needs to take advantage of the economic opportunities that come from the transition to renewable energy. The amendments in the bill will ensure the continued implementation of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

The bill also ensures that electricity concessions for green hydrogen producers will be administered effectively. The concessions will support the creation of a green hydrogen industry in New South Wales, which will play a key role in decarbonising industry. We are amid an important transition in our energy markets. We are seeing that in the electricity market as we transition from fossil fuel to renewables and in the gas and fuel markets. Green hydrogen will support the decarbonisation of heavy industry and provide further export opportunities for New South Wales, supporting the State and, indeed, Australia to become a clean energy superpower.

As the State transitions, the New South Wales Government has an important role in ensuring that the regulatory frameworks are fit for purpose. The reforms are critical to supporting New South Wales to achieve its ambitious renewable energy and emissions reduction targets. The Minns Labor Government is making progress on its plans and will keep looking for opportunities to improve the delivery of the energy transition in New South Wales, because the opportunities for our State from renewable energy and green hydrogen are immense. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:02):** I make a contribution to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024. It is worth remembering that when the renewable energy transition began in this State little thought was given to the impact on rural and regional communities. It was almost as though city folk thought no-one lived in rural and regional New South Wales, despite the fact that is where the wind towers, solar factories and huge transmission lines were to be built. When it came to transmission lines, it

was assumed that a one-off easement payment would be enough. If a person did not like that, the Government would compulsorily acquire their land. That is how landowners were first greeted when the HumeLink project arrived in my electorate. There was no thought of community impact or social licence. There is finally recognition that that was not good enough, and we are beginning to see government action.

The bill contains aspects of that. I comment on those and reinforce the important need for genuine community engagement and community benefit. The first aspect is transmission licensing. The legislation provides that licensing applies to operators in renewable energy zones. That is to be welcomed. I make the point that licensing should be about not just issues of reliability but also the ability of the companies involved to engage with and support the communities through which they are building these projects. The need for licensing, both in a social sense and a literal one, is illustrated by Andrew Dyer's Community Engagement Review that was commissioned by the Federal Government, which laid bare many of the failings so far—HumeLink being the prime example. Importantly, the Dyer review showed the need for a scheme to accredit providers based on their ability to engage with communities.

The key findings focused on making that engagement worthwhile by requiring best practice and selecting reputable developers for new projects; improving the way that sites are selected; improving complaints handling; and, significantly, ensuring equitable sharing of the benefits of transition. The sharing of those benefits brings me to the issues of strategic benefit payments and community benefits in general. I have been fighting for appropriate compensation for landowners affected by transmission lines for the past four years. The just terms compensation Act has not been adequate, and one-off easement payments are out of date when compared with renewable energy infrastructure on farms. For example, solar and wind give landowners annual payments well in excess—on some estimates, 10 times in excess—of one-off payments for transmission lines. The previous Government committed to strategic benefit payments. I note that the shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change spoke earlier, and I commend the former Government for undertaking the initiative.

It is good and welcome to see the Government is seeing that through. Community engagement should also mean community benefit. The strategic benefit payments benefit landowners; there should be, along with community engagement, benefits for the whole community. It is becoming widely acknowledged that the community benefits scheme, especially in relation to communities along the HumeLink route in my electorate, is completely inadequate. At least the national regulator is talking about community benefits. When the renewable energy infrastructure planning began, the only consideration was the price that consumers would pay. The impact of the infrastructure on the communities through which the infrastructure was going was not on the table. At least the need for the Australian Energy Regulator to consider social licence is on the table. There is a proposal that Transgrid has put to the regulator about the need for community benefits in my electorate. That is a start.

Recently I gave notice of a motion to this House that noted Transgrid's proposed community benefits package represents just 0.003 per cent of the project's total cost. The motion called on the State and Federal governments to do all they can to ensure that the Australian Energy Regulator and Transgrid provide appropriate compensation for communities along the route, in line with the compensation outlined by this Government for communities in the Orana Far West region. A similar notice of motion was debated and passed in the Legislative Council with the support of the Government. Developers are on notice that they must do better. It is an issue that I have personally taken up with the Federal energy Minister because it is that important. I note the Government's response to the recent Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up, which says:

Finally, the NSW Government will streamline renewables approvals in the planning system as well as enhance and coordinate community benefit sharing.

It continues:

**Government, industry and consumer advocates have a critical role to improve the wider community's awareness of the energy transition**

The Check Up finds that general community support for the energy transition is vital, but that awareness and understanding of the need for and importance of the energy transition is low.

**Communities that host electricity infrastructure need genuine engagement and to share in the benefits of the energy transition**

EnergyCo will coordinate benefit sharing and community engagement activities with industry and the planning system to ensure local communities, including First Nations communities, have a say and share in the benefits of investment in their regions.

That is clearly in relation to the renewable energy zone. Nevertheless, the same should apply to projects outside the renewable energy zone, such as HumeLink, and to projects across the State. The Government response to the Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up also says:

The Department of Planning and Environment will release benefit sharing guidelines to ensure local communities in and outside REZs share in the benefits of infrastructure investments in their regions.

I have had discussions with the Minister. I believe the Minister is supportive of Andrew Dyer's Community Engagement Review that the Federal Government commissioned. I understand that State Ministers have met with the Federal Minister, and there is a consensus that this space needs a vast amount of improvement across Australia. The renewable energy transition is under threat if we do not get communities on board and sharing in the benefits. I believe both the Federal and State governments recognise that, which is a positive. The reason I am speaking on this bill is to remind people that it is such a critical aspect.

In talking about transmission licensing and the strategic benefits payments, this bill begins that journey of better benefits for communities. I understand there is support for these initiatives. From my discussions, I believe the environment and energy Minister is supportive, and there is recognition at the Federal level. Action cannot come soon enough. Community engagement and community benefit must be front and centre. Corporations in this space must earn their social licence. The introduction of the Strategic Benefits Payments Scheme is a start for landowners. The licensing of providers is an opportunity to improve community engagement and community benefits. Without this, our renewable energy transition is at risk, and that means our future is at risk. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:09):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024. The bill aims to improve on the existing legislative framework to secure a clean energy future for New South Wales. The bill is not only a step forward in our environmental policy but also an essential measure to ensure that our communities are resilient and prepared for dramatic weather events. The bill makes amendments to the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 to accelerate the regulatory approval process to recover the costs of electricity system security infrastructure projects. Those projects ensure that the electricity system in New South Wales stays renewable and up to date. Currently the regulatory approval process can take up to three years under the National Electricity Rules, and it can take a further three years to deliver those projects due to supply chain issues. That delay is untenable in the face of the urgent need for a clean energy transition. By accelerating those processes, the bill ensures that the electricity system in New South Wales stays renewable and up to date, thus facilitating a quicker response to energy needs and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The Electricity Supply Act 1995 is amended to introduce a new requirement for a network operator licence to be held and maintained by a network operator that is authorised to carry out renewable energy zone network infrastructure projects. This ensures that the renewable energy zone projects, which will greatly improve our network capacity, are carried out and maintained safely. Furthermore, the amendments allow licence conditions to be imposed regarding specified performance and reliability standards and business continuity requirements. This is critical for maintaining the integrity and reliability of our energy infrastructure as we transition to renewable sources. The bill provides clarity to the scope of the discount and the Minister's regulation-making powers under the Electricity Supply Act 1995 so that the concessions process can operate more effectively. Additionally, the bill updates the definition of market customer in the Energy Savings Scheme to reflect the Australian Energy Market Operator's introduction of a new participant category.

Regulation-making power is granted to the energy security safeguard schemes to prevent Energy Savings Scheme and Peak Demand Reduction Scheme liability being incurred on electricity purchased by battery facilities. Those changes are essential for keeping our legislative framework current and reflective of ongoing developments in the energy market. The bill makes amendments to the Pipelines Act 1967 to modernise the safety and technical regulation framework for pipelines in New South Wales. This ensures that legislation remains fit for purpose and relevant for the future energy transition. Modernising those frameworks is crucial for ensuring the safe transport of energy resources and aligning with best practices. The bill amends the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987 to refine and strengthen arrangements to the governance of the Energy Corporation of NSW under the Act and functions as the infrastructure planner under the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020. Those amendments support the Energy Corporation by the Electricity and Utilities Administration Act 1987 and the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.

The Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme aims to ensure that benefits of the energy transition are shared between private landowners or holders of other interests in land who are hosting new or eligible transmission infrastructure. Currently landowners receive a one-off compensation payment under the Act for hosting new transmission infrastructure projects. The Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme provides an additional \$200,000 per kilometre to people with interests in land that hosts transmission projects critical for energy transformation. The amendments ensure that payments made under the scheme will be separate, in addition to, and will not reduce the compensation payable under the Act. This equitable distribution of benefits is crucial for gaining public support and ensuring the smooth implementation of energy infrastructure projects.

The bill shows that the Government is committed to a clean energy future. The amendments made are long overdue and aim to improve an outdated legislative framework. The provisions in the Energy Legislation

Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024 will help us meet our renewable energy targets, enhance energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. Moreover, they address critical issues in regulatory processes, licensing and market adaptation, while ensuring the benefits of the energy transition are equitably shared. The Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024 is a visionary piece of legislation that sets New South Wales on a path towards a cleaner, more sustainable future. By promoting renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency and supporting a just transition, we are addressing the urgent need to combat climate change and secure a prosperous future for all. The bill is a testament to our Government's commitment to a sustainable legacy, ensuring that future generations inherit a world that is not only habitable but also thriving. We look forward to this piece of legislation having a positive impact on our environment, economy and communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:16):** I speak in support of the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024 and briefly recap its purpose. It amends various pieces of energy legislation to secure a clean energy future for New South Wales. It is absolutely necessary that we do everything we can to transition to a clean energy future because we need a future for our children and grandchildren. It is not an option, but it is how we make that transition and take the community with us that is important. It has to be community centred. It is community centred because it secures our future by having clean energy but, on the transition journey, we have to have community front and centre.

The bill also covers the transmission licensing framework and incentives for storage projects. It clarifies existing positions regarding support for green hydrogen and regulation-making powers to ensure the safe operation of pipelines. That is critical. It refines the energy code governance arrangements. That is key, and I will address that in more detail. It also enables strategic develop payments to landowners. I listened very carefully to the contribution of the member for Wagga Wagga, and I concur with a lot of what he said, particularly about community engagement. I will speak a bit about what we have to do with community. In August 2021 I wrote to the then Minister for Environment and Energy, Matt Kean:

I ... ask you to consider the missing link in the NSW renewable energy rollout. The missing link is the machinery of government designed to implement the renewable energy plan, based on the policy and legislative instruments resoundingly endorsed and then improved in the NSW Parliament.

The Electricity Infrastructure Investment bill went through, supported by this whole House, but it was missing the machinery of government. The machinery of government is important to engage the community. I continued:

There is no government body that acts as a first point of contact to consult with the community and provide advice when building renewable energy projects.

In 2021-22 the first time most people heard about a renewable energy project in their community was when a contractor arrived at a neighbour's property to install a battery, a wind farm or a solar farm. Then all the neighbours heard about it. There was no consultation with the community up until the environmental impact statement [EIS] stage. The government of the day argued that people could be involved at the EIS stage. I said that was a little bit too late. Residents of the Lismore electorate were concerned about three projects: a proposed battery storage facility at McKees Hill between Lismore and Casino on the Bruxner Highway; a proposed wind farm in Tenterfield and a proposed solar farm in Tenterfield.

The battery storage facility was primarily in the Clarence electorate. The then member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis, and I worked together to inform the people of our electorates about the facility. Communities were understandably upset. There was no way that they could know about or understand what was going on or become involved. McKees Hill is mainly farmland. It is quite a small town. There is a little hall there. The private company contracted to build the battery storage facility convened a public meeting, and 80 concerned residents turned up. There was no government process to hold a public meeting. The member for Wagga Wagga spoke about the need for a social licence. Chris Gulaptis and I met people onsite and we got the department to meet with them, but there was still a missing piece. The proposed legislation will start to fill that missing link. That is why I welcome and support the bill. We need it.

We need renewable energy, we have to roll it out, but it has to be rolled out in a way that we are in step with communities, so that they understand what is going on. There must be a community benefit beyond renewable energy. We have to have renewable energy—I want my grandson to have a future—but we also need some community benefit. I note that the member for Goulburn is in the Chamber. She has also raised this issue in Parliament. The member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Goulburn and I all agree that this needs to happen. I thank the Minister for listening, taking all of this on board, and making sure that the governance of renewable energy will be in step with community. I also wrote in my letter to then Minister Kean:

When people ask me for information about the projects I of course contact the company ...

But, really, what is the company going to say? Some of the questions were about safety. I will not go through them all. I continued:

Minister, can you please take my entreaties on behalf of our regional and rural communities under serious consideration? We need to make sure renewable energy is rolled out in a way that is structured and gives locals confidence as we work together to secure a clean energy future.

That is what the bill sets out to do. On 23 May 2022 I wrote to the NSW Agricultural Commissioner about the process for the rollout of renewable energy, because he was looking at that issue. I similarly advised him that my concerns were centred on a lack of process for consultation. I prefer to call it community engagement. The process of consultation is rather sullied, unfortunately, because it is supposed to involve two-way communication and more often people are just told what is being done. It is not a discussion with them. It is about community engagement, and the bill provides for that in the governance provisions. In my 2022 letter to the commissioner, I wrote:

People are used to such developments at least having local government involvement with clear rules.

They might not always like it, but with local government involved, people know what is happening. I continued:

The consultation process is virtually non-existent.

I wrote about the missing link in the rollout of renewable energy. I also mentioned the concerns raised by the member for Goulburn and by the member for Wagga Wagga. I attached page 15 of the budget submission from Regional Cities NSW, in which it was stressed that all levels of government should require renewable developments to show they have a social licence to operate in the local community. I know that is not easy. We all operate in challenging environments in our constituencies, but it is really important that the groundwork is done and that we achieve that social licence. It is not an option to have renewable energy; we must have it. We have to roll it out, but we need the requisite machinery of government in place. This bill puts it there. I thank Minister Sharpe and Minister Dib. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:26):** I contribute to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024. As various speakers have mentioned, the bill proposes various amendments to four different pieces of energy and electricity related legislation. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 to provide for a streamlined regulatory approval process to recover the costs of electricity system security infrastructure projects by including these projects in provisions for priority transmission infrastructure projects. Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Electricity Supply Act 1995 to introduce a requirement for a network operator authorised to carry out renewable energy zone [REZ] network infrastructure projects to hold and maintain a transmission operator's licence.

The bill introduces penalty provisions for REZ network operators who operate without a transmission operator's licence and provides for regulation-making powers to prescribe that certain purchases or supplies of electricity are not liable acquisitions for energy security safeguard schemes, with the intent to reduce barriers to battery storage and energy sharing. Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Pipelines Act 1967 to clarify regulation-making powers and provisions dealing with the making of directions regarding the management and decommissioning of pipelines. Schedule 5 to the bill amends the Electricity Supply Act 1995, the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987 and the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 to develop and implement the Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme announced in 2022, which will deliver additional financial benefits to eligible landowners and holders of other interests in land hosting new transmission projects.

Those payments are in addition to up-front compensation paid in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 and will be delivered by a transmission operator under its licence under the Electricity Supply Act 1995 in accordance with ministerial guidelines. I agree with many members, on both sides of the House, that renewables are the way of the future. We have grown up in the era of burning coal and gas. We all support the transition to renewables. Like many members, I have a large number of elderly people on pensions in my electorate. We all have constituents who have suffered significantly with the rise of electricity costs. People on fixed incomes have come to my office and said they are not having hot showers. It is quite terrible that they are having cold showers. While I understand climate change and support what we are doing, we must acknowledge that a lot of people are suffering with electricity prices. I was fortunate; I made the jump and put solar panels on my roof. I monitor it all the time and growl when somebody puts the dishwasher on—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** In the dark.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** In the dark. It is difficult in the country. It is going to be a big debate. I have been on various parliamentary committees, and there is a lot of angst in rural areas about transmission lines coming across land. I fly down from the Gold Coast or Tweed, and I notice windmills and big, black splotches on prime

agricultural land everywhere. I know that bait. I know the Federal Government is working hard with that, and the Federal Opposition is looking at alternatives.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Not in the Northern Rivers.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Lismore. After 17 or 18 years in this place, what annoys and upsets me is that a lot of Government policies hurt the people who can least afford it. They have worked hard. They have grown up through an era of great agricultural wealth in Australia. Yet we are in an era when a lot of people in my electorate are having cold showers and turning the lights off. We are not a Third World country; we are a First World country. Have we really got to this point? There are a lot of subsidies. I have been quite critical of the Queensland Government, particularly over COVID.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Really?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Yes. I agree with the member for Lismore and the member for Ballina. Amazingly, that Government has just announced a \$1,000 rebate for electricity.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** We watch it closely, don't we?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** I know. Maybe there could be an election in a few months time. I am not sure, although I should be after working in this place for 17 years. All these bills are about the environment and clean energy and how it is the way to go. But we need to start looking after the poor people—the little people—because they are important. They were our fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents. They are really suffering. It is horrifying. I have been shown a \$900 bill by people in my electorate, and it is only the two of them in the household. Typically, my elders go to bed at 7.30 at night. They are not up late; they do not have all the lights on. In future I implore the current Government to look at pensioners on fixed incomes. Let us start looking after them. In a lot of clean energy, we hear about the Twiggy Forrests, the billionaires and the big companies, but it is the little people who I hope we look after in future legislation.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:34):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Energy Legislation Amendment (Clean Energy Future) Bill 2024. In particular, I thank and acknowledge in the first instance the shadow Minister and member for Manly. He is always in the Chamber for the debates and I want to do the same in return. I thank him very much for his contribution. I am very happy to see that we retain a bipartisan approach to the energy transition in New South Wales. Even if that bipartisanship is not holding up elsewhere, in New South Wales it is clear that both major parties are on the same track in that we know where we want to be. The question is how we get there. That means that we can find a solution when we work together. It is also good to hear that the Opposition is supportive of the Government's commitment to develop the green hydrogen industry in New South Wales, especially in working with landowners.

I also especially acknowledge and thank the member for Blue Mountains, who is the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Parliamentary Secretary for Energy. She spoke about how the Government is prioritising action on climate change and the renewable energy transition. She also spoke passionately about the economic opportunities that can come with that. We know there is a transition, but we should not just watch it happening. We should be not only active participants but also leaders in it, and take it as an opportunity for economic development.

The member for Wagga Wagga spoke about the importance of genuine community engagement by transmission operators. I thank the member for his strong and ongoing commitment to improvement in that space. He spoke about improvements made to our legislation last year to ensure that the new board of EnergyCo has community engagement expertise, and we appreciate that. That is how good governments work. If somebody has an idea and it works, we will add it in. The Government and I appreciate what he does. I remember meeting community members, with the member for Wagga Wagga, in early 2019. We drove to Wagga Wagga and there was a community-led meeting, where there were lots of placards. The then Minister did not turn up, but I courageously turned up and listened to the concerns of the community. Dr McGirr was there and the one thing that came out very clearly is exactly what he spoke about, which is the importance of genuine community engagement. Some of the things that came out of that meeting helped shape our thoughts and the amendments.

That leads me to the member for Lismore. I will get to the member for Mount Druitt in a second. The member for Lismore raised points very similar in theme. I love how the member for Lismore talks about engagement, not consultation. I agree with her. As an old English teacher who is pretty pedantic about words, the word "engagement" has a much better connotation than "consultation", because engagement is about genuinely giving and taking, and listening. We often talk about consultation, but it is really a dissemination of facts and information as opposed to engagement. That was a good point. Also, a little known fact is that the member for Lismore has been campaigning in this space for many years. She made a reference to 2021 and writing to then

Minister Kean to make suggestions, which are good and sensible suggestions. They specifically link to that idea of how we can make it better.

I am following a theme. I am sorry; I have gone off my notes. That is not unusual for me—poor Hansard could tell us all about it. I continue the theme with the member for Tweed. I was moved when he spoke about the impact that rising energy costs have on people, particularly people who can least afford any changes. We are living through a difficult time. As a government, we made a commitment to support the most vulnerable, particularly in assisting with energy costs. The plan needs to be for everybody, whether it is this Government or another government. The member for Tweed raised the point that it has most impact on the people who can least afford it. We need to make sure that there are protections for them, because we do not want a situation where not everybody benefits from this reform.

I assure the member for Tweed that the whole ecosystem developed by the excellent Minister Sharpe is about not only making sure that we harness all the energy we can—and I spoke about that in question time today—but also making use of that harnessed energy when the sun is not shining and when the wind is not blowing so that we have enough energy to put downward pressure on energy costs. That was heard. I appreciate the passionate and the compassionate way in which the member for Tweed spoke. I have had a bit to do with the member in my role as emergency services Minister, and I say publicly that he is a decent man who genuinely believes in service to his community. I have not forgotten the member for Mount Druitt. I left him until last because the member is a prolific speaker. While I was sitting at the table, I know he was looking at his phone. I got in trouble with my phone because I pressed the wrong button, but the member was looking at his phone because he was checking his solar intake. Am I correct?

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** That's right.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** He was checking his solar intake, and we are talking about the impact that solar has had. The member for Mount Druitt represents a community that would particularly benefit from lower energy prices. All the things we do as a government are designed to deliver the greatest benefits to all. I will return to my notes. As I outlined in my second reading speech, the omnibus bill amends several pieces of energy legislation to secure New South Wales's clean energy future by streamlining approval processes for critical electricity system infrastructure; strengthening the New South Wales transmission licensing framework; incentivising storage projects; clarifying existing positions regarding support for green hydrogen and regulation-making powers to ensure safe operation of pipelines; refining EnergyCo governance arrangements; and enabling strategic benefit payments to landowners.

That last point is important, and I think the best part of the consultation. People are not anti-transition or anti-change but want to be part of the journey and to be fairly compensated. I made the point earlier that energy transition is happening. We are not going to waste time arguing about whether we need it or whether climate change exists. There was a bipartisan commitment in this place to make sure that we move forward. Our next job is to get on with the task. We are doing that. But we also need to make sure that everybody is included. I represent a government that takes energy transition seriously. We will keep looking for opportunities wherever we can.

I thank staff of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water who worked on the bill, including Cris Hickey, James Griffiths, Simon McCabe, Kylie Tanner, Meira Chen, Jason Scattolin, Rebecca Derham, Julia Manchester, Hoi Lam Lo, Alicia Kuczera, Ashleigh Croucher, Liam Ryan, Kate Norris and Colette Grigg. This is a big team effort. I also acknowledge the Minister and her team who have worked as hard as they can to make this happen. I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues who have spoken in support of the bill, the impact that it will have and the improvements it will bring to the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2024

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 4 June 2024.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:44):** I make a hopefully short contribution to debate to explain why the Opposition will support the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2024. One of the great things about our democracy in New South Wales—which we do not see in other parts of the world—is that we have a number of integrity measures, including public funding for candidates for public office. It is an important aspect of our democracy because it means that people cannot buy election results as they can in other jurisdictions and it means there is a degree of regulation that is designed to ensure everyone has a level playing field. One aspect of public funding in our State is a fund called the Administration Fund, which the bill deals with. In particular, the bill proposes amendments to section 84 of the Electoral Funding Amendment Act. I should point out that the Act was a creation of the Hon. Don Harwin when he was Special Minister of State. As I recall, it came into law just prior to the 2019 election in a blaze of activity towards the end of that parliamentary term.

It was a substantial piece of legislation and section 84, which is the subject of the bill, defines expenditure that can and cannot be made from the Administration Fund. Section 86 of the Act talks about the establishment of an Administration Fund. Section 87 and other sections deal with different rules around whether people are representatives of a political party, in which case there is a certain allocation for them from the Administration Fund. When people are not members of a registered political party, there are provisions for Independent members. The bill deals particularly with a ruling by the Remuneration Tribunal that has caused issues for Independent members of Parliament, and it seems to remedy the situation. The bill amends section 84 (1) (a) of the Act to enable the relevant Minister to prescribe, by regulation, matters that can be properly the subject of funding from the Administration Fund.

The second amendment is to section 84 (1) (b) and makes a qualification to an exclusion provision regarding difficulties experienced by Independent members, who have asked for this legislative change. We are talking about public funds, so it is important that there is regulation and clarity about the use of those funds. But, by the same token, it is important that members of Parliament not be constrained from proper expenditure of those funds. There have been issues in the past about whether legal fees and the like should be paid from the fund, but the amendments in the bill are not geared towards that. However, I think it would be desirable to have a new regulation-making power in section 84 (1) (a) (xi) that would allow the Minister to give greater clarity about what is proper expenditure and so on.

The real problem the bill is trying to deal with is the ruling that suggested, as I understand it, that matters covered by an electoral allowance were not matters that could be funded out of the Administration Fund. The member for Sydney will probably explain it better in his contribution to this debate, but I think this would constrain members from using the Administration Fund for things like communication, travel and so on, which had always been the subject of use of the fund and are proper expenditure within the course of a parliamentarian's duties. Although members of parties would not typically use it, it is an important levelling of the playing field in terms of parliamentary representation. That is the intent of the bill.

It is important to note that the bill does not open a door for matters that are private expenditure to be paid for out of the Administration Fund, which would not be a desirable public policy outcome. But it does allow expenditure in the performance of public duties to be paid out of the Administration Fund, which is not currently provided for as a consequence of the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal's ruling. In those circumstances, it seems entirely appropriate to the Opposition that these changes be made. For those reasons we support the bill. All members want to see full transparency and clarity and ensure that public funds are being properly used. The bill provides an architecture for that to take place into the future, which I think is a desirable outcome in the public interest.

I do not think everybody in the community appreciates that countries like the United States do not have bodies similar to the NSW Electoral Commission and the Australian Electoral Commission, which is why that country had controversies, such as George W. Bush's election as President some years ago, which went all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States, or the last Trump election, where there were controversies over the counting of votes and the like. We do not have those problems in Australia because we have those independent commissions. If the tribunal makes a ruling that may have unintended consequences, we come to Parliament and openly discuss and change that.

All these little components of our electoral and democratic systems breathe life into a much more transparent and good democracy, one we should all be proud of. We were one of the first countries to extend suffrage to women. We have a proud democratic history in this country, but it only stays that way while we are vigilant and transparent. I see this bill as being part of that. There have been no quiet little side deals. Independents came to the Government and said, "We have a problem." Now, in this open forum, we are recorded on *Hansard* debating that. It is just another example of how our democracy works in a pretty fantastic way. We should all be proud of that and do everything we can to maintain it.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:53):** I make a contribution in support of the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2024. The bill makes amendments to the Electoral Funding Act 2018 in relation to payments from the Administration Fund. The bill, introduced by the Hon. Jo Haylen, provides clarity regarding what may and may not be claimed as an administrative expenditure or operating expense from the Administration Fund. This excludes administrative expenditure for which a member may claim an electoral allowance as a member. The bill empowers the regulations to set expenditure that can be claimed from the Administration Fund. The NSW Electoral Commission manages the Administration Fund, which is established under part 5 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018.

The role of the Administration Fund is to reimburse eligible political parties and Independent members of Parliament every quarterly period for specified administrative and operational expenditure they have incurred, up to a certain capped amount. Under the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal Act 1989, elected members of Parliament are entitled to an electoral allowance as well as additional entitlements. The amount available to members of Parliament for electoral allowances and other entitlements is determined by the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal. The annual determination made by the tribunal on 15 June 2023 under the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal Act 1989 provides that a member's electoral allowance is intended to be used to pay for expenses incurred in the efficient performance of their parliamentary duties.

It outlines the circumstances for which the additional entitlements may be used for parliamentary duties, such as for the purpose of representing the interests of constituents, while excluding activities of a direct campaigning or electioneering nature. The determination specifies what the electoral allowance or other entitlements should not fund. However, the determination does not specify all the types of parliamentary and electoral expenses which may be funded by the electoral allowance. This aligns with the fact that just as the size and locations of the electorates of members differ, so does the amount of their allowance. The determination made by the tribunal also provides for additional entitlements, which include the Sydney allowance, communications allowance, committee allowance, general travel allowance, and the skills and development allowance. Following the publication of the tribunal's determination, the NSW Electoral Commission published a new statutory guideline on 13 December 2023.

The guideline sets out its approach regarding assessing claims that may or may not be permitted to be claimed from the fund. Independent members have raised concerns with the Government that they are no longer able to claim certain items of administrative expenditure from the Administration Fund when the expenditure may also be met by the electoral allowance. The bill aims to address those concerns, providing that the exclusion in section 84 of the Act will not preclude claims for payment of administrative expenditure from the Administration Fund where the expenditure may also be met by the member's electoral allowance under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989. That aims to provide clarity to stakeholders who both make and determine claims for payment from the Administration Fund.

The bill amends the exclusion in section 84 of the Act to provide clarity regarding a "parliamentary allowance" to state that this does not include expenditure for which an electoral allowance is payable under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989. Further to this, the bill includes a new regulation-making power in section 84 of the Act that empowers the regulations to prescribe expenditure that can be claimed from the Administration Fund. It also includes a transitional provision that allows a regulation to prescribe types of administrative expenditure for a period before 1 July 2024 to take effect on or from 1 April 2023. The provisions provided by the bill seek to provide clarity and certainty to those who make and determine claims from the Administration Fund. It is important to ensure that these processes are clear. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:58):** On behalf of Independent members of the Legislative Assembly, I speak in support of the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2024. I thank the Government, the Premier and the Special Minister of State, the Hon. John Graham, for their work with us to get this legislation to the Parliament. The bill provides important clarity in relation to the Administration Fund both to Independent members of the Legislative Assembly and the NSW Electoral Commission. Importantly, the legislation has a retrospective commencement date, which allows us to address a period of time during which there was a great deal of grey area as to what was and was not possible to claim under the Administration Fund.

The issue stems from advice in the Remuneration Tribunal's report from last year, which provided some general tax guidance on the use of the electoral allowance for all members. Its very broad description of how the electoral allowance could be used was then interpreted by the Electoral Commission as a claimable parliamentary allowance across various items that Independent members had used the Administration Fund for. All of a sudden, guidelines were issued that indicated that those items could no longer be claimed for without consultation with anyone, including Independent members. The bill will have the important effect of making it clear that the electoral allowance is not a parliamentary entitlement that members can claim for. Therefore, the ability to use

the electoral allowance for certain items does not preclude members' ability to use the Administration Fund for those items.

The bill provides an important regulatory power for the Minister. Currently, the regulatory powers in the Electoral Funding Act in relation to the Administration Fund only allow the Minister to take items out but not add them in. It has become increasingly important to provide clarity to Independent members and political parties but also to the Electoral Commission. As needs and use appropriately change, some items may need to be excluded or clarified and included. The bill is supported by all Independent members of the Legislative Assembly, who jointly wrote to the Government about this matter. All members use the Administration Fund in very different ways. My work as the member for Sydney is very different to that of the member for Barwon, so there needs to be a broad scope for how members can use the Administration Fund, obviously within clear parameters.

The Electoral Commission determination was overly restrictive and created a great deal of confusion for both members and the commission, so this important bill provides members with clarity on how the Administration Fund can be used. If the bill is passed, regulations will be issued that will hopefully provide further clarity on items that were mentioned, including the safety of Independent members, the use of vehicles and other challenges that all members face regarding social media use and how it can be used for advice—research, legal or otherwise. If the bill is passed, those items can be addressed and dealt with through the proper process. I thank the Government for working with me and other members and for providing that important clarity. I thank the Opposition for supporting the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:02):** I speak in support the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2024. I will comment on the speeches made by the three previous members. The member for Wahroonga spoke eloquently and located his speech within the framework of our democracy, and transparency and accountability. It was a very useful contribution. The member for Mount Druitt provided technical clarity around what the bill will do. The member for Sydney spoke on behalf of Independents and made it clear the bill is necessary to correct unfair and unintended consequences that have disadvantaged Independent members. He also spoke about how the bill will have the regulation-making power to permit inclusions, not just exclusions. Given the diverse nature of members' duties, that is important.

I note, as I usually do, the Legislation Review Committee. Pages 47 and 48 of *Legislation Review Digest No. 15/58* drew attention to the bill's regulation-making power. Under this bill it will be necessary to have that power and there is no issue with applying it retrospectively because there were unintended consequences and the Electoral Funding Act should not be interpreted in the way that it is, which happens frequently with the interpretation of Acts. I will now speak about how the Administration Fund operates. Most people probably do not turn their minds to the Administration Fund in their normal course of business. It reimburses eligible political parties and independent members of Parliament for administrative and operating expenditure incurred in a quarterly period.

It also applies to elected Independent members. Quarterly amounts can be paid in advance and claims for payment relating to the Administration Fund must be accompanied by evidence when lodged with the NSW Electoral Commission. All members of Parliament come to understand what evidence is required but sometimes it is unclear, so it is important that we have as much clarity as possible. Section 84 (1) of the Electoral Funding Act, which other members have already spoken about, prescribes a list of about nine administrative and operating expenses that can be claimed from the Administration Fund. However, the Minister is not able to include anything else, which disadvantages a range of members of Parliament and prevents them from carrying out their duties. I support the bill.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (19:07):** On behalf of The Greens, I make a contribution in support of the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2024. The bill amends the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to clarify that claims for payment from the Administration Fund may be made for administrative expenditure that may be met by a member's electoral allowance and provides that the regulations can prescribe expenditure that can be claimed from the Administration Fund. Section 84 (1) of the Act outlines matters that are included and excluded from claims for payment from the fund, and administrative expenditure is not excluded if it is expenditure for which a member may claim a parliamentary allowance. That problem has come about because the *Remuneration Tribunal Annual Report 2022-23* detailed for the first time the types of expenses that may be met from the electoral allowance. That informed updated guidance from the NSW Electoral Commission on expenditure that is not permitted to be claimed from the Administration Fund.

As other members have highlighted, the outcome of the broad application of the electoral allowance has been the unintended consequence of making it very difficult for Independent members to use the Administration Fund without getting into strife with the Electoral Commission. The Greens do not want an arrangement where Independent members are disadvantaged because they do not incur the same kinds of administrative expenses as

members with party affiliations. We do not want Independent members to be unable to use their administration funds for expenses that could be covered by the electoral allowance.

We know the electoral allowance can be used for a really broad range of things. As MPs we all have a broad range of responsibilities in servicing our communities, communicating with our electorates and undertaking our important day-to-day work. We need to ensure that if this type of funding is available to members we do not find ourselves in a situation where Independent members are disadvantaged because they cannot use those funds for expenses that could be covered by the electoral allowance. The practical effect is that it prevents Independent MPs from drawing on their administration funds at all. There is really no value in public electoral funding being given to those members if it cannot be reasonably acquitted by those who are entitled to it. We want to see that overturned.

The bill makes a very reasonable amendment to the Act to unwind something that was never an intended consequence in the first place. Independent members are critical to our democracy. They bring a really important difference from the major parties to this Parliament. We must ensure that they are able to do their jobs, reasonably acquit the funding they are given and use that funding to work for and communicate with their communities. We want to make sure they are able to do their jobs just as well as, and as unimpeded as, members of major parties or smaller parties. The bill makes an important and reasonable change, and The Greens are pleased to see the Government bring it to the House. The bill has been consulted on quite widely and the NSW Electoral Commission staff agency has been consulted. The Independent members of the Legislative Assembly support the bill and have advocated for The Greens to support it.

The bill is critically important. The Greens do not want Independents to be disadvantaged compared with members who represent political parties. In this House we have 12 crossbench members and nine Independent members. We want them to be able to get on with their jobs, do the important work that their communities expect them to do and spend the administrative fund in the same way that other members of this House are able to. The Greens are very happy to support this important bill. I thank all members, particularly the crossbench MPs who have taken the time to explain to The Greens the importance of the bill and to get us on board.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (19:11):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2024. I thank the member for Wahroonga, the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Sydney, the member for Lismore and the member for Balmain. As members would be aware, the bill proposes amendments to the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to make further provision regarding administrative expenditure payable from the Administration Fund. The bill provides certainty and clarity for stakeholders who are both making and determining claims for payments from the Administration Fund. It clarifies that the concept of administrative expenditure, which may be claimed from the Administration Fund, does not exclude expenditure that may be met from a member's electoral allowance.

The bill also inserts a positive regulation-making power for the regulations to prescribe expenditure that can be claimed from the Administration Fund. The Government is seeking to progress the bill so that it may be able to commence in time to align with the new financial year. Once enacted, the bill is taken to have commenced on and from 1 April 2023. Importantly, I note that the Legislation Review Committee considered the bill today. The committee noted that the retrospective application of the amendments in the bill would not adversely impact rights or liberties. The committee also commented that the regulation-making power would allow the identification of administrative expenditure which should be covered by the Administration Fund but which may not clearly or explicitly fall within the existing categories under section 84 (1) (a). I explicitly thank the member for Sydney for bringing this matter to the Government's attention. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **WENDY WALLER, OAM**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:14):** I give a huge congratulations to former Mayor of Liverpool Wendy Waller on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to local government

and the community of Liverpool as part of the recent King's Birthday Honours. Wendy served on Liverpool council from 1995 until her retirement in 2021, holding the mayoral office twice during that time. During her tenure, Wendy chaired multiple committees and was an ambassador to the award-winning 2168 Children's Parliament. She was also recognised for her work in community services, managing the South West Child, Adolescent and Family Services for many years. Wendy's time as mayor focused on several key initiatives, including advocacy on Liverpool's status as Sydney's third CBD and leading the development of the City Deal for the Western Sydney airport and aerotropolis. Always a strong and unwavering advocate for the Liverpool community, Wendy was also an irreplaceable mentor to me during my first term on council. I wish Wendy and her family the best.

#### **HMAS KUTTABUL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:15):** On 7 June an important commemorative service was held at North Head in Manly. Each year the Australia Remembers Northern Beaches and North Shore Committee, of which I am patron, reflects on the night in 1942 when three Japanese midget submarines conducted a daring raid on Sydney Harbour. The submarines entered the harbour on the night of 31 May with the aim of hitting Allied warships, including the heavy cruiser USS *Chicago*. Although the warships were missed, one of the torpedoes sank the converted Sydney Harbour ferry HMAS *Kuttabul*, with the loss of 19 Australian and two British sailors. All six submariners on the three midget submarines also lost their lives. A special guest speaker at this year's eighty-second anniversary defence of Sydney commemorative service was Sir Peter Cosgrove, former Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. On behalf of the committee, I extend my thanks to Sir Peter Cosgrove and to all who work behind the scenes to make this annual event such a success. Lest we forget.

#### **HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE KING'S HONOURS RECIPIENTS**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:16):** I congratulate the outstanding Heathcote electorate locals who were recognised in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours List: Professor Lisa Kervin, Professor Kathleen Eagar, Professor Kathleen Clapham, Ms Fiona Shewring and Dr Jodie Ward. I am so proud to have so many outstanding individuals living in our electorate. Professor Lisa Kervin is appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to tertiary education and to research in early childhood digital literacy. Professor Kathleen Eagar is appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to community through health services research and development, and as a mentor. Professor Kathleen Clapham is appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to Indigenous community health, to anthropology and to tertiary education. Ms Fiona Shewring was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the building and construction industry. Dr Jodie Ward was awarded the Public Service Medal. I thank those wonderful locals for their community service and congratulate them on behalf of the Heathcote electorate.

#### **SUI WATTS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (19:17):** I recognise Sui Watts of Oxley Island, who is the reigning world dressage champion for riders with an intellectual disability. Sui is preparing to compete in the European championships in the United Kingdom next month, which will be another step towards her lifelong dream of participating in the Paralympics. Sui's love for dressage began after attending the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney. Since then, with the support of her coach, Nell Marshman, and her mother, Janett, Sui has overcome numerous challenges. Despite setbacks, including a sport reclassification and a personal injury, she has persevered. Sui's outstanding qualification and performance at the Global Games in France last year saw her become the highest qualifier and world champion. At the championships, Sui will face the challenge of riding borrowed horses, with only two practice sessions before competing. As Sui prepares for the European championships, I wish her all the very best. May she achieve her lifelong dream of participating in the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles.

#### **EMERITUS PROFESSOR BARNEY GLOVER**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:18):** Western Sydney University has transformed tens of thousands of lives for the better. Emeritus Professor Barney Glover has played a key role in that endeavour, having served as the university's fourth vice-chancellor from January 2014 to April 2024. Since that time, the university has grown its reputation in research, impact and student success through his guidance and leadership. Emeritus Professor Glover was also pivotal in establishing the university's Fairfield Connect Study Hub in my electorate—the first time a university has established a physical footprint in Fairfield. Whilst it has just opened, many more thousands of young people will have the chance to pursue their academic and professional dreams because of the hub. I thank Emeritus Professor Glover for his dedication as vice-chancellor. Western Sydney is better because of him. Well done.

### GRACE WEST ANGLICAN CHURCH

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (19:19):** Communities in Silverdale and Warragamba celebrated a momentous occasion: the official opening of the Grace West Anglican Church in Silverdale. I joined Chris Braga, the senior minister for the church; Felicity Grima, the principal of Penrith Anglican College; the member for Badgerys Creek; and Kanishka Raffel, the Anglican archbishop of Sydney, to share in the joy and pride of seeing this project come to fruition. The dream to establish this church first began in the early 1980s, and many members of the church community have worked hard for decades to finally be able to step over the threshold of the newly opened building. A special mention must be given to Margaret Fowler, whose determination ensured that the dream was never in doubt. Senior Minister Chris Braga noted that a church is a gathering place and the people inside are what give it its importance. With special thanks to the generosity of the builders, the architect, the donors and everyone who sacrificed to see this building established, the church now has a thriving base from which to serve, help and care.

### UNITING LAKEVIEW ANZAC DAY SERVICE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:20):** I thank Valerie Tranter from Shellharbour City Centre for organising a wonderful Anzac Day service at Uniting Lakeview retirement village. I was honoured to be invited to be a guest speaker at the ceremony to commemorate 109 years of the Anzac spirit. Valerie's organisational skills are truly amazing, ensuring that guests at the event were treated to incredible displays of memorabilia, historic artifacts and a wonderful hand-knitted poppy display in the beautiful gardens of the village. After the event, guests were treated to lovely food and refreshments served at tables adorned with handmade Australian and New Zealand flags. On behalf of all who attended the ceremony and the broader Shellharbour community, I congratulate Valerie and the entire team at Uniting for assisting all residents to observe this important day at Lakeview Retirement Village.

### 2KF ESPRESSO

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (19:21):** I pay tribute to 2kf Espresso, a wonderful family business owned by Kristy and Daniel Rempt, where their amazing children, Holly and Harry, work 30 hours a week. Recently the local council tried to shut down 2kf owing to one complaint. This is despite its operating in the same way for over two decades. The council has attempted to intimidate, threaten and bully this amazing family business. But this beloved cafe enjoys immense community support. Within a couple of days, it had received signed support from over 5,000 locals. Councils exist to serve communities. They work for us. I will stand with 2kf, with the Rempts and with our community. In a cost-of-living crisis, the Rempts' positivity and perseverance are an inspiration. I look forward to overcoming this challenge with them and to seeing 2kf flourish. We will always have their backs.

### PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE HOMELESSNESS ROUNDTABLE MEETING

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:22):** In Parramatta, we are fortunate to share in a community that emphasises supporting our most vulnerable members, a fact that was demonstrated by the strong representation of those who work in the sector at a homelessness roundtable meeting I coordinated with Minister Jackson on 28 May. By bringing together community stakeholders and government representatives, we fostered collaboration and an exchange of ideas, with a focus on finding local solutions to prevent and reduce homelessness and better support those experiencing all types of homelessness in the Parramatta electorate. I thank everyone who attended and acknowledge that their passionate dedication to fighting housing insecurity on the local level ensures that people experiencing homelessness in Parramatta receive the effective care and guidance they need. I extend my sincere gratitude to Parramatta Mission, Parramatta Police Area Command, City of Parramatta, Uniting, Parramatta Women's Shelter, Cumberland Women's Health Centre, Housing NSW, Birribee Housing, Corrective Services NSW, the Salvation Army, and Street Level Christian Community.

### UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE KING'S HONOURS RECIPIENTS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:23):** Upper Hunter can be proud of its 2024 King's Birthday Honours recipients. Five people were honoured for their contributions to our community. Lorraine Bruce of Wards River, the Great Lakes Rural Fire District's first female group officer, was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal. Current Netball NSW council delegate Madeline Allen of Limeburners Creek received an Order of Australia medal for her contribution to netball. Scone has a pair of Order of Australia medallists in John Brooks, recognised for his involvement with Scone Legacy and fundraising for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, and Charlie Cooke, founder of the Aberdeen Highland Games, awarded for service to the Scottish community and Gundy Crown Reserve Trust. Sharon Pope, Muswellbrook Shire Council's director of environment and planning, received a Public Service Medal for her contribution to local government. I congratulate them and thank them for their service.

### QUAKERS HILL PIRATES BASEBALL CLUB

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (19:24):** Hearing about sporting success in the Riverstone electorate always fills me with pride. Recently some extraordinarily talented girls under 12 years old, from Quakers Hill Pirates Baseball Club, were selected to represent New South Wales at the world's first national Little League for girls. Georgia Williams, Indiana Birtles, Taylor Stevens, and Emma and Caitlyn Gainsford were selected to represent our State at the national championships. Two teams represented New South Wales, and Emma and Caitlyn were a part of the team that took out the title in the end. I have always advocated for sports that keep players and their parents healthy and active while bringing communities together. Accolades are the icing on top; the friends made along the way and the values, such as teamwork and resilience, developed are just as important. The lessons learnt in the field can be applied to everyday life. I congratulate Georgia, Indiana, Taylor, Emma and Caitlyn on their wonderful achievement. I cannot wait to see their future sporting endeavours.

### KIAMA RED CROSS FUN RUN

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:25):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Red Cross Fun Run. On Sunday 9 June 2024 I was extremely pleased to participate in the tenth Kiama Red Cross Fun Run. I thank the hundreds of runners, walkers and volunteers who turned out for the Kiama branch of the Australian Red Cross. The weather was spectacular, the scenery unmatched and the run terrific. It was also nice to catch up with so many local residents to say g'day. Importantly, all proceeds raised will go directly to the Australian Red Cross. Members should tell their friends and families about the annual Kiama Red Cross Fun Run and be sure to be there in 2025. I acknowledge Judi O'Brien, the president of the Kiama Red Cross and the organiser of the Kiama Red Cross Fun Run, for her amazing efforts in bringing everything together for another successful event, on its tenth anniversary. I acknowledge all of the amazing volunteers who realised the event and congratulate Kiama and the Red Cross.

### PROJECT PRIDE LISMORE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:26):** I congratulate the organisers of Project Pride Lismore, particularly Alex Jackson, for the wonderful event they put on in Lismore from 1 June to 8 June. Lismore and the rainbow region's vibrant LGBTIQ+ community invited everyone to celebrate pride, diversity and belonging. It is a community-driven organisation that promotes creativity, inclusivity and cultural expression. Over the week, they had a festival of arts, culture, music, education and fun. It was an initiative of a grassroots group that wanted to illuminate the community and celebrate diversity. It was sponsored by Boys' Hair and Make-up, Bi-Rite Home Appliances and Lismore City Council. I got to launch it at Hotel Metropole. It was terrific and colourful.

### SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (19:27):** The Science and Engineering Challenge [SEC] is a nationwide science, technology, engineering and mathematics outreach program presented by the University of Newcastle in partnership with communities, Rotary clubs, other universities and sponsors. Through the SEC, students experience aspects of science and engineering they would not usually see in school. This year the smallest school on the planet, Frederickton Public School, got up there, rotated around the challenges, got among it, learned the science, talked to the teachers, came back and ended up winning the challenge for the broader Macleay region. Freddo Public School is the epitome of what we do well. They get in and get it done. I congratulate them.

### AMAYA JAMES

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (19:28):** Newcastle is a city of artists, and one of our youngest Novocastrians is shining bright in the art world. Amaya James, a San Clemente High School student, has been selected as a finalist in this year's Young Archie competition, the Art Gallery of NSW's youth portraiture art prize. Her drawing, named *Golden Hour*, depicts her father, who Amaya refers to as her rock. In the artwork he holds a piece of golden wattle to his heart, symbolic of his love for the Australian landscape and his connection to Country. Amaya's work is currently on exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW alongside the works of other finalists in the Young Archie competition as well as the work of finalists in Australia's most prestigious art competitions, the Archibald, Wynne, and Sulman prizes. The Young Archie winners will be announced on 27 July and I have my fingers crossed for Amaya.

### TRIBUTE TO LOU LIEBERMAN

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:29):** On behalf of the Albury electorate, I extend deepest sympathies to the friends and family of Lou Lieberman following his passing at the age of 85. Lou was a devoted advocate of the Albury-Wodonga district and enjoyed a lengthy political career as the State Liberal member for Benambra and the Federal Liberal member for Indi from 1976 to 2001. He made a point of being accessible to his constituents and that hands-on approach earned him the respect and admiration of many. He was seen as not just

a representative but also a fierce advocate and friend. Of Lou's many notable achievements were his efforts to improve our environment, with a particular focus on the Murray-Darling. He was also immensely proud of the role he played in the establishment of the National Heritage Trust in 1997, Australia's primary investment platform to support and protect native species and landscapes. He was a champion for our region and his passion for improving the lives of others was truly admirable.

#### CHUNG VAN DUONG

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:30):** I acknowledge a distinguished community leader, Mr Chung Van Duong, president of NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association [VEFA], for his remarkable contributions to some 1,300 senior members of Vietnamese heritage in my electorate of Cabramatta and beyond. Mr Duong is among the first generation of Vietnamese Australians. Since the early '90s he has served voluntarily in various managerial capacities, notably as president of VEFA. With his profound care-for-others nature and insights spanning three decades, Mr Duong has championed numerous programs to address the needs, struggles and opportunities to enhance quality of life for Vietnamese Australian elderly residents and their families. I am particularly impressed by the Vietnamese Family Day program. It is part of a broader effort to bridge gaps between the older and younger generations. Mr Duong's dedicated leadership and seamless efforts to empower vulnerable elderly community members are commendable. On behalf of my local community, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for his contributions and wish him continued success.

#### HILLS RELAY FOR LIFE HIGH TEA

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (19:31):** I was privileged to be able to attend this year's Hills Relay for Life High Tea, which was held at Rydges Norwest Sydney on 15 June 2024. The annual high tea continues the fundraising activities of the Hills Relay for Life committee. Money raised from all Hills Relay for Life events supports the continuing efforts to find a cure for cancer. I thank the entire Hills Relay for Life committee, including chairperson Lisa Carruthers and committee members David Hand, Jenny Glover, Krishi Raghupathi, Alison Harper, Gillian Schrickker, Bryan Mullan, Karen Cunningham, Angela Pike, Lynne Pike, Terese Wilson, Lachlan Forrest, Michelle Fuentes Byrne, Katie Didsbury, Bev Jordan, Ruth Didsbury, Jacqueline Lee, Feona Henness and Jaime Berglin. Hills Relay for Life this year has raised an amazing amount of \$308,000. The target was \$300,000, so they made it. I thank the entire Hills Relay for Life committee.

#### TRIBUTE TO GARY NAIRN, AO

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (19:32):** I pay tribute to Gary Nairn, AO, who passed away recently at the age of 73. Gary was the Federal member for Eden-Monaro from 1996 to 2007. He was the Liberal member for Eden-Monaro whom I opposed twice during my career but lost to. I then went on to work with him for a period when I was a State member and he was the Federal member. Gary was a gentleman and a great local member. He remembered everybody's name—something I have always envied. He was very active in his post-political life in things like the Mulloon Institute and his original profession of surveying. He was always committed to his community. Not so long ago he moved to Queensland with his wife, Rose, but unfortunately found out that he had lung cancer and died just a few weeks ago. I extend my condolences to Rose, Ben and Deborah and to Gary's grandchildren.

#### CHLOE KARSTEN

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:33):** I celebrate an extraordinary Central Coast teenager, Chloe Karsten, whose story embodies resilience and determination. Born with a heart defect, cerebral palsy and legal blindness, Chloe underwent four open-heart surgeries before her fifth birthday and lost her hearing at three. Despite those challenges, Chloe has achieved so much. Her equestrian journey began at six with Riding for the Disabled [RDA]. Through her hard work and an indomitable spirit, she quickly became a successful and competitive rider. She has represented Australia in dressage, which was a dream she tirelessly pursued. Today Chloe is a rising star in equestrian sports. She is a four-time champion in the RDA NSW State championships and in May 2024 was selected as the youngest member of the team to represent Australia in the Virtus equestrian championships in the United Kingdom this July. Chloe's achievements also highlight the unwavering support and sacrifices of her family. Their dedication has been crucial in helping her reach her dreams. Chloe's story inspires all of us, and I look forward to congratulating her personally on her return. We wish Chloe every success in the upcoming championships. Go, Chloe!

#### MARINE RESCUE NSW

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:35):** As this year's boating season comes to a close, I acknowledge the heroic work of Marine Rescue NSW, which undertook over 3,000 search and rescue missions over the season, including 201 on the Central Coast. I offer special congratulations to all members who were recognised for their years of experience and received special commendations at the awards ceremony last week. The Central Coast is

fortunate to be home to some of the most beautiful waterways and beaches in the State, including Brisbane Water, which forms the heart of the Gosford electorate. Those waterways make our region popular for fishing, boating and water sports—activities that majorly contribute to our Central Coast community and our Coastie way of life. With those beautiful waterways come high numbers of community members who are out and about in our maritime environment and face risks on our waterways. Marine Rescue plays a significant role in keeping those waterways safe, all through the hard work and dedication of a fantastic team of volunteers who conduct rescue operations when disaster strikes. On behalf of the Central Coast community and those who have been saved by our wonderful Marine Rescue teams, I thank Marine Rescue NSW.

#### **BOOKHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:36):** I recognise the Bookham Community Association. Bookham is half an hour's drive from Yass. The first merino sheep was brought to the area by Joseph Julian, and the Bogolong farm remains in the family to this day. Bookham has a rich history, with many other original farming families still there. Sisters Marguerite and Tess Julian have utilised their ancestry knowledge, skills and passion to restore the history and the commitment to maintaining community connections. The old general store has been remodelled and is now known as Barney's Cafe. Marguerite and Tess's ancestors were involved in the original construction of the church, which has now been remodelled into a bed and breakfast stop. The incredibly special main window was given to the sisters by their grandmother, who was Joseph Julian's wife. The work undertaken has brought not only life into those old buildings but also excitement within the community to collaborate on highlighting the history of their village. I acknowledge the vision, work and passion of Marguerite and Tess in rejuvenating the history of Bookham and establishing the Bookham Community Association.

#### **ST CHRISTOPHER'S FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (19:37):** I am so pleased to hear that one of my local football clubs, St Christopher's Football Club in Panania, was able to enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime experience at the Matildas match against China earlier this month. The club is recognised as a "Game Changer 1 Star Club" due to its dedication to developing women's and girls' football. The club's young ladies were selected to enjoy a lap of the field before watching the Matildas defeat China 2-0. While the club previously had three female teams and 37 registered players, its success in developing female players has led to 13 all-girl teams and 142 female players this season from the kindies to the all-aged ladies teams. What a fabulous experience it must have been walking the same grounds as our amazing Matildas before cheering our State female football team on to victory from the sidelines. I thank all the players, coaches and volunteers for their dedication to female excellence in football. I wish the teams success in their upcoming matches.

#### **ANGLICARE ORAN PARK RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (19:38):** I thank the friendly staff and residents at Anglicare Oran Park Retirement Village for their wonderful hospitality in welcoming me to their home for a visit and morning tea last week. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to have a chat with the residents and staff and to answer their questions. I was also more than happy to explain to them how I assist them as their local MP in the area and my activities to reach members of the Oran Park community. The vibrancy of the retirement village and the camaraderie and respect the residents and staff have for one another and for others was very clear to me during the visit. It was a lot of fun. I give special thanks to village coordinator Nicole Azocar for arranging the visit. I also wish resident George Nelson a very happy ninetieth birthday. I am looking forward to visiting and seeing all the residents and staff again. I wish everyone at Anglicare Oran Park Retirement Village continued health and happiness.

#### **JANE POWLES**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:39):** I acknowledge the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute's chief executive officer, Jane Powles. Jane joined the institute in September 2022, bringing with her an impressive skill set. She followed in the footsteps of our fabulous founding directors, Rosalie Chapple and Dr John Merson. Jane has been an impressive leader, with an ethos centred around seeking opportunities for progress and creatively seeking alternative possibilities for connection. The institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation bringing together research, local communities and government agencies to support the conservation and management of the greater Blue Mountains. At present the Blue Mountains ecosystem is under threat from climate change impacts, fire, urban interference, invasive species and the loss of biodiversity. Jane and the learned collective at the institute are working tirelessly to contribute to the protection and preservation of that precious World Heritage region. They are focused on driving change and championing a more just, equitable and sustainable future. Whilst Jane has recently announced her retirement from the institute, I know her legacy will live on. I wish her all the very best in her future endeavours.

### PORT MACQUARIE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:40):** I congratulate the Port Macquarie State Emergency Service for taking out three major accolades at the State Disaster Rescue Challenge held over the weekend. In a showcase of strength, strategy and determination, 50 SES volunteers from around the State converged at Narrabeen to compete in the highly esteemed State Disaster Rescue Challenge. Emerging as champions, the Port Macquarie unit topped the awards, claiming the Winning Team, the Safest Team and the Best Team Leader. A team of eight from Port Macquarie made up the winning side, with Unit Commander Katie Blake leading the efforts and thus securing the competition's overall Winning Team award. Although the State Disaster Rescue Challenge is competitive, the purpose of the three-day event is to experience a variety of rescue scenarios to enhance the skills of members in preparation for when an emergency call is heard. Emergency situations tested in the challenge included mass casualty events, extricating people from entrapment and confined spaces, retrieving casualties from heights and search-and-rescue scenarios. This is the second time in seven years that the Port Macquarie SES team has lifted the winning trophy. I congratulate all of them on that wonderful achievement.

### SYDNEY SOUTH WEST VOLLEYBALL CLUB

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:41):** Volleyball has enjoyed a huge boost in popularity over the past decade, thanks in part to the Japanese sports anime and manga series *Haikyu!!* That is especially true in south-west Sydney, and Sydney South West Volleyball Club is a key driving force for locally engaging young people in the sport. Its development and social activities have had a profound impact on people like Madison and Jenny from Liverpool, who face transportation challenges yet remain dedicated participants. Despite their constraints, the commitment and talent of Madison and Jenny shine through, highlighting the need to address those issues to support their potential. The men's and women's teams represent Liverpool in national volleyball competitions. However, transportation challenges persist, requiring shared transport and other arrangements. The club regularly fundraises to help overcome some of those barriers. That is why I was so excited to join members to announce their success in securing a Community Building Partnership grant for an inclusive community van to help them run volleyball programs, especially in local schools. Through that vital investment, the club can empower and engage our diverse community. I acknowledge the efforts of Robert, Margaret, Kim, Ba and the whole crew.

### BRENDON WESTON

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:42):** Marine Rescue Central Coast recently marked 135 years of combined service, as well as the significant contributions members have made to the unit and organisation, during its annual awards presentation evening on 12 June. I congratulate Brendon Weston, who was awarded one of two life memberships on the night. Brendon joined the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol in March 1999, qualified as a radio operator and crew, and advanced to senior levels. On the creation of Marine Rescue NSW, Brendon was awarded recognition as a Marine Rescue watch officer and Marine Rescue coxswain. Brendon is a long-serving member who has stood up to fulfil many roles in the unit over his career and always makes positive contributions to the unit, Marine Rescue NSW and our Central Coast community. Brendon has also received the National Medal for 25 years of service, which recognises long and diligent service by members of recognised government and voluntary organisations, who risk their lives to protect the safety of others. I congratulate Brendon on his very well deserved awards and dedication to protecting our Central Coast community.

### FAIRFIELD CITY HEALTH ALLIANCE GAMBLING WORKING GROUP

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:43):** Formed in 2019, the Fairfield City Health Alliance Gambling Working Group comprises 16 organisations in partnership, contributing their skills, knowledge and time to combat gambling harm in the Fairfield local government area. As the recent winner of the ZEST 2024 Outstanding Community Partnership Award, the Gambling Working Group has demonstrated extraordinary social impact, delivering community health outcomes through partnership and collaboration across the health and social care sectors. Its focus helps to inform our understanding of the scope and depth of harm from gambling, and it is actively addressing it through community awareness-raising activities, projects, GambleAware Week and research. I thank all members of the working group for their dedication to supporting the residents of Fairfield in combating gambling harm.

### STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (19:44):** I thank and commend our SES volunteers for their tireless work in protecting lives, property and livestock during the recent floods that affected our region. Those dedicated volunteers are the embodiment of the true community spirit that shines so brightly during tough times. We owe a great deal of gratitude to those courageous men and women, who respond—often on very short notice—to the community's requirement for assistance. I also pay tribute to the families of our SES volunteers for their

sacrifice as their loved ones take time away from their families in service of the broader community, often in dangerous and unpredictable conditions and situations. I encourage my community and all communities to thank and repay our SES volunteers by following their advice, warnings and directions during extreme weather events. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek community, I extend my deepest gratitude to all SES volunteers for their service to the community.

*Private Members' Statements*

**LIVERPOOL HOSPITAL**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:45):** Liverpool is home to one of the largest hospitals in the Southern Hemisphere, Liverpool Hospital. It serves as a quaternary referral hospital for the entire South Western Sydney Local Health District [LHD], which covers seven local government areas: Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Wingecarribee and Wollondilly. The district is the most populous in Greater Sydney, with more than 1.2 million residents. If growth in our region continues as projected, our local health district will have a larger population than the entire city of Adelaide. In addition, Liverpool is the only formally and unconditionally verified level one adult trauma centre in Sydney and is also a specialised brain injury centre that takes on a large number of trauma patients from across the State.

In 2018 WESTIR Ltd published the first *Condition Critical* report, commissioned by the Liverpool Hospital Medical Staff Council. It outlined Liverpool and south-western Sydney's healthcare needs and capacity. Since that report's release, our region has continued to experience exponential growth and change, often without the commensurate resources. Recently, the Medical Staff Council commissioned an updated report to develop an up-to-date picture of the strengths and challenges facing Liverpool Hospital and the community it serves, *Condition Critical 2024*.

The report makes several key findings. Central to those is that the funding in our system remains inequitable. South Western Sydney LHD recorded one of the lowest values for annualised expense budgeted per resident—almost \$1,000 per resident lower than the Sydney LHD. That is especially disappointing given that the socio-economic and demographic profile of our region indicates a real need for increased and more specific resources to respond to the sometimes complex and compounding factors that affect our residents. Additionally, there are few alternatives to inpatient and outpatient care outside the public hospital system in south-west Sydney compared with other LHDs. We have the lowest rate of GPs and registered medical officers of all Greater Sydney LHDs.

The report depicts the depth of health inequity experienced by the south-western Sydney community. I recently met with representatives from Liverpool Hospital to discuss the reality on the front line for our healthcare workers. The common thread between the many specialties across the hospital is that their services are under-resourced to breaking point. Take Liverpool Hospital's emergency department [ED]. Access to CT scanners is a significant issue due to a lack of staffing resources, especially out of hours. Compared with other hospitals, that is a significant risk for Liverpool ED and contributes to long waiting times for patients and processing times for results of scans.

For new mothers in our region who deal with the stress of the neonatal intensive care unit, the lack of NICU beds at Liverpool means far too many from south-western Sydney are made to travel daily to Royal North Shore Hospital, the Royal Hospital for Women and sometimes even as far as John Hunter in Newcastle to see their critically ill babies. The impact of long travel times and cost can further compound a traumatic experience. For renal patients, there simply are not enough dialysis chairs for the LHD. That results in the district having to reduce haemodialysis for patients from the recommended three times per week to twice a week. In addition, 72 residents of the district currently complete their dialysis treatment outside. In a region where chronic kidney disease is on the rise, and that will hopefully introduce a renal transplant service soon, we must ensure continuity of care rather than the current situation.

There are numerous other examples where, due to funding constraints and the historic under-resourcing of our community, we are not afforded the gold standard of care that exists in other districts. The last decade in particular put immense pressure on our frontline health workers to fight an uphill battle to deliver the best possible care for our community against a government that did not care about south-west Sydney. I genuinely take my hat off to those workers for their hard work. The impact on our hospital workers is compounded by the lack of investment in community or preventative health care to make the biggest difference to people before they require acute care. Those issues cannot be fixed overnight.

However, I am overwhelmingly optimistic that the Minns Labor Government can meet the challenges it faces to deliver for the people of south-west Sydney and for the healthcare workers who do their best to care for them in a health system that is under extreme pressure. I know that this optimism is shared by many staff

throughout the district, and I look forward to working with them to make sure that they have the resources and tools they need to deliver high quality care for the residents of south-west Sydney—just like the oath they take when they start out as healthcare professionals.

### E-BIKES

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:50):** Shared e-bikes are a great form of environmentally friendly and affordable transport and, since their introduction in New South Wales, they have transformed the way many of us get around. In an electorate like mine, which is a peninsula where our last train station is Edgecliff at the city end of the electorate, e-bikes have helped people navigate areas where transport is not present. They have their place, but e-bikes do not come without their problems. Over the past six months or so I have had an increase in correspondence from people across the electorate telling me about the problems, because these bikes are literally multiplying—especially the green ones.

The problem is that the bikes are being left dumped across footpaths, blocking people pushing prams or the elderly with accessibility issues trying to get through. People have found that they block driveways. The bikes are quite heavy, so they are hard to move. In the case of one constituent who spoke to me last week, the gentleman was walking home and there was a bunch of e-bikes in a very hard-to-see area. It was not well-lit. He tripped over a bike and ended up in St Vincent's Hospital with four spinal fractures. This is a legitimate problem for my community and for others. That gentleman, by the way, is a supporter of e-bikes. He does not want to see them gone, despite what he has been through. But, like many people in my community, he would like to see better regulation.

One of the ways I have tried to address this is by speaking to councils. Councils cannot do much, so they are frustrated. I spoke to the Transport department, which also does not have the power to prevent this. The Environment Protection Authority can pick up dumped bikes, but in practicality that does not happen. I have spoken to e-bike providers in the time I have been here. To give members an understanding of the issue, there are roughly 7,000 e-bikes in Sydney. That number has quadrupled in the past 18 months.

Currently the shared e-bike providers in New South Wales operate in a vacant regulatory landscape. It is a desert for them. It is causing many issues, not just for the riders but also for the e-bike providers. Beam, just one provider, has recorded over 500,000 trips in the City of Sydney since October 2020. That is in one local government area. We do not want a situation where, due to a lack of regulation, we have to ban these bikes. That is not what I want. I would be in tremendous difficulty because my teenage boys would have a lot to say to me if I tried to ban these bikes. I do not want that. I like the bikes as well, but we cannot have a situation where they are operating in an environment where they end up losing social licence to operate.

Over the past few months, I have met with Neuron Mobility, Lime and Beam. They have told me that they are open to fixing the system. In fact, it would work better for them as well. Shared e-bikes are quite concentrated in the City of Sydney, in the Woollahra and Waverly council areas, and in the inner west. Sydney has the most e-bikes of any city in Australia. There are 8,400 e-bike trips every day, and the average distance is about 1.6 kilometres. The bikes are there.

I am really pleased to report that the Opposition has received bipartisan support in the upper House to launch an inquiry into e-bikes and e-scooters. It is not just about the e-bikes that are populating my area, which are the Lime bikes and the shared e-bike systems, but also Deliveroo and the fat bikes that are causing problems in the northern beaches and Cronulla in particular. Any e-scooter will fall in the remit of this inquiry, which will hopefully have some great outcomes. Looking at best practice internationally, those of us who have travelled might have used scooters overseas, where you have to dock them in a particular space. If you do not, you will keep getting charged. Those types of examples will be considered as this bipartisan, multi-party committee looks at these issues and hopefully comes up with some really positive solutions.

In this place we do not want to ban things because they are inconvenient. We would like to find solutions that support an environmentally friendly, affordable option that is accessible for young people. Particularly in my electorate of Vaucluse, where we have problems with public transport, this is a great initiative—but we need to get it right. I am very pleased to report to the people in my electorate and beyond that we in this place are attempting to do something about that. We are not going to say to the companies, "Get on your bike. Move on." If you will pardon the pun, Madam Speaker, there is a lot riding on us getting this issue right.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:55):** On 23 May it was Public Education Day, a day when we celebrate our incredible public education system and the staff and students who make it so. I honour public schools every day. I have stood many times in this place—as have you, Madam Speaker—and spoken about public education. As a loud and proud advocate, I have no doubt I will speak about it again. Many members know that

I was a teacher prior to becoming a member of Parliament. It is that lived experience of being an educator in the public system that makes me believe to my very core that good, accessible, well-funded and supported public education is the very backbone of our society.

Public education does not discriminate. It is accessible to all, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation or faith. I know that the world that exists outside of the school yard can be full of bigotry and prejudice, but if we can give our kids the best possible start by immersing them in a culture where acceptance and inclusion is taught as the norm, then we are providing a remarkable foundation for them to build upon. Education is a right and should never be a privilege. That was first recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 75 years ago and has been reaffirmed multiple times since.

In a report released in February this year by the University of Newcastle Centre for Law and Social Justice in collaboration with the Human Rights Law Centre, a quote caught my eye: "A well-educated, enlightened and active mind, able to wander freely and widely, is one of the joys and rewards of human existence." The statement is simple enough, but the sentiment is powerful. To deny any child the joys or rewards of an education would be unforgivable. If we did not have a public education system, then that right would be denied to many. I really emphasise that point because I think that at times public education and all those who work within it are taken for granted. We forget sometimes to acknowledge its crucial place in our society. Access to public education is absolutely essential. It is up to the individual to decide what to do with the opportunities that stem from there, but access without restriction or prejudice must be non-negotiable. Public education is the only education that provides that.

In my time in the classroom, I remember teaching kids who came from homes where they did not have much, or where they experienced some of the harshest realities of adult conflict and suffering. School provided a haven, and the opportunities that existed for them there expanded their world and gave them a glimpse of lives filled with different possibilities. I know school is not necessarily an easy ride for every kid, academically or socially—in fact, for some, it is quite the opposite. But with public education, they have a chance to grasp something that can level the playing field and diminish their disadvantage and the comparisons they face outside of the school hallways. Public education is critical in providing opportunities and a firm footing that every child can grab hold of.

I finish by acknowledging all the public schools in my electorate. The primary schools are Blackheath, Blaxland, Blaxland East, Ellison, Faulconbridge, Hazelbrook, Katoomba North, Katoomba, Lawson, Leura, Megalong, Mount Riverview, Mount Victoria, Springwood, Warrimoo, Wentworth Falls and Winmalee. The secondary schools are Blaxland High School, Katoomba High School, Springwood High School and Winmalee High School. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of those public schools, their teachers, their P&Cs, their support and admin staff, and the mighty Teachers Federation for the contributions they make to the community and, as their students venture beyond their academic years, the world more broadly. Here's to public education; may it go from strength to strength.

### COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:59):** Like many in the Cootamundra community, I was completely blindsided by the release of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District [MLHD] draft health services plan for the Cootamundra Hospital. I was shocked, dismayed and angry to find that, among other things, it contained proposed changes impacting the future availability of maternity, surgical and pathology services. As local GP and obstetrician Dr Jacques Scholtz said, "We are very concerned. These services are very closely interconnected, and if you start cutting services in one area, it very quickly impacts on others." Like a pebble in a pond, the ripple effects are far-reaching. The plan is a critical document—one that impacts every single resident of Cootamundra and surrounds.

On becoming aware of the plan I convened a meeting, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders including doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, pathologists, new mums and other members of the community to discuss our concerns. The meeting was about getting a holistic perspective and giving a voice to a community that felt that it had not been properly consulted. I take this opportunity to thank those involved in the initial meeting, including my parliamentary colleague the member for Wagga Wagga, who, as chair of the Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health, provided a unique insight into the challenges facing regional health services. Fundamentally, we all agreed at that meeting that there needs to be a strengthening of services, not cuts.

From my discussions, it became apparent that the community had not been adequately consulted in the creation of the plan. Unfortunately, a subsequent MLHD community information evening made it clear that the MLHD had no real interest in community input. I attended that meeting and I agree wholeheartedly with one

attendee, who described it as a shemozzle. Not only was it held at a time when MLHD staff knew that local councillors would be an hour away in Gundagai at their regular monthly meeting, but the session was poorly advertised and there was not enough seating at the venue, which meant that many older residents were forced to stand for over one hour. Copies of the plan were nowhere to be seen and the MLHD representatives did not introduce themselves and did not appear to be taking notes as people tried to have their voices heard, which was made more difficult due to a lack of audio equipment.

The meeting called into question the integrity of not only the draft plan but the entire process that has led to this point. Following the meeting, I felt compelled to reach out to my parliamentary colleagues in the other place to seek support for an order for papers under Standing Order 52. In what was a significant win for the Cootamundra community, the Coalition secured support for the motion, calling on the release of all documents relating to the Murrumbidgee Local Health District's draft health services plan for the local hospital. There are serious questions about how the MLHD came up with the draft document, and the motion will go towards providing the answers that we in the community seek. It is about restoring trust and transparency, and it is a win for common sense that will help shine a light on what, to this point, has been quite an opaque process.

From the beginning, I have said that the MLHD must go back to the drawing board and start again. This is the first step towards ensuring that this crucial document is fit for purpose and truly reflects what the community needs and, most importantly, deserves. There needs to be a strengthening of services locally, not cuts. We cannot lose maternity, theatre and pathology from the Cootamundra Hospital. We need healthcare services that are close to home for our most vulnerable. From a teaching and skills perspective, it is vital that we have the clinical settings in place that allow doctors and specialists to continue their professional development, or else we risk losing those professionals altogether. We should not be overburdening the already overworked hospitals in our bigger centres, like Wagga Wagga. That is simply not the answer. Cootamundra is growing, so it is vital that it has the health services in place to futureproof the community and ensure that it continues to be a place where residents of all ages and stages in life can thrive.

### EATING DISORDERS

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:04):** I speak about an important health issue that is impacting my community and people right across New South Wales and beyond. I have discussed it on the floor of the Parliament in the past, but I highlight the fact that eating disorders are a huge problem. Over 1.1 million Australians are living with an eating disorder. That is the equivalent of 4.45 per cent of the Australian population. People who suffer from eating disorders need multidisciplinary care on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. It is often a lifelong commitment and the incidence of relapse is high. Women are twice as likely as men to experience an eating disorder, and people aged 15 to 19 are 2.7 times more likely than the average Australian to be impacted. Tragically, over 1,200 people died from an eating disorder in 2023 and only 30 per cent of those with eating disorders seek the help they need. That is mostly because of the associated costs.

Such diseases are on the increase and are insanely difficult to cure, with only one in three anorexia nervosa patients being cured within 10 years. Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia can have a profound impact on not only the patient but also their families. Family members and other carers are vital in assisting those suffering from eating disorders to recover, and they deserve all the support that members of this House can offer. Carers work hard to assist those with eating disorders by helping with daily routines, encouraging additional nutritional intake and providing emotional support. Carers give up a lot when faced with trying to support a loved one or friend who has an eating disorder. They often face reduced income, caused by missing work to look after their friend or family member, as well as the travel costs to attend treatment. The burden on the mental health of carers is also significant, having to witness disturbing behaviours such as purging, self-harm and, in some cases, suicidal thoughts or attempts.

There are also significant social and psychological costs to carers, as the stress of looking after someone impacted by an eating disorder takes its toll over many months or years. Carers also help to navigate complex healthcare systems and with managing the societal stigma associated with eating disorders. The huge responsibility and constant vigilance required from carers can lead to feelings of helplessness and burnout. On behalf of my community, I thank all of the people caring for someone who is suffering through an eating disorder. The burden of care needs to be acknowledged. I thank all of the amazing carers across New South Wales who put their own lives on hold to look after someone impacted by an eating disorder.

Factors such as lost productivity for the patient, their family and their carers ensures that there is a huge economic and social cost of eating disorders in Australia, which totalled an estimated \$67 billion in 2023. Of all diseases in Australia, eating disorders ranked sixth in terms of years lost due to disability. Before I finish, I thank the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health for their ongoing work on eating disorders on behalf of all residents of our State. I particularly thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal in the other place, who is doing a fantastic job in this space.

To all of those watching or listening who are suffering with an eating disorder, or are concerned about a loved one, free and confidential help is available at the Butterfly Foundation, which can be contacted on 1800 ED HOPE, or 1800 33 4673. If someone is in crisis, please call 000 or Lifeline on 13 11 14. Children can call the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800. I finish by saying that eating disorders and mental health are public health issues. I encourage the Minns Labor Government, which has already done so much for mental health issues in all communities, to look at ways that it can invest more money to make sure that those who cannot afford treatment for an eating disorder have avenues and access to proper, appropriate treatment.

### STATE BUDGET AND WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:09):** Today I speak on a number of items in the budget and some projects that I am glad to see come to fruition, but also on some items that are in great need that require much more work. Wollondilly is a beautiful area that is sometimes forgotten due to a lack of transport and being just that far from the city that it seems always to be not eligible for metro funding and often not for regional funding either. With this in mind, my team and I set about making our requests to the Government to try to bridge the lack of infrastructure gap that we have had to live with for decades. The job is monumental. I can tell you, cutting down the scores of projects to a small wish list of what is ready to go is no easy task, but I believe my team struck the right balance, even if we did not get all we were after.

Many years ago, in my second term in council, we had an unfortunate run of deaths of motorists on Picton Road. Around my council table we debated what to ask of both State and Federal governments. Thankfully, the council aimed high, and we demanded a separation along the road. That started a project which is still funded today. Thankfully, there has been a drop in accidents and fatalities since then, and the \$89.3 million for the bifurcation and separation of Picton Road through upgrades is money well spent. As former mayor I tabled one of the largest petitions ever gathered in Wollondilly for the protection of koalas. During that time we were lucky enough to get a few minutes spoken on the matter in this place, while it barely felt like 100 seconds or so. Today we have added millions of dollars in funding for koalas, including safety upgrades for crossings of \$26.7 million, which is something that is needed right now. We also have the Georges River koala national park, and as chair of Parliamentary Friends of Koalas Group, I am excited to see this established for future generations to protect arguably the cutest residents of Wollondilly.

Wollondilly is also home to many idyllic sportsgrounds that are overlooked by bushland and hills. Unfortunately, these sportsgrounds are often under-resourced, and I am pleased that two sportsgrounds have found an increase in funding after my requests. Warragamba Sportsground and Dudley Chesham Sportsground will receive \$5.2 million each for upgrades. Those upgrades will give a boost to the local clubs that are much needed and will free up funding and resources now to complete the work needed in Thirlmere that council has identified, including providing the hall that they have funding for from WestConnex, without, of course, ripping up the Thirlmere tennis courts. I also hope this will lead to council listening to community members and their needs in all of the Wollondilly Shire Council area townships. There is no funding for a high school. That conversation is ongoing, but I welcome the announcement of the new Wilton Junction public school and the upgrades to the Wilton Public School. I also welcome the commencement of this work, which we are yet to see.

While not as glamorous, I look forward to seeing the upgrade with \$88.7 million spent on the Thirlmere and Tahmoor sewer treatment works. Those works do not increase the growth capacity; they just meet the target and estimated need approved by the former Government in one small section of my community. There is a deficit of over \$1 billion, and I am hopeful the discussions with Government and developers will lead to a better outcome. Our final big-ticket item, and one I know so many people care about, is the Picton Bypass. The finalisation of the study during this term, at the cost of \$18.3 million, will frustrate many. It frustrates me that this work was not done prior. There were no plans, no money and nothing but novelty cheques in the past. Today the amount in the budget is testament to hard work and not giving up. With this funding, the project moves another step towards completion, and I cannot wait to turn dirt on that necessary piece of infrastructure.

There are some opportunities that I think were overlooked. The budget identifies over \$300 million for bus services between Campbelltown and the new Western Sydney airport, but that overlooks the growth in Wollondilly. A connection for the growth area is logical. It is 20 minutes from the airport, but having no chance to work there is ridiculous. I look forward to the new bus services that must come with growth. Finally, the investment in services to reduce domestic family violence is welcome. It has been called for by all voices in this place but, without any details on where and how it will be funded in the regions, we do not know what we are going to get. We need more services in Wollondilly, and I will be working more in this space in the years to come.

### HELENSBURGH POLICE STATION

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (20:13):** For more than a decade, the Helensburgh community was faced with forever promises from the previous Liberal-Nationals Government on the construction of a new

police station to serve the community. The station on Waratah Street has not been operational because of not meeting work health and safety standards, leaving the community without an ongoing police presence. The former Government announced a new station time and time again, usually in the lead-up to an election, yet it never delivered. After 12 years of inaction by the former Government, the New South Wales Government has invested \$3 million in a new police station to serve the community. After only the second year of a Minns Government, we are delivering. This purpose-built station can accommodate up to eight officers, and provide modern facilities and secure parking for police vehicles. It will provide a much-needed increase in the Wollongong Police District's ability to maintain a visible presence and support community safety within the northern suburbs of Wollongong, where the closest 24/7 staffed police station in the district is Wollongong Police Station—30 minutes away.

This essential project is a commitment that the New South Wales Government promised to deliver in its first term. It shows that the Minns Government delivers on its electoral commitments and listens to our community's needs. Our police work tirelessly to protect and serve our community, and it is essential that they have the facilities and resources to most effectively do their jobs. Our police in the Wollongong and Sutherland police districts are not only doing a great job in keeping our community safe, but they are building strong relationships and trust with their local communities. Initiatives like Coffee with a Cop, something I have participated in with our local police officers, are an excellent way to foster the relationship between the general public and our police.

The Minns Labor Government is committed to ensuring the safety of our community and making sure our police officers are supported in their roles. That is why the Government has announced a suite of recruitment and retention programs, including paid study, to get more boots on the ground to fight crime. The Government scheme to pay police recruits to study at Goulburn Police Academy saw a 26 per cent increase in applications between 31 October 2023 and 5 May 2024, compared to the same period last year. The Professional Mobility Program and regional recruitment scheme announced by this Government on 15 May will address 1,500 vacancies within the NSW Police Force. Those vacancies are a legacy of the previous Government's neglect and mismanagement of police recruitment and retention.

I look forward to the Helensburgh Police Station being built by the end of September 2024, weather permitting, and to the residents of northern Illawarra having the ongoing peace of mind of knowing that police resources are being committed to their community by the New South Wales Minns Labor Government. I thank the Minister for her ongoing support and commitment, and Superintendent Jason Box from the Wollongong Local Area Command for his advocacy and dedication to his officers and the community. Superintendent Box is leaving us soon to continue his NSW Police Force career. We thank him for his public service, and we wish him well.

#### **TRIBUTE TO KAY VAN NORTON POCHE, AO**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (20:17):** I acknowledge the unfortunate and very sad passing last weekend of Kay Van Norton Poche, AO, one of the most generous philanthropists to have lived in this country. Together with her husband, Greg, she donated over \$150 million to a variety of generally health-related causes right across the country. Kay was a very passionate and active member of the Manly community. In 2018 she made a donation of some \$6 million to support the then fledgling Manly Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice, also known as the AYAH, which opened in 2023. It is the first of its kind in Australia. It provides support, care and respite to young people with life-limiting illnesses, as well as supporting their family members and carers who might like to stay with them.

Kay was born in upstate New York and had lived in Manly for many years. She was a very passionate supporter of the Manly Warringah Sea Eagles. She supported the club's Indigenous round jersey and a number of other very important causes in and around the Sea Eagles. In 2019 she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for her distinguished service to the community as a benefactor and supporter of Indigenous health and medical research initiatives. This was largely through her work founding the Poche Indigenous Health Network. She was also a very proud supporter of the Melanoma Institute Australia, funding it to the tune of several million dollars. But perhaps closest to my heart and that of many people in the community of Manly was her unwavering support for the hospice at North Head. Her support of the Manly Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice will never be forgotten. The hospice is also known as Kay Van Norton Place. We are very grateful for her work.

I will never forget the moment that she sought me out to make a donation to the hospice. As we were announcing the plans, Kay approached me. I thought, "Who is this lovely older lady?" She said to me, "I want to make a donation." I thought she might hand me a little bit of money to support the cause. In fact, she pulled out her chequebook, there and then, and wrote a cheque for \$5 million. I put that cheque in my pocket. I took it to my electorate office, which was the only place I could think of that had appropriate security, and I locked it in a cupboard. I presented the cheque to NSW Health a couple of weeks later. Kay's \$5 million donation was enough to get the ball rolling to create what is now a centre that supports people from across New South Wales. I will

never forget when she wrote that cheque, because we were about to do a press conference and I was very nervous about having it. I was thinking, "I've got a cheque for \$5 million in my top pocket."

I thank Kay. Her version of a meeting was going for a drink at Garfish, the great seafood restaurant in Manly. She will be missed. What an impact she made with her husband, Greg. Kay will be remembered for her outstanding and lasting contribution to the State of New South Wales.

### STATE BUDGET AND NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (20:21):** The New South Wales Labor Government is delivering for the people of Newcastle. With its second budget out today, I would like to discuss the achievements the Government has delivered for my constituency in the past 12 months or so. Key to Newcastle's future is the development of a green hydrogen hub in Kooragang, where heavy industry will have access to cleaner, green energy. The Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub is one of the three hubs designated for development in New South Wales, and is also the biggest. The New South Wales Government recognises the enormous potential for industry development in Newcastle. That is why we have committed \$45 million to the Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub. It will ensure that existing local industries in the area can decarbonise and deliver clean energy for the future.

The New South Wales Government is also moving ahead to revitalise our night-time economy after the damaging effects of the lockout laws and COVID-19. Newcastle is a hive of culture and live entertainment, with a devout live music scene and exquisite culinary offerings. The vibrancy reforms introduced by this Government will protect live music venues by ensuring sensible sound management is in place, and increase opportunities for trade and events for restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs.

An important issue that has been eating away at my town for some time is the severe erosion that has been occurring at Stockton Beach. I am proud to announce that the Government has released the Stockton Beach Repair Blueprint to outline its plan to fund and address erosion at Stockton Beach. The New South Wales Government put the first 130,000 cubic metres of sand on the beach as part of the Australian Government and City of Newcastle's joint \$6.2 million program. The rest of that funding is going towards feasibility studies to determine the best source of sand, whether that be from the northern Hunter River or from offshore. Those studies are currently being carried out and once we know where the best source is, the \$21 million I committed to at the election will be allocated.

Only a New South Wales Labor Government will safeguard our major water utility companies from privatisation. The former Coalition Government refused to rule out selling Sydney Water, so we amended the Constitution Act to ensure Sydney Water and Hunter Water remain in public hands. Today's budget continues to deliver for Newcastle. This is a classic Labor budget, putting housing, health and education at the forefront. The Government will be investing \$10.5 million into upgrading existing social housing supply. Every day, constituents reach out to me about the condition of their homes—mould, broken windows, leaks. These upgrades will ensure that every Novocastrian lives with dignity. Some \$5.1 million has been allocated for 8,400 new social homes. Newcastle will no doubt benefit, once the funding has been allocated. A further \$45 million has been allocated to the redevelopment of Newcastle High School—works are currently underway.

The Government has set aside \$8.9 billion for maintenance and minor works in public schools across the State, giving our students an appropriate environment for positive learning; \$835 million for the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct; \$189 million for the Bulk-Billing Support Initiative, which incentivises general practitioners to offer bulk-billing with payroll tax rebates; \$9.1 million for road upgrades in the port to project program for renewable energy infrastructure transportation; and a further \$74 million for Hexham Straight. Since coming into power, this Labor Government has achieved an enormous amount and, with this budget announced today, it will do a whole lot more. I look forward to speaking to the House this time next year about the Government's achievements in the 2024-25 financial year.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (20:26):** Tonight I update the House about the latest Community Building Partnership [CBP] grants in my electorate. What will \$300,000 do for the Upper Hunter? The great thing about the CBP grants program is that it is not just about the value of the grant but what the recipient can do with it. Twenty organisations are celebrating because they can now attend to projects on their to-do list. This includes community groups from Gloucester to Lorn, from Branxton to Bunnan, a specialist service helping the homeless, rural firefighters, Gloucester's community radio station and a football club wanting to improve spectator comfort. I congratulate the recipients and thank all the organisations that applied.

The Denman-Sandy Hollow Junior Rugby League Football Club will receive over \$36,000 to build a roof over the tiered seating at Denman Oval. The multipurpose court at Paterson sportsground can have solar security lights installed after the Paterson Cricket Club secured \$24,000. Upper Hunter Homeless Specialist and Outreach

Service has \$20,000 to enhance its transport options by purchasing a vehicle to move goods and groups of people. Lorn Park Bowls Sports and Recreation Club can purchase new furniture with its \$20,000 grant. Reg Ford Oval is set to have the existing boundary fence replaced after Clarence Town Football Club was awarded almost \$20,000, and the Gloucester Broadcasters Association Inc. has \$19,150 to purchase an outside broadcast kit. Bucketts Radio 104.1 FM will be able to do outside broadcasts from local cultural events such as Anzac Day services, benefiting those who are unable to attend.

The visitor experience at the Paterson Court House Museum will be improved, with \$18,361 enabling the Paterson Historical Society to upgrade lighting and floor coverings. The Bunnan Sports Club Inc. has \$18,000 to revitalise the livestock holding facilities at its ground, which will improve safety for cattle and the people who attend the facility. Dungog Wholefood Co-operative can increase the availability of locally produced food with the \$16,630 it receives to purchase fridges and a freezer. I thank the NSW Rural Fire Service Association for its applications, which will help three brigades across the Upper Hunter electorate. The Bunnan brigade can improve storage, concrete the floor of the current fire shed and install two water storage tanks with a grant of \$15,000. Bureen Rural Fire Service can have cold food and drinks out on the fireground, with \$5,000 to purchase a new fridge for the brigade's fire truck.

The Community Building Partnership program has the power to deliver, and the 2023 allocations will spark a range of energy improvements. Rouchel School of Arts will use its \$15,000 to update the hall with solar panels and a battery system. Singleton Golf Club has \$14,600 to install solar panels on the roof of the new machinery shed in order to reduce costs and decrease its energy use. Branxton Golf Club can purchase an electric utility cart with its \$14,000 allocation. Gloucester will see another three projects from the latest round of CBP funding. Thunderbolts Swimming Club has \$9,400 for a new marshalling scoreboard. Air conditioning will be upgraded at Gloucester Men's Shed with its \$8,195, and Gloucester Country Club has \$5,000 to improve shade for the club's golfers.

It is also great to do something for our youth through two longstanding organisations. The Girl Guides Association has over \$7,000 for solar power and lighting improvements at Singleton. The 1st Scone Scouts will do their bit to improve air quality with \$6,000 to replace a 90-year-old fireplace with a slow-combustion, modern fireplace. Again, I thank all the organisations that submitted applications for the 2023 New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership grants program. Scores of good projects were considered, but a budget of \$300,000 did make it difficult to assist all the applicants on this occasion. I look forward to seeing the successful projects come online and become a reality in the months ahead.

### **TRIBUTE TO JOHN EDWARD AKISTER**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (20:30):** Tonight I pay tribute to John Akister. His daughter told me on the weekend that he passed away recently at the age of 86. John was the member for Monaro from 1976 until 1988. He won four elections and was the local member for nearly 12 years. He was a member of the Wran Government and a Minister in that Government. He was the last Labor member to represent the electorate before me. John came into politics from a fascinating background. He came from Sussex in England and was an orphan. His mum was 17 when she had John, and she handed him over to his grandmother. She then handed him over to a local workhouse, which later sent him to an orphanage. He grew up in the orphanage, which he left at the age of 15. He went off to a job in Manchester as an electrical fitter and was then called up for national service. He later decided that he wanted to escape wintry England and came to Australia, where he backpacked around before getting work in Cooma as an electrical draftsman on the Snowy Mountains hydroelectric scheme.

From then, John became an important member of the community. He joined the Labor Party. For a while, he was captain-coach of the local Cooma rugby team, now known as the Red Devils—I am not sure whether that was their name then. He won the key seat of Monaro after then Liberal member Steve Mauger died, and helped Neville Wran come to power in 1976. His win was a surprise to many people, but he went on to hold the seat for four elections. He was a great local member. I remember well—yes, I am old enough to remember—my father working with him when my dad was the member for Eden-Monaro. John was a stalwart of the Labor Party who worked with Dad, and Dad supported him later when he became the member for Monaro.

One of John's characteristics was his incredibly broad accent. Many people would say that he was a great bloke but they could not understand a word he said. He had a strong accent but was committed to our local area. He is commemorated by a building which bears his name at the Cooma jail. During my previous term as the local member, I tried to get a government office building in Queanbeyan named after John. He was acknowledged but the building was not named after him. Unfortunately, the Coalition then sold off the building—as it tended to do. John is certainly well worth remembering for his contribution to the Monaro electorate, where he was the local member for 12 years. He had an incredible history. He did not meet his mother until he was elected to Parliament.

He met her for the first time just before he was sworn in and she came to Australia. He had a tough upbringing, but some people would say that it made him a tough person.

John is survived by two children. Vanessa let me know about his passing the other day. I understand that he had suffered from dementia for some time. He was living in Sydney the last time I spoke to him. He is certainly remembered by many of the older residents of Cooma as a prominent member for the area and local resident, and for his contribution to the Snowy scheme and to our communities. I have twice this evening talked about deceased former members for our local area, which is a little sad, but it is important to acknowledge them. Probably not many members recall when John Akister was the member for Monaro, but his election was a harbinger of the Wran slide that came later. He was a very successful member and served as Minister for Corrective Services. He was voted out in the 1988 election, when he discussed attempted changes to forestry and gun controls. He went on to work in private business and I understand that he renovated a few houses as well. My thoughts are with John's family and children. Rest in peace, John Akister.

### ILLEGAL TOBACCO SALES

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (20:35):** I wish to speak about organised crime—specifically, a wave of criminality that is bringing corruption and intimidation into pockets of regional and rural New South Wales, including my electorate of Wagga Wagga. The issue at the centre of this alarming development is illicit tobacco. As the cost of legal tobacco rises and restrictions on sale grow stronger, black market operators are ingratiating or intimidating their way into local businesses. Those criminals use threats and coercion to force retailers to sell black market tobacco under the counter to smokers at much lower prices than those offered by legal operators. Consumers might congratulate themselves on getting a bargain, but few perhaps pause to ponder the harm they cause by supporting criminals. Make no mistake, law-abiding people caught in this crime wave are afraid.

In my electorate of Wagga Wagga the problem has exploded in the past few months. I heard of one store owner who was told by a black market salesman—for want of a better term—that they must stock his illegal product. It was made clear that refusal would mean repercussions. That brave retailer opted not to bow to the threat but now lives in fear and has installed security systems at home, amid fears that the unwelcome visitor with the intimidatory sales pitch will return. In another instance, a person who wanted to open their own store was warned not to do so. The message was clear: Tobacco criminals had the market cornered and any new, legitimate player would enter at their own risk. It is no exaggeration to say that the crimes are infecting my community with fear and corruption.

Until now, illicit tobacco has been regarded as a "health" problem rather than a crime problem. Indeed, health officials in Wagga Wagga have done their best to stem the tide of crime. I acknowledge the great work done by public health officials. I worked with them during my time in health and since then, and until now they have been able to identify and act on reports of illegal tobacco use. But it has become clear that health staff do not have the resources to take on the insidious might of organised criminals. That is why I believe the Government must escalate this issue so that police lead the way in preventing and prosecuting this crime.

This month more than 600 kilograms of tobacco, about 2,000 vapes and a significant amount of cash were seized when police stopped vehicles near Gundagai. That was excellent work to sever part of the supply chain. But police cannot stop every car, and the amount of illegal tobacco in Wagga Wagga alone indicates that those seizures were just a dent in the crime supply pipeline. That is why I call for a major, targeted police response to tackle the supply routes, as well as consistent, effective enforcement operations to catch retailers breaking who are the law at the point of sale to customers. But for prosecutions to be a major deterrent, we also need punishments that fit the crime. In some cases, at the retail level the fines are only \$5,000. I am sure that is just seen as the cost of doing business by those operators. I am told that when offenders are caught they simply pay the fine and restock with more illegal supplies, and the vicious circle continues.

That is why I support substantially increased penalties for traffickers and sellers. I understand that the New South Wales Government will be mirroring substantial penalty increases planned by the Federal Government. Legislation for those penalties is due to be passed by the Federal Government shortly. This Government intends to embody those penalties that will be up to millions of dollars, as I understand it. That is incredibly important. The penalties must be sufficiently punitive to be a major deterrent. In the meantime, legitimate retailers are losing a great deal of money, with some worried that they will have to shed staff or reduce operations. One supermarket owner told me that his weekly turnover has fallen by 10 per cent, and another supermarket is down about \$7,000 in sales.

Legitimate tobacco retailers comply with government regulations aimed at reducing tobacco harm, so this criminal activity is not only responsible for hurting decent people but also making a mockery of our governments and undermining efforts to encourage people to quit smoking. If we do not act now, I fear the fiery tobacco wars that are plaguing Melbourne could erupt in our regions. I believe we are at a turning point. The actions we take

now will determine whether tobacco crime diminishes or is allowed to flourish. Flourishing is just not an option. The time to act is now.

### TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY CONNOLLY, OAM

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (20:40):** Tonight I pay tribute to a remarkable community member and a giant of netball in Campbelltown, the Macarthur region and indeed across the State. Ms Shirley Connolly, OAM, sadly passed away this month. Shirley was the driving force behind the growth of netball in our region for 50 years as both a coach and an administrator. During this period, Shirley coached many East Campbelltown club teams and Campbelltown and District Netball Association representative teams. In my local community, when we think of netball we generally think of two things: the courts at Minto, where hundreds if not thousands of girls and women gather each week during the season to train and compete; and Mrs Shirley Connolly, stalwart of the local netball community, highly revered among her peers and commended by Netball NSW.

Shirley—or "Mrs C", as she was affectionately known—held various positions at the association and was instrumental in making netball the sport of choice for women and girls in our local community. In 2021, Shirley was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for her outstanding volunteer contributions to netball in the Macarthur region. Shirley was also recognised by both Campbelltown City Council and Netball NSW for her contributions to netball. The accolades are indeed very well deserved. Shirley played a pivotal role in advocating for the expansion and enhancement of the netball courts and facilities at Coronation Park in Minto. The facilities are rated among the best in New South Wales, and host netball competitions at local and State levels. Shirley's loss will be felt by so many in our local netball community. Shirley is deserving of permanent recognition, which is why I propose that the netball facilities at Minto be renamed "The Shirley Connolly Coronation Park Netball Complex".

I have written to the Mayor of Campbelltown, calling for council to consider my proposal and honour Shirley's legacy. The renaming of the facilities would serve as a permanent tribute to the netball stalwart and much-loved community volunteer. It would honour Shirley's dedication to the sport and provide an enduring legacy of her valuable contributions to netball in Campbelltown and the Macarthur region. It would also ensure that Shirley's contributions to the local netball community live on in the hearts and minds of future generations of netballers in Campbelltown and across the State. I urge the council to consider my proposal to rename the Minto netball complex in honour of Mrs Connolly and, in doing so, pay tribute to a remarkable member of our local community. Naturally, I look forward to council's favourable response. It is only fitting for a woman who was synonymous with netball locally and who dedicated her life to the sport.

I am told that as a child Shirley never had the opportunity to play netball. However, she fell in love with the game after her five daughters played the sport. Shirley recognised the importance of girls playing team sport and saw firsthand the value and rewards of being part of a team. As the mother of five daughters, Shirley could certainly testify to that. Shirley had a long involvement with the Campbelltown and District Netball Association, including as president between 1990 and 2018. Over many years, Shirley led the association through significant change, such as the digitisation of the association's administration and financial systems. She also introduced coaching and selective systems for representative teams. As a founding member of the Campbelltown Sports Foundation, Shirley contributed to the establishment of the South West Sydney Academy of Sport, which has directly supported the development of elite netballers from the Macarthur region.

Above all else, Shirley was a committed volunteer who believed in the value of service to our local community. Her actions reflected the belief that if our community provides a service, then we should give something in return. She certainly achieved that—and so much more. Shirley was also a strong believer in thanking people who volunteered their time and for their being loyal to the association. Shirley will be fondly remembered for her grassroots connection to the Campbelltown association which she lived and, indeed, breathed. Our community will be forever grateful for Shirley's advocacy, commitment and valuable contributions to netball in Campbelltown and the Macarthur region. I thank Gail, her daughter whom I know well, her sisters and Shirley's nine grandchildren for allowing the community to share their mother and grandmother and her dedication and passion for netball and our community. May Shirley rest in peace.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:45):** This evening I address the devastation of domestic violence, an issue that affects individuals and families across our State. Domestic violence remains a pervasive issue that deeply affects our community, and it is essential that we continue to shine a light on the work being done to support victims and address this pressing problem. This issue is not confined to any single demographic; it affects women, children and men too, and people from all walks of life. We all have the right to live in safety and without

fear, especially in our own homes. Domestic and family violence is destructive and devastating for those impacted and, as a society, we must do all we can to address it decisively and prevent it.

It is overwhelmingly women who bear the brunt of this violence. We must recognise the deep and lasting impact that domestic violence has on its victims—physically, emotionally and psychologically. Domestic violence in New South Wales has seen an increase of almost 2,000 victims in the 12 months to March 2024. In my local area, the Willoughby electorate, we are fortunate to have outstanding organisations and services, including Mary's House Services and the Daisy Centre, which provide crucial support to victims of domestic violence. These organisations offer safe havens and comprehensive services to those in need, and their work is so valuable and deeply appreciated. Both are doing incredible work with little government support and resources. I have worked to provide a grant to support their initiatives, and I have personally participated in a Mary's House Walk on more than one occasion. My staff have been trained by the Mary's House team, and I am proud of that. I have also met with their leadership and recently have written to the Minister on behalf of Mary's House.

Despite the essential services these organisations provide, they continue to operate with very limited resources. Recent data highlights a concerning rise in domestic violence incidents and deaths. In 2024 the number of women killed due to domestic violence increased, with a woman now being killed every four days on average. Yet current funding for essential services has not kept pace with demand. The Government's recent \$230 million package is welcome but must more urgently and practically address the needs of the community. Despite the present urgent and critical nature of the need, the challenge in part is in implementation. We saw that at a Federal level when in March this year Federal Labor admitted to hiring only 17 of a promised 500 domestic violence staff, despite money being in the budget. In New South Wales we need more tangible and pressing results.

The Coalition was proud to make record investments in these programs in the sum of \$787 million, and made tangible and enduring change. I note the bipartisan way in which we in this Parliament responded to recent challenges with a range of reforms, which the Coalition supported. In 2022 I supported the criminalising of coercive control in intimate partner relationships. That law is now in effect and builds on measures such as the right to know a partner's criminal history, affirmative consent laws and expanding women's shelters. Some other examples of on-the-ground improvements made by the Coalition include the reformation of apprehended domestic violence orders; over 80 safe rooms and over 150 remote witness rooms in metropolitan and regional courthouses, helping domestic and sexual violence survivors to give their best evidence in court; 24/7 support via the NSW Domestic Violence Line; the doubling of leave for domestic and family violence; and the facilitation of immediate termination of tenancies to escape violence.

I commend the leaders and teams of Mary's House and the Daisy Centre, and the individuals who are on the front lines, supporting victims and advocating for better, both in Willoughby and in New South Wales. Let us reaffirm not just a show of support in budgetary terms but a genuine commitment to tangible and pressing change for a safe and just society. We must continue to properly support victims, hold perpetrators accountable and work towards a future where every individual can live free from fear and violence. There is much more to do, and I will continue to advocate strongly for further measures to reduce domestic and family violence.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (20:50):** I thank the member for Willoughby for his interest in this issue and for his advocacy for Mary's House and the Daisy Centre, and I note he has written to me in relation to Mary's House particularly. This Government is investing a record amount of money in this budget to support domestic violence survivors and to hold perpetrators to account. We have record funding in housing for domestic violence victims. We are also legislating bail laws that have recently been brought into Parliament. The Government will continue to work with experts, practitioners and victim-survivors in the field and hear lived experiences. I am looking forward to continuing in a multipartisan way with everybody in Parliament to eradicate the scourge of domestic violence.

#### **TRIBUTE TO MAYOR TONY BLEASDALE, OAM**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (20:51):** Last Monday the Bleasdale family celebrated the 40-day memorial service for my dear friend the late Blacktown City Mayor Tony Bleasdale, OAM. The 40-day memorial service is a Greek Orthodox tradition and was celebrated for Tony, as Tony's widow, Nina, is of Greek origin. It is a significant and solemn event held to honour and pray for the soul of a deceased loved one. This practice is deeply rooted in Orthodox Christian beliefs about life, death and the afterlife. The 40-day memorial service is based on the belief that the soul undergoes a journey after death, and the prayers offered during this service help the soul find peace and rest. It also provides comfort to the bereaved family and community.

Today I honour the life and legacy of my dear friend, a dedicated servant of the Blacktown and Mount Druitt community. I had the pleasure of serving with Tony on the council for more than 12 years. We worked together in serving the Mount Druitt community for more than two decades. Tony was not just a leader

but a pillar of our community, a man whose unwavering commitment and compassionate spirit touched the lives of countless individuals. Tony's journey as a public servant was marked by his tireless dedication and remarkable vision for Blacktown.

He believed in the potential of our city and worked relentlessly to ensure that Blacktown thrived as a place of opportunity, inclusivity and growth. His leadership was characterised by a profound sense of duty and integrity, and a genuine desire to uplift every member of our community. Tony was always a champion of the underdog. Under Tony's leadership, Blacktown saw numerous initiatives that improved our infrastructure, enhanced our public services and fostered a sense of unity among our diverse population. His efforts in promoting community engagement, supporting local businesses and championing environmental sustainability have left an indelible mark on our city.

Tony's work was not just about policies and programs; it was about people. He understood that the true strength of a community lies in the connections we build and the support we offer one another. Tony's warmth and approachability made him a beloved figure among residents. He was always ready with a listening ear and a kind word, no matter the issue at hand. His ability to connect with people on a personal level set him apart as a leader who genuinely cared for the wellbeing of his constituents. He made anyone he met feel like the most important person. He was not just our mayor; he was my dear friend and a mentor. As we remember Tony today, let us also celebrate the values he stood for: kindness, perseverance and a deep sense of community. His legacy will continue to inspire us as we strive to build a better Blacktown, one that reflects the principles he championed throughout his life.

In remembering Mayor Tony Bleasdale, let us honour his legacy by continuing his work. Let us strive to build a community that is inclusive, compassionate and forward thinking. Let us carry forward his vision of a city where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, where diversity is celebrated and where kindness prevails. To Nina and all Tony's family, I extend my deepest condolences. I and many others share in their sorrow. Please know that Tony's impact on our lives and our city will never be forgotten. His spirit will live on in the initiatives he started, the lives he touched and the community he loved so dearly. May my dear friend rest in peace. His legacy will forever be etched in the history of Blacktown, and his spirit will always be with us. Vale, Tony Bleasdale.

#### **RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:55):** There was a time not so long ago when it was a great thing for health to be growing up in country New South Wales. The fresh air, the open spaces, the physical activity and, in most areas, the local fresh food all made it worth leaving behind the cities and enjoying the many health benefits the bush had to offer. Back then, people in the bush had a higher life expectancy than those choking on the pollution in urban areas. In 1999 the life expectancy for people in western New South Wales was just over 80 years, while people in Sydney had a life expectancy of just over 79 years. But over the last 20 years, that situation has reversed. Life expectancy for people living in Sydney now averages around 84 years, while for people living in western New South Wales it is around 79 years. What has changed? The country itself is still as beneficial to a person's health as it ever was, and technology has made some of the hardest work on farms and in mines less dangerous and less backbreaking. For most of us, we would not want to live anywhere else.

The major reason for the declining life expectancy is less access to health care. When you compare the list of the top 10 reasons for people dying in the city and those in the country, the thing that stands out is the disproportionate number of deaths from preventable causes and, sadly, the higher rates of suicide in the country. If people in regional areas had more equitable access to services for physical and mental health, they would still, on average, live longer than folks in the city. The May 2022 report of the inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales found that residents living in bush communities face significant financial challenges in order to access diagnosis, treatment and other health services, compared to those living in metropolitan cities.

The report cited a range of problems with the regional health system due to workforce shortages, under-resourcing, funding models not fit for purpose in country areas, confusion between State and Federal responsibilities, poor workplace culture, and a lack of transparency and accountability in local health districts. There were 44 recommendations. The previous Government supported 41 of those recommendations in principle but left office before it could implement many. That left it up to the incoming Government to make good on its promise to implement all 44 recommendations.

In May 2023, the Government appointed a select committee to examine the implementation of the 44 recommendations, chaired by my friend the member for Wagga Wagga. That inquiry is due to report its findings next year, but that does not mean we should be sitting on our hands, waiting for the report. There are things that should be right done now to reverse the decline of the regional health system. So far, we have seen the

implementation of several recommendations from the 2022 report, including increased pay and incentives for regional health workers, funding for more housing for health workers, and increases in the number of regional paramedics. That is all good news. To take some pressure off presentations at regional hospitals, there have been moves made to broaden the scope of practice for pharmacists, but we should increase the scope of practice for paramedics too.

Another big part of providing better health care to regional areas is giving more support to non-government organisations playing a vital role in providing services the Government does not or cannot provide. That includes high-profile operators like the Royal Flying Doctor Service [RFDS], which has provided medical services to remote areas of New South Wales and Australia for nearly a century. It does emergency retrieval services and inter-hospital transfers of high-acuity patients as well as transfers of non-emergency patients. It also provides rural area health services. In some of the towns in my electorate, RFDS is all that is there. In Barwon it operates four GP medical practices, which have handled 28,700 consultations in 2023. It does that largely on money from philanthropy, bequests, donations, merchandising and fundraising—that is about 52 per cent—with 14 per cent from the Federal Government and 34 per cent from the State Government.

More recently, the need to provide support during the pandemic and other factors have seen the RFDS forced to draw on funding reserves to continue its important service. It needs a baseline of funding every year just to continue to operate, and hopefully expand, rather than reapplying for grants, which forces it to compete with other providers for funding and makes it hard to retain staff. It is not the only non-government service operating in remote New South Wales. Others including Little Wings, Angel Flight, Variety, Royal Far West and a private sector group, AirMed, provide a range of services. They provide, importantly, paediatric assessments, which are vital in regional areas—for access to NDIS—but there is some overlap and inefficiency that needs to be addressed.

What is needed is a comprehensive review of how much non-government operators do to fill the gaps in health care in New South Wales. A coordination of their services to avoid them having to compete for funding and to make sure that they collaborate to continue to provide that level of support for the regional health system is also needed. If any one of those services should fail, the Government would have to take over providing that service. When it comes to keeping the regional health system going and improving it, the Government cannot do without them but, more importantly, nor can the bush.

### ENDEAVOUR ENERGY

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (21:00):** On 20 March this year I spoke in this House about the single biggest issue in Leppington and across the State, the cost-of-living crisis, with one of the biggest contributors being energy bills. In my speech I emphasised the significance of fair and just negotiations between Endeavour Energy and its dedicated workforce. Sadly, little has changed in the past three months and, in response, workers have taken industrial action with a rally today at Parramatta Square outside Endeavour's offices. I am here to reiterate that the best cost-of-living relief for workers is a robust union enterprise agreement. That is not just a fundamental truth, which many people on this side of the House are aware of, but it is also a critical component in ensuring fair wages, improved working conditions and a balanced distribution of economic benefits. Unfortunately, Endeavour Energy continues to demonstrate an unwillingness to negotiate in good faith on key issues such as pay, overtime rates, rostering and allowances.

Endeavour Energy provides services for a large region, including western and south-western Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Illawarra, the Southern Highlands and the South Coast. The men and women who maintain our energy infrastructure in those areas, many of whom are from those same regions, deserve better. They should be recognised for their contributions. They are willing to engage in fair negotiations. One glaring issue is Endeavour Energy's failure to invest in the future of the workforce. The company trains the least number of apprentices of any power company in this State. That risks the future skills base of the industry and limits opportunities for young people looking to break into the industry. Just as alarming is the fact that since the privatisation of Endeavour Energy, network charges for customers have increased by over 20 per cent, far outpacing employee wage growth.

While customers are bearing the brunt of increased charges, the workers who keep the lights on are seeing their wages stagnate. To add insult to injury, Endeavour Energy executives, by contrast, received a pay increase of over 13 per cent last year. That is a glaring example of the disconnect between the company's upper management and its workforce. Further to how workers have been severely impacted by privatisation, the number of trade workers has more than halved since privatisation. Understandably, that has led to increased workloads and stress for remaining workers. During the current industrial dispute, Endeavour Energy management has resorted to intimidation tactics, telling workers that up to half of the workforce would be sacked if they secured the terms that they were after. The behaviour demonstrated by Endeavour Energy is unacceptable and undermines the principles of fair negotiation.

Worse still, Endeavour Energy management suggested that workers' cost-of-living issues could be resolved if they "stopped eating steak and smoking cigarettes." That is not only outrageous but it is absurd how out of touch that statement is with everyday struggles. The refusal of Endeavour Energy to engage in good-faith negotiations by resorting to intimidation tactics and absurd statements is a disservice to not just their employees but also the communities they serve. In fact, Endeavour Energy owes it to all citizens of New South Wales, given that they own 49.6 per cent of the company. A fair enterprise agreement is crucial for the workers and for ensuring reliable and efficient energy services across the regions it covers. I urge Endeavour Energy to return to the negotiating table with a genuine willingness to address the concerns of its workers. Until that occurs, I will continue to support workers at Endeavour Energy in their continued industrial action.

Fair pay, reasonable working conditions and respect for the workforce are not demands; they are necessities for maintaining a motivated and effective workforce for any workplace across this State and this nation. I call on this House and all stakeholders to support the workers of Endeavour Energy in their fight for a fair enterprise agreement. The hardworking men and women of Endeavour Energy deserve respect, recognition and fair remuneration. It is time for Endeavour Energy to show that it values its employees and is committed to fair and equitable treatment.

### WATER SECURITY

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:05):** The Commonwealth announcing the Sustainable Communities Program last week places water buybacks firmly on the agenda of the Federal water Minister, Tanya Plibersek. Irrigation plays a significant role in our region. The total gross value in the Murray-Darling Basin of irrigated agricultural production before value-adding is approximately \$8.4 billion. Overall, irrigation contributes \$30 billion to the Australian economy each year. Industry research notes that there are approximately 20,000 manufacturing jobs directly relying on irrigation in the southern Murray-Darling Basin. That is indeed significant. A report by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences [ABARES], released concurrently with the announcement, shows that modelling on the effects of the buybacks estimates that achieving half of the 450 gigalitre flow by buying 225 gigalitres will decrease water use for irrigation by 4 per cent a year. That, it states, would translate into a 10 per cent increase in annual water allocation prices, or about \$45 per megalitre across the southern basin, and the average value of irrigated production is estimated to decrease across the southern basin by \$111 million per year.

The ABARES report has been used to infer that because the impact of water buybacks has been modelled to be less harmful than low rainfall or a drought, somehow all is okay. That is hardly reassuring. The offer of an up-front \$300 million compensation package will not ameliorate the intergenerational impact of the ongoing financial losses associated with decreased production. Bonegilla cattle farmer Lindsay Rapsey has decades of knowledge about the Murray River. When I asked Lindsay his thoughts, he said to me simply, "They've got a problem." What happens when the buybacks are compounded by a drought? And that will happen. In response to the report and the Sustainable Communities Program, NSW Irrigators' Council CEO, Clair Miller, said that the basin communities already struggle to survive droughts when water is scarce and too expensive to grow key crops such as rice, which keep vital processing jobs in towns like Deniliquin. She said:

This report shows more Government buybacks will add to costs and water scarcity, leaving these and other vulnerable communities in an even more precarious position.

An output report to a basin leadership summit in April this year identified an opportunity to shift the volume-focused perspective of the plan. In reporting on the summit, *The Border Mail* records Murray-Darling Basin Authority Chief Executive Andrew McConville as saying, "How do we get the maximum value of every gigalitre recovered, and are we using that in the best and most efficient way?" He also said, "We can actually get even more environmental outcomes with the same volume of water." I have witnessed environmental issues evident due to high water flows just downstream of Hume Dam, including extensive riverbank erosion and an enormous build-up of sand and sediment that has changed the flow and path of the Murray, resulting in irrigation supplies dwindling, while destructive and invasive European carp are ruining native habitat and water quality. In my inaugural speech in 2019 I told the House:

Water policy is complex, but it is also vital. We need to ensure that the social and economic prosperity of our regional communities is part of our thinking while returning water to the environment. The local environment, local farming, and local economy in the Albury electorate are no less important than the environment, farming and economies elsewhere.

This week Albury is hosting the MDBA's 2024 River Reflections conference, which will include the release of the *Basin Plan Review Early Insights Paper*. It will be an important opportunity to continue the dialogue, and I took heart when the basin authority stated:

The Authority sees a significant opportunity to build confidence in Basin management by focussing on outcomes. In preparing for the Review, it will be critical that we continue the conversation, to build a shared understanding of what a healthy Basin looks like from an environmental economic, Cultural, and social standpoint – including what this means locally, within regions, and for the whole of the Basin. These are important conversations about our shared values and goals for the Basin.

Whilst resilient and experienced when it comes to the challenges they face with weather and markets, our communities remain vitally concerned about the negative impacts of further water recovery through buybacks in the southern basin. The New South Wales Government cannot wash its hands of the decision made by the Commonwealth.

### **DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (21:10):** I am pleased to acknowledge the recipients of this year's Community Building Partnership [CBP] grants in the Drummoyne electorate. This year's grants will go towards funding a range of community projects, including upgrades to local parks, sustainability improvements at local venues and new public facilities. It is wonderful to see so many community groups working to make our electorate a better place. I congratulate all the successful recipients, but I also acknowledge those who were unsuccessful in this round and encourage them to apply for next year's grant funding.

I am delighted to announce that one of the successful projects from this year's CBP grants is the LIVVing Room social enterprise cafe and community hub. The LIVVing Room will be a community hub built at the existing Livvi's Cafe at Timbrell Park in Five Dock. The LIVVing Room will provide paid internships, helping those living with disabilities or experiencing employment difficulties to develop practical skills. Seeing the vision for that community hub has been amazing, and the grant of \$114,484 will prove invaluable to developing the commercial-grade community kitchen at the LIVVing Room. I acknowledge and thank Mrs Justine Perkins and her husband, John, from the Touched by Olivia team for being at the forefront of that visionary project. It will be such an important place for fostering community and supporting those who are struggling and vulnerable, and for providing meaningful employment to those who may not have that opportunity.

Recently, Massey Park Golf Club successfully sought Government funding for the purchase and installation of solar panels on the clubhouse roof. The new system is a great step forward in sustainability for the club and will go a long way in reducing its energy costs. I congratulate Pat Cullen, general manager of the Massey Park Golf Club, on his work and look forward to seeing the completion of the project. I also acknowledge club president Rob Gilder and vice-president Stephanie Callaghan, as well as the entire board, for their leadership. I recently visited the club and it was great to see their plans for its future. I also congratulate Dobroyd Aquatic Club in Rodd Point for its successful grant of \$37,500. The funding will be used to replace the degraded decking. The club provides sailing lessons to all abilities and ages, and the funding will help to improve safety standards for all club members. I congratulate Geoff Wilson on his successful application. I also acknowledge Margaret and John Sanderson of Sailability. For many years they have provided sailing lessons to those living with a disability, and I back in the work that they do.

The City of Canada Bay Council successfully secured funding for a range of projects in our community. The grants included a \$15,000 expansion to the Chiswick Community Garden. COVID demonstrated the importance of community, and it was lovely to see how the popularity of community gardens grew. They really became community hubs, so I am very happy to support funding for the Chiswick Community Garden. There was also a grant of \$16,000 for a shade sail at Livvi's Place playground at Timbrell Park. The City of Canada Bay Council also successfully secured \$15,000 for the purchase and installation of a new basketball hoop at the South Street playground. During school time, the playground is shared between St Mark's Catholic Primary School and Drummoyne Public School, so I know that will go a long way. There was \$9,626 for the installation of a new water refill station at St Lukes Oval, helping the many sporting clubs that play there.

I also congratulate Strathfield Council on its grant of \$42,000 for the construction of a bird hide at Mason Park Wetlands in North Strathfield. I am sure that new facility will be a great spot for our local avian enthusiasts. I once again express my sincerest congratulations to all successful recipients of this year's Community Building Partnership grants.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:15 until  
Wednesday 19 June 2024 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

### **GYMEA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB'S MENTAL HEALTH MATCH**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Gymea United Football Club on its Mental Health Match for Beyond Blue recently. The initiative was the idea of Rachael Kearney, mother of under 9B player Scarlet. Rachael is a medically retired police officer who has suffered PTSD. She is passionate about increasing awareness of mental health as an issue in the community and raising funds to support the cause. Rachael encouraged Gymea United to run the club's Shire Premier League game against Kirrawee on the King's birthday long weekend as a Mental Health Match to raise funds to support Beyond Blue. Gymea's Under 9B girls led Gymea's Shire Premier League Women's team out onto the field to kick off the fundraising effort. Thanks to the generosity of the Gymea and Kirrawee teams and their supporters, around \$2,500 has so far been raised for Beyond Blue. This is very close to Rachael's heart; I recognise her efforts to give back to mental health through Gymea United. I acknowledge the support she received from the under 9B girls and their families on the day and from club committee members Peter and Michelle Nagy.

### **DR DAMIEN STARK OAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Dr Damien Stark on receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday Honours. Dr Stark was awarded the medal in the General Division for service to medicine in the field of microbiology. His work at St Vincent's Hospital has been extensive; he is currently the Principal Hospital Scientist in the Division of Microbiology, Molecular Diagnostics and Precision Medicine. Through his role, which he has held since 2018, he leads the microbiology department at St Vincent's, which specialises in the extensive analysis of infectious diseases. His skills were especially useful throughout the coronavirus pandemic; at its height he had increased the processing capacity of his lab to over 12,000 tests per day. Dr Stark's contribution to his field also includes his work with cancer, where he is helping to develop and expand the use of genetic sequencing in cancer treatments.

### **CHERYL STEER AFSM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Cheryl Steer on the award of the Australian Fire Service Medal and recognise her contribution to firefighting services through her roles with Fire and Rescue NSW. The Australian Fire Service Medal is awarded to recognise the distinguished service of firefighters. Ms Steer is currently the Assistant Commissioner - Regional Operations. Her firefighting career extending over 28 years. Assistant Commissioner Steer has not only been deployed to many stations across our state, but has also helped fight fires in Victoria, as well as overseas. She has also been a guiding light for women looking to become firefighters, mentoring them through her role as co-chair of the FRNSW Women's Inclusive Network. Firefighting is a difficult job, and requires strong support among colleagues, which Assistant Commissioner Steer promotes as the director of the Relief and Welfare Fund. I once again congratulate Assistant Commissioner Steer for receiving the Australian Fire Service Medal and thank her for the work she does to promote fire safety across the State.

### **DR BILL PIGGOTT AM**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Dr Bill Piggott from Berry who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) during the 2024 King's Birthday Honours for Australia announced on 10 June 2024 by the Governor General. Dr Piggott was honoured for his remarkable and significant service to conservation and the environment, to medical education, and to international community health. An active Landcarer in Berry and former Chair of Berry Landcare, Dr Piggott was awarded with an Honorary Life Membership at the 2021 Landcare NSW Annual General Meeting in recognition of his service to Landcare NSW and Landcare movement. Bill is also recognised as a leader in the Landcare movement on the South Coast for many years. Bill played an instrumental role in designing the early Musters and was the inaugural recipient of the Gerald Carnie Memorial Award in 2015. A former international medic with the World Health Organisation, Dr Piggott lobbied Fulton Hogan and Transport for NSW to source local seedlings and seeds for the Berry Bypass project, as well as ensuring environmental offsets remained local. A huge congratulations and well done to Dr Bill Piggott AM from Berry.

### **GREG CROFTS OAM**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Mr Greg Crofts from Kiama who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) during the 2024 King's Birthday Honours for Australia. Greg was honoured for his remarkable service to scouting. His involvement with the Kiama Scout Group spans 16 years. He began his scouting journey in 1976. He started as the '1st Peakhurst Cub Leader' and progressed to '1st Peakhurst Scout Leader' in 1980, and to '1st Sylvania Heights Cub Leader' in 1987. In 1996, Greg moved to Nowra and joined the '1st Illaroo Cub Pack.' Two years later, he became the Regional Leader of Cub Scouts for the South Coast and Tablelands Region. His leadership skills were further recognised when he

was appointed District Cub Leader for Shoalhaven in 2003 and District Commissioner a year later. Greg's leadership continued to be acknowledged, leading to his promotion as Assistant District Commissioner in the Illawarra South District in 2006. In 2009, he took on the role of '1st Kiama Scout Group Leader,' before becoming the Group Advisor in 2020. A huge congratulations and well done to Mr Greg Crofts OAM from Kiama.

#### **COLIN RATHBONE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Mr Colin Rathbone from Kiama who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) during the 2024 King's Birthday Honours announced on 10th June 2024 by the Governor General of Australia. Colin has many years of significant voluntary service to local Kiama community particularly to the Kiama Sports Council and as an active member of Kiama's Friends of Vision Australia. A cause that is close to my heart too. Colin is currently riding the Bicentennial National Trail, 5,330 kilometres on horseback from Cooktown to Healesville. He is doing this ride to raise funds for Melanoma Research as he sadly lost his wife to melanoma in 2020 and has so far raised in excess of \$24,161. Many of us remember his dear wife Ronni (short for Veronica) Rathbone, a passionate and generous volunteer who sadly succumbed to malignant melanoma first sighted under a toenail. Colin is an incredibly well respected and well regarded local; a gentleman and a character who enjoys enormous community affection. He is so deserving of this recognition. Congratulations Colin, and well done.

#### **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RIFLE CLUB AWARDED GRANT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Congratulations to Southern Highlands Rifle Club, Hill Top, which has successfully secured a grant under the NSW Local Sport Grants Program 2023/24 for Club Improvements. An amount of \$4400.00 was awarded, which will be well utilised by the club to benefit the members. The Southern Highlands Rifle Club has access to a Classification range: a 500-metre, 50-metre, and 800-metre range and currently has more than 83 active members. They use the impressive Oz Score target system developed in Canberra, always used in accordance with range safety procedures—safety first and foremost. I'm delighted to have been able to support this well-deserved funding, and it is great to see the club among a variety of different sport organisations who have benefitted from the NSW Local Sport Grants Program funding. I know it will make a huge difference to the club members and community.

#### **BOWRAL CRICKET CLUB AWARDED GRANT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Congratulations to Bowral Cricket Club, which has successfully secured a grant under the NSW Local Sport Grants Program 2023/24. The grant, worth \$5500, will provide the womens and girls' teams with gear, uniforms and equipment such as game-day and training shade canopies. Bowral Cricket Club is famous for being the home of Australian cricketing legend Donald Bradman, and the club is brimming with cricketers making a name for themselves, living up to the legendary reputation set by The Don. Established in 1883, it is the biggest cricket club in the Southern Highlands, and junior and senior teams in all divisions and age ranges. Bowral Cricket Club is a member of the Highlands District Cricket Association, the Southern Districts Zone, and NSW Cricket Association and has their home grounds at Bradman Oval and Stephens Park Bowral. The club benefits from the countless hours of contributions by volunteers, and I'm delighted to have been able to support this well-deserved funding. I know it will make a huge difference to the club members and community. Well done.

#### **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS WATER POLO AWARDED GRANT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Congratulations to Southern Highlands Water Polo, who have successfully secured a grant under the NSW Government Local Sport Grants Program 2023/24 for the Junior WaveMakers Water Polo Tournament Development Program. An amount of \$6020 has been awarded to the Club. Southern Highlands Water Polo are currently working with the Council and other stakeholders on the Community and Recreational Facilities Strategy to advocate for and improve the masterplan for sporting facilities in the Highlands. Water polo as a sport grows in popularity every year, and I recognise the efforts of the board and members of Southern Highlands Water Polo to make the club a vibrant and engaging feature of the sports on offer in the Highlands. The Club is run with the dedication of volunteers who give their time in training, refereeing, coaching and fundraising. Junior and Senior teams have represented the Highlands at both state and interstate competitions, and will continue to make waves in future comps. I'm delighted to have been able to support this well-deserved funding for you. I know it will make a huge difference to your club members, especially the youth, and the community.

#### **AUDREY KOOSMEN**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to congratulate Lake Macquarie's very own wildlife warrior Audrey Koosmen who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in this year's Kings Birthday Honours, for her services to animal welfare. Audrey is a remarkable woman. She founded Hunter Wildlife Rescue almost

45 years ago and remains the not-for-profit organisation's President, she is also the current Chair of the NSW Wildlife Council. Audrey's empathy towards animals and passion for conservation began at a young age, when as a teenager she joined Greenpeace and the RSPCA. Indeed, it is fair to say that she has dedicated her life to the care of sick, orphaned and injured animals, often having to wake up every three hours at night to feed newborn native mammals and birds. The 76-year-old has turned her Blackalls Park home into a wildlife sanctuary of sorts, where she will care for a number of animals at anyone time. In 1994 Audrey and her team rescued more than 50 koalas, that had been burned in the terrible bushfires that raged throughout Newcastle and Port Stephens. Congratulations Audrey on this very well deserved accolade. Keep up the amazing work.

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - JOSHUA MARR**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Joshua Marr a joyous 1st birthday! His mother, Youlanda, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy 1st birthday Joshua/JJ! You have brought so much joy into our lives and into the lives of others. Your dad and mum love you lots. Hope you have a great day. ." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Joshua's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Joshua!

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - ZHUOBIN DENG**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Zhuobin Deng a joyous 65th birthday! His dad, Ming, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy Birthday, Ye Ye! On this special day, I want to express how deeply grateful I am for your wisdom, kindness, and the countless wonderful memories we've shared. You've always been a source of inspiration and strength for our family, and your stories and lessons have enriched my life in so many ways. I hope your day is filled with joy, love, and everything that makes you happy. Here's to celebrating you today and always!." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Zhuobin's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Zhuobin!

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - ZHIRU ZHAI**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Zhiru Zhai a joyous 68th birthday! Zhiru's dad, Ming, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Dear Nai Nai, happy birthday! On this special day, I want to let you know how much you mean to us. Your warmth, love, and endless care have always been a source of comfort and joy in our lives. Your stories and wisdom have enriched my experiences and guided us in so many ways. I hope your birthday is filled with happiness and laughter, and may each day bring you smiles and good health. Thank you for your constant support and love. We cherish you always!." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Zhiru's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Zhiru!

#### **WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING – ORANGE CHAPTER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I rise today to recognise the outstanding contributions of the Orange Chapter of When No One is Watching (WNOW) to our community. Dedicated to promoting men's health and well-being, this group has created a welcoming and supportive environment where men can connect, share and grow together. The Orange Chapter meets every Wednesday at 6am in the picturesque Elephant Park. Sessions include a simple workout, mindful movement, and the essential component of connection over coffee. This routine promotes physical health and fosters well-being. WNOW's mission to challenge cultural norms and celebrate emotional vulnerability is timely. By encouraging men to embrace their authentic selves and support each other, WNOW is making significant strides in improving the mental health landscape of our community. The group's commitment to creating a non-judgmental space where men are comfortable expressing themselves is commendable. The Orange Chapter of WNOW exemplifies the power of community and connection. Its work has had an impact on the lives of many men in our region, promoting healthier, happier, and more connected individuals. Thank you, WNOW Orange Chapter, for your unwavering commitment to improving men's health and well-being in our community.

#### **CARL JAEGER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the contribution my constituent Carl Jaeger has made to not just his community, but Australians in need. A life-long Orange resident, Carl has

literally opened a vein to help strangers, with an amazing 200 blood donations now under his belt. It is a number Carl has racked up during the past 50 years, first giving blood as a young man as part of his National Service but continuing well after, until reaching the rare milestone on June 4, 2024. With blood donations around 470ml, Carl's 200 represents around 94 litres, meaning he has helped countless people in desperate need. Whether it be trauma, through road accidents or other incidents, the treatment of cancer and blood diseases and other surgical uses, the need for blood and blood donors is infinite. The son of a former Orange mayor, Carl has always been community minded but is a quiet achiever with probably only Orange's Lifeblood staff aware of his unwavering commitment to donation. People are often praised with the term 'your blood is worth bottling'. In Carl's case, a truer word was never spoken. On behalf of the community, thank you Carl.

#### **CUMNOCK GENERAL STORE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I rise today to recognise and commend the remarkable contributions of the Cumnock General Store to our community. In 2023, facing the threat of closure, the store was saved through the efforts of Cumnock locals who banded together to purchase and revitalise this vital hub. Their dedication and commitment transformed the store into a vibrant and essential part of the town once again. Now community-owned, the Cumnock General Store provides essential goods and services but also fosters a sense of unity and support among residents. It serves as a central gathering point, where people can connect, share stories, and support one another, reinforcing the strong community spirit that defines Cumnock. The store's revitalisation has also brought opportunities for local employment and has become a model of community-driven success. Its continued operation ensures residents have access to necessary supplies, fresh produce, and a welcoming place to gather. The Cumnock General Store's transformation is a testament to what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared vision. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in this incredible effort. Your hard work and dedication have made a profound and lasting impact on our community.

#### **CHALDEAN BABYLONIAN NEW YEAR 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 14 April 2024, I was fortunate to partake in the commemoration of the Chaldean Babylonian New Year 7,324 (AKITU) while also paying tribute to the remarkable achievements of HSC students and university graduates. I extend my sincerest appreciation to Mr. Sam Yousif and the Chaldean League Australia of NSW for extending their gracious invitation to me. Their dedication to preserving Chaldean heritage and fostering educational excellence within the community is truly commendable. The celebration provided a platform to honour the ancient traditions of the Chaldean Babylonian New Year, offering insights into its rich history and significance. Additionally, it was a joyous opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of HSC students and university graduates, applauding their academic accomplishments and future endeavours. The event served as a testament to the enduring spirit of the Chaldean community and the importance of cherishing cultural heritage while embracing academic success. Attending the Chaldean Babylonian New Year celebration was truly a wonderful experience, and I am grateful for the chance to be part of such a meaningful event.

#### **MR BORIS BELEVSKI – CEO, CABRA-VALE DIGGERS CLUB**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr Boris Belevski, CEO of Cabra-Vale Diggers Club and a true local member, has been instrumental in supporting community initiatives that consistently empower our community and its residents. Having come to Cabramatta over 65 years ago from Bitola, Macedonia, Mr Belevski grew up in our local community and discovered a passion for serving it after embarking on his career journey in the club industry with Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. Mr Belevski proudly remains a strong supporter for local infrastructure development and tourism economics. Specifically, Mr Belevski has positioned the Club's operation to deliver its mega hospitality centre project, supporting the forthcoming Western Sydney airport and the foreseen increase in tourism in the Southwestern Sydney region. As CEO, Mr Belevski has guided the Club's initiatives, ensuring it continued support for the local community. His leadership has benefitted a diverse array of local cultural and community services organisations. On behalf of our local community, I commend Mr Belevski for his exemplary community spirit, and I thank him for his unwavering commitment and support.

#### **MR HANH TIEU**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—It is my privilege to recognise Mr Hanh Tieu, Vice President of NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Associations (VEFA), for his outstanding service to the Vietnamese senior community in my electorate of Cabramatta. Mr Tieu is among the first generation of Vietnamese Australians who embarked on a courageous journey as boat people in search for refuge and freedom following the Fall of South Vietnam in 1975. Motivated by his passion for serving vulnerable members in the community, Mr Tieu has voluntarily joined VEFA as Vice President since 2014, placing a particularly strong focus on enhancing the health and well-being of VEFA members. Mr Tieu is regarded as the right-hand person of VEFA. Without him, VEFA's programs benefiting thousands of people would not have been possible. Mr Tieu's altruistic endeavours extend beyond VEFA, as he remains a revered volunteer within the wider Vietnamese community in my electorate. On

behalf of the community, I thank Mr Tieu for his generosity and the dedicated efforts in enhancing the well-being and betterment of our community members.

#### EMERSON GARCIA

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Emerson Garcia, from Shell Cove, who will soon be starring in the Arcadians Theatre company production of Pippin, as Pippin. The 19-year-old from Shell Cove has been performing in Musical Theatre productions from a very early age. At the age of 10 he was "Gavroche" in the Australian Professional Production of Les Miserables and performed in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Alongside his Musical Theatre passion, Emerson performs in a local boy band 'Overnight' who were recently seen on the 2023 season of The Voice and who are regularly performing and releasing music. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I congratulate Emerson and wish him well in all his future musical endeavours.

#### DAPTO HIGH SCHOOL – WOMEN IN TRADES PROGRAM

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Dapto High School for providing information and pathways into apprenticeships for female students through their 'Women in Trades' program. Data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency shows that women make up just 26 per cent of the workforce in both the construction and the electricity, gas, water and waste services industries, with the largest proportions in the lowest paid quartiles. There are proportionately even fewer women in mining, while manufacturing's workforce is 28 per cent women. The program has been running for a few years now and has seen about 18 former Dapto High School students enter apprenticeships. Over the course of the program, female students from Dapto, as well as Warilla, Corrimal and Warrawong high schools, learn what a trade involves; how to work in a male-dominated field, including employment law; and how to find, apply and secure a job. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Dapto High School on this wonderful initiative in providing female students a pathway into what were traditionally male dominated careers.

#### ZAC LOMAX – NSW BLUES

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Zac Lomax, from Shell Cove, being selected in his first State of Origin for the New South Wales Blues rugby league team on 5 June 2024. Known for his exceptional skills and versatility on the field, Zac has been a standout performer for the St George Illawarra Dragons in 2024, showcasing his abilities as both a reliable outside back and accurate goal-kicker. His inclusion in the State of Origin team is a testament to his hard work, consistency, and impressive performances throughout the NRL season. Whilst the result didn't go our way in Game 1, Zac played exceptionally well, scoring a try and topping both the total run metres and post-contact metres for New South Wales. On behalf of the Shellharbour Electorate, I congratulate Zac on his selection into the NSW Blues team and wish him all the best for the remainder of the origin series.

#### DAVID MONICO

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge David Monico 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 David and his service as a Justice of the Peace. On behalf of the Department of Communities and Justice and the Attorney General, Hon. Michael Daley MP, David was awarded a certificate thanking him for his fifty years' service. David was presented with the award at a lovely afternoon tea along with the other recipients in the Swansea Electorate. 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 David for his dedication to our community.

#### ERIKA ENDERBY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Miss Erika Enderby for her upcoming representation of Australia at the 2024 World Orienteering Championships, the 2024 Junior World Championships and the 2024 European Youth Orienteering Championships. Erika is 17 years old and has already achieved tremendous results in her chosen sport of orienteering. She clearly demonstrates outstanding dedication and skill to be chosen to represent Australia in Poland, Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom. Earlier this year, Erika claimed a silver medal at the 2024 Oceania Orienteering Sprint Championships in Junior Elite. In this competition, she further was named the second overall Oceania competitor. Congratulations Erika on your remarkable achievements. It is an incredible honour to be selected to represent your country at the highest level and I wish you the best of luck in your future competitions.

### GEOFFREY PENDLEBURY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Geoffrey Pendlebury 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 Geoffrey and his service as a Justice of the Peace. On behalf of the Department of Communities and Justice and the Attorney General, Hon. Michael Daley MP, Geoffrey was awarded a certificate thanking him for his fifty years' service. Geoffrey was presented with the award at a lovely afternoon tea along with the other recipients in the Swansea Electorate. 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 Geoffrey for his dedication to our community.

### EZEKIEL PRATT

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I am thrilled to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of Penrith rower Ezekiel Pratt. At just 15 years old, Ezekiel has collected an impressive array of medals, trophies, and glassware over the past year, marking an extraordinary journey since he began rowing in 2022. In 2023, Ezekiel had a remarkable season, winning six medals at the Taree Regatta, a significant event for the Nepean Rowing Club. He ended the year with a stellar performance by securing the NSW State Championships Men's Under 16 Single Scull title. Ezekiel himself has reflected on the season, calling it one filled with many highlights. These triumphs demonstrate Ezekiel's dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment to his sport. His achievements not only bring pride to the Nepean Rowing Club but also to the entire Penrith community. Sport plays crucial roles in the development of young people, teaching discipline, resilience, and the importance of teamwork. Ezekiel's success serves as an inspiration to all aspiring athletes, demonstrating what can be achieved through perseverance and passion. Congratulations, Ezekiel, on your phenomenal success. Penrith is immensely proud of you, and we look forward to witnessing your continued excellence in the years to come.

### GREEN GARDEN CHILDCARE CENTRE

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—It was such a pleasure to visit the Green Garden Childcare Centre to recognise their extraordinary efforts in organising a community drive to ease the cost-of-living burden on families in our community. This initiative calls for donations of children's clothes, books, and toys, providing essential support to those in need. Green Garden Childcare Centre's community drive is a shining example of the remarkable community spirit in Penrith. It is through these selfless and generous acts that we can come together and support one another during challenging times. The dedication and commitment demonstrated by Green Garden Childcare Centre in supporting our families not only alleviates immediate needs but also fosters a sense of unity and care within our community. These initiatives save families from the strains of economic hardship, save unnecessary clothing waste and ensures that every child has access to the necessities and comforts they deserve. Last week I was fortunate enough to meet with Melanie Carter and Olivia Bateup from Green Garden Childcare Centre who set up this initiative. Thank you, Green Garden Childcare Centre staff, for your commitment to making a difference to our Penrith community. Your efforts are truly commendable and deeply valued.

### NEIL HOLMES

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Congratulations to Neil Holmes, a dedicated Kingswood resident, on receiving the Distinguished Long Service Award at the 2024 NSW Community Sports Awards. This prestigious honour recognizes Neil's decades of unwavering dedication and selfless service to the sport of rowing. Neil has made countless contributions at the club, state, and national levels, becoming a cornerstone of the rowing community. As a regular volunteer at Rowing NSW regattas and the renowned Boat Park Manager for the Sydney International Regatta Centre, Neil is known and respected nationwide for his commitment and expertise. Volunteers like Neil are the backbone of grassroots and community sport, ensuring that events run smoothly, and athletes can perform at their best. His tireless efforts have not only enriched the rowing community but have also inspired many others to get involved and give back. Thank you, Neil, for all your years of service. This much-deserved award is a testament to your hard work and dedication. Penrith and the entire rowing community are incredibly proud of you and deeply grateful for your contributions. Congratulations once again on this outstanding achievement.

### INTERNATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—The 30th anniversary of International Men's Health Week occurred from Monday 10 June 2024 through to Sunday 16 June 2024. The focus of this year's International Men's Health Week was on increasing the number of men getting health checks. According to the Australian Men's Health Forum, 50 men in Australia die each day from preventable causes. That's approximately 18,000 men per

year. One preventable death is one too many. To reduce this number, I encourage all men to speak to their GPs about getting their health checked and to visit the Australian Men's Health Forum website or contact them to obtain a Men's Health Checks Toolkit. I also encourage all people to spread this important message. I thank and commend the Australian Men's Health Forum and all organisations, such as Men's Shed, who work so hard in promoting and assisting the health of men.

#### **TASTE OF EVERYTHING**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I thank and commend local Glenmore Park women's social group 'Taste of Everything' for continuing to support individuals and families doing it tough. Their support of those who are disadvantaged includes donating food items to families and assisting disadvantaged groups with grants from Penrith City Council. Taste of Everything currently has 25 members and is open to all age groups. Taste of Everything conducts a variety of exciting activities such as learning to knit, crochet and quilt, inviting guest speakers, and enjoying each other's company over lunch, ten pin bowling and bus trips to points of interest. Previous trips have included a visit to May Gibbs' House and Wendy Whitely Secret Garden in Kirribilli. I'm pleased that our community has such a welcoming group who enjoy each other's company and contribute so much to others.

#### **B DYNAMIC LOGISTICS**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was delighted to meet the team at B Dynamic Logistics and tour their Kemps Creek site last Tuesday. It was wonderful to learn about and witness their specialisation in providing cross-sector logistical services capable of meeting the needs of diversified retailers and e-commerce operations. This expanding business is of great benefit to local employment and the economy. It was pleasing to see the focus that the business places in the growth and development of their employees and the value they place in the input and feedback from the employees in driving the business' direction and vision. I am excited to see what the future holds for this business, particularly with the pending arrival of the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport. I thank CEO and co-founder Mangala (Mal) Siriwardhane and his team for taking me on what was a very informative, insightful and exciting tour. I congratulate Mr Siriwardhane and everyone at B Dynamic Logistics for their accomplishments so far and I wish them the very best in their future.

#### **GANG SHOW'S PHASERS SET TO STUN AUDIENCES**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the 58th Annual Production of the Albury Gang Show – called 'Intergalactic Show Off The Musical', under the leadership of Assistance Production Director Harley Maclachlan and his dedicated team. Nearly a hundred Scouts and Guides from throughout the Riverina and North-East have come together to create a spectacular performance for the second longest running Gang Show in Australia. Over the past 11 months, this hardworking team has poured their hearts into brainstorming, collaborating, and bringing their ideas to life. Remarkably, all the dialogue has been crafted by the youth participants themselves. The cast comprises 50 Scouts and Guides, with one-third of them taking the stage to showcase their talents. Participants range in age from 10 to over 50 years old. Supporting the cast, are a crew of 40 individuals who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes. This production is more than just a show; it provides a wonderful opportunity for Scouts and Guides to grow and develop a broad range of skills. Thank you to everyone involved in making the 58th Annual Albury Gang Show an unforgettable event!

#### **STRANGER'S ACT OF KINDNESS SHINES IN THE DARKEST HOUR**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the extraordinary kindness of Alana Maskielle, from Jingellic. Her compassionate actions brought a glimmer of hope to an elderly man, John Rooney, who recently lost his wife of 63 years. In a beautiful act of generosity, Ms. Maskielle paid \$400 for a replacement tyre for Mr. Rooney after briefly meeting him in line at the local tyre store. When Mr. Rooney returned to the shop to pick up his car, he found solace in this unexpected kindness. This act of goodwill was brought to light by the diligent efforts of the Border Mail, who embarked on an investigative journey to find the good Samaritan. This heartwarming story serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that small acts of kindness can have on our border community, especially towards the elderly. Thank you for reminding us of the power of empathy. A simple gesture can make a huge difference in someone's life. Alana, your generosity has not only provided comfort to Mr. Rooney but also inspired us all to be more compassionate and supportive of one another.

#### **ALBURY STAR TOPPLES CHAMPION'S RECORD**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Albury High School student Sienna Toohey, for her outstanding achievement at the Australian Olympic trials in Brisbane on June 11. Sienna made history by breaking Leisel Jones' 15-year-old Australian age-group record with a phenomenal time of 1:07.01 in the women's 100-meter breaststroke final. Sienna's dedication to swimming is truly inspiring.

She has consistently demonstrated her passion and commitment to the sport, showing a keen desire to break records and achieve her goal of competing at the highest levels. Her recent record-breaking performance, improving her previous best time by 0.71 seconds from 1:07.72 at the Australian Age Championships in April, is a testament to her relentless pursuit of excellence. Although this swim event did not secure her qualification for the Paris Olympic Games, it has certainly made a significant impact on the swimming world. Sienna, your hard work and determination are a testament to your potential, and I am confident that you will continue to achieve great things in the world of swimming.

#### **BOWRAVILLE HIT SAUTABU VILLAGE**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—A couple of amazing committee members from Bowraville Junior Rugby League Club embarked on an unforgettable journey to Fiji. Their mission, to spread and share their love for rugby league with the kids in Sautabu village was well received. Armed with a few of Bowraville junior rugby league beloved, well-worn jerseys from back in the day. The committee members arrived in Sautabu village ready to make a difference. As they handed out the football jerseys to the eager and excited kids, the face of the children lit up with a smile from ear to ear. The gift of these jerseys' spreads joy instils hope and makes a positive difference in the lives of those kids. There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing the smile they bring. So, here's to the committee members, who dedicated their time and effort to make a difference in the lives of those kids in Sautabu village. They exemplify the true spirit of a sporting club, and I couldn't be prouder of their selfless act of kindness. Cheers to spreading joy, fostering connections, and making a positive impact, one footy jumper at a time.

#### **QUICK THINKING BOATER**

**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.

#### **ROD MCDONAGH**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today, congratulating Rod McDonagh who was recognised for two prestigious awards in his contributions to emergency support services and Surf Life Saving. Rod is a recipient of an Emergency Services Medal in the 2024 King's Birthday Honour Roll for decades of community service, specialising in emergency management and response. This was complimented by the highest local honour, being inducted as the fifth Life Governor in the history of South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club. From an early age, Rod was a member of Forster's Cape Hawke SLSC until his career with Maritime moved him to South West Rocks in 1993 as a local boating officer. He soon became one of the youngest presidents in 1997 before a Life Member in 2006. These awards are rightfully deserved and a testament to Rod's human spirit and bravery. If there is a call for action, Rod is the first to take it, ensuring our safety and security in the waterways. Congratulations, Rod on this momentous achievement. I also thank you for your service and the lengths you have gone, and continue to go, for our community.

#### **NEWPORT PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Mr Speaker, I pay tribute to Newport Probus Club (NPC). NPC is for women and men alike, opening the door for new friendships, hearing, and learning from interesting speakers, and plenty of fun. Meeting at Newport Bowling Club, NPC membership is capped at 160! It's an extraordinarily active and diverse Club with a wide range of activities, accommodating the interests of all members. Whether its book clubs, golf, history tours, camping trips, bowls, the cinema group, coffee, discussion, knitting groups, tennis, pickleball, NPC offers it all! Congratulations all NPC office bearers on their efforts supporting the Club and its members: President – Phil Butcher, Vice President – Chris Jones, IP President – Diana Burrell, Treasurer – Susie Lough, Secretary – Jan Pilz, Membership – Stephen Neutze, Link Editor – Sam Burrell, Activities – Angelika Acock, Speakers – Jenny Neilson, Welfare – Drew Martin, and Club Photos – John O'Sullivan. Plus, thank you all group organisers! Thank you and congratulations to all involved with NPC. I am pleased that acknowledgement of NPC is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

### COMBINED PROBUS CLUB OF MONA VALE

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Mr Speaker, I pay tribute to the Combined Probus Club of Mona Vale (MV Probus). Meeting at Pittwater RSL, MV Probus is the biggest on the Northern Beaches! MV Probus was founded on 16 April 1996 and this year turns 28. I pay tribute to current and founding members – Sue Ward, John and Barbara Sinclair and Maureen Robinson! In 2026, MV Probus will be 30 years old, and Sue, Barbara and Maureen will each be 90, and will have spent one third of their lives in MV Probus – what a feat! MV Probus offers something for everyone – the President's Lunch, the Movie Mob, Mah-Jong, Café Society, Men's Breakfast, and Ladies' Dinner, plus a wide range of interesting activities and tours. Congratulations all MV Probus office bearers on their efforts supporting the Club and its members: President – Robert Stocken, Vice Presidents: Terry Mackin and Julie Magill, Secretary – Leonie Ridgway, Treasurer – Jan Nixon, Membership – Barry Taylor. Plus, thank you all group organisers! Thank you and congratulations to all involved with MV Probus. I am pleased that acknowledgement of MV Probus is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

### JIM COLLEY

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Mr Speaker, I pay tribute to local sailing legend, Jim Colley. Jim is getting ready to take on the world at the 2024 Paris Olympics in the 49er class, with his sailing partner, Shaun Connor. Jim's dad, Gerald, built him a boat at age five and set him on his way to his great love in sailing. Ever since, Jim has been progressing through the sailing ranks, first qualifying for an international regatta at age 13. He has been closely supported by his parents, Gerald and Sally, from day one. Jim's an Avalon local through and through and his sailing really took off when he started sailing in Avalon and then Newport. I also acknowledge Tracks Gordon's mentorship of Jim. Jim and Shaun just missed out on a place at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics but have been working diligently towards their Paris dream. I was very pleased to hear that Jim was recently assured of his place at the Olympics, whilst having a coffee with his mum and dad in Avalon. Jim, I wish you every success and look forward to you celebrating your many accomplishments on your return at your favourite café, Swell Café, Avalon.

### DR PAUL GAUDRY AM

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The 2024 Kings Birthday Honours provides the people of Australia the opportunity to recognise and say 'thank you' to outstanding citizens whose efforts make our communities and our nation a better place. Within my own electorate several outstanding citizens were recognised. I recognise and commend Dr Paul Lyttleton Gaudry AM who is a resident of Kenthurst. Dr Gaudry was awarded with a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) General Division for significant service to emergency and forensic medicine, and to professional associations. Dr. Gaudry has served as the Inaugural Director of Emergency at Westmead between 1980-1998; Emergency Medicine and Forensic Medicine Practitioner, until 2017; and Consultant Emeritus, 2019. In addition, Dr. Gaudry has contributed to the advancement of medicine serving in various positions on the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine as well as the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

### CHRISTINE SINCLAIR AM

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The 2024 Kings Birthday Honours provides the people of Australia the opportunity to recognise and say 'thank you' to outstanding citizens whose efforts make our communities and our nation a better place. Within my own electorate several outstanding citizens were recognised. I recognise and commend Christine Sinclair AM who is a resident of West Pennant Hills. Christine was awarded with a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) General Division for service to squash as an administrator and referee. Christine contributed to the World Squash Federation in various roles including, World Squash Referee Assessor, since 2010; World Squash Referee, 2003-2014; Member, Referees and Rules Committee, 2008-2014; Facilitator/Presenter, World Referee and Coaching Conferences, 1989-2013; Member, Referee CBTA Implementation Working Group, 2000s; and International Squash Referee, 1987-2003. Christine has contributed to the Oceania Squash Federation as a Convenor, Refereeing and Rules Committee, 2007-2017, and as a Referee Controller, Oceania Squash Championships, Pacific Games and Pacific Mini Games. Christine has held many positions with Squash NSW and Squash Australia. Christine has been honoured with several awards for her service. I congratulate Christine for the significant contribution to our community through service to the sport of squash.

### CAROLYN JOY KITTO OAM

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The 2024 Kings Birthday Honours provides the people of Australia the opportunity to recognise and say 'thank you' to outstanding citizens whose efforts make our communities and our nation a better place. Within my own electorate several outstanding citizens were recognised. I recognise and commend Carolyn Joy Kitto OAM who is a resident of Castle Hill. Carolyn received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) General Division for service to the community through social justice initiatives. Carolyn has

served as a Co—Director on the board of 'Be Slavery Free' since 2011. 'Be Slavery Free' is a coalition of civil society organisations with experience in preventing, disruption and remediating modern slavery. Carolyn's extensive professional career includes, Consultant and Co-Director, Spirited Consulting, since 1999; Community Engagement Officer, University of Technology Sydney, 2018; Church Engagement, World Vision Australia, 2007-2010; Coordinator, Church Partnerships, Anglican Board of Mission, 2001-2006; and Uniting Church in Australia, 1983-2001. I recognise and commend Carolyn on significant service to the community through social justice initiatives.

#### **POLICE AWARDS TWO**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Today, I further congratulate Riverina police officers who have received Commissioner's Awards for their outstanding service. Detective Sergeant Timothy Briggs, Detective Senior Constable Marc Lawrence, former Detective Inspector Darren Cloake and former Detective Dominic Burton have been awarded for outstanding service as members of Strike Force Amias, an investigation into the disappearance of a young woman from Coolamon, in 2017. Using sophisticated police methodologies, they uncovered the truth about the woman's disappearance and were able to lay charges against several people. Later, the officers recovered the young woman's remains, bringing some measure of closure to her grieving family and friends. Congratulations also to Detective Sergeant Mathew McDougall and Senior Constable Matthew Giddings for their award recognising their persistence and dedication in the arrest of a wanted offender who had evaded police, following several foot pursuits. And last but certainly not least, congratulations to Constable Thomas Brunton for winning the Peter McLay Perpetual Award for Excellence which recognises outstanding service, consistent and positive workplace culture, fair and respectful behaviour and overall commitment to the Riverina Police District. On behalf of a grateful community, thank you to these officers for their dedication and bravery.

#### **POLICE AWARDS ONE**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It's in the job description for police officers to put themselves in harm's way so the rest of us can sleep easy at night – but sometimes the bravery and service of our men and women in blue is overlooked. For that reason, I am proud to offer my congratulations to police officers from the Wagga Wagga command whose dedication and hard work were recognised in recent Commissioner's Awards. Among the recipients was Leading Senior Constable Simon Carberry who put his safety at risk by responding to a gunshot within a caged police van containing a violent offender. Unfortunately, the offender later died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound but not before Leading Snr Const Carberry entered the van, not knowing whether he would be fired upon, and tried to save the man's life. Congratulations also to the members of Strikeforce Rubie who have been commended for a remarkable 75% reduction in break and enter offences through their efforts to fight a spike in property crime in Wagga. My appreciation also goes to Superintendent Andrew Spliet and Inspector Jillian Gibson for their leadership of an outstanding police team in Wagga Wagga. Congratulations and well done to all.

#### **RFS 50 YEARS-PLUS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to the 563 Rural Fire Service members in the Snowy Valleys who have collectively clocked up more than 17,000 years of service to their community. Having earlier acknowledged those volunteers who have served for more than 60 years, today I would like to recognise those members who recently received honours for between 50 and 59 years of service with the RFS. Thank you and well done to: From the Adelong Brigade, Michael Neyland (51 years), Bombowlee Brigade Ian Harris (55) Alan Keenan (58), and Robert Webb (59); from Brindabella, Angus (Neil) Seagrim (54); Brungle, Bernard Quilty (52), Colin Pearce (54), Rodney Purcell (54), Kerry Naughton (55), David McGruer (58), John French (58) and Warren Wilkinson (58). From Darlow, Ross Smith (53) and Robert McMahon (58). From Gilmore, Gregory Adams (51). From Gocup, John Watson (50). From Goobarragandra, John Piper (50) and Lindsay Buckley (54). From Mt Horeb, Kevin Miller (55). From Tumorrana, Warwick Garner (59). From Tumut Plains, Roger Harris (50), and from Yaven Creek, David Hartnett (50), Phillip Adams (54) and Stuart Garner (56). What an amazing example of dedication to the community! Congratulations and thank you to all.

#### **NIKKI HUONG**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I would like to congratulate Nikki Huong from Kyeemagh on her achievement in winning the Harding Miller 2024 South Sydney Scholarship. Miss Huong is a year 9 student attending Tempe High School. The Harding Miller Scholarships are provided to female students who show high academic potential, who are currently experiencing low socioeconomic circumstances. The Harding Miller Foundation also provides high-achieving young Australian women experiencing hardship with tools, resources, and support to help them reach their full potential and builds pathways to tertiary education and fulfilling careers. Nikki recently told the St George Sutherland Leader that winning the Harding Miller scholarship has made her feel recognised for her many years of studying and that her career goal is to become a biologist,

where she can study and research living organisms so that in the future she can contribute to improving the environment. Nikki has stated that winning this scholarship has motivated her to pursue further learning in areas she couldn't before, striving for even higher standards and has given her a chance to believe she can achieve her goals. I would like to acknowledge Miss Huong on her hard work and congratulate her on winning the Harding Miller Scholarship.

#### **LOCAL AREA COMMANDER DUNSTAN**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I would like to congratulate Detective Superintendent Paul Dunstan on his recent appointment as Local Area Commander for St George. LAC Dunstan has over 30 years policing experience, starting his career in the South Western Sydney region before moving to Police HQ where he transferred to the detective's branch in 2000. LAC Dunstan was then appointed as an Inspector in 2012. LAC Dunstan then became a Superintendent in 2021 where he served as operations manager supporting the Assistant Commissioner for the Central metropolitan region, covering areas from the city down to the Sutherland Shire. LAC Dunstan commenced his new role as St George LAC Commander last month and has been actively out and about meeting with Community Leaders and members. LAC Dunstan stated to the St George Sutherland Leader, "I grew up in country NSW and have seen the strong bonds and relationship between the police and the local community. That's the sort of leadership I will have - to be out and engaging with the community." On behalf of my community, I wish to sincerely welcome and acknowledge LAC Dunstan for his distinguished service in bringing families peace of mind and keeping our community safe.

#### **KU-RING-GAI LIONS CLUB: 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In 2024 the Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai marks a milestone of 70 years. Since their establishment in 1954, they have played a pivotal role in our community, from supporting our most vulnerable to bringing our community together. Operating on the values of service, camaraderie, and good citizenship they have served with distinction. Their recent projects include installing green shade sails at the St Ives Village Green, installing benches at Swain Garden in Killara in memory of Lions Bruce Hutcherson, undertaking the Food Collection Project at St Ives Village Shopping Centre for flood victims, and BBQ cooking at Belrose Bunnings to raise funds for child cancer, the Lions International Sightfirst Foundation and the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. As a part of the Ku-ring-gai Lions 70-year anniversary celebrations, they installed 21 new members to the Charter of Leos Club Ku-ring-gai and conducted their annual changeover of board members. I recognise 2023-24 board members President Harold Zev, Vice President Carlo Colpani, Secretary Wilfrid Paes, and Treasurer Reg Wallin. I recognise 2024-25 board members President Salinda Perera, Vice President Catherine Guilday and returning members Wilfrid Paes and Reg Wallin. Best wishes for the year ahead and the next 70 years.

#### **AAROHI BANSAL: NSW YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL SHORTLIST**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise local resident Aarohi Bansal who is one of 50 candidates to be shortlisted for the NSW Youth Advisory Council. It was wonderful to meet her on Friday 14 June. The NSW Youth Advisory Council advocates on matters relating to young people to the NSW Minister for Youth. As a shortlisted candidate, Aarohi will participate in a one-day selection process event at the Parliament of NSW in June to learn more about issues affecting young people, advocacy and policy. This is an exciting opportunity and a chance for our community's youth to be heard. It was pleasure to meet with her, listen about youth issues in our community, and discuss the work that was required to create a more inclusive society. I wish Aarohi all the best with the upcoming selection process, and I know she will be an outstanding representative of our community.

#### **KILLARA HIGH SCHOOL FOOD FESTIVAL 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Saturday 15 June 2024, I attended the Killara High School Food Festival 2024 organised by the Parents and Citizens Association. The Food Festival is an opportunity for the community to come together to celebrate our vibrant multiculturalism with delicious food, excellent music performances by the KHS Musical Band, and great conversation. Food stalls encompassed a wide variety of cuisines including Chinese, Colombian, French, German, Indian, Israeli, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Pakistani, South African, Sri Lankan, Venezuelan and Vietnamese. I want to recognise the P&C, led President Joseph Chia, staff led by Principal Robin Chand, student prefects led by captains, Claire Polczynski and Leo Wang, and to all the volunteers. The commitment from dedicated people within our community makes events, such as the Killara High School Food Festival, a wonderful success and creates an even more inclusive community.

#### **INDUCTEES INTO THE NSW AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Australian rules football has been played in NSW since the early 1880s. During the 140 plus years, there have been champions, trailblazers, and characters, and the NSW Australian Football Hall of Fame recognises those who have made a significant contribution to Australian Football. In 2024,

100 new people across the state were invited to attend a Gala Dinner in May. Each person was inducted into the NSW Australian Football Hall of Fame. Of these 100 people, eleven hail from the Northern Riverina Football and Netball League, including past and current residents of the Bland Shire. These are Jim and Edna Daniher, Stan Hague, Keith and Paula Rees, Terry Daniher, Neale Daniher, Anthony Daniher, Chris Daniher, Paul Kelly and Leanne Imrie. The Hall of Fame aims to recognise and enshrine players, coaches, umpires, administrators, volunteers, and media representatives who have helped create rich tradition and history of Australian Football in NSW since its inception in 1880. Each of the inductees received a framed certificate of induction. I congratulate each of the new Inductees and thank them for their incredible and significant contributions to the New South Wales Australian Football League.

#### **NEW POLICE TO PROTECT COOLAMON SHIRE RESIDENTS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Policing even the smallest of our towns and villages is vital to the safety and security of residents. For the towns of Ardlethan, Coolamon, and Ganmain, within the heart of the Cootamundra Electorate, the protection of their residents has become even more of a reality thanks to two (2) new Constables and one (1) new Senior Constable. It is an honour to welcome Senior Constable Joshua Iglesias to the Coolamon Police Station and Constable Kenton Craig to the Ganmain Police Station. I also welcome Constable Adam Kong back to the area at the Ardlethan Police Station. I am grateful to all our local police officers across the Cootamundra electorate. Your commitment to our safety and your selfless service are truly commendable. The New South Wales Police Force's work to reduce violence, crime, and fear is evident in the recruitment of these three (3) new officers, who I know will take up their responsibilities with due diligence. I wish Senior Constable Iglesias, Constable Craig, and Constable Kong the best of luck at their new Police Stations.

#### **JUNEE FAMILIES ENJOY FAMILY FUN DAY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The Junee Recreation and Aquatic Centre was buzzing with excitement as a multitude of families gathered for a truly memorable Family Fun Day. This event, designed to foster connections and celebrate diversity, was a resounding success, drawing in a large crowd of participants. Thanks to the dedication of the team at Junee Community Centre and the exceptional coordination by Angelika Andreou, the Community Development Officer, the event was a huge success. Over 250 people enjoyed various activities, games, free snacks, face painting, and hair braiding, all thanks to their hard work and commitment. The event was such a hit; the Junee Community Centre is looking forward to planning their next year's event, which I have no doubt will be bigger and better than ever. What a truly remarkable event! It exemplifies the power of community, bringing families and services together under one roof, eliminating the need for families to venture out of town and keeping the connections strong and local.

#### **BRIAN WILCOX**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Brian Wilcox for his exceptional service to the Forster Surf Life Saving Club and the Lower North Coast SLS branch. Since the early 1990s, Brian has devoted countless hours to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of beachgoers. Brian's expertise as a Rescue Water Craft operator and trainer has been important to the success of patrols. His leadership as a patrol captain has inspired many to engage in lifesaving. As a member of the Forster SLS Club call-out team for the past 20 years, Brian has been a reliable presence, responding to emergencies at any hour. During the Black Summer Bushfires, Brian played a significant role in developing evacuation plans for isolated Mid-Coast communities. His efforts were critical in ensuring the safety of residents during the Hillville fire. Brian's dedication was recognised with an Emergency Services Medal, awarded as part of this year's Australia Day honours. This accolade is a testament to his invaluable contributions as a branch duty officer, RWC operator, patrol captain, trainer, assessor, and call-out team member. Congratulations Brian on this well-deserved recognition, thank you for your ongoing commitment and service to our community.

#### **CORBIN KELLY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Corbin Kelly, a personal trainer, for his recent achievements in body building. Corbin's hard work paid off as he participated in his first body building competitions, bringing home an impressive six medals. At the Queensland State Body Building Championships, Corbin secured a first place in the novice division, a second in the first timers division, and a fourth in the under 90 kilogram division. His success continued at the Nationals in Melbourne, where he earned a second place in the first timers division, and thirds in both the novice and over 90 kilogram divisions. Preparing for these competitions requires more than just lifting weights. Corbin followed a strict diet, losing 20 kilograms over 26 weeks. Under the guidance of a coach, his regimen included daily weight training and extensive cardio exercises, starting as early as 2:30am each day. A qualified personal trainer, Corbin dedicates his time to helping others achieve their fitness goals. His contributions to the community, especially assisting special needs

individuals and supporting parents in their fitness journeys, are commendable. Congratulations on your achievements Corbin, thank you for promoting health and fitness in the Myall Lakes.

#### **HELEN BENNETT**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Helen Bennett who is named on the 2023 Hidden Treasure Honour Roll, which recognises volunteer contributions to our regional community. Raised on a dairy farm in the Manning, Helen attended local schools before pursuing secretarial studies at Taree Technical College. She worked as a private secretary at Commonwealth Bank Taree before marrying Ernie and co-running the Krambach to Taree bus service for 26 years. Settling in Tinonee, Helen became actively involved in community organisations like the Tinonee Historical Society and Tinonee Memorial School of Arts, which she is still a patron. Helen has participated in many fundraising activities for their upkeep. Helen is an inaugural member of the Manning River Trefoil Guild which was formed over 40 years ago and is part of the Girl Guides movement. Helen has volunteered for the past 40 years at the Taree sale yards canteen in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church Taree. All funds raised through the canteen further the work of the church in assisting those less fortunate in the community. Congratulations Helen, thank you for all the wonderful work you do, we are lucky to have you as our own Hidden Treasure.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB ANNUAL PRESENTATION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I acknowledge the Port Macquarie Surf Life Saving Club's (PMSLSC) Annual Awards Presentation evening held on Saturday, 25 May 2024. The achievements of our volunteer lifeguards were recognised and rewarded at the Surf Club's annual event, highlighting their dedication and commitment to serving their community. The highly coveted Patrol Person of the Year was presented to Rex O'Rourke for his exemplary commitment to the Club over the past 12 months. Rex was also named in the Patrol of the Year and the 60 plus Age Champion Awards. Rookie of the Year was awarded to Luke Hough. Luke also won the 30 plus Age Champion accolade. Under 17 Patrol Person of the Year went to Drew De Silva. Ethan Maher was named as the Under 17 Club Person of the Year. Under 15 Club Person of the Year was claimed by Airlia Matthews. Airlia also received the Under 15 Age Champion Award. Surf Life Saving New South Wales mission is 'saving lives, creating great Australians and building better communities'. Congratulations again and thank you for keeping us safe on our beaches.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Huge congratulations to the Male and Female Age Champions that were recognised at the PMSLSC Annual Awards Presentation evening held on Saturday, 25 May 2024. Under 17 Age Champion: Brianna Maloney. Under 19 Age Champion: Chloe Caldwell. 30 plus Age Champions: Laura Granville, Bronwyn Hiles, and Cassie Trotter. 40 plus Age Champions: Debra Bartlett, Sara Jane Oakeshott and Paula Stone. Sarah was also named in the Open Champions category. 50 plus Age Champions: Raelene Myers, Linda Perkins. Raelene was also successful in the Open Champions category. 70 plus Age Champion: Maree Mackenzie. Under 15 Age Champion: Lucas Maher. Under 17 Age Champion: Ethan Maher. Under 19 Age Champions: Nick Caldwell and Sam Kobelke. 40 plus Age Champions: Lindsay Moller, Luke Morris and Chris Jecs. 50 plus Age Champions: Richie Hewens, Andrew Mitchell and Duncan Kirkland. 60 plus Age Champions: Rorge Dalrymple and Jeff Polverino. Rorge was also recognised in the Open Champion and Club Board categories. 70 plus: Fred Middleton. Open Champions Women: Debra Bartlett. Men: Richie Hewens and Lindsay Moller. Overall Pointscore Winners in Club Swim: Laura Granville. Congratulations on your achievements and thank you for keeping us safe on our beaches.

#### **SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL PORT MACQUARIE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to a local, human rights organisation in my Electorate - Soroptimist International Port Macquarie for their new initiative to donate pamper packs to the Maternity Unit at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Soroptimist International, of which I am a proud member, is a volunteer movement based in 118 countries. Founded in 1921, Soroptimist International are a global voice for human rights and gender equality. The organisation works across seven United Nations Centres (UN) to ensure the rights of women and girls are heard. Education, maternal health care and advocacy against gender-based violence are core areas of focus for Soroptimist International as they strive to create a 'Bright Future' for all women and girls. Today, I commend the work of my local Soroptimists for donating 24 pamper packs of handmade items for new mum's. Inside the handmade gift bags were soft face washers, nourishing hand cream, a knitted bear and a voucher for a facial. A heartfelt project with so much meaning behind it, I congratulate President Di Barnes and the membership for donating these beautiful items to new mums who I know will be so appreciative of these gifts.

**PETE CEGLINSKI**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Pete Ceglinski, CEO and co-founder of Seabin. Seabin, is an innovative, Australian made, world-first invention that has attracted global attention for its potential to help clean the ocean and revolutionise the health of marine ecosystems around the world. Similar to a skimmer box in a swimming pool, the Seabin is an automated rubbish bin that collects floating rubbish, oil, fuel and detergents. It is designed for marinas, private pontoons, inland waterways, residential lakes, harbours, ports and yacht clubs. We know the amount of waste in the ocean and waterways is overwhelming. Seabin estimate they capture one item every 6 seconds in Sydney Harbour. This is an amazing piece of technology that we need to continue supporting at all levels of government. Congratulations Seabin.

**RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE RANDWICK**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to send my appreciation to all the volunteers from across the eastern suburbs, who support the important work of Ronald McDonald House at Sydney Children's Hospital. I had the pleasure of meeting some of the generous people who invest countless hours – and so much love and care – into supporting the families who use the facilities. With 31 rooms, Ronald McDonald House Randwick allows families to stay by their child's side during their treatment at the Sydney Children's Hospital. In 2023 they provided a home-away-from-home for 962 families who were travelling to Randwick for treatment. Priority is given to families whose children have been recently diagnosed, seriously injured or who require emergency treatment and who live more than 100kms from the hospital. The volunteers welcome families, do light housekeeping, assist with functions and provide a friendly face at the House. I encourage more locals to assist if they have time – and be part of such a meaningful and vital service for those who need our support. Thanks again to everyone who has already rolled up their sleeves and donned a smile in support of Ronald McDonald House.

**NEIL PERRY ICON AWARD**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Neil Perry AM for taking home the 'Icon' Award at the Worlds 50 Best Restaurants Awards. Over his storied career, Neil has been awarded more 'chef's hats' by Australia's Good Food Guide than any other individual. Neil has been this country's most influential culinary figure for decades, inspiring a generation of young chefs and delighting millions of diners across his multiple projects. From starting with Blue Water Grill at Bondi Beach in 1986, Neil has left a trail of successful restaurants in his wake including Rockpool, Spice Temple and Rosetta. Of course, in 2021 our community was delighted with the opening of Margaret in Double Bay. Last year, Margaret was awarded the 2024 Good Food Guide Restaurant of the Year. We look forward to the opening of two more Double Bay venues by Neil Perry this year – Songbird and Bobbies. Congratulations Neil. Our community is grateful for your contributions and proud of your achievements.

**EMILY STANTON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Local Nyngan resident Emily Stanton has recently been awarded the 2024 Outstanding Young Business Leader of the year. This award was presented to Mrs Stanton at the Western NSW Business Awards held in Bathurst, where she was recognised for her success in managing her family's Nyngan Riverside Tourist Park. In recent years Mrs Stanton and her husband James have built a car wash, renovated an older building into 1930's boutique accommodation and the most recently, carried out the rebuild of the Nyngan Hotel which was originally built in 1883. The Hotel has been out of operation for 40 years, with the new opening around the corner. I would like to congratulate Emily for receiving this outstanding award and thank you for all your outstanding achievements, dedication, and support for the local community of Nyngan and surrounds.

**RICHARD SCILLEY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Narrabri local Richard Scilley was recognised for his years of dedication to the Narrabri Rural Fire Services (RFS) by being awarded with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM). Richard began volunteering his time with the RFS when he was 13, in 1975. Richard became deputy captain in 1991, moving on to be captain in 2004 and from 2011 has been Group officer with the Namoi-Gwydir RFS. I would like to thank Richard for his many years of commitment and dedication to his community, also being a wonderful role model for the younger generation and for those interested in becoming a volunteer of any kind. The community relies heavily on volunteers such as yourself and you are appreciated for the sacrifices and risks taken to do this.

### GRAFTON BREWING CO.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to Grafton Brewing Co, who have won a silver award for their Somervale Pale Ale in 'Best International-Style Pale Ale' category and Bronze for their Brick Tower Lager in 'Best Australian-Style Lager' at the Melbourne Royal Australian International Beer Awards in May, 2024. Just to add to their successes, in April at the Royal Queensland Beer Awards they won Bronze for their Somervale Pale Ale, all before even opening its doors as Clarence Valley's newest brewery. Grafton Brewing Co will operate from the historic Tooheys Brewery and is locally owned and operated by the Firth family. The Firths bring new life to the Brewery complex and have plans to operate a family friendly brewery, distillery and coffee roastery to complement the existing café and 70 other tenants who operate their businesses from the complex. Well done Grafton Brewing Co for all your achievements!

### COLDSTREAM GALLERY ULMARRA

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—It was my honour to attend the official Coldstream Gallery re-opening of the Black Gallery exhibition space earlier this year coinciding with the opening night of the 'Our Clarence' exhibition. I would like to congratulate Steve and Mark. I was lucky enough to be in attendance and joining me for this momentous occasion, my friend, The Hon Ben Franklin, was delighted to open the event. The Black Gallery was flood-affected during the 2022 flood event and received a NSW State Government Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Package which provided necessary funds to restore and enhance the gallery space. The evening allowed for a special opportunity to mingle with the artists, attendees were able to gain insight into the inspiration and creative process behind each piece. An amazing exhibition which featured the works of established and emerging artists from the local community, through various styles and mediums from oil paintings and vibrant abstract interpretations. Congratulations to all involved on such a successful event.

### JAZMINE CHELLEW AND WILL TAIT-MCAULEY CATHOLIC COLLEGE

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I offer my congratulations to senior students of McAuley Catholic College in Grafton, Jazmine Chellew and Will Tait for their outstanding efforts at the recent Oceania Athletics Championships in Suva, Fiji. Both students represented the under 18s Australian Regional Team and McAuley Catholic College proudly with their competitive fierceness, determination and sportsmanship throughout all of their track events. A special shoutout to Will, who received a silver medal in the men's under 18s - 400m hurdles final with an incredible time of 55.19 seconds. Well done Jazmine and Will, you are both superstars!

### WESTERN NSW BUSINESS AWARDS

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge four local businesses in the Dubbo Electorate on their success at the Western NSW Business Awards on 31 May 2024 in a variety of categories. Lazy River Estate took home the Excellence in Sustainability Award and was recognised as a business that has demonstrated commitment to sustainable business practices, working to reduce the impact of its operations on the environment. The Outstanding Community Organisation Award recognises an organisation that works to improve the social, cultural, or environmental wellbeing of the community. This was won by Marathon Health. Ben Furney Flour Mills were also winners on the night with the Employer of Choice (21 employees or more) Award, an award that recognises a business that has implemented strategies and initiatives to create a stimulating and supportive workplace environment. Small Batch Brewery of Mudgee were named Outstanding New Business, recognised as a startup that has driven growth and is able to demonstrate the potential to achieve future success. Each of them will now go on to represent the region at the State Business Awards being held in October. I congratulate them all and look forward to seeing their continued success.

### DUSTY BOOTS FESTIVAL

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Mal Norton on the success of the Dusty Boots Festival held in Narromine over the June long weekend. The festival is a three-day, family friendly, free event and showcases a host of Australian Country Music artists. Mal started the Dusty Boots Festival to honour his father, Johnny Norton, who was a regional country music pioneer. The event at the Narromine United Services Memorial Club drew a large crowd, with attendees eager to enjoy a variety of country performances. The venue was packed with people who came to support the artists and dance the weekend away. This vibrant gathering showcased the community's love for country music and provided an opportunity for the artists to shine. An important part of the weekend was also honouring members of the country music community with some special award presentations, including services to country music, keeping the dream alive and the songwriting award. Congratulations Mal on your dedication and passion in keeping your dad's legacy alive. Your efforts in organising and providing this wonderful weekend for country music enthusiasts is commendable.

### DUBBO BULLS FOOTBALL CLUB

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Dubbo Bulls Football Club on their 20 year anniversary. The Dubbo Football Club was formed following a merger between Sass Strikers and East Dubbo United. The club consists of Men's, Ladies and Juniors teams. Since the club's inception, it has achieved several notable successes, including Western Premier League Champions in 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2020, 1st Grade Women's Champions in 2011, 2013 & 2014 and under 18's champions in 2014, 2017 and 2021. To celebrate their anniversary, the club hosted an Anniversary Gala on 8 June 2024 at Dubbo Rhino Lodge. Master of Ceremonies was local Real Estate Agent and club Sponsor Brently Goodwin. The Black-Tie event was well attended by past and present players and supporters of the club, coming together to celebrate their achievements and their growth as a club. The event also included special award presentations and an anniversary auction. 20 years is a significant milestone and I congratulate the club's dedicated committee and volunteers on their contribution to making the club such a successful one.

### MAXWELL PADMORE

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate and recognise the achievements of Blakehurst resident, Maxwell Padmore. In August of last year, Maxwell competed at the World Dragon Boating Championships hosted in Thailand, captaining the Australian Under 18 and Under 16 Dragon Boating team. Maxwell displayed exemplary leadership skills guiding the underdog squad against well-established teams from all over the world to two silver and nine bronze medals. At a State level, Maxwell paddled with the Under 24 and Under 18 NSW State Dragon Boating Team in Perth at the 2024 Australian National Competition. Incredibly, he captained the Under 18 team to gold over every distance, receiving nine gold medals. Beyond sport, Maxwell also excels at an academic level receiving several accolades at Trinity Grammar School and representing the school at the prestigious Da Vinci Decathlon competition. To be achieving so much at just 16, Maxwell is nothing short of an inspiration and serves as the perfect role model for our local community. On behalf of NSW, I congratulate Maxwell on his outstanding achievements and express my deepest appreciation for his commitment to the sport of dragon boating.

### DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to extend my best wishes to the Chinese community in NSW and share in their celebration of this year's Dragon Boat Festival. The Dragon Boat Festival held on the 10th of June is an annual commemoration of the life of Qu Yuan, an ancient Chinese poet and loyal politician. The Dragon Boat Festival, also known as Duanwu, is one of the most important celebrations of the year for the Chinese community filled with timeless traditions and legends. I know that within our local community many Chinese constituents have come together to celebrate this special occasion over the past couple of weeks. I thank the Chinese Australian Services Society and in particular the Hua Kang Seniors Group for giving our local Chinese seniors an opportunity to celebrate this wonderful occasion. Community organisation, 3 Bridges, also shared in the festivities by delivering packages of rice dumplings, a traditional delicacy, to seniors' homes. I would like to thank both these organisations for helping promote the spirit of the Dragon Boat Festival throughout the Kogarah electorate. I want to wish everyone celebrating this occasion a lifetime of prosperity and happiness and hope you all have a joyful festival.

### AUNTY BERYL VAN OPLOO OAM

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate and recognise South Hurstville resident, Aunty Beryl Van Oploo, OAM. Aunty Beryl was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her distinguished service to both the Indigenous community and the hospitality industry. As a resident of Hurstville for 50 years, Aunty Beryl is well-known amongst our local community for her years of dedication to the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence. As an Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Beryl has trained more than 4,000 young people in hospitality and assisted them in finding employment. At 81, Beryl runs her own catering company, Yaama Barrgay Pty Ltd and organises a cooking program to teach older men how to cook for themselves. For over 60 years, Beryl has been selflessly giving up her time and energy to help educate the next generation so they have access to better opportunities. Beryl is truly an inspiration and the perfect role model for us all. I want to thank Aunty Beryl for her years of dedication and unwavering commitment to helping others and congratulate her on this much deserved national recognition.

### CAMERON ARNOLD OAM, TOURISM INDUSTRY CHAMPION

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate Byron Shire-based Cameron Arnold on being awarded an Order of Australia Medal for services to tourism and conservation in the King's Birthday Honours List. Cameron has been an outstanding leader of the tourism industry in the Northern Rivers region, particularly during the challenging times for doing business -- drought, the Black Summer bushfires, the Covid pandemic and

the major floods of 2017 and 2022. He has had an extensive career in the hospitality and tourism industry, holding senior management and executive positions in more than 30 hotel and resort operations throughout Australasia. He has also owned and operated his own businesses, including restaurants, apartments and glamping operations. Cameron has spent the past decade giving back to the tourism and hospitality industry, and to the business sector generally, in a range of leadership and advisory roles at regional and state levels. Notably, he has chaired Destination North Coast NSW since 2016, and before that, chaired the North Coast Destination Network from 2012 to 2016. Cameron Arnold has served as Vice-President of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail Incorporated since 2013 and been a board member of the Cape Byron Trust since 2016.

#### **DIANA ROBERTS OAM, COMMUNITY LEADER FOR NIMBIN**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate Diana Roberts on being awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her services to her beloved community in the King's Birthday Honours List. Diana has co-founded and led many grassroots organisations in her town, such as the Nimbin Community Centre and Nimbin Environment Centre. She is the epitome of a community-minded person who demonstrates great intellect, interpersonal skills and passion working on projects which make a real difference. A former councillor, Diana Roberts served with distinction as a Community Independent on Lismore City Council from 1991 until 2004. A successful businesswoman, she was proprietor/herbalist at the Nimbin Apothecary in Cullen Street from 1991 until 2019. She has served as president, vice-president and committee member of the Nimbin Chamber of Commerce. Other highlights of her community involvement include: Member, Nimbin Advisory Group, since 2010; Former member, Nimbin Neighbourhood Improvement Project; Former member, Save the Nimbin Hospital Committee; Member, Overseeing Committee, Rainbow Road Walking Track, since the early 2010s; Volunteer, Resilient Lismore, 2022; Member, Stoney Chute Bush Fire Brigade, since the early 1980s, including serving as president from 1992 until 2002. I value Diana Roberts OAM's counsel on all things Nimbin.

#### **NEVILLE KELLY OAM, LABOR STALWART AND COMMUNITY MAN**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate Neville Kelly, formerly of Ballina and now living in Bexley, on being awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his service to the community of New South Wales in the King's Birthday Honours List. An active member of NSW Labor since 1960, Neville was awarded life membership of the Australian Labor Party in 2016. Remarkably, he has served as president of three ALP branches; Forster-Tuncurry (1961), Lismore (1975-1979) and Ballina (2012-2015). Neville Kelly made a significant contribution to modernising Lismore Base Hospital as a board member from 1979 until 1989, including as its chairman from 1981 to 1986. I know because I sat on the LBH Board with him. Neville served as a board member of Moree District Hospital and Moree councillor during the 1960s, so he understood the health system and local politics. A man of great compassion, he was a member of the Moree Aboriginal Advancement Association and of the Moree Tenancy Advisory Committee. This dedication to helping others continued during his time in Lismore and Ballina as Lismore President of the St Vincent de Paul Society and as an active member of Vinnies in Ballina.

#### **TOCUMWAL - LIAM HALL**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to acknowledge Liam Hall from Tocumwal for his exemplary community service, which has earned him the prestigious Dawn & Jack Watson Youth Award for Community Service at the Rotary District 9790 Shine On Awards. At just 19 years old, Liam has demonstrated remarkable dedication to his community. He has volunteered at the Tocumwal Rotary Op Shop for the past 18 months, where he assists with daily operations and helps raise funds for local initiatives. His work and dedication to the Rural Fire Service has resulted in him being the designated equipment officer, and their youngest member, helping to ensure the safety and well-being of his community. Liam's selfless contributions and unwavering commitment to supporting his community set a shining example for us all. Congratulations Liam, and all the best in your future endeavours.

#### **FINLEY SHOW TEAM**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today, I would like to recognise and acknowledge the remarkable achievements of Finley High School at the 2024 Holbrook Sheep and Wool Fair. The school's show team, led by dedicated teachers Gary Webb and Robyn O'Leary, along with Principal Jeff Ward, excelled in numerous categories. Notable accolades include Charlotte Rafferty winning the Supreme Exhibit and Champion Sheep of the Show, and Ryan Bauer securing first place in Novice Junior Judging of Meat Sheep. The team also received awards for Best Maintained Team and Interbreed Champion Group of Three. Congratulations again to all for their outstanding dedication and hard work. I look forward to hearing about your continued success.

**SUE FAIRLESS - EXTRAORDINARY NORTHERN BEACHES BUS DRIVER**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst)**—Sue Fairless is a remarkable woman who has served the Northern Beaches community on our buses since 1964. Starting out as a conductress, Sue was one of the original agitators who pushed for the right for women to be bus drivers. In 1971, she became the second female driver at the Brookvale Depot and is still driving buses today! Sue was promoted up the ranks from conductress, to driver, to depot officer and radio room controller at the Brookvale Depot. She also had two children and continued to drive buses whilst pregnant, which was radical for the time. Sue retired in 2008, but later returned to work as a part-time driver. She was drawn back behind the wheel by the camaraderie with colleagues, the connection with bus passengers and the varied opportunities the role gave her. On behalf of all the bus passengers who travelled with her over the decades, we thank Sue for her extraordinary service, getting people where they need to go on the beaches for 60 years- an incredible innings and not out yet! Sue is an inspiration and demonstrates the rewarding career that awaits as a bus driver.

**KRISTEN BUTCHATSKY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise local artist, Kristen Butchatsky, for her recent achievements. Kristen is set to perform in the Sydney Chamber Choir's upcoming performance of Fireside on June 29. As a Soprano, Kristen will play a very important role in the Sydney Chamber Choir's showcase of choral music. It is set to be an impressive, yet relaxing evening, held at the Neilson in Dawes Point. As a trained musician, conductor and music teacher, Kristen has certainly had some amazing experience and training over the years. She has been with the choir for three years now and is an incredibly valued member of their team. There is so much local talent in our community, and it is always such a pleasure to see talented artists making strides in our state, country and sometimes, even globally! Artists like Kristen demonstrate that our local area truly is among the best to live, work and raise a family. I would like to congratulate Kristen Butchatsky once again for her fantastic efforts and wish her all the very best of luck with her performance.

**BRADLEY BERRELL**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I wish to acknowledge Charlestown electorate local Bradley Berrell, who was awarded a 30 years' service Long Service Medal 2nd Clasp at the Rural Fire Service's Central Coast Lake Macquarie Volunteer Appreciation awards on Sunday 19 May. Bradley originally joined the RFS Reserve Brigade, now the Cameron Park brigade, in April 1993. In 2007 he joined the Wallarah brigade, and transitioned to the Lake Macquarie Support brigade in 2018. He remains a member at both Wallarah and Lake Macquarie. He has held a number of positions during his service to the RFS, including deputy captain, senior deputy captain and training officer. He is currently serving as support captain of the Lake Macquarie Support Brigade, and has achieved qualifications up to crew leader. Bradley has supported operations both locally and out of area, a record of service matched by his previous accolades. He was made a Brigade Life Member in 2012, the National Medal in 2013, the Premiers Bushfire Emergency Citation in 2020, and the National Emergency Medal in 2021. Congratulations, Bradley, and thank you for your service. This acknowledgment is so well-earned.

**ST MARY'S COLLEGE GATESHEAD**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Over the last fifteen years, staff and students at St Mary's Catholic College at Gateshead has transformed the nearby Kennedy Creek from an unkempt and overgrown drain into the heart of a lush and thriving ecosystem. After countless hours of voluntary work on the part of the St. Mary's school community and the addition of fifteen thousand plants, the Creek has become a living, breathing outdoor classroom. Here, students engage in the College's environmental sustainability course, looking at the environment, and learning about a range of topics, including ecology, soil testing and water quality. The creek's rehabilitation is part of an ongoing school program. Partnered with Lake Macquarie City Council, the plan to make the campus and its surrounds more sustainable has included the introduction of energy efficient LED lights and fan timers, passive solar building design, an organic vegetable garden, a recycling program and even an aquaponics garden. I would like to thank principal Brett Donohue and his team, particularly teacher Katrina Piper, for their work, and would like to acknowledge the students for their commitment to this project—it is making an extraordinary difference to the local environment.

**MIA SHORTER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—My congratulations to Charlestown Electorate local Mia Shorter on being named a finalist for Employee of the Year at second annual Newcastle Hospitality & Tourism Awards. The Awards are organised by the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group and are designed to honour

outstanding contributions across the City of Newcastle visitor economy, including hotels, restaurants, tour operators, event organisers, and support partners. Mia works at Quest Apartments in Newcastle, which prides itself on welcoming visitors to Newcastle with local tips. As the visitor economy grows in importance for the future of Newcastle and the Hunter Region, it's great to see individuals like Mia recognised for their work. This year, the awards reached a new peak of highly competitive nominations, making Mia's place on the shortlist an achievement reflecting the extraordinary commitment of a staff member who is making a difference in making guests feel special. The winners were named at a gala night at the FogHorn Brewery in Newcastle on Monday 27 May. Congratulations once again to Mia, the winners, other finalists and nominees.

#### **PHILIPPINE 126TH INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Monday 10th June 2024, I was delighted to address members of our Filipino community, representing Premier Chris Minns, and join Her Excellency Ma. Hellen B. De La Vega, Ambassador of The Philippines to Australia at the 126th Philippine Independence Day celebrations. The Pista Sa Nayon celebrates the Philippines' declaration of independence from Spain on 12th June 1898, which marked the end of 300 years of colonial rule. It is an opportunity for our proud Filipino-Australians to celebrate their cultural heritage, and their place as the earliest modern democracy in Asia. Filipino-Australians have made significant contributions to our Western Sydney community over many years, and are a wonderful example of our vibrant multicultural society. New South Wales is lucky to be home to the largest Filipino community in Australia, with more than 152,000 people with Filipino ancestry living across our State. Organised by the Alliance of Philippine Community Organisations – the peak body representing 30 Filipino community institutions – the celebrations included a Multicultural Parade, Song and Dance performances, food stalls, and even a TikTok Dance Competition! Congratulations to Charles Chan, President and Dr Cen Amores, Founding President, APCO, and all our proud Filipino-Australians on a wonderful event.

#### **GREEK ORTHODOX EASTER – ST PARASKEVI BLACKTOWN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Saturday 4th May 2024, I was honoured to attend the Greek Orthodox Easter midnight service at St Paraskevi Parish and Community, Blacktown. Pascha celebrates the resurrection of Christ as the most important date in the Orthodox Christian calendar. It marks the end of Orthodox Holy Week and the beginning of Bright Week and the Paschal liturgical period. The midnight service was highlighted by the sharing of the Holy Fire from beyond the altar, symbolising Christ as the light of the world, and the proclamation of 'Christos Anesti', meaning Christ is Risen. Greek-Australians are a wonderful example of our vibrant and multicultural Western Sydney community. New South Wales is home to more than 156,000 people with Greek and Cypriot ancestry living across our State, including many across our local Electorate of Prospect who attend services at St Paraskevi. This year's Easter celebrations were particularly significant for our Greek-Australian community as part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia's centenary, celebrating the establishment of the first diocese in 1924. Congratulations to President Prof Vlasios Brakoulis, Parish Priest Fr Alexis, and all the Parish Committee and volunteers on a wonderful service. Kalo Pascha!

#### **DIABETES AWARENESS WALK-A-THON**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations on the great success of the Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce [ATCC] Diabetes Awareness Walk-a-thon in partnership with Healthy Living Toongabbie on 3 March 2024, in Parramatta Park. The ATCC helps local entrepreneurs and Western Sydney businesses thrive, by offering skill development, platforms to increase visibility and networking opportunities. With spirit and generosity core to their ethos, the ATCC lead community walk-a-thons annually. Supported by the health-conscious business and community leaders at Healthy Living Toongabbie, this Walk-A-Thon raised funds to provide treatment and support to people living with diabetes. Diabetes is a prevalent health issue within our Western Sydney community. By increasing awareness and encouraging early testing, we can help members of our community to access important healthcare and improve lifestyle choices. Healthy Living Toongabbie continues to promote this important message by hosting monthly meetings and activities to connect our community and inspire long-term healthy lifestyles. Thank you to ATCC President Anton Fernando, Community Relations Manager Venkat Jayaraj and the dedicated team at Healthy Living Toongabbie for organising this event. Thank you all for your efforts to champion this important cause and your dedication to supporting better health outcomes for our community.

#### **GEORGES RIVER THISTLE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Congratulations to the Georges River Thistle Football club on a successful Under 8/9 Gala Day which brought many young players from the Bankstown District Amateur Football Association together for a fun game in front of friends and family. Each team played three non-competitive games at the Thistles home ground, Coleman Park in Georges Hall. Many of the young players come from our local schools. Thistles FC has played a big role in community sport in the East Hills electorate.

Established in 1957, it is mostly a junior football club and has competitive sides from men's and women's grades. Many of the parents are volunteer managers and coaches at this foundation football club that believes in the motto, football has to be fun first. A big congratulations and thank you to all of the volunteers, coaches and players for making this day possible, and to all of your family and friends for cheering you on.

#### **REVESBY WORKERS FOOTBALL CLUB LOCAL SPORTS CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Congratulations to the Revesby Workers Football Club who will receive a new kitchen upgrade thanks to the NSW Government's Local Sports Grants program. The Club will receive \$16,000 to transform their kitchen area and keep providing tasty snacks to their almost 600 playing and non-playing members including 100 coaches and managers. The upgrade will include much needed improvements to the Club's original kitchen fit-out which is over 30 years' old. The canteen is a crucial part of not only Saturday game days and major events throughout the year but is also an important source of fundraising for the Club's activities. The Club was represented in the highest division 1 competitions in both men's and ladies' football within the Bankstown area. They field 35 teams in the Bankstown District competition in the winter with teams from under 6's to over 45's. Congratulations Revesby Workers FC. Can't wait to have a bite at the new canteen next season.

#### **FUNDRAISING AT PADSTOW HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—A big thank you to students and staff at Padstow Heights Public School who have managed to raise almost \$4,000 for charity in the last few weeks. Their annual Biggest Morning Tea event drew in \$1,184 while \$2,873 has been raised for the Heart Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser so far. Money raised in their Biggest Morning Tea will go towards the Cancer Council's fight against cancer. Padstow Height's Public School's Jump Rope for Heart efforts have seen 60 "Heart Heroes" tracking their skipping hours to raise funds for innovative heart research and programs run by the Heart Foundation. This small school of only 335 students from kindergarten to year six, clearly has a big heart, and will continue to jump rope to raise funds for those with heart problems. Thank you to students and staff for all you are doing to progress research into some of the biggest health issues facing our country. You have done your parents and school proud.

#### **MRS RUTH CHARLTON AM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to pay tribute to the late Mrs Ruth Charlton of Middle Cove who was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours. Ruth was awarded her AM for 'significant service to the law, particularly dispute resolution and mediation'. Ruth's contribution to the law was a long and distinguished one, most notably in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution. In addition to working as a solicitor from 1986-2023, she was a Founding Member of the Australian Dispute Resolution Association in 1986. For the NSW Ombudsman, Ruth served as a leader for Complaints Handling in the Public Service, a consultant for mediation services, and a co-author of Public Sector Mediation Guidelines. Recognised for her contribution, Ruth received the Meritorious Service Award for Mediator Service to NSW Community Service Centres from the NSW Attorney-General in 1988 and the Service to Dispute Resolution Award in 2021. I honour Ruth Charlton AM for the great service she gave to law and justice in our State.

#### **DR EILEEN GALLERY AM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It is my pleasure to warmly congratulate Dr Eileen Gallery of Roseville who was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours. Eileen was awarded her AM for 'significant service to nephrology, to obstetric medicine, and to tertiary education. Eileen's contribution to medicine was a long and distinguished one which included leadership roles in the International Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy, and locally, as a Founding Member of the Australasian Society for the Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy. Eileen's illustrious medical career dates back to the 1960s from when she worked as a medical intern in Newcastle. It was there that she became interested in nephrology, a specialist branch of medicine dealing with the treatment of the kidneys. From specialising in nephrology, Eileen branched out into obstetrics and gynaecology where she held distinguished positions in hospitals that included the John Radcliffe Hospital of Oxford University and North Shore Private Hospital in St Leonards. I honour Dr Eileen Gallery AM for her distinguished, lifelong contribution to medicine in Australia and abroad.

#### **DR WINSTON PONDER AM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It is a delight to congratulate Dr Winston Ponder of Chatswood who was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours. Winston was awarded his AM for 'significant service to scientific research, particularly invertebrate and conservation biology'. Winston serves as a Senior Fellow at the Australian Museum and an Honorary Associate at the University of

Sydney. Prior to his retirement in 2005, Winston served as a Principal Research Scientist at the Australian Museum, where he worked in the Malacology section for thirty-seven years. Malacology is a branch of biology specialising in the study of molluscs and creatures with shells. During his time at the Australian Museum, Winston helped build up the collection of exhibits, mentored young researchers, organised several conferences, ran workshops and ran an intensive mollusc course at the University of Wollongong over several years. I honour Dr Winston Ponder AM for his contribution to biology, research and teaching that has helped our community better appreciate the wonders of our natural world.

#### **RANDWICK CITY COUNCIL – ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I congratulate Randwick City Council for its proactive contributions to the environment for world environment day on the 5th of June! Randwick City Council have been working behind the scenes for a more environmentally friendly community over the last few years, including installing 19 recovery hubs, which have collected more than 12 tonnes of waste. They have also transformed soft plastics from the Randwick Recycling Centre into benches for our community. The council has also prevented 300 tonnes of pollution from entering our beautiful oceans through the 38 gross pollutant traps in the local waterways. I appreciate all the work that the team at Randwick City Council have done to make these initiatives happen.

#### **RANDWICK RUGBY COOGEE**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I congratulate Randwick rugby club's under 16s and under 18s teams, for taking home both the Sydney Cup and the State Cup Championships last week. Both teams were undefeated on all three days of the Championships with the under 16s team having no tries scored against them on the final day of the Championship. I would like to congratulate all the dedication and hard work these teams put in to make this happen including the players, coaches, and parents who made this possible. The Coogee Electorate is well known for producing rugby greats and these results show that this tradition is not going away anytime soon. Again, congratulations teams and look forward to watching continue to succeed in the rest of the season.

#### **JOHN FRANCIS FORD OAM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate John Francis Ford OAM of Greenwich for his significant service to community health. His contributions include having served as the Director (1997-2012) and the Chair (2005-2012) at the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation (SCHF). Not only was he the Director of Sydney Children's Hospitals Network from 2012-2022, but he was also the Former Chair of Capital Works Committee. Prior to his service to community health, John was a lawyer where he worked at Freehills from 1981-1988. Currently, he is a member in the Capital Works and Performance Committee. An honour well-deserved after a lifetime of community service. Congratulations John Francis Ford.

#### **HEATHER ELIZABETH GARNSEY OAM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate Heather Elizabeth Garnsey OAM of Lane Cove for her service to genealogy. Having served as the Executive Officer (1988-2020) of the Society of Australian Genealogists, she was also Former Treasurer and President (1989-1994) of NSW and Act Association of Family History Societies. Furthermore, she was a Life Member and Patron since 1991 of Dubbo and District Family History Society. Currently, Elizabeth is an Honorary Member of the Society of Australian Genealogists, an Associate Fellow of Society of Genealogists (London and an Honorary Fellow of Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra (Family History ACT). Moreover, she has won an Award for Meritorious Service to Family History, Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations. It is clear that she has demonstrated several acts of community service to genealogy through her many roles and achievements. Congratulations Heather Elizabeth Garnsey.

#### **CONCETTA PERNA AM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate Concetta Perna AM of Riverview for her significant service to the Australian Italian community. She has served as the President of the National Italian-Australian Women's Association since 2010 and Dante Alighieri Society. She was also dedicated to being a Vice-President at Lucanian Association for 20 years. Amongst her notable roles in multiple associations and societies, Concetta was heavily involved in serving her community. She volunteered at Scalabrini Villages for 25 years and was a Donor at the Mission of the Sisters of St. Anne since the early 1990s. Furthermore, she was also a Patron at Handital (Association of Italian-Australian Families with Disabled Children). These acts of community services were recognised as she received a Mediterranean Award in 2017 and 'A castagna ra critica' prize, Lucanian Cultural Association in 2018. Concetta's contributions and achievements have clearly made a

huge impact to the Australian Italian community as demonstrated with the awards she received. Congratulations Concetta Perna.

### 2024 SYDNEY HARDING MILLER AWARDS CEREMONY

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Tuesday 7th May 2024, I had the absolute pleasure of attending the Sydney Harding Miller Awards Ceremony to present scholarship certificates to 3 Bankstown Girls High School students. I would like to recognise Bankstown Girls High School students Tracey Duong, Soolaf Alabed and Sireen Mustafa who were all recipients of the Harding Miller Education Foundation Scholarship 2024. The Sydney Harding Miller Awards night is a celebration to welcome Year 9 students to the Harding Miller Education Foundation scholarship program. The Harding Miller Foundation is an Australian charity that supports students with high potential who may not have access to the resources they need to make the most of their education. It provides a \$20,000 scholarship over four years of high school, aiming to bridge the long-term societal gap of opportunity for girls within the public-school system who are experiencing financial disadvantages. The Harding Miller Education Foundation has created an incredible opportunity for our young girls to reach their full potential. Congratulations Tracey, Soolaf and Sireen on this magnificent achievement. I hope that this scholarship provides you girls with amazing opportunities and wish you all continued success.

### BANKSTOWN'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA 2024

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Friday 31st May 2024, we hosted Bankstown's Biggest Morning Tea in partnership with Eighteen22, for the second year, to raise funds for the Cancer Council of Australia. Australia's Biggest Morning Tea is the Cancer Council's most popular fundraising event, with the aim to raise over \$15 million to fund research, prevention and support services for those affected by cancer. Hosting a morning tea is a rewarding way to get involved and make a difference in the lives of cancer patients and this year we welcomed people from all parts of our community to take part in this important event. Sadly, it is highly likely that every family will be affected by cancer in some way, and we all know of somebody who has gone through this battle. It was a pleasure to have Kerrie Newcombe from Bankstown Women's Health Centre as our guest speaker to share her cancer journey and to provide valuable information and resources particularly to women in our community. Thank you to everyone who helped raise approximately \$2000 for the Cancer Council to go towards research. Every contribution will make an incredible difference for people impacted by cancer.

### TURKISH CENTENARY FESTIVAL

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Friday 4th May 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the Turkish Centenary Festival at Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, in commemoration of 100 years of history and culture. This occasion marked a significant milestone in the history of Turkey and symbolises the enduring friendship between Australia and Turkey. The festival was a vibrant showcase of Turkish culture, featuring a traditional bazaar, food stalls, an ice cream truck, and activities like Ebru art, Zeybek dance, and virtual reality experiences. Welcoming people of all ages and backgrounds, the Turkish Centenary Festival brought together residents with Turkish ancestry and others to commemorate the events of a century ago. This event also highlights how we have come together to build a community based on understanding and respect. I would like to thank and acknowledge Erol Tarpis and Asiya Rodrigo, for organising such an incredible event that brought the Turkish community together as well as all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this event so special. Through a range of cultural performances, culinary experiences, art exhibitions, interactive workshops and historical displays, the Turkish Centenary Festival highlighted the rich history and cultural significance of Turkey.

### GLENN FROM KMART GREENHILLS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—It's not everyone who has hundreds of relative strangers turn up to their farewell. Glenn was the beloved doorman at Kmart Green Hills, previously Target, for almost 18 years and recently retired from his role. Chloe Sumner, a regular customer of the store, organised a clap out event through her mum's group Facebook page, after making the event public, the clap out quickly gained popularity. Chloe was joined by 200 people to give Glenn a send-off to remember on Friday, May 31. The crowd stretched from Kmart all the way back to the food court. Glenn is well known to Green Hills shoppers for being kind, telling great jokes and putting a smile on the faces of younger shoppers. Chloe said Glenn is just a really nice man that's always made people laugh, is really kind and that he deserves recognition and celebration for all his years of work. Congratulations Glenn on this important and well deserved recognition of the impact you have had on so many shoppers lives. Thanks also to Chloe for organising the clap out.

### VALLEY AQUATIC CLUB

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—At the Coast and Valley Swimming Association (CVSA) Winter Championships, the Valley Aquatic Club came home with 74 medals and four district records broken, what a result! With 42 swimmers taking part in the meet, it was the largest and most successful team the club had ever sent to the championships. The most prominent member of the events was Charlie Potts, who broke the CVSA records for 13 years boys 200m backstroke, 100m individual medley, 100m backstroke and the 50m backstroke. Charlie Potts is a proud member of the Valley Aquatic Club. The club is greatly supported by the Maitland Aquatic Centre and its squad program, with many hours committed to the team. The Valley Aquatic team collectively won 26 gold medals, 24 silver medals and 24 bronze medals in the event. The result of their hard work, with the team starting training at 5am and sometimes ending at 5pm. From this hard work the 42 swimmers competed in 274 individual swims, with 238 of those swims being personal bests for the swimmers and 34 of those events being new Valley Aquatic records. Congratulations to the club and all the swimmers on your results.

### LOUISE LANE

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Making the world a better place deserves an award. Louise Lane has recently received the Australian Corrections Medal in the King's Birthday Honours for her excellent work in Maitland. Louise has worked as the Maitland Community Corrections Manager for over 30 years, a role which she believes she has been incredibly blessed to hold. This role is one where you can make a real difference. Louise's work involves working with people who have community court orders or who are doing community service work, with the goal of behavioural change. Thanks to Louise's leadership and hands-on approach, the Maitland office can hold a large number of offender management programs each year, which directly improve outcomes. Programs include the Aboriginal men's mentoring group, and a program that assists women on orders in finding employment. Louise is one of eight Corrective Services NSW staff who were acknowledged this year in the King's Birthday Honours List. Leon Taylor, NSW Acting Commissioner acknowledges recipients of these awards have worked hard to protect their community. Congratulations Louise on this extraordinary recognition.

### MANLY MAROONS NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I am delighted to pay tribute to our very own Manly Maroons, who recently claimed the Little League Division II National Championship. Winning all six games in their tournament and outscoring their opponents 67-6, the Manly Maroons were unrivalled, soaring head-and-shoulders above the very best in their division across Australia. This comes off the back of a dominant season in the State Championship, where they managed to outscore their opponents 57-2. This fantastic achievement represents the first time the Manly Warringah Baseball Association has taken home a National title, marking the beginning of what I am confident will be a string of successful seasons to come for our mighty Manly Maroons. It is always wonderful to see sport thriving at the grassroots level in our community. The Maroons represent the very best of this, and I congratulate them on becoming National Champions and paving the way for future generations. I also wish to commend all those individuals and organisations who heeded the Club's call for donations to assist with the costs of accommodation and transportation for the boys. Well done Manly Maroons!

### P & C AFTERNOON TEA

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to highlight an excellent opportunity to connect with Executive Members of Parents & Citizen's Associations – generally referred to as P & C's - in my Electorate of Manly. I thank the President of the other place for his generosity in making available his Dining Room for the occasion. The occasion provided a wonderful opportunity for P & C Leaders of Seaforth Public School, as well as Mackellar Girls and Manly Selective Campuses of the Northern Beaches Secondary College, to connect, network and hear from the Manly Electorate's 2024 Woman of the Year, Georgie Furze. Georgie specialises in empowering teenage girls to conquer life, so they have the tools to regulate and navigate life's challenges with resilience and self-belief. Her website, Get Real with Georgie, highlights the breadth, and effectiveness of her programs and I thank her for agreeing to be our guest speaker. The success of the P & C Afternoon Tea opens the door to better equip additional, Manly Electorate P & C Executives in the future.

### SALVATION ARMY RED SHIELD APPEAL DINNER

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I was honoured to be the MC for the Manly, Salvation Army, Red Shield Appeal Dinner last Saturday. Funds raised from the evening go to assisting people in the Manly District, including through a new venture to help people re-connect with their local community. It's hoped a planned Learning Centre will offer courses to improve computer, literacy and job searching skills. The evening provided a great range of items for auction including a cricket bat, autographed by 'The Don' himself, Sir Donald

Bradman. I switched the tables on at least one journalist at the dinner as I became the interviewer instead of the interviewee. The journalist was the Guest Speaker, Peter Hartcher, Political Editor for the Sydney Morning Herald and The Guardian, who was grilled with some of the best probing questions I could find. Congratulations to the Manly Salvos particularly, Malcolm Smith for a wonderful event and for the Salvo's work in the Manly District. Anyone who hasn't yet donated to this year's Red Shield Appeal, donations can be made until 30 June.

#### **DAVID FUNK**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—David Funk volunteered as Grounds Convenor for Ku-ring-gai Netball Association between 2013 and 2023. This is a vital role to KNA's 4000 members who play at their netball complex plus the 5000 supporters who attend Saturdays and Thursdays during the season. After arriving at 6am, David supervised his team of volunteers to prepare the facilities. He coordinated the carpark team, who manage vehicles into the limited parking area throughout the day. He supervised the BBQ team and ensured all volunteers were provided with lunch. Before completing a 12-hour Saturday, David ensured the complex was secure and managed afterhours incidents. Through David's incredible work the netball complex always ran seamlessly. He is unobtrusive and dependable, always looked for ways to improve the netball experience for members and spectators. He built shelves, re-organised storage, so items could be safely reached, and repaired any broken equipment. He always displayed patience and empathy when resolving inevitable conflicts. David's ability to lead by example, motivate and organise has inspired so many others to volunteer. He was not only KNA Grounds Convenor but also a supporter of everything netball. I was pleased to recently present David Funk a NSW Government Community Service Award.

#### **PETER SROUR**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—I have known local resident Peter Srouer and his family for many years. Srouer Group started in the 1970's by Joe Srouer, carrying out all types of civil work. For the next 25 years Joe continued to grow Srouer Group's reputation for its professionalism, honesty, quality and reliability. Joe's son, Peter, worked alongside his father gaining knowledge and experience. When Joe retired Peter Srouer took over the business which continued to grow. By 2010, Srouer Group had acquired a large fleet of trucks, excavators, bobcats and recycling equipment that over the years has been updated with latest in technology, safety and reliability. Today, Srouer Group is the contractor of choice for civil work required of any size. As well as being a very successful local business owner, Peter Srouer, leads the highly respected Charity Association of St. George Bann Ltd, the representative body of the Bann community in Australia. Since being established in 1960, this group has been committed to actively supporting the community of the Lebanese village of Bann, through charity work. Under Peter's leadership the Bann community has grown to over 500 members who have a shared passion for serving the community, particularly those in need.

#### **MARTIN PLUSS, EDUCATOR AND COMMUNITY ADVOCATE**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—I have known and worked with Martin Pluss, in his various community roles, for many years. As a greatly respected geography teacher, with over 40 years' experience, Martin has worked in many local high schools in and around my electorate of Hornsby. In that time, he has been a positive influence on hundreds of young people. Martin's wife, Jenny Pluss, is also a passionate educator and has been associated with Northholm Grammar since that school was established over 40 years ago. Martin and Jenny Pluss have lived in various locations around the Hornsby electorate including Berowra, Galston and Pennant Hills. Martin has always been very passionate about delivering improvements for his local community and, through his community roles, he has led many positive campaigns, including via the Pennant Hills Civic District Trust. In recent years Martin joined the Liberal Party and been a hardworking and valuable asset. He is a rare Local Government enthusiast and his roles currently include President of the Hornsby LGC and Secretary of the Westleigh Fox Valley Branch. I sincerely thank Martin Pluss for his various positive contributions to the local community in my Hornsby electorate.

#### **FOUNDATION OF HOPE CHARITY BALL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On 4 May, I had the privilege of attending the Foundation of Hope Charity Ball, hosted by the Autism Advisory & Support Service (AASS). The Autism Advisory and Support Service is a not-for-profit organisation that provides support and services to individuals with autism and their families. The Foundation of Hope Charity Ball is an annual fundraising event that aims to raise awareness and funds for their programs so they can continue to provide essential services to those affected by autism. It was inspiring to see the community come together to support this important cause, ensuring the Service can continue providing crucial therapy, educational programs, and family resources for those affected by autism. A big thank you to Grace Carbone Fava OAM and the team at AASS. It's always inspiring to see the impact of your work, and I am grateful for the dedication and passion you bring to the autism community.

### BATHING THE BUDDHA FESTIVAL

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—The Bathing the Buddha Festival, also known as Buddha Day or Vesak, is one of the most significant events in the Buddhist calendar, commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha. I was fortunate to attend these celebrations on 4 May at Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta. The event, supported by the Prajna Monastery, featured the ceremony of bathing the Buddha, that symbolises the cleansing of one's mind and body. Devotees make offerings of flowers, incense, candles, and fruits at temples and practice giving to monks and the needy. It was a day of incredible cultural performances, music, and several lion dance performances. The festival is a time for Buddhists to renew their commitment to the Buddha's teachings, practice compassion, kindness, and humility, and foster a sense of community and shared values. It is always wonderful to see the community come together to celebrate, and learn more about Buddhist culture and teachings.

### CAMPBELLTOWN HSC HIGH ACHIEVERS AWARDS PRESENTATION

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—It was an absolute pleasure to attend the Campbelltown HSC High Achievers Awards Presentation on 25th March, celebrating the incredible achievements of our students from South West Sydney. There were 34 recipients from schools in my electorate: Robert Townson High School had 3 recipients, and Mount Carmel Catholic College had 31 recipients. As we honour our distinguished High School Certificate achievers, we recognise not only their academic excellence but also their dedication, resilience, and hard work. Each of them has shown remarkable perseverance and an unwavering commitment to their education. These qualities will undoubtedly serve them well as they embark on the next chapter of their lives. Congratulations once again to our distinguished achievers. Your success is a testament to the strong educational foundation provided by our schools. We are incredibly proud of you and look forward to seeing all the amazing things you will accomplish in the future.

### GLEBE'S DEADLY WARRIORS

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the house Glebe's Deadly Warriors, a group of awesome young First Nations girls who completed Uncle Col Watago of TRYP Consulting's Deadly Warriors bootcamp late last year. TRYP – short for "To Reach Your Potential" – Consulting runs these 5 day Deadly Warriors bootcamps to give local First Nations kids the opportunity to experience and celebrate their culture, with a focus on leadership and team building. It is a wonderful initiative, helping to create more great role models in our community. I want to congratulate these young First Nations girls from Glebe for their participation in last years' bootcamp. I was honoured to attend a presentation earlier this year to celebrate their recognition as Deadly Warriors in our community.

### SQUADRON LEADER DARRIN LINDSAY

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Each year on the King's Birthday public holiday, another group of outstanding Australians are recognised for their service to the community. I would like to congratulate Squadron Leader Darrin Lindsay on being awarded a Conspicuous Service Medal, for meritorious achievement in security governance management and reform in Airborne Early Warning and Control, and Electronic Warfare capabilities for the Australian Defence Force. Lindsay recently spent 5 months deployed in Germany as Wing Commander of a team protecting humanitarian and military assistance in Ukraine. Congratulations Mr Lindsay, and thank you for your service to our country.

### GENERAL CONJOINT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JAMES SCURRY

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Each year on the King's Birthday public holiday, another group of outstanding Australians are recognised for their service to the community. I would like to congratulate General Conjoint Associate Professor James Scurry was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to anatomical pathology, women's health, and to professional societies. On top of his work at University of Newcastle and as a Senior Staff Specialist in anatomical pathology at John Hunter Hospital, Professor Scurry has published almost 200 research papers, is a founding member of the Australian and New Zealand Vulvovaginal Society. This prestigious recognition could not go to a more fitting community member. Congratulations Professor Scurry.

### GEORGE WILSON JP

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Justices of the Peace play a vital role in our community, generously volunteering to assist people with crucial documents that make a difference to their lives. I congratulate Liverpool local George Wilson, who was recently acknowledged for his 40 years of membership in the New South Wales Justice Association as a Justice of the Peace. Outside of his work as a JP, George has lived in Liverpool all his life and has ingrained himself in many elements of our community, including in the

Liverpool Branch of the NSW Justices Association. I note important work of the Liverpool Branch, which advocates consistently for the interests of JPs in Liverpool, in addition to enabling the appointment of new JPs to service our growing community. I extend my sincere thanks to George for his many years of service, and to Liverpool Branch Secretary Jennifer Reddish for her hard work.

#### **ALL SAINTS BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Cakes, pastries, adobo, coffee, tea and everything else you need to bring people together for an Australia's Biggest Morning Tea in the All Saints Liverpool way! The Parish, who collaborated with the student leadership team of All Saints Catholic School, organised a fantastic event which raised vital funds for those impacted by cancer. With over 500,000 hosts every year, the Biggest Morning Tea celebrations attract many thousands of volunteers and supporters in recognition of the way that cancer touches all of our lives in some form. It was great to join members of All Saints parish, as well as students and teachers from the adjacent All Saints Catholic College, who prepared an excellent morning tea for their parents and families. There was an array of scrumptious offerings, generously supplied by the parish community, as well as many fun prizes that were distributed to winners of the raffle. Congratulations to the Parish Social Committee, who undertook this event as their first project! Kudos also to Father Paul Monkerud and his stellar group of volunteers, as well as all those who supported the cause through the purchase of raffle tickets and baked goods.

#### **ERNEST KULAUZOVIĆ**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Ernest Kulauzović, who was recently awarded the NSW Government Community Service Award for his distinguished service to the Liverpool community. Through his employment with Belgravia Leisure, Ernest has consistently demonstrated commitment to uplifting the lives of people in Liverpool, most recently through his efforts to increase the availability of swim classes at Liverpool's leisure centres. Prior to his time at Belgravia, Ernest was a community liaison for Liverpool West Public School and built relationships with local organisations for the benefit of the school community. Having worked with Ernest over a number of years, I can attest to his continued contribution to many of Liverpool's community organisations, which are facilitated by the use of Belgravia managed facilities. I send my sincere thanks to Ernest for his contribution to our community.

#### **FARAG BASSILI GOBRAN OAM**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate and acknowledge Mr Farag Bassili Gobran OAM who has been recognised as part of the King's Birthday 2024 Honours List. Mr Gobran was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to youth, aged welfare, and the Egyptian community. Mr Gobran has dedicated decades of service to the Egyptian community in NSW serving across various organisations. Mr Gobran was a founding member of Exodus Youth Worx providing support to members of our community with mental health counselling and domestic violence support. Mr Gobran also served as a founding member and former President of the Australian Egyptian Forum Council and was named Egyptian of the Year by the Council in 2023. With a career spanning over 50 years as a pharmacist, Mr Gobran has been recognised for his sustained commitment to professional and community service. His leadership, compassion, and commitment to helping others has made a lasting impact. I sincerely congratulate Mr Gobran on this prestigious recognition of his service in his selfless commitment to preserving and promoting the culture of the Egyptian community. I wish him all the very best.

#### **CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOHN CULLEN AM**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate and acknowledge Clinical Associate Professor John Cullen AM who has been recognised as part of the King's Birthday 2024 Honours List. Associate Professor Cullen was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division for significant service to geriatric medicine as a clinician, researcher, health innovator, and advocate. Mr Cullen's notable appointments include Executive Clinical Director at Concord Repatriation General Hospital. He began working at Concord Hospital as an intern in 1978 and was Head of the Department of Geriatric Medicine from 1994 to 2019. He was awarded the Pride of Concord Medal for his contributions to the Hospital, and recognition as a leading expert in his field. Mr Cullen has also served as Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Health Aged and Chronic Care Subcommittee, contributed to over 30 peer reviewed publications and served as Clinical Director of several departments of the Sydney Local Health District since 2011. In his service, he has made a significant impact on the lives of countless older Australians, improving their health and wellbeing. I sincerely congratulate Associate Professor Cullen AM and thank him for his commitment and dedication to our community.

#### **DR GEORGE BRYAN FOSTER OAM**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate and acknowledge Dr George Bryan Foster OAM who has been recognised as part of the King's Birthday 2024 Honours List. Dr Foster was

awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to the Jewish community of New South Wales. Dr Foster has dedicated decades of service to the Jewish community serving across various organisations. As President of the Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Descendants, Dr Foster has worked selflessly to promote awareness, education, and remembrance of the Holocaust, ensuring the stories and experiences of survivors are preserved and honoured. Dr Foster has also served as Chair of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Shoah Remembrance Committee and was made a Life Member of the Southern Sydney Synagogue in 2021. His leadership and advocacy has made a significant impact on the community, fostering values of understanding, tolerance and inclusivity. I sincerely congratulate Dr Foster on this prestigious recognition of his service in his commitment to preserving the history and heritage of the Jewish community, and his contributions to building a more compassionate and just society for all. I wish him all the very best.

#### **ICSOA WELLNESS FOR WOMEN EVENT**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I am pleased to introduce ICSOA, Indian Crescent Society of Australia Inc., a community-based not-for-profit organization representing and networking Indian Muslim migrants in Australia. There are over 122,000 Indian Muslims in Australia and are settled in NSW, VIC, QLD, WA, SA, TAS, ACT & NT. The largest number are based in NSW. ICSOA is the only Indian Muslim organization that is networking & representing all Indian Muslim migrants living in Australia.

#### **IAN BAKER**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Ian Baker of Taren Point on being awarded an Emergency Services Medal in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours for his dedicated service to Marine Rescue NSW. By way of background, Mr Baker first joined Marine Rescue NSW, formerly the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association in 1975. Today he serves as an operational Search and Rescue Support Officer and Coxswain. During his time as a volunteer, he has responded to more than 400 emergencies and other incidents from Port Hacking to Botany Bay saving countless lives and helping to get wayward boaters home safely. As a volunteer, Mr Baker has become known for his professionalism, dedication and extensive maritime safety expertise which continues to inspire other volunteers to maintain and extend their skills and knowledge in maritime safety for the benefit of the wider community. In recognition of his service, he has also received the Transport for NSW Maritime Medal for Safety in 2021 and has had a Marine Rescue NSW vehicle named in his honour. I congratulate Mr Baker for receiving an Emergency Services Medal and thank him for his continued efforts in keeping our community safe in the water.

#### **MENAI STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the incredible volunteers from the Menai State Emergency Service ("SES") Unit for thrusting themselves into dangerous paths during weather events to protect and assist others. Menai SES members are part of a network of over 10,000 highly trained professionals across the state who share a commitment to supporting our community in times of need. But the work of the Menai SES goes beyond responding to emergency events. Volunteers sacrifice their time weekly to attend training and develop their skills and also raise community awareness about flooding events through planning and education. During 5 and 6 April 2024, the Sutherland Shire recorded rainfall ranging up to 257mm, the Menai SES responded to 16 incidents across the Sutherland Shire with their two teams providing 5 hours and 38 minutes man-hours in the field. Led by Unit Commander Daryl Brett and Deputy Unit Commander Hemant Raval, the 40 active volunteers went above and beyond in responding to these emergency events. I thank all Menai SES Unit volunteers for their continued dedication and service to others to our community and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **THE FAMILY CO**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the incredible work of The Family Co in Jannali in supporting domestic violence victims and their children living in the Sutherland Shire and St George areas. By way of background, The Family Co was established in 1987 and offers a wide range of services specialising in family and parenting support, domestic and family violence support and education and training. Through programs such as the Pathway of Change – Domestic Violence Support Group, The Family Co works to ensure women, children and families are empowered to have a safe home and opportunities to thrive. I recently visited the service with the Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Leslie Williams to discuss their important work. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the team at The Family Co. I recognise Ashleigh Daines, Michelle Fairweather, Kim Byron, Amber Schact, Belinda Harrison, Danielle De Costa, Nikki Mead and Melissa Keane for their contribution to our community. I commend the work of The Family Co in creating safe communities where women, children and families can build capacity to take on life's challenges and realise their best futures.

### MATT BURGESS

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I rise today to congratulate Senior Firefighter Matt Burgess, who recently in April marked twenty years of service as a professional firefighter at the Menai Fire Station. Matt's service to both the local Shire community and the state has been exemplary, as he has acted as a mentor to so many new firefighters coming through the ranks and served multiple deployments during the 2019 - 2020 bushfire season. Matt has also been involved in the worst incidents that the fire station has had to respond to, including motor vehicle accident rescue, Hazmat incidents, assisting the ambulance and welfare checks. He has undoubtedly saved many lives during his service that has exceeded two decades, and on behalf of the Parliament and the people of Holsworthy, I extend our deepest gratitude to Senior Firefighter Matt Burgess for his remarkable service. I look forward to seeing what the next 20 years entail for Matt as he continues to serve our community with distinction.

### MARK PHIPPS

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I rise today to congratulate Senior Firefighter Mark Phipps of the Menai Fire Station, who recently retired after sixteen years of service to Fire and Rescue NSW. Mark first joined the fire brigade on the 15th of March 2008, being stationed at Bundeena. From there, Mark's journey as a professional firefighter led to his involvement in mentoring and assisting new staff, as well as being involved in many types of jobs, including motor vehicle accident rescue, structure fires and Hazmat incidents - both locally and across the state. His efforts have not only saved lives but also provided invaluable support during times of crisis. On behalf of the Parliament and the people of Holsworthy, I extend our deepest gratitude to Senior Firefighter Mark Phipps for his remarkable service. We wish him a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement, confident that his impact on the fire service and our community will be long remembered and greatly appreciated.

### MANDAEAN REMEMBRANCE DAY 2024

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I rise today to recognise the Mandaean Remembrance Day commemoration that was held on the 16th June 2024, at the Sabian Mandaean Mandi. The Mandaean Remembrance Day is a day of reflection on the history of the persecution, and those who lost their lives. I also would like to recognise the contribution that the Mandaean community makes to the diverse Holsworthy electorate. Holsworthy has one of the largest population of Man9aeans in the world, with some 9,000 residents in the local region. This small but vibrant group of people has made significant contributions to the cultural diversity and social fabric of our community, I would like to recognise all the youth involved in organising the Mandaean Remembrance Day and their commitment to ensuring the history and struggles of their ancestors are not forgotten.

### MAGGIE'S RESCUE

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to acknowledge the invaluable work of Maggie's Rescue Cooperative. Their tireless commitment to animal welfare over the past 13 years has seen them recently achieve the remarkable milestone of over two thousand pets being rehomed! Maggie's Rescue was founded in 2011 when the cooperatives early founders got the call that a nine-year-old border collie named Maggie had been found abandoned by a woman who needed their help to find Maggie the care she needed. Maggie's Rescue's no-kill philosophy allows their team to focus on rescuing and rehoming unwanted animal companions, advocating for and assisting in desexing animal companions, and educating and promoting animal welfare in the Inner West community. Headed by director Dr Sandra Hodgins the team behind Maggie's embodies integrity, collaboration, and most importantly the compassion for and empowerment of voiceless animals. Their hard work has paid off for over a decade, showing that this incredibly important cause and the undeniably hardworking people behind it is paramount to both the people and pets in the Inner West community. Thank you and congratulations to everyone involved with Maggie's Rescue and keep up the important work!

### BRIGADIER BRENDAN SHANNON CASEY AM

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I wish to recognise and congratulate Brigadier Brendan Casey AM on his Military Award in the King's Birthday 2024 Honours List. Brigadier Casey is a resident of my Summer Hill Electorate and received this award for exceptional service to the Australian Army Reserve as Commander of the 8th Brigade, Commander of Operation AGED CARE ASSIST and as the Australian Army's Adjutant General. Brigadier Casey has selflessly given his time for over 35 years to the Australian Army Reserve, including active deployment overseas in 2011 in Afghanistan. His other volunteer work includes being the Deputy President of the Alumni Council at the University of Sydney. The PhD-qualified chemical engineer has also had a celebrated career in the finance sector and has stated that "leadership, planning and resilience are the qualities the army has given me". Brigadier Casey has been described as calm under pressure, driven to excellence and has a track record which shows a high level of mental agility. Congratulations on this well-deserved honour and thank you for your decades of service to the Australian Army Reserve and wider community.

### SYDNEY WOMEN'S BASEBALL LEAGUE

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I wish to acknowledge the amazing Sydney Women's Baseball League (SWBL) who go from strength to strength as they grow their welcoming and inclusive league. SWBL is a community baseball league based in Marrickville, catering for players of all skill levels and sporting backgrounds - from experienced to newbies, there's a position for everyone on the diamond. The league was established in 1995 and will celebrate their 30th anniversary in 2025. The league is the longest continually running women's baseball league in Sydney and has grown from what was once a few enthusiasts catching up in a park to a fully substantiated league now with 9 teams and a waiting list to join. SWBL truly believe that baseball is for all. A Code of Conduct has been implemented to help strengthen the community and prevent any misunderstanding or misinterpretations of what's meant by 'playing nice'. Congratulations to current President Ruth Lindsay and all the many committee members, players and supporters who have helped the League grow to the fun, welcoming and inclusive community that it is today.

### UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I acknowledge the Ballina/Byron arm of the University of the Third Age (U3A) for their contributions to the pursuit of lifelong education for our senior community members. Run completely by volunteer tutors and course leaders with the common goal of sharing knowledge. The 'Third Age' represents the period of active retirement. Beginning in France in 1973, U3A is now a world-wide organisation, making its way to Ballina/Byron in 1994, which offers a myriad of classes and activities. These include a diverse range of courses including; languages, dancing, crafts, poetry and sports. U3A has continued its commitment to provide ongoing study, as well as social, opportunities for our senior residents. U3A has created a community for its students and promotes the importance of lifelong learning and education and empowerment. The value of these inclusive community initiatives cannot be overstated, and I extend a heartfelt appreciation to the incredible volunteers at Ballina/Byron University of the Third Age for their contributions to our senior community.

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