

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 8 August 2024**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

*Business of the House*

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:18):** By leave: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to extend the lapsing date for the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQ+) Bill 2023 until 31 October 2024.

I am deeply disappointed in the Government for forcing a further delay on the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQ+) Bill 2023. The most worrying aspect of the delay is that it is being done knowing the negative impact that it will have on people and families across New South Wales. The Government's own statistics are clear: The NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy found that 57 per cent of LGBTIQ+ people experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress, compared with 13 per cent of the rest of the population. The highest levels of distress are among trans and gender diverse people. LGBTQIA+ people are experiencing higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicidality, with a quarter experiencing suicidal thoughts in New South Wales. They are more likely to experience social exclusion, verbal abuse, harassment, physical violence and sexual assault. The experiences of young LGBTQIA+ young people are especially dire.

The health strategy found that over half of LGBTIQ+ high school students in New South Wales felt unsafe due to their sexuality or gender identity. The New South Wales Advocate for Children and Young People found widespread experiences of homophobia and transphobia. Some 45 per cent did not feel safe or supported, 40 per cent experienced bullying or discrimination recently, and a quarter experienced some kind of physical violence at school. Whether it likes it or not, the Government's inability to make a decision is sending the message that LGBTQIA+ people's dignity, work and identity is not a priority.

I think of Charlotte, who loved her job as a music teacher. She lost her job when the school found out that she was in a relationship with a woman. In its standdown letter to Charlotte telling her to stop work, the school wrote, "Your engagement in a same-sex relationship is a breach of your employment contract." Today in New South Wales we are allowing McCarthy-era invasions into people's private lives to occur. I think of Carlie, who tells me that her daughter should not have to move through life creating narratives, out herself unwillingly, answer unnecessary questions or be rushed into medical interventions just so that she can have legal documentation that represents her identity. I think of the families living in legal limbo, gay and straight, because they engaged in legal and regulated surrogacy processes overseas to have a family. I think of the sex workers who have to decide whether to work or care for an elderly parent, because in New South Wales it is illegal to do both. My bill seeks to fix those real-life problems.

Let me make it clear: Today we are delaying dignity to the LGBT community because the Government has not yet decided whether we have equal value as citizens. In his apology for the criminalisation of homosexuality, the Premier said:

As a government, we know that we are not there yet. There are kids today who feel like they have something to hide, maybe from their schoolmates, sporting teams, families and friends, and maybe even from themselves. The member for Sydney is currently progressing his equality bill, and we will work with him in good faith and with a shared ambition to help vulnerable people.

I have always been able to trust the Premier's word and, along with the rest of the crossbench, I hope that continues. I am grateful to the Coalition and the crossbench for their respectful and caring consideration of this legislation. I am also grateful for the support received from Rainbow Labor, Domestic Violence NSW, the Australian Medical Association, the Public Service Association, the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Teachers Federation and countless other representative organisations. As the Government knows, I remain open-minded to compromise and to negotiate with the Government and all colleagues. As I approach this with an open mind, I ask that the

Premier approaches it with an open heart for the families that may not look like his but still deserve the same dignity, safety and respect—certainly much more than they are getting today.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:23):** On behalf of The Greens, I offer our support for the extension of the lapsing date of the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 so that we can debate it at a future time. I thank the member for Sydney for his words and put on record The Greens' significant disappointment about the delay in debate on the bill. If a new piece of legislation or a new innovative idea had come out of nowhere, we could justify wanting to take time to consider it as a Parliament. However, we must remember that the proposed reforms in the equality bill that the member for Sydney has brought to the Chamber are not new. In fact, almost all of the elements of the equality bill have been brought forward either by members of The Greens in the other place or members of the Labor Party in historical times, or by current and past members in this House.

The reforms in the bill will remove discrimination that is currently protected by our laws and provide people with protections that ensure that they are treated equally under the law in New South Wales. None of that is new. None of that is groundbreaking. This is about a fundamental principle that everyone should be treated equally under the law. The further delays by the Minns Labor Government in taking action causes many in the community not just frustration and disappointment but also hurt and harm. The longer the delay, the longer the homophobes, transphobes, bigots—those people who want to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people—will continue to cause hurt and harm. By delaying debate on the bill, the Government is not standing up on the side of the people who are being bullied, harassed and intimidated because of their sexuality and their gender identity. Instead, the bullies, harassers and intimidators are feeling vindicated by the further delay.

I urge the New South Wales Labor Government to stop delaying the delivery of equality for LGBTIQA+ people in our communities. No matter what powerful lobby groups and interests are trying to stop it from delivering the reform, I urge the Government to recognise the true and right way to go on this legislation. I urge the Government to remember that, as the member for Sydney mentioned, members in this place apologised to those who were criminalised for their past relationships. When we made that apology, we acknowledged that in future we would be apologising for the criminalising and discriminatory laws that exist today. The longer we take, the more people will be harmed and the more people will fill the gallery of this Chamber. Whether it be in five years, 10 years, 15 years or 20 years, the gallery of this Chamber will be full to the rafters with young gender diverse people and LGBTIQA+ teachers because we delayed once again on delivering equality, and we will have to apologise again.

The purpose of saying sorry is that it does not happen again. If we are sorry for past discriminatory laws, we should remove all current discriminatory laws from the New South Wales statute books. I appreciate the internal politics within NSW Labor that make that difficult but, bizarrely, I urge members opposite to listen to the words of former Premier Dominic Perrottet in his valedictory speech: to set their priorities and tell everybody else to fall in line. They were wise words. I thought I would never say that he spoke wise words or that I agreed with him. Government members should not get caught up in the idea that there are so many overwhelming things to address. Those opposite should remember why they wanted power, why they wanted to be Ministers and why they wanted to be in government. It was to deliver social justice, equality and fairness for the people of New South Wales. They are now in power, and they have a supportive crossbench. They have people ready to go hard, and we want to work with them to deliver equality for the people of New South Wales. I thank the member for Sydney for his ongoing persistence and negotiations. The Greens look forward to continuing to work to deliver that result.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:29):** By leave: The member for Newtown beat me to the jump. Because the Leader of the House is in the Chamber, I expected him to have sought the call first because, as I understand it, the Government will agree to this extension. There is really little for the Opposition to say as it has already been agreed to and will go through with the Government numbers. But I will say a couple of things. First of all, I repeat what I said on Tuesday when there was a motion to extend the lapsing date of a private member's bill that dealt with ICAC and recommendations of the ICAC to amend legislation, which, somewhat ironically, both the member for Sydney and the member for Newtown, who have just spoken, voted against.

That was the first motion for an extension to that private member's bill; this is now the third extension of time motion for the equality bill. Those members are quite happy to say how it is so important to extend this bill, but they were not happy to extend an ICAC bill based on recommendations from an ICAC report. I find that somewhat curious, inconsistent and troubling.

*[A crossbench member interjected.]*

The member for Newtown is triggered because she knows the hypocrisy of her position in not supporting that extension of time and not supporting greater integrity in New South Wales—something that The Greens spoke a lot about when we were in government but now apparently do not care about under the Minns Labor Government.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Newtown rises on a point of order.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** If the member wants to reflect on whether I care about corruption and The Greens' longstanding commitment against corruption in this State, he needs to move a substantive motion. He should not be reflecting on that in this debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** There is no point of order. However, the Manager of Opposition Business is being inflammatory. He will speak to the motion.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I was merely pointing out the voting record of the member for Newtown regarding a suspension of standing and sessional orders motion on Tuesday to extend the lapsing date of a bill related to ICAC. As I said on that day, we need more consistency in how we deal with extensions of private members' bills which, ridiculously, lapse after only six months under Standing Order 105. We should all work together to respect the private members' bills that are introduced by members of the crossbench and show some consistency with regard to them, rather than take an inconsistent approach. Of course, they include important issues. The bills that The Greens and the member for Sydney voted against extending on Tuesday were about electoral integrity and corruption. It is extraordinary that they did not support that, given the importance of those issues. Maybe they need to reflect on their position and vote with greater integrity and consistency in the future.

Second, it seems to be accepted that the equality bill will not proceed in the form in which it was presented last August. The quicker the true form of the bill is formulated, circulated and available for public consultation, the better. Because this extension will only generate continuing angst on all sides of the issues brought forward by the bill, it is much better for all sides to know what is the true position and what is going to be advanced in the Parliament. I see the member for Sydney agreeing with me. I know he wants that. I think everyone would like that. I encourage the Government to formulate a position on this bill so that we all know what is going to be brought into the Parliament. Because, ultimately, I think it is unlikely that the member for Sydney will advance anything that the Government does not support. Therefore, it is desirable that we all know where we stand on those issues, around which there is a high degree of concern from all sides of the community.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (10:34):** By leave: I reject the criticisms from the member for Newtown. There is nobody on this side of the House who does not support either equality or social justice and is not vehemently opposed to any act of discrimination. It is fine to advocate a philosophical position and to be frustrated and want a policy position accepted by this House and the other place; however, the government of the day is responsible for ensuring that legislation it proposes to this House or legislation that it agrees to that might be introduced by either Opposition or crossbench members is, as best as possible, correct, does not have unintended consequences and—more significantly for an issue like this—is able to take the entire community with it.

A number of controversial and seemingly contentious social issues bills have been debated in this House. But ultimately because of the way in which the matters were handled or even prosecuted by the member for Sydney and others, who can take credit for that, they successfully took the community with them—to such an extent that there was criticism from members across this House with the delays from the other place, because it had not respected the verdict of the people's House, whose members are the appropriate representatives of this State. I value the way in which the member for Sydney has approached this bill. I have the deepest respect for the way in which he has consulted with the Government and is prepared to compromise over a number of issues that I know that he and other stakeholders feel strongly about. I appreciate that. However, the Government is working through those issues and will continue to work with the member for Sydney to see whether it can arrive at a solution to them.

The member for Wahroonga is right. A number of the issues that were proposed originally are being considered as part of the reform of the anti-discrimination legislation. So they have not gone away; they have been taken on by the Government and are being reviewed in a separate legislative issue. There are issues that still exist at this stage of the negotiations that greatly concern certain sections of the community. It is not just crossbench members that the Government seeks support from for the passage of legislation through this House; it actually wants the support of Opposition members as well—or a substantial portion of Opposition members. If the legislation can reach that stage, then it has a much greater chance of taking the entire community with it in the decision-making process. I thank the member for Sydney for his patience. He has been extremely patient. But the Government has not landed on a number of positions yet.

The member for Sydney knows there are differing views within the Government over some of those issues, although not all of them. He has been particularly patient. We understand the member's criticism. We knew that

he would criticise the Government's position that it has taken to this point in time. But the Government is not ready at this point in time to make decisions because it does not think that the legislation or the negotiated position at this stage is correct. There is a difference between policy and philosophy, and the Government has a responsibility to make sure the laws that we propose to this House are correct. It is the view of the Government that we have not reached that stage yet and we are not in a position to introduce our own bill at this stage.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:39):** In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to debate on the motion. Like many members across the Parliament, I am committed to making New South Wales a safe place where everybody is treated with dignity and respect. That is what my bill seeks to achieve. I am open to working with members across the Parliament to address any concerns they may have. Let us not delay debate on the bill beyond October. Let us make New South Wales a safer place for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (WATER ACCESS LICENCE REGISTER REFORM) BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Helen Dalton, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:41):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024. In rural New South Wales, our lives and our livelihoods come down to water—it is that simple. I wish city-based MPs understood this better. Access to water is the difference between a rural area thriving or dying. We need to treasure this precious resource and manage it correctly. An important part of water management in this country is understanding who owns it. Right now, the ownership of this life-saving asset is often unknown. In the past, water entitlements were tied to land ownership, so it was pretty easy to work out who owned the water. But since the ownership of water entitlements was separated from land ownership, that has all changed.

This causes all sorts of problems. It is an environmental problem because we need to know who owns water and what they are using it for. It is a law and order problem because if people are using water entitlements to launder the proceeds of crime, we need to know about it. Believe me, this is currently happening and because we do not have a proper register of water ownership, the police are forced to fight crime with their handcuffs on themselves. They are being forced to do it the hard way. Not knowing who owns our water is also a national security problem because if foreign governments are buying Australian water, we need to know why. Finally, it is a food security problem. We need to know who owns what so that we can properly manage our rivers and waterways. If we fail to do this, we will inevitably face food security issues in this country.

For all those reasons, we need a proper register of every person who owns and controls water in New South Wales. The Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024 will achieve a number of important reforms. Firstly, it will create a public water register so that we can all finally know who owns what. This will be a publicly available register that anyone can access. The time for secrecy is well and truly over, and the bill will finally ensure some accountability. Secondly, the bill will establish a code of conduct for water brokers that is designed to ensure water ownership is transparent. Brokers who do the wrong thing will no longer be tolerated.

The bill will also require annual reporting of the foreign beneficiaries of trusts that have an interest in a water access licence. This is designed to ensure that foreign owners of water entitlements can no longer hide behind trusts that seem designed to give them anonymity. One has to ask: Why does anyone want to keep their water ownership secret? What do they have to hide? Water is not like other assets like gold or diamonds; it is a life-saving natural resource, and we need to treat it as such. Rural New South Wales lives and dies based on access to water, and that is why a register like the one the bill will create is so important. New South Wales desperately needs the reforms contained in the bill. I call on every member of Parliament to support these sensible proposed changes.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone general business order of the day (for bills) No. 4 [Electricity Infrastructure Investment Amendment (Renewable Energy Sector Plan) Bill 2024].

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I set down the second reading debate as an order of the day for a future day.

*Bills***PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONS AMENDMENT (BALLOONS) BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 6 June 2024.**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (10:47):** The Government does not support the private member's bill entitled the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. However, plastic waste is a growing problem in New South Wales, and the Government is committed to taking strong action to tackle it. Work is already underway. The Government is progressing a holistic and systematic approach to addressing a range of unnecessary and problematic plastic items and materials, including items that pose risks to the environment and communities because they are highly littered, like lighter-than-air balloons, as well as related items like plastic balloon sticks, clips and ties.

The Government recognises the impacts of lighter-than-air balloon releases on the environment and understands that when they are released, lighter-than-air balloons can travel large distances, enter our waterways and be swallowed by wildlife, leading to starvation and death. The Government is progressing action to tackle these issues. Such action must be undertaken in a considered and comprehensive way to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for the environment, communities and businesses in New South Wales. The bill instead proposes a piecemeal approach to dealing with unnecessary and problematic plastics and has not been informed by the same close consultation with community, industry, businesses and other stakeholders that has informed this Government's actions.

In October 2023 the Minister for the Environment released the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* issues paper for public consultation on potential action to tackle a range of unnecessary and problematic plastic items. This includes action to reduce the harm associated with releasing any number of lighter-than-air balloons. Currently, under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, it is already an offence to release 20 or more lighter-than-air balloons in New South Wales at the same time. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] is now considering the feedback to the paper and is working closely with industry, environment and government stakeholders to understand how best to tackle the plastic items identified in that paper. Informed by this feedback, the Government plans to release an action paper in the coming months, seeking the public's views on more detailed proposed actions on plastic items including balloon and balloon accessories.

Passing this bill would be premature while that broader process is in progress and would mean that the views and perspectives of the public would not be heard when deciding to phase out all releases of lighter-than-air balloons. I respect the member for Balmain for her care for the environment and her good work in progressing an agenda to protect our environment. I will continue to work with her on the broader approach and those objectives. I acknowledge, on behalf of the Government, her good work, and I understand the steps she has taken and her need to step up and put forward this bill. I do believe that, eventually, we will get there.

I will elaborate on some of the actions the Government is taking. I understand that many stakeholders and environmental groups have talked to many of us as members about the desperate need to take quicker action than what is deemed necessary in this particular process. Those environmental groups and the community often consider that they are three steps ahead of the Government and of the parliamentary process. As I travel around the State, representing the Government and the Minister in my role as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, I acknowledge that.

It is important that the community understands that we do hear their voices. When the Minister for the Environment released the issues paper, seeking feedback on potential further action to reduce the harms associated with these plastic items, she sought stakeholders' views on the proposed phase-out of the balloons and the balloon accessories I mentioned before. The EPA is still in the process of reviewing that feedback, and we need to allow that process to take its course. It is working closely with a range of stakeholders, and I presume that they are some

of the people the member has spoken to, as well. In so many respects, we are on the same page. It is just a process issue.

The EPA tells us also that it is regularly monitoring litter in the environment and using the data to inform which frequently littered items to target with those litter prevention programs. I understand that some of those programs have contributed to a 43 per cent reduction in litter volumes between 2013 and 2019. Some of my young former students have approached me in my current role. They care deeply and expect that governments will take action on climate change and care for the environment in accordance with community expectations. It is sometimes frustrating for us all because we need to go through certain steps. On Clean Up Australia Day, for example, so many more young people joined the effort, jumping into the waterways and having discussions in the classroom afterwards about what they had found. They identified a long list of plastic items, which included balloons, that pollute our waterways. They understand the impact that those items have on not only the water but also the creatures who become tangled in that plastic.

I understand that the EPA is working across the community and within schools, providing materials and guidance to encourage alternatives to releasing lighter-than-air balloons, such as lights, bubbles, music, kites or planting native flora. That is important to point to while we go through this process. The material from the EPA includes a fact sheet and posters available on its website, which are aimed at minimising balloon releases.

In speaking to the member's bill and our position—and acknowledging her care and compassion and that many of us are on the same page—it is important to say that the Government has started a comprehensive process, working alongside the EPA and continuing with consultation. I mention briefly some of the outcomes of that public consultation. On balloon releases, we received over 5,000 survey responses and written submissions to the issues paper. We heard strong opinions from members of the community on all of those unnecessary or problematic items and about encouraging the community to be more aware. Some of the students I spoke about pointed out to me that they encourage each other, their families and their neighbours to use some of those other items rather than balloons.

When we know that 98 per cent of survey respondents supported our policy objectives, set out in the Minister's paper, to reduce plastic litter, to reduce microplastics, to eliminate harmful chemicals from plastic items and to harmonise approaches to dealing with plastic pollution across Australia, that 94 per cent supported phasing out releasing any lighter-than-air balloons and that 93 per cent supported phasing out the supply of plastic balloon accessories altogether, we know that this Government and members across the Chamber are taking the right steps. It is not only representatives from across New South Wales who come into this place on behalf of their communities; a whole range of action groups, who encourage each other to take different action, have discussions about the litter caused by helium balloons. They can be mistaken for prey and are often swallowed by animals such as turtles and seabirds, leading to starvation. In fact, of all the types of marine debris, balloons are the most likely to kill seabirds. The Government opposes the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** It being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Visitors*

#### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to Jan and Chris Leong, the parents of the member for Newtown; and Jo and Barry Dore, the parents of the member for Balmain. I hope they enjoy today's proceedings. I am sure they are very proud of their adult children. I welcome Charlotte, Jasmine and Allan Bennett, guests of the member for Myall Lakes. I welcome the Mayor of Gunnedah Shire, Jamie Chaffey, a guest of the member for Tamworth.

*Question Time*

#### NSW POLICE FORCE GIFT POLICY

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:03):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Yesterday the Minister said the police commissioner's alcohol purchases were courtesy gifts for visiting commissioners and other dignitaries from other jurisdictions and overseas. Why did the Minister not say that she had also received alcohol from the police commissioner?

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:04):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I did get a bottle of gin. It is still sitting

on the shelf in my office. The police commissioner gave it to me when I first became the police Minister. I have not tried it. I am not a gin drinker, but I do like red wine.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I did not get one of those, but I am interested to know if the Leader of the Opposition did.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Members opposite would have us believe that this practice began in March 2023. That is as far from the truth as anything could be.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** There is a long tradition of the commissioner's office giving gifts, including alcohol. For the benefit of our guests in the gallery, I will tell them what is happening. Opposition members would have us believe that the practice of giving gifts to overseas dignitaries and law enforcement experts by the most senior public servant in this State started only when Labor come to government. That could not be further from the truth. I have a few facts to share. All of those gifts were purchased under the former police Minister, Paul Toole. He was the Minister who authorised those purchases. At the same time, former Government members were sitting in this Chamber while police were asking for a pay rise.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Where were you when the police asked for a pay rise? And where were you when the police asked for a pay rise?

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair. The member for Coffs Harbour rises on a point of order.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Paul Toole did not receive a bottle of gin. We asked why the Minister—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. He knows that is not how to take a point of order. I will not tolerate that behaviour. Members will listen respectfully while the Minister is answering the question.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I have spent the past 18 months getting around this State, mopping up the mess left by the former Minister. There are more than 2,000 vacant positions in the NSW Police Force.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Wahroonga.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. Yesterday the Minister said that visiting commissioners and other dignitaries received alcohol. Unless she is a visiting Minister or dignitary, why did she not say that she received a gift of alcohol?

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** As I said, I have gone from Bourke to Brewarrina and all the way down to Wagga Wagga to mop up the mess the former Government left in regional New South Wales. One would think that the former police Minister, the member for Bathurst, would have looked after regional cops, but he did not. Instead, he comes to this Chamber— [*Time expired.*]

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

#### WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (11:07):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plans to connect the fast-growing jobs precincts of Western Sydney with the new Western Sydney airport?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:08):** I thank the member for Penrith for that very important, sensible question about ensuring that there is infrastructure linking to the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of Western Sydney airport, which we are close to opening. Members of this House will be well aware—we talk about it a lot—that this Government is focused on delivering for the people of Western Sydney. I note that the Deputy Leader of the

Opposition in the other place—it is hard to keep up with their positions—is constantly criticising the Government for being too focused on Western Sydney. It will shock members to learn that I wear that criticism as a badge of pride. The people of Western Sydney we represent—

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** —wanted the airport at Badgerys Creek because of the job-creating opportunities it will realise for us, for our children and for their children. It is the first generation of Western Sydney families that can hope to work close to home. This will solve so many of the issues that we and the people we represent have been battling for decades and decades as Western Sydney has grown. Last week the Premier, some of our local members and I were proud to announce that work is about to begin on finally upgrading Mamre Road, one of the most important arterials leading to the airport.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** I started the project. You're welcome.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The member for Badgerys Creek cannot miss the opportunity to interject, of course. Recently on her Facebook she has—

**Mr Adam Crouch:** You've got a follower, Tanya.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Yes, I do follow what the member for Badgerys Creek says because it is hard not to. She highlighted the fact that I, as the member for Londonderry, have been calling for this since 2018. It took a Labor government to actually deliver it. We on this side are very proud of that work. This is a vital piece of infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Myall Lakes will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The first stage is a 3.8-kilometre stretch between Erskine Park Road and the M4, widening two lanes to four lanes, with the potential to grow to six lanes. There will be six new intersections. This will be congestion-busting for our part of the world and crucial to unlocking the employment opportunities of the Western Sydney airport. It is part of that \$5 billion the Government is investing in Western Sydney road infrastructure. This is important to the people who live in the fast-growing region of Western Sydney. [*Extension of time*]

This included working with the Commonwealth Government to fund stage two of Mamre Road, something we are also proud of—it took two Labor governments to deliver. As much as the previous Government talked a big game, when it came to the actual delivery, it choked. We are delivering stage one. We are funding stage two between Erskine Park Road and Kerrs Road, taking the total funding for that project to \$1 billion. It took two Labor governments to finally deliver this for the people of Western Sydney and realise the full potential of the Western Sydney airport. Those opposite, including the member for Badgerys Creek, can crow on and on about what has been needed for years and years. They were in government for over a decade. Just over 12 months in, this Labor Government is actually delivering the upgrades to Mamre Road that are needed for Western Sydney down to south-western Sydney.

**Mr Warren Kirby:** More grandstanding than the Australians!

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The member for Riverstone is spot on. Those opposite can grandstand all they want, but who was it turning the sod on that upgrade for Mamre Road? It was Premier Chris Minns. The Labor Government is delivering the infrastructure it was elected to deliver for this vital part of Western Sydney. While those opposite delivered urban sprawl without the employment infrastructure, we on this side are proud to be delivering the infrastructure. We ensured the Federal Government came good on its commitment. We ensured it was a massive commitment in our recent State budget. Unlike those opposite, we represent the growing communities of Western Sydney that changed their local members to ensure that urban sprawl is met with the infrastructure those communities have been denied for so long.

#### NSW POLICE FORCE GIFT POLICY

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (11:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. By failing to disclose in her answer yesterday that she received a gift of alcohol from the police commissioner, does she agree that she misled the House?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:13):** Absolutely not, Mr Speaker. What I might say to the Opposition is that it did not ask me the question yesterday. It had to rely on the question coming from another source.

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



**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** If those opposite had asked the question, I would have told them the answer. I have now answered that question, but I will go on to inform the House of some good news about the police. While we have the Opposition wasting our time in question time with their gotcha moments—which completely fell flat, by the way—I inform members what the NSW Police Force is doing in relation to domestic and family violence.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Minister cannot, by beginning for a few seconds to have a relevant answer, continue to be irrelevant for the rest of her answer. If that were the case, the Minister could get up and say yes or no to a question and then go on to tell fairytales, which is what she proposes to do. She has to remain relevant.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate the point of order. It seems to me that there is some precedent for it. I recall that similar points of order were taken during a former Parliament—maybe the last one. I will hear from the Leader of the House before I make my ruling.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Remember the last time Henskens accused someone of misconduct?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will come to order. The member for Wahroonga will come to order. I will hear from the Leader of the House. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the second time.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Opposition members cannot ask a question that contains an assertion of a Minister misleading the House and not open up their own credibility as part of the process. What becomes directly relevant—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** That's not in the standing orders.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Maybe if you read some of the Speaker's rulings—you were the Deputy Speaker, you know—

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the Leader of the House that he is trying to convince me, not the member for Port Macquarie.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Can we stop the clock?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** If she aspires to be the Deputy Speaker again, she might learn from her previous rulings. Mr Speaker, a member cannot open up an issue and make an allegation of misleading the House without opening up their—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Give me an extension, member for Wahroonga! I ask for an extension.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. The Leader of the House is still speaking to the point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** A member cannot open up an issue and make an allegation of misleading the House without opening up their own credibility. Those opposite are actually getting what they asked for by nature of the question that they put to the Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House.

**Mr Paul Scully:** I think the member for Wahroonga is seeking an extension. He is on his feet.

**The SPEAKER:** While it is a moot point, in that the time for the answer has expired, I tend to lean towards the position of the Leader of the House on this matter because of the nature of the question. Members know that some questions do open up opportunities for wider examination and wider debate. I have ruled along those lines before: Because of the nature of the question, I give more latitude to the Minister in answering it. I believe the question from the member for Wahroonga may well have fallen into that category. Thankfully, I do not have to rule on that point.

## HEALTH WORKFORCE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:17):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to reduce pressure on our State's healthcare system by delivering safe staffing levels?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:18):** I thank the member for Liverpool for her question. The hospital in her electorate was the first hospital the Premier and I visited after taking our Cabinet roles. At the moment, that hospital's emergency department is the busiest in Australia. It has a battle with Campbelltown, and at the moment it is winning. It is probably not a record the member for Liverpool wants, but it is one she has got. Without a doubt, the biggest challenge that our health system and hospitals face right now is not a case of needing more equipment or more facilities; it in fact relates to the men and women who deliver the health services the communities of all members rely on.

For just on 20 years now, under the leadership of Brett Holmes and now under Shaye Candish and Michael Whaites at the Nurses and Midwives' Association, they have campaigned for one issue—ratios. They have campaigned it for oppositions trying to get into government; they have campaigned it for governments trying to keep government. For over 20 years that has not been achieved. Under the Minns Labor Government, that reform will be rolled out. We are very proud of that reform.

We are rolling out ratios across New South Wales hospitals. Today we announced an additional 12 sites, taking the total to date over the first 15 months to 16 hospitals that will be moving or have moved to one-to-three in emergency departments. That makes an enormous difference. Those 10 hospitals include places like Coffs Harbour, and I know the member for Coffs Harbour will be very pleased; Wagga Wagga, and I know the member for Wagga Wagga has been a very strong and fierce advocate for that; in the hospital shared by my electorate and the electorate of the member for Wollongong in Wollongong; St George Hospital, also very—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Hear, hear!

**Mr RYAN PARK:** No, not you, Coure. St George Hospital also has a very good advocate who happens to be the Premier. The hospitals include places like Gosford and places across New South Wales. We are moving to one-to-three in emergency departments. We announced those additional sites at this morning's conference, and every person in the Government should be proud of that because it is the largest single reform of the way in which we staff our hospitals in New South Wales. The reform will see an additional 2,500 nurses and midwives enter the system over the next few years. [*Extension of time*]

I remind members of the Opposition that six weeks ago under their leadership the State would have lost 1,112 nurses. They could never deliver ratios because they never wanted to deliver ratios. They are not interested in staffing. They are not interested in properly resourcing our hospitals, but we are, and we are going to back the men and women who resource and staff our hospitals. We know that when we back them, we deliver better and safer health care for our communities, and we help to attract and retain nurses, midwives and other allied healthcare workers to the health system. That is the focus and that is why, in addition to ratios, we are rolling out rural incentive schemes. In some parts of New South Wales, in hard-to-fill areas, we are providing up to \$20,000 for healthcare workers to go into those areas.

We are providing study subsidies of up to \$12,000—\$4,000 a year over three years—for people to commence their degree and study to become a healthcare worker. Why is that important? It is because the State needs a pipeline of healthcare workers to staff our hospitals as the demand increases. We are rolling out reforms like boosting the supply of key worker accommodation, which links very closely with properly staffing our hospitals. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Housing know very well that accommodation for key workers is often the difference between whether or not they make the decision to go to regional and rural hospitals. This Government is rolling out those reforms. This Government will put healthcare workers first, second and third.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Sydney, I recognise the wonderful cohort of students who have joined us in the Cooper Gallery today. I thank them for visiting the Legislative Assembly and I hope they are enjoying their question time experience.

## ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:23):** My question is directed to the Minister for Building. Will New South Wales join the majority of States and Territories and implement the Silver Level Livable Housing Design Standard within the National Construction Code to ensure people with a disability and the ageing population have safe and accessible housing options now and in the future?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (11:24):** I thank the member for Sydney for his question and for his advocacy for housing justice in New South Wales. The former Government chose not to adopt the Livable Housing provisions from the 2022 National Construction Code, but the Minns Labor Government is committed to housing justice. The Government is working harder than ever before to ensure that everyone in the community can access good, quality homes. When it comes to the silver liveable housing standards, we are leading by example to deliver better homes that work for everyone in the community.

**The SPEAKER:** I forgot the member for Lane Cove was still in Parliament. The member will come to order.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Nothing says more about the Government's commitment to the issue highlighted in the question of the member for Sydney than leading by example and showing industry that accessible and affordable housing can go together. We have made a record \$5.1 billion investment in more than 8,000 social housing properties, and that includes \$1 billion for the upgrade of 30,000 homes. Every one of these homes will be built to the silver standard, meaning they will all be accessible. We are also directing Landcom to ensure that at least 30 per cent of all medium- to high-density homes comply with these standards. The Apartment Design Guide is encouraging at least 20 per cent of apartments to be delivered to the silver standard. The metrics are the floor and not the ceiling.

The moves are a great start, but I understand the enthusiasm of members in this House to do even more. The Government has heard the voices of advocates loudly, including the members representing the electorates of Sydney, Newtown, Balmain and Ballina. I also recognise my colleague and good friend the member for Gosford; she is working extremely hard every day to ensure this issue is a top priority for me as Minister for Building and for my colleague the Minister for Disability Inclusion. That is why we are working through the issues very carefully. The Building Commission NSW is working across government and with other jurisdictions to understand the impact of any future implementation. While other States have adopted the provisions, they originally signed up but also delayed their implementation. Our friends in South Australia and Tasmania have delayed commencement to later this year. Our friends in Queensland have delayed them to March next year, demonstrating the complexities of implementing the reforms. The Government wants to learn from those experiences. [*Extension of time*]

We want to learn from the experiences of our colleagues in other States, but as we wait for meaningful data to come through, the Building Commission NSW is also working with stakeholders in our State at present. We brought together the disability community and the building industry at a government forum on accessible housing in September last year to discuss how best to meet the needs of all occupants, regardless of their mobility or age. We are committed to ongoing engagement as we leverage our record investment in new and accessible housing. As part of the Government's work responding to the disability royal commission, my colleague the Minister for Disability Inclusion is also playing a leading coordinating role. Following the release of our response to the royal commission, further stakeholder forums will be conducted and other recommendations will be scheduled for later this year.

We are in a housing crisis and every decision we make must be geared to easing the pressure on housing. I want to be transparent to colleagues, though, about the challenges associated with the standards. Housing is the number one issue for people in our State. We need more homes, we need them to be of a higher quality and we need them to be affordable. The Government is working hard to meet these challenges. Unlike some other States, we are building a large proportion of freestanding residential buildings, and the standards are a bigger challenge at those sites. We are conscious of the need not to increase the cost of compliance for builders or the cost of homes for consumers. We have to strike a balance.

The Government is committed to delivering housing justice for the whole community. That includes accessibility, affordability and availability. The National Construction Code 2025 will be considered for approval by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments in late 2024. This will be a great opportunity for governments to further consider their positions on disability accessibility regulations in the building space. I thank the member for his question.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** That's our document. Just say thank you—we did that and you know that.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Tamworth knows he will be called to order for that interjection. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time. All members will come to order. I call the member for South Coast.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT SUBSIDIES**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Epping will come to order. I need to hear the question, as does the Minister. I ask the member for South Coast to begin again.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister respond to my community's concerns around local transport subsidies?

**Mr Michael Daley:** And any other relevant matters.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:30):** I thank the member for South Coast for her question. She is a great advocate for the South Coast and I am really grateful to her for that. Those opposite might learn a thing or two. Some of them do come and tell me about their issues. Some of them just get up in the Chamber and have a bit of a blast—not here today, I see—but the member for South Coast advocates for her community. We all know that the Minns Labor Government is committed to keeping regional communities connected. I have spoken in this Chamber many times about the enabling aspect of transport.

Unfortunately the Labor Government has inherited from those opposite a hotchpotch of bespoke and grandfathered rural and remote bus contracts. Under the previous Government, access to concession fares depended on where a person lives. I acknowledge that we are in a cost-of-living crisis. The member for South Coast has been a strong advocate on that issue for her community. Recently I was in the Far West. The Government has put out a trial of new buses in Brewarrina and Collarenebri, and has contracted those. The local Aboriginal Land Council is doing that work. It is delivered by community for community. This is about building viable services. Earlier this year the Government announced that the trial service from Tumut to Wagga Wagga will be contracted, and it has been contracted.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** We on this side inherited a mess from those opposite, but our Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans are about rolling this out in a much better way. The work that the Minister for Transport and the Parliamentary Secretary have been doing on the bus taskforce is about having a coordinated and cohesive approach. We know the regional bus contracts process will be coming. So what are we going to be doing? We are meeting today. I have already met with the member for South Coast. We will continue to meet with them and Transport. We will work on a solution to this issue for the people in rural and regional communities. They were left with a contract that was signed over eight years ago and then left with no option to continue. We will continue to work on a solution. Once again I say to every member in this House that if they have a genuine issue that they want to fix in their community, they should know they can come up here and talk about it. At the moment, we have a rabble in opposition. But my party is the party of the bush. We are getting real solutions for public transport for local communities.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** Tell Prue you're the party of the bush!

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** We are the party of the bush.

**Ms Liza Butler:** I seek further information.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Those opposite cannot speak with any credibility on public transport. They have got the former Minister running around querying costing. This is the guy who presided over a \$20 million blowout on expenses in transport in the Sydney Metro to the detriment of the bush. What did The Nationals do? They did nothing. They just let it lie. They had a train fleet with one train that they did not manage to get happening. We inherited a mess.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. The Minister is inciting quarrels across the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister did so inadvertently as she was caught up in the moment. However, I uphold the point of order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** There is no quarrel. Every member in this House agrees that Labor is the party of the bush. There is not an issue of disagreement here. Labor is the party that will deliver the Jervis Bay overpass. Labor will deliver the Milton Ulladulla bypass that those opposite could never get the community to agree on.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. I thought the question was about transport subsidies.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Those opposite are clutching at straws. They promised the Tripoli Way upgrade twice—at two elections—but never delivered it. We on this side will deliver it. We will not be lectured by those opposite.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Labor is the party for the bush. The Government is delivering better transport. It is delivering better concessions. It is delivering the roads, railway networks and bus networks that regional people have never had under those opposite. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

They ask about taxis—from a guy who has never been to Moree.

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides of the House will calm down. I assure the students in the gallery that everything is okay; it is not as bad as it looks.

### BUILDING INDUSTRY

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (11:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Building. Building approval levels are at a 12-year low under the Minns Labor Government. Are builders in New South Wales being scared off by the CFMEU's corrupt activities, which union officials describe as "the cost of doing business"?

**Mr Paul Scully:** Maybe if your husband sped up the approval times, things could get built—worst approval times in the country!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Holsworthy will resume her seat. Government frontbench members will come to order. The interjection was unnecessary and out of order.

**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) (11:37):** I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. Of course we all know of the cost pressures in the building industry at the moment. The macro factors are known to all and sundry. As I said yesterday—in case the members opposite did not hear, I will make this clear again—the Minns Labor Government will not tolerate any threats, bullying or intimidation on any building site, in any workplace, anywhere.

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

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** All members are of course troubled by reports over the past couple of months. That is why the Government has taken quick and decisive action to move to suspend the CFMEU's construction branch from affiliation with the NSW Labor Party. It has asked the Fair Work Ombudsman to review the enterprise bargaining agreements in New South Wales and referred all allegations of inappropriate behaviour—

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Vacluse rises on a point of order. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was about the correlation between the CFMEU and 12-year lows in building approvals. The Minister has not answered it.

**The SPEAKER:** It is very difficult to uphold the point of order. The member for Wollongong will calm down. The Minister will continue his answer.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** As I said, we are taking decisive action. My colleague the Minister for Industrial Relations is bringing forward strong legislation to ensure that the issues raised in the media about the CFMEU are dealt with quickly and decisively. Will the Opposition come out and support what we are doing? We talk about the involvement of the CFMEU and building approvals in the past 12 years. I noticed as I did a bit of research that there has been some consultation between the CFMEU and certain members of the House. I wonder who those members could be.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I'm intrigued.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** I am intrigued too. The Leader of the Nationals, and member for Dubbo met with the CFMEU not once, not twice but three times. What did they speak about?

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Under Standing Order 52, I have the right to make an approach without harassment from members opposite. The second standing order—

**The SPEAKER:** It is a moot point as the Minister's time has expired. I will not hear further from the member for Vacluse on the point of order. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the third time.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:40):** My question is addressed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Will the Minister update the House on the importance of sustained and meaningful government action to address domestic and family violence in New South Wales?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:41):** I thank the member for East Hills for her question. She is an incredibly hard worker in this space. She has worked with the Biyani House Revesby Women's Shelter over a number of years, and up until recently she was the deputy chair of its board. She knows all too well the devastation that domestic and family violence causes for communities and families. This morning the Domestic Violence Death Review Team tabled its 2021-23 report. The report and the data it contains make for a sobering read. Every statistic in the report represents a life that was unjustly ended too soon. Every statistic in the report is someone who was loved and whose absence leaves a hole in the lives of family members, friends and the community. They continue to be mourned by many.

The report provides a stark reminder of our great responsibility to keep families safe from the harm and horror of domestic and family violence. It further strengthens our resolve to take sustained and meaningful action on domestic and family violence in our State. In this year's budget the Minns Labor Government has already made a historic commitment of an additional \$245.6 million to support women and children escaping domestic and family violence, and to reduce the rate of violence in this State. To make sure our action in this space is meaningful, we must do it all and address domestic and family violence from every angle. We must take genuine preventative action and early intervention action. Of course we must make crisis responses and provide healing and recovery for those affected.

Earlier this week the Deputy Premier spoke about changes to the curriculum to mandate the explicit teaching of consent to our young people. It will be age appropriate and underpinned by the concept that consent must be freely given, clear, unambiguous, coherent and ongoing. Consent education, together with respectful relationships education more broadly, is a key component of primary prevention of domestic and family violence. Another component is the work of the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre on its All In pilot, which is funded by the Government. The pilot is giving our early educators tools to challenge harmful gender stereotypes that impact children in their care. *[Extension of time]*

We are now putting the final touches on the State's first dedicated primary prevention strategy so that vital work can continue to drive change over the longer term. In the immediate term, the Government has turned its attention to earlier intervention—detecting and intervening before the violence can escalate. A key component of that, which has been sidelined for too long, is holding to account men who use violence and asking them to take responsibility for their actions. In the short term, that is reflected in the \$15 million allocated in the budget to men's behaviour change programs and research. We want to help the men who use violence to recognise that violence does not have to define them, their relationships or their future.

We are also helping to ensure that children who have experienced domestic and family violence recover and heal, with support from Specialist Workers for Children and Young People and the expansion of that program. That work disrupts intergenerational trauma, breaking the cycle of violence. For women and children escaping violence, we are making sure they have wraparound supports, with Core and Cluster refuges and, importantly, a historic investment in public housing, with an additional 3,100 new homes prioritised for women and children leaving domestic and family violence. The Staying Home Leaving Violence program will finally be available across the State. We are expanding the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services; strengthening our bail laws, led by the Attorney General; and providing support by expanding our Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program. I thank the Domestic Violence Death Review Team for its work. We will consider the analysis very carefully. We will continue to invest in and work with communities to ensure that women and children can finally be safe.

### REX AIRLINES

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:46):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that hundreds of jobs have already been lost and hundreds more are at risk in regional New South Wales, why has the Premier not met with Rex Airlines?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:46):** There is a question as to who is running Rex Airlines at the moment. The administrator is being appointed. It is running the insolvency process. Potential intervention is a matter for the Commonwealth Government.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Hang on a second. Do you want to know?

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Yes.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We have made it clear that linking Rex Airlines with regional communities in New South Wales is an absolute priority. I have not ruled out—and I do not think the Commonwealth Government has ruled out either—New South Wales taxpayer money being involved in that insolvency process. We cannot have a situation where regional communities are cut off or the uses of Rex Airlines, particularly for government services, are not part of a potential solution. At the moment, the airline is in the middle of an insolvency and a bankruptcy, and that has to take priority.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** At the moment, that has to be the process. I am happy to meet with everybody.

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

### HOUSING SUPPLY AND PLANNING

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:47):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plans to provide more housing across the State?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:48):** I thank the member for The Entrance for his question. I note with interest that in The Entrance the number of first home buyers benefitting from our stamp duty concessions has doubled since the Government's changes a year ago. There are lots of happy first home buyers on the coast. While Opposition members have been busy over the break talking down housing, coming up with more excuses why they do not like it and working hard to keep their anti-housing bill in the other place, the Minns Government has been getting on with the job of implementing the planning reforms that the State needs to make sure we are delivering homes, jobs and renewable infrastructure. Last week planning changes came into effect for five more locations under the Transport Oriented Development program. The member for Wahroonga loves it because he speaks about it all the time.

Following discussions with Wollongong, Central Coast and Bayside councils, planning controls around Dapto, Gosford, Tuggerah, Banksia and Rockdale stations have come into effect. They have delivered tailored solutions, adjusting local boundaries to take into account local conditions. Those places will be attractive for first home buyers who saw the stamp duty statistics I spoke about yesterday. As the member for The Entrance knows, the Central Coast is a popular location for first home buyers, with over 1,300 families saving more than \$22,000, on average, in stamp duty under the changes implemented by this Government. That is not to mention first home buyers around Dapto, who are saving an average of \$24,000 as a result of the changes implemented by this Government. This Government is all about local solutions for statewide problems.

Between those five areas it is expected more than 22,000 new homes will be delivered over the next 15 years for young people, families and downsizers. They are homes that the Opposition wants to stop. Why? Because members opposite are the blockers and we are the builders. Our efforts will not stop there. Master planning proposals are now on exhibition for Crows Nest, Homebush, Kellyville and Bella Vista, Macquarie Park and Hornsby. The former mayor of Hornsby was behind some of our initiatives until he got caught up in internal dealings and was rolled by members opposite. More than 60,000 homes are set to be delivered to those areas, and they will be built with parks and other amenities, supporting around 100,000 jobs. Homes and jobs connected to transport and services is sensible planning. [*Extension of time*]

It does not stop there. The Government has also extended permissibility for dual occupancies and semi-detached dwellings to 124 local government areas throughout the State. That will add diversity to stock in the housing market. It is crazy, but today we are seeing less diverse housing options than we did a century ago. We are bringing back housing choice. We are giving people a choice of homes that suits them through all stages of their lives in areas where they want to live. It makes no sense that some councils have allowed dual occupancies to be built while others have not. We have made them available in all but four local government areas that are impacted by fire and flood.

We have not stopped there. We have done more in planning. There is an old management adage: If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. I think the Leader of the Opposition should consider that when he looks at his frontbench members, because he cannot manage them. Last year the Premier committed to publishing league tables of how councils performed. We have delivered on that. We have published them and update data is coming later today. So that we do not go backwards again, like members opposite—

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

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** You woke them up.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** They are awake now, aren't they? They know why.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Who are the top five worst-performing councils run by? Who are the mayors of those councils? They are mostly Liberal mayors. If a council is not meeting its performance requirements under the new statement of expectations, the Minister for Local Government is willing to step in and issue a performance improvement order. Instead, what are members opposite doing? They are backing their anti-housing bill. They are backing it so much that they did not even try to list it on the Legislative Council agenda yesterday. That is how much they support it. They are a disgrace.

#### REGIONAL TRANSPORT SUBSIDIES

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:53):** My question is directed to the Minister for Seniors. Last year the Government cut the regional seniors travel card. Now it has increased regional bus fares from \$2.50 up to \$65. As the Minister for Seniors, what involvement did the Minister have in those decisions?

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:54):** Government members talk to each other and Ministers consult each other all the time on matters that relate to each other's portfolios.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** We have some hard decisions to make on matters we have inherited.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** We have inherited some dire financial situations, and we are dealing with it. We are taking the time to go through them sensibly, and we are making hard decisions that members opposite did not make. The member has asked his first question as the new shadow Minister for Seniors—good on him! It does not change the fact that we have inherited an absolute mess, and we are going through it methodically and making hard decisions. I am quite happy to say—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. The member for Coffs Harbour rises on a point of order.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was about the Minister's involvement in these decisions.



**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour. I am confident that the Minister will be directly relevant when answering the question.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** I answered the question at the outset. My statement was that Ministers consult each other on a regular basis, but I will not go into confidential Cabinet discussions. I am quite happy to leave that answer as it is. We will continue to work as a united government. We will continue to work collectively. We will continue to work across portfolios. I do that in my portfolios relating to Seniors, Women and the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** The police Minister consults me on a regular basis on matters relating to the prevention of domestic and family violence. The Attorney General consults me.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** We're a team!

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** We are, absolutely, a united team and we will continue to be for a very, very long time.

### LITHIUM ION BATTERIES

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is taking action to impose strict new standards on lithium ion batteries?

**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) (11:57):** I thank the member for Shellharbour for her question and for her great interest in this topic. We are acting decisively and quickly to protect people and their property by imposing new regulations and tougher penalties for substandard e-mobility devices that use lithium ion batteries. We are acting now because fires related to lithium ion batteries, including those started by e-mobility devices, are the fastest growing cause of fires in our State.

In 2023 Fire and Rescue NSW attended 67 fires attributed to e-scooters, e-bikes, e-skateboards and hoverboards. That was three times the number that occurred the year before. This year we are on track to exceed that number, as our fires have been forced to attend 54 instances so far. These fires are dangerous. They can be hard to extinguish, and they can take off quickly. They have destroyed property and, sadly, in one instance lives were lost. The growth in the number of "e-fires" is alarming. It has been driven by the fact that as products that use those batteries come onto the market, more people are purchasing them. The number of e-mobility devices sold to New South Wales consumers in 2022 increased by 322 per cent, compared with 2020. That trend will only go up.

We want people in New South Wales to get the products that they need but only when they are safe and of high quality. That is why from 1 February next year NSW Fair Trading will require all those products to meet higher quality and safety standards. There will also be a higher price to pay for those who put our community at risk. Anyone caught selling products that do not comply could face fines of more than \$800,000. Once fully phased in, products will need to be clearly tested, certified and labelled. Our officers at Fair Trading will be conducting inspections of retailers and suppliers to ensure that only compliant products are sold to our consumers.

Whilst New South Wales is, indeed, acting ahead of the nation, we are also putting this on the national agenda because, honestly, a Federal framework is required. The new regulations we are proposing do protect our community in New South Wales, but the best approach would be one that is standardised across the nation. The reality is Fair Trading can only control products in New South Wales, but there are big risks for consumers, for example, who purchase those products and items online or from other jurisdictions. The importation of products, as members may be well aware, is controlled by the Commonwealth and there is very little regulation in place. *[Extension of time]*

I inform the House and members that the New South Wales Government will put this on the national agenda to ensure that it stops low-quality products reaching our shores in the first place. When consumer affairs Ministers meet later this year, our Government will be taking the lead to advocate for a national framework. Stronger regulation of e-mobility devices in New South Wales will complement a whole suite of measures the Government is already taking to keep our communities safe. Of course, regulating e-mobility devices is not the end of the story. Across government we are working to keep people safe. Tough fines and new regulations are part of a suite of measures we are implementing to improve safety.

In June my colleague the Minister for the Environment, along with other environment Ministers across the country, met to expedite work on model legislation to improve the design, packaging, importation, storage and disposal of batteries. The NSW Environment Protection Authority is working with our friends in Victoria and Queensland to urgently progress that important work. NSW Fair Trading has already started a very strong consumer education campaign explaining how those products should be used, highlighting unsafe charging practices and other factors that may contribute to fires.

I am happy to be a part of a government that is taking strong action to protect people in New South Wales as we get ahead of technology and consumer demand. We are acting now so that members of the community who want those products can use them safely. We are also acting to ensure that the members of the Opposition, inspired by the farewells of the member for Epping and the member for Hornsby, can get on their hoverboards and their e-bikes to go down King Street to Thai Pothong in Newtown, and do not burn down their favourite Thai joint—a great institution right in Liberal Party heartland. The member for Newtown should be wary. They will probably start campaigning in her electorate. In all seriousness, all members in this House should join me to support the Government's regulation to keep our community safe.

### WESTCONNEX

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:02):** My question is directed to the Premier. The recent inquiry into the impacts of the Rozelle interchange found that the financial model of WestConnex was based on maximising its sale value, driving design decisions that increased traffic congestion, and that lack of transparency and accountability for those design decisions is unacceptable, given the significant impact it has had on the community. Many in my electorate would agree. What is the Government doing to identify those responsible for the design of that disastrous project?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:03):** It is a good question: Who is responsible for that disaster? We have a team on it. We have some undercover police. We have a team of investigators. They do not have to look too far, however, because the people responsible for that mess are sitting on the other side of the Chamber. We looked really closely at the upper House inquiry and found a couple of very important things for the New South Wales Government and, I think, all politicians in this House. It found that the previous Government was fixated on maximising the WestConnex sale price at the expense of traffic conditions in the community of the member for Balmain. The inquiry also heard that the previous Government knew exactly what the impact of the interchange would mean for parts of Rozelle and Victoria Road and went ahead with it anyway. An internal Roads and Maritime Services document to the previous Government prior to its opening stated:

... the predicted increase in traffic demands in all future scenarios cannot be accommodated without some form of traffic or network management.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* reported in December 2023 that the then Government shelved plans to create moveable lanes on the Anzac Bridge to cope with a surge of vehicles. It found the previous Government "had concerns about the impact of the final part of WestConnex" but then "deprioritised" those fixes in the run-up to the last election. It was planned chaos. The Government has come in and placed new signage reminding drivers to access the toll-free section of the tunnel between the Iron Cove Bridge and the Anzac Bridge. Two ramp signals were installed to manage traffic flows downstream of the interchange. Bus lanes were added and amended on Victoria Road in both directions in November last year, improving local access and bus priority on Victoria Road and the City West Link. There was also a paid media campaign, which was important for the local community so that they could understand where and how to access streets they have been using for literally decades.

In addition to all of that, the Government is cracking on with another crossing of the harbour, investing billions of dollars, which we believe will add to the ease of traffic and, as a result of that, ease some of the absolute chaos brought to us by the previous Government. The question asked about who is responsible for this. We are lucky in this scenario because the current Leader of the Opposition has decided to keep most of the people responsible for those disasters in their previous portfolios as shadow Ministers. Mr Toole is in police. Mitchell is in education, responsible for the crime— *[Extension of time]*

There is also a member in the upper House named Natalie Ward. I have never met her, but allegedly she is on the job in the upper House. In an interview on 2GB, the interviewer, John Stanley, asked her if she would try to find a way to reduce the number of cars and work her way through it. She said:

Well, I would be getting traffic experts in together with the community and saying, what are the solutions? But, I'm not hearing any of those.

She said she was not hearing anything from the Government and that there was absolutely no accountability. Then John Stanley says, "Well, hang on a second, weren't you in the chair? Why didn't you see what was happening and do something about it?" Then Ward said:

I mean, we can all look backwards and say, coulda, woulda, shoulda.

Where is the accountability? When the new Government is inheriting the mess of the previous Government, it is, "We need to look into that." When there is even a sliver of inquiry as to what happened during its 12 years in office, it is, "Coulda, woulda, shoulda. Why would we look into that? It is only 12 years in office. We are only responsible for traffic chaos and absolute mess." The thing about the Hon. Natalie Ward is that she does not particularly care about the residents in Rozelle because she lives in Pittwater. Maybe she lives in Hornsby, or maybe she lives in Epping. Maybe she is moving all the way to Mosman, to North Sydney. One place where residents will not welcome her is Rozelle because she is responsible for that mess and she has absolutely no plans to fix it.

### PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:08):** My question is addressed to the fabulous Minister for Sport.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. We need to hear the member for Gosford above the jangling of the medals she is wearing.

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** Will the Minister update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to support our fantastic current and future Olympians and Paralympians?

**The SPEAKER:** I thank our favourite Olympian in the House for her question. I call the Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (12:08):** I thank the member for Gosford for her question. What a terrific member. We are so lucky to have our very own Paralympic hero. The member for Gosford is a five-time Paralympic medallist. The Paris games have been Australia's most successful Olympics ever. Last night our athletes brought home another four gold medals, which is a one-day record. Australia currently sits third on the medal tally, which is an outstanding achievement. There have been plenty of special moments: the Fox trifecta, the McKeown double-double in the backstroke, and the emotional story of Saya—and her brother, Kai—who overcame so much to reach gold.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

Just listen. I was privileged to meet Kai at his rowing club in Drummoyne earlier this year. What a great family, and what great determination and strength of character they have shown. How could we not want to support these athletes? The New South Wales Government has shown its support for athletes in more ways than one, starting with helping them to qualify for the Games. Right now 83 NSW Institute of Sport athletes are competing as members of the Australian Olympic Team, which is a remarkable achievement in itself. Most importantly, we have doubled down on our support for Olympians. Earlier this year I was proud to join the member for Gosford to announce that the Minns Labor Government, in a historic first, will provide equal funding to the Olympic and Paralympic teams.

The Government is also helping the community to celebrate the success of our athletes and get behind our Olympians. It has set up a free live site at Sydney's Darling Harbour, illuminated the Opera House in celebration of our athletes and all who support them—not Opposition members, but all others who support them—and the Premier has announced that we will be throwing a welcome home party for our New South Wales Olympic and Paralympic heroes at Tumbalong Park. I encourage all members of the House to join us—I encourage Opposition members too. Everyone needs to enjoy and participate in sport, whether it is at the local park or in the stadiums of Paris.

As members of the House are aware, Opposition members are always interested in a bit of healthy internal competition. We know the member for Wahroonga has his eye on the top job, so it was no surprise when he signed up for the team pursuit. I am sure we will hear about his disappointment on the next episode of his podcast after he was advised that nobody wanted him on their team. The member for Dubbo tried to put together a rugby sevens team—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** Everyone is excited to hear more. I grant an additional one minute.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The member for Dubbo tried to put together a rugby sevens team but, sadly, he could not find seven friends in his party room. Dugald was going to get there, but the shadow member for Wagga Wagga in the other place, the Hon. Wes Fang, was too busy training for the breaking. Breaking is a great new event, and it goes to show that there are opportunities for everybody. Of course, the Liberal Party's best prospect is in the speed climbing. The member for Vacluse jumped right over the top of the other slower climbers, such as the member for Oatley—he is a glacial climber! Regardless of their sport, New South Wales is committed

to supporting all our athletes. That is why the Minns Labor Government, alongside everybody else in New South Wales, is celebrating and supporting our Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge that this is the last question time for former Premier, and member for Epping Mr Dominic Perrottet. I am impressed that the member for Epping has continued to attend the Chamber until now.

#### *Documents*

### **NSW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW TEAM**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Coroners Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team for 2021-2023, received on 8 August 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### *Committees*

### **MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** As Chair: I table report No. 2 of the Modern Slavery Committee entitled *Ethical Clothing Extended Responsibilities Scheme 2005 (NSW)*, dated 8 August 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Business of the House*

### **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1413 to 1443 and general business notice of motion (for bills) Electoral Funding Amendment (Property Developers) Bill 2024 have lapsed.

#### *Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:16):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. It is good to be back in the saddle, after the recent reshuffle, taking on the shadow ministry for the environment. The bill seeks to amend the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to prohibit the release of helium balloons into the environment. Currently under the Act it is illegal to release 20 or more lighter-than-air balloons. The bill seeks to amend section 146E to make it an offence to release one or more lighter-than-air balloons into the environment. It is very easy to look at the long list of environmental challenges facing us and be disheartened. When cost-of-living challenges have rocketed up the list of issues concerning citizens, issues concerning the environment are at risk of being forgotten or taking a back seat. Those two things together can lead to people being overwhelmed and, indeed, can diminish the importance of reforms that deal with an issue like plastic.

My philosophy to approaching the environment is one of environmental optimism. I recognise that, certainly in New South Wales, we have the smarts in both the technology and people to deliver massive change for good—and, in fact, to change the arc on most, if not all, environmental issues facing us. We have proven that we can do it. Waste, and more specifically plastic, is one good example of where, thanks to ingenuity, political courage and good implementation, New South Wales has made significant improvements. Whilst we are not perfect, the facts are that we have been successful at reducing litter and changing littering behaviour. Plastic waste in our environment has reduced by 22 per cent since 2019. Equally, the impressive Return and Earn program is part of a long-term solution to help manage recycling and recyclable material in this State. The scheme has successfully reduced the amount of litter and diverted drink container waste from landfill by capturing this valuable resource.

At the end of the 2021-2022 financial year, 7.63 billion drink containers were returned through the scheme's return point network. That is seven billion containers out of parks, rivers, streams and landfill. However, in

2020-21, plastic items such as takeaway beverage and food packaging still made up 81 per cent of littered items in New South Wales. Changing human behaviour and supply chains is hard work, but it pays dividends. The Australian clean-tech startup Seabin recently released new data showing that the former Government's ban on lightweight plastic bags has been highly effective in reducing plastic waste, with an estimated 71 per cent reduction in plastic bags washing up in Sydney Harbour. The ban went into effect last June. Since then, Seabin has reported a dramatic decrease in the number of plastic bags captured in Sydney Harbour. The reduction is a significant step in showcasing the power of government policies to create real change for the environment around us. I thank CEO Pete Ceglinski and his team for their efforts in monitoring that change.

Recognising the problem of plastic waste and doing something about it meant that in 2022 the Coalition Government banned the supply of certain single-use and problematic plastic items under the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021. These items included some of the most commonly littered items in New South Wales. The intent then—and I hope it remains so today—was that those initial bans and changes would be just the beginning. Indeed, the website of the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] could not be clearer when it states, "New South Wales banned some plastic items in 2022, but more action needs to happen." We should learn from that process and other jurisdictions, and then forge ahead with another phase. It was not all smooth sailing. In fact, I remember ordering Thai food from my favourite Thai restaurant in Manly a week after bringing in the ban on plastic bags. When the food arrived I saw a paper bag at the door, which was heartening. But I opened the paper bag and found that in it was a plastic bag that wrapped up the food!

**Ms Jenny Leong:** And the 85 sauce containers.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Yes. I note the interjection from the member for Newtown. It demonstrated that, whilst the policy intent was clear and the public will was there, changing the habits of consumers and of businesspeople is hard work and takes a lot of effort. There is no doubt that comprehensive action is needed. That is where I differ with my Greens colleagues on this bill. I appreciate the intent. Believe me; it is a passion point of mine. But to pick one item and then seek to ban it would jeopardise the real opportunity to put continued pressure on this Labor Government for a more comprehensive suite of actions. I note the comments of the member for Balmain in her second reading speech:

There are still plenty of items in our environment that we could be taking a much more proactive stand on to get rid of single-use plastics and improve environmental outcomes for our community.

I support that statement. In 2022 we began to tackle problematic plastics by phasing out the supply of items such as lightweight plastic bags, single-use plastic cutlery, bowls, plates, stirrers and straws, and plastic microbeads in some rinse-off personal care products. These phase-outs of single-use plastics were but the first step towards achieving our targets of phasing out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025, reducing plastic litter items by 30 per cent by 2025, achieving an average recovery rate of resources from all waste streams of 80 per cent by 2030, significantly increasing the use of recycled content by government and industry, and reducing overall litter by 60 per cent by 2030.

The items we phased out were identified in the NSW Plastics Action Plan, which was released in June 2021. It set out actions across the plastic life cycle, from production and consumption to disposal and recycling. The plan also committed the former and current governments to review additional single-use and problematic plastics in 2024 for potential regulation, including plastic bowls and cups with lids, oxo-degradable plastics, fruit stickers, heavyweight plastic shopping bags, and barrier or produce bags. It noted that the Government would consider expanding the design standard on plastic microbeads to other products and look at design standards for potentially problematic uses of plastic like synthetic turf and crumbled rubber infill. I note the proposed response in the action plan relating to helium balloons is:

Phase out the release of helium balloons, as well as accessory items such as plastic balloon sticks and ties.

It further states:

NSW has already stopped the release of 20 or more lighter-than-air balloons into the environment at the same time. But we are behind many other states and territories, which have either banned all lighter-than-air balloon releases altogether or are consulting on doing so.

As I said before, good public policy hinges not only on political courage and direction but also on implementation. The implementation is perhaps the hardest part and one that is often overlooked in debates in this place. It is all well and good to seek to single out balloons, but to execute that ban significant change will need to occur in small businesses and communities across the State. When the former Government banned single-use plastic bags, we went on a comprehensive road trip to different cultural communities throughout New South Wales to explain the plastic ban and to work with retailers. I thank the Australian Retailers Association for its work alongside the then Government. I have no doubt that the top-rated team at the EPA will give due consideration to the implementation of much of the proposals in the consultation paper. Indeed, the likes of Nancy Chang will give each aspect of the

proposed actions a thorough review, and it would be a brave ministerial office to not take her advice. I urge the Labor Government to hurry up, get on with the job we started, be bold and brave and continue removing harmful waste from our environment.

I appreciate my Greens colleagues bringing this bill to the House, and I leave them with this question: Why not ask the Labor Government, which they give the numbers to in this minority government, what has happened to the expansion of the Return and Earn scheme? Why is the next phase of the plastics plan sitting on the shelf? When will the report outlining the feedback from consultation be available? I note that it concluded in February 2024, which is over six months ago. Also, why is the Government discussing a piecemeal approach to phasing out problematic plastic when it should be discussing a more comprehensive and considered approach that I know an agency as professional as the EPA can deliver? All it requires is some political courage. The clock is ticking.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I call the member for Newtown. I welcome her parents and the parents of the member for Balmain to the advisers area.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:26):** It seems we have a Greens "Bring your parents to Parliament" day. It seems that other MPs did not get the memo that today is Family Day in the Parliament. I acknowledge that our parents are here. I contribute to debate on the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024 and acknowledge the wonderful work, dedication and passion of my Greens colleague the member for Balmain and her team on the bill. This bill seeks to amend the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to make it an offence to release any lighter-than-air balloons into the air. Currently the Act allows for the intentional release of up to 19 balloons outdoors without any penalty. If 20 or more balloons are released at once, the responsible actor is slapped lightly on the wrist with a \$1,100 fine.

This policy makes New South Wales an outlier amongst other States. In Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia there is already a complete ban on the release of even a single lighter-than-air balloon, and the Northern Territory is poised to implement its own ban in 2025. Some members in this place and others will dismiss the bill and ask, "How much harm can a few balloons really cause?" The answer is a lot! The reality is that we have, over generations, moved to a place where the idea of ditching stuff out of a car window or littering while walking down the street is completely unacceptable. Yet we are allowing people to distribute elements that will indeed become litter into the air, with no punishment or sanction and with absolute legality, because it is still allowed.

Balloons take hundreds of years to degrade, and they never do so fully; they just become smaller and smaller until they become microplastics that contaminate our soil and our waterways. Even so-called biodegradable balloons that end up as litter or as landfill take decades to degrade and contain toxic additives that make their way into the environment, where they wreak havoc on ecosystems and human health. In 2019 a joint study between the CSIRO and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania found that balloons are in the top three most harmful pollutants threatening marine wildlife, alongside plastic bags and bottles.

I refer to the comments made by the shadow environment Minister, and member for Manly, who is passionate about marine conservation and ensuring that marine wildlife is protected, as well as the beauty of our oceans. I repeat that one of the reasons The Greens have introduced the bill is because the CSIRO study found that balloons are in the top three most harmful pollutants threatening marine wildlife, alongside plastic bags and bottles. It is not that we do not want comprehensive reform to the use of single-use plastics. It is not to say that there is not a whole lot more this Labor Government could be doing to protect our waterways and natural environment.

But we absolutely want to see movement. The study found that this is one of the three most harmful pollutants. Balloons are 32 times more likely to kill marine animals than hard plastics when ingested by seabirds, turtles and other marine life. In her second reading speech, the member for Balmain shared harrowing accounts of marine life undergoing immense suffering, and in some cases dying, after ingesting balloon waste. We heard of painful deaths by suffocation, drowning or starvation that too often occur when dolphins, whales, turtles and seabirds mistake a balloon for prey or become entangled in a balloon ribbon or string.

I appreciate that kids love balloons. The member for Balmain and I both have young children who absolutely love balloons. But the reality is that children and the younger generation also love our beautiful oceans and waterways. They are probably the strictest about not littering in our natural environment or causing harm to animals. If we change the perception around the release of balloons and the damage that single-use plastics are causing, the younger generations will absolutely be on board to ensure we do not cause harm. We are positioning a balloon release as a lovely, celebratory thing to do, when in actual fact it is causing significant harm.

We heard that two marine bird species known to be significantly impacted by balloon debris—the flesh-footed shearwaters and short-tailed shearwaters—are now classified as "near threatened", with their

populations decreasing. Is this the world we want to leave future generations? Are we willing to accept this suffering for a few short-lived seconds of joy when releasing a balloon into the air? As the member for Balmain acknowledged, balloons are sentimental items that are associated with birthdays and other celebrations. But there are so many other ways to mark special occasions and celebrate that do not create environmental and wildlife risks.

It is disappointing that the New South Wales Labor Government opposes this bill. When current Government members were sitting in opposition they urged for more action on single-use plastics. But as the former member for Balmain used to say, we see a very different Labor Party in opposition than in government. That is why it is so great that we have such a strong crossbench in this Parliament. During her contribution to debate on the bill, the member for Blue Mountains noted the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper, which was released by the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] in October last year. The EPA is currently reviewing public feedback on that paper, which included the suggestion to:

Phase out the release of helium balloons, as well as accessory items such as plastic balloon sticks and ties.

While The Greens absolutely recognise the need to allow that review process to play out, it is disappointing that, nearly one year on, we are yet to receive any firm indication of a time frame for a review response or any concrete action from the Labor Government. We urge the Government to act.

This issue is resonating across the community. During the weekend I was doorknocking in Surry Hills and the primary concern raised with me by one Surry Hills resident was that councils have failed to address the recycling of soft plastics. Sadly, in the City of Sydney the soft plastics recycling and FOGO recycling processes have been stalled. That is, in part, because the State and Federal governments have failed to step in to ensure there are adequate end of recycling process practices in place. Absolutely, our local councils need to do more. But it should not fall on only local councils to have council-by-council solutions. The State Government has a critical role to play to legislate and ensure that soft plastics are recycled. The Greens will continue to stand with the environmental and animal justice activists to push for this important change. I again thank my Greens colleague the member for Balmain for introducing this important legislation.

There is multi-partisan support in this House to take action. But, sadly, there is not strong leadership from anyone in the New South Wales Labor Government to take a stance on delivering this. I am absolutely certain that no member across the political divide supports the use of single-use plastics through the release of balloons into the air without any penalty. We know there are other ways to celebrate birthdays or other occasions. Disappointingly, Government members are not taking action. They know what needs to be done, but it is like they have forgotten they are in power and can change things for the better. The Greens are here to remind and encourage Government members to do what they know is right and take further action to ban the use of single-use plastics. The Labor Government can absolutely work with us—and we hope it will—to deliver this reform and others to ensure the protection of our environment.

Finally, it is all well and good for the Opposition and the member for Manly to say they do not want a piecemeal approach and want to see genuine change, so they will not support the bill. But it is a bizarre approach. They are saying they will back us in if we do it all but will not support us if we do it one bit at a time. We could ban every piece of single-use plastic separately or we could do it comprehensively, or the Government could act. But right now we have a bill before us that bans single-use, lighter-than-air balloons—which studies have identified as one of the three most damaging types of plastic to our marine life—being released into our environment. It is shameful and disappointing that the Opposition does not support the bill, particularly when the member for Manly is so passionate about marine and water protections. If the Opposition does want action on the issues The Greens are advocating for, the best way to force the Government to act is to back us when we introduce sensible bills that are going to deliver for the people of New South Wales and our environment.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:35):** I oppose the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024 and reiterate the words of the Parliamentary Secretary in her contribution to the second reading debate. I share the concerns of the member for Balmain and the member for Newtown around litter and ensuring that our wildlife and environment are protected. This Government is committed to reducing litter. I highlight the significant progress this Government has already made to reduce litter in our environment. Under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, it is already an offence to release 20 or more lighter-than-air balloons at the same time in New South Wales. The penalty is a \$1,000 fine for individuals or corporations. Releasing 100 or more balloons is treated more seriously, with on-the-spot fines and penalties of \$3,630 and \$6,050 applying throughout New South Wales for individuals and corporations.

The Government is also funding a range of litter prevention and reduction programs run by the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA], local councils and community groups to help protect our environment and keep our waterways clean. Legislation without education or clear implementation is, in many circumstances,

meaningless for the broader community. The Environment Protection Authority leads litter prevention programs such as the successful Hey Tosser! behaviour change campaign, implements the Return and Earn container deposit scheme, partners with local government and other New South Wales government agencies to spread anti-litter messaging, and enforces anti-litter laws. It also collects data to monitor our progress and inform our actions to reduce litter in the environment.

These initiatives have driven a 43 per cent reduction in the volume of litter in New South Wales between 2013-14 and 2019-20. I imagine every member of this House and every member of the community would appreciate that is a huge achievement and something we should all celebrate. However, there is more to do. Under the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021, New South Wales phased out the supply of some single-use, unnecessary and problematic plastic items that were highly littered, including lightweight plastic bags and plastic straws. Behaviour changes within our community are already underway through the use of new products and processes, particularly within younger generations, as the member for Newtown highlighted.

In October 2023 the Minister for the Environment released the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper, which sought feedback on potential actions to further tackle unnecessary or problematic plastic items, including highly littered plastic items such as balloons. The paper sought feedback on phasing out the release of any number of lighter-than-air balloons. The EPA is now considering the feedback received on the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper. Informed by this feedback, the Government intends to release more detailed actions to tackle the items identified in the paper for further consultation in the coming months. This includes action on the release of lighter-than-air balloons as well as balloon accessory items, like plastic sticks, clips and ties.

The bill before the House duplicates work already underway, but only insofar as it relates to lighter-than-air balloon releases. Passing this bill would undermine the progress of the work currently underway by the Government to tackle highly littered plastic items, as well as the views shared by members of the community, industry, businesses and other stakeholders on the next steps to address plastic litter. There were over 5,000 survey responses and written submissions to the release of the issues paper from the community and various stakeholders, which the EPA is currently reviewing so that next steps can be worked on. This huge volume of submissions shows the depth of interest and engagement with this issue within our broader community, and its desire for meaningful action that irons out the potential kinks that could occur in the implementation of any legislation or policy that is delivered.

Overall, about 98 per cent of survey respondents supported our policy objectives set out in the paper to reduce plastic litter, reduce microplastics, eliminate harmful chemicals from plastic items and harmonise approaches to dealing with plastic pollution across Australia. Some 94 per cent of survey respondents supported the phasing out of the release of any number of lighter-than-air balloons, and 93 per cent supported phasing out the supply of plastic balloon accessory items. I appreciate and acknowledge that balloon litter causes significant harm to the environment and our wildlife. I also acknowledge that releasing lighter-than-air balloons can be a meaningful way to mark a significant life event, such as a birthday or funeral. But as the member for Newtown pointed out, there are other ways we can celebrate those events in our communities and our lives. These feel-good, fleeting acts can inflict long-lasting and potentially harmful consequences on the environment and wildlife.

However, I am quite mindful that divorcing policy and legislation from implementation can sometimes lead to negative or unintended consequences. The member for Newtown pointed out circumstances such as the way we are dealing with the recycling of soft plastics and the implementation of food organics and garden organics—FOGO—collection, which I was a fierce advocate for as part of my local council. I know it has been frustrating to see the delays on that. I attribute those delays to not paying enough attention to the process and the implementation of policy. Whilst we have a motivation and a desire to see change, not holistically looking at the process and planning it out to ensure we get it right at the first go can lead to delays in the passing or implementation of legislation.

As I have said, the member for Balmain and the member for Newtown—along with many other members of this House—do not disagree on the issue. However, my focus is on how we tackle the next steps, and my understanding is that the EPA will be coming out with a paper and a plan regarding those. Unfortunately, that is why I cannot support this bill. I look forward to working with the member for Balmain to look at what might come from this.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:43):** I am happy to support my colleague the member for Balmain and her excellent legislation that we debate today, the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. I have been in this Chamber long enough now to hear the language of postponement and the euphemisms that surround it. I urge the minority Labor Government to please be bold. Anyone watching its Federal counterpart would note the treading water—I am not suggesting those opposite are treading water—and a level of pushing things down the line to avoid doing something bold. Former Premier Dominic Perrottet talked about having bold ideas in his valedictory speech; I encourage those opposite to have one.



While I am an Australian citizen, I am also still an American citizen. I have said it many times before, but when I am in the United States I do not see plastic in any blue state. You could not even bribe anyone to get plastic if you wanted it. Plastic just does not exist in blue states in the United States. We are so far behind in terms of banning single-use plastics, and the bill before the House regarding balloons is just one piece. Members only need to look around the world to see that we are an outlier. The idea that the sky will fall, that it is the end of birthday parties and that there will be unforeseen consequences is absolute nonsense. Government members could support the bill today and make a huge difference to our environment. It is a small step towards reducing our plastic pollution. Releasing balloons pollutes our oceans and kills our precious marine wildlife.

I give a massive shout-out to some of the incredible plastic-free warriors in my electorate. Sasha Mainsbridge of Mullum Cares has done a plastic-free month every year I have been in office. I also give a shout-out to Plastic Free Byron and Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue. I have seen turtles and birds with plastic inside them, which is the sort of thing you never unsee. I give a shout-out to Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital, Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital, Positive Change 4 Marine Life and countless others. It is interesting to note that the owner of one of the balloon businesses in my electorate supports this ban. Lily Boyau from Bang Bang Balloons in Byron Bay says her business is "as eco-friendly as possible" and that there are other locations in which balloons could be responsibly used. She states:

This ban should be the way of the future because nobody needs to throw balloons into the environment for any reason ...

We don't support helium balloons being released anywhere.

When I hear that support of this ban from a business that is literally called Bang Bang Balloons, I think we can safely say we are on the right path. This amendment would bring New South Wales in line with other States and Territories in Australia and, as I say, many countries and states around the world in reducing the impact of plastics on our natural environment. Members have also heard a lot lately about forever chemicals and how many things we use on a daily basis are making us sick. No-one in this Chamber doubts for a second that these plastics are killing our marine life and that it absolutely has to end. We really do not understand those supposed "unforeseen outcomes" of banning these balloons. Let us be clear: We are not banning balloons. This bill amends the existing offence of releasing lighter-than-air balloons into the air by extending its application to one or more balloons rather than the current restriction of 20 or more.

According to a lead paper from the CSIRO, balloons or balloon fragments were the marine debris most likely to cause mortality and killed almost one in five of the seabirds that ingested them. Similar research into plastic ingestion by sea turtles has found that while it appears that hard plastic fragments may pass quickly through the gut, soft plastics are more likely to become compacted and cause fatal obstructions. As a member with what I would argue is one of the most beautiful coastal electorates in the State and as an avid ocean swimmer who swims across Byron Bay, I see lots of turtles, dolphins and, indeed, the occasional shark. When we consider the statistics of how much plastic is in every square metre of the ocean, combined with the effects of global warming, the outcome on our precious marine ecosystems is horrendous.

When it comes to the climate and the environment, I honestly feel like I am in a time warp where I say the same things over and over in this Chamber. No disrespect, but the conversation has not changed, whoever is in government, when it comes to taking a bold stand. It is absolute nonsense that the Government needs any more information. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] recognises the significant harm caused by balloon litter and is proposing to phase out the use of helium balloons entirely as well as accessory items such as plastic balloon sticks and ties. That is included in the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper. The Government has the research on its books now, but no time frame has been given and the Government, as we heard in this debate, has not indicated when it will implement the reform.

We understand that the Government does not usually support private members' bills and that it wants to introduce its own. Knock yourself out, but do it really soon. I do not even want to start on the issues that we face in some major ecosystems along our coast as it is now. We know that balloon litter is 32 more times likely to kill marine animals than hard plastics. The bill is a really easy environmental stand that the Government can take and that it has already been advised on by its own EPA. People who do not live along the coast might think there is no way that balloons become ocean debris, but there is strong evidence to suggest otherwise. The Australian Marine Debris Initiative has documented several examples showing how quickly balloons can travel and become litter. It found that balloons released in Albury with the city council logo on them, as the member for Balmain talked about in her second reading speech, washed up on a beach in Bermagui 300 kilometres away. It is predicted that by 2050 we will have more plastic in the ocean than fish. That also goes to the heart of the fact that anyone who is eating fish is eating plastic these days.

The bill is an easy one. The Government has the evidence. The Greens would have loved to work with the Government. The member for Balmain would have happily said, "If you're going to deliver this, we'll back you

to the hilt." But unfortunately, that is not where we find ourselves today. It is incredibly disappointing. I know that there are Government members who absolutely would like to support the bill. In their caucus they would be talking about the issue because it is obvious; it can be done. The Government should look to other jurisdictions and bring New South Wales into line with other States and Territories. This bill is just a small part of the issue. As the member for Newtown said, we will take the piecemeal approach because, for goodness sake, we cannot wait. Perfection is the enemy of the good. Let us ban it, get on with it and save our marine species.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:52):** I contribute to debate on the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. I share the concerns of the member for Balmain, the member for Newtown and the member for Ballina, but I do not support the bill because the New South Wales Government is progressing action now to address unnecessary and problematic plastics, including lighter-than-air balloon releases. We agree with the sentiment, but we need wide consultation with the community, industry, businesses and local government. Plastic items are ever present in our day-to-day lives. Action to tackle unnecessary and problematic plastics and reduce plastic waste will have far-reaching impacts on members of the community and businesses in New South Wales. I do not support the bill because we need a considered, methodical and holistic approach. That is what is needed to ensure we consider the views of the public and key stakeholders, weigh our options carefully and take action to deliver the best outcomes for the environment, communities and businesses in New South Wales.

To that end, in October 2023 the Minister for the Environment released the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* issues paper seeking feedback from the people of New South Wales on action targeting problematic and unnecessary plastic items. That included potential action to phase out the release of any number of lighter-than-air balloon releases. After a 14-week consultation period, the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] received over 5,000 submissions on the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper, which is evidence of the level of public interest on the issue of unnecessary and problematic plastics. The EPA is now reviewing the feedback received and has been working closely with environmental, industry, business and government stakeholders to help inform our next steps on the problem of plastics.

We are on the same page. The New South Wales Government intends to release an action paper for further public consultation in the coming months with more detailed proposed actions, including in relation to lighter-than-air balloon releases. By including action on lighter-than-air balloon releases as part of the broader consultative approach to addressing problematic plastic items, we can be considered in the way we tackle balloons and balloon-related litter. That means considering the impacts of any action on the environment as well as on the community and on businesses. That is critical to designing the regulations that we need that will be fair and effective. It will provide the comprehensive reforms that have been mentioned earlier.

For example, when balloons are released into the environment, they can pose significant risks to the environment and to wildlife, and we have all seen those horrific photos. We know that balloons have had a place at birthday parties and sorrow-filled events. We need to listen to the perspectives of the public and other stakeholders to work through these issues and to get the balance right to avoid unintended consequences and deliver the best outcomes we can for the environment, communities and businesses. We are taking the time to engage with the community, stakeholders, industry and businesses to ensure that those who are impacted can understand the proposed changes and are supported to transition towards more sustainable alternatives to balloon releases. Successful implementation of a new regulation requires businesses and the community to be aware, be engaged and support it.

In contrast, the proposed bill offers a standalone type of approach to regulating the release of lighter-than-air balloons. That does not take these ongoing consultative processes into account and nor does it offer any support for the community or businesses that need to change their ways. The Government believes thorough public engagement is the best way to deliver fair and effective regulation. That is why I do not support the bill. I firmly thank the member for Balmain for her passion for, and commitment to, the environment, which the Government and I share. We look forward to working with her on the next steps.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:58):** I do not support the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. The New South Wales Government is committed to reducing the environmental impacts of unnecessary and problematic plastics, including those caused by balloon releases and balloon-related items that end up as litter. Significant progress has already been made to reduce the harm caused by plastic items like lighter-than-air balloons in the environment. In New South Wales it is currently an offence to release 20 or more lighter-than-air balloons at the same time under the Protection of the Environment (Operations) Act 1997, with a penalty of \$1,000 for individuals or corporations. Releasing 100 or more balloons is treated more seriously, with on-the-spot fines and penalties ranging from \$3,630 to \$6,050 applying throughout New South Wales.

On 29 October 2023 the Minister for the Environment released the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* discussion paper. The paper sought stakeholders' views on a proposed phase-out of any number of lighter-than-air balloon releases as well as plastic balloon accessories items that are often littered, such as sticks, clips and ties. As I walk around Parramatta Park and other local parks, I often see the remnants of balloons and little bits of litter, particularly the sticks and little catches at the end of balloons. This form of litter needs to be addressed. I therefore welcome the news that the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] is currently reviewing the feedback received on the paper and has been working closely with stakeholders to help inform our next steps on problem plastics.

It is also pleasing that the EPA is providing online materials and guidance to the community to encourage using alternatives to releasing lighter-than-air balloons like light displays, bubbles, music, kites or planting native flora. The material includes a factsheet and posters aimed at minimising balloon releases, which are available on the website. I support any further efforts to make this information more available, including access in a wide range of languages to make it more accessible across our communities. Local and State governments can work together more closely to make people more aware of the environmental impact that balloons have and what the fines are for using balloons.

To address the issue of balloons, the New South Wales Government intends to release an action paper in the coming months with more detailed proposed actions, including lighter-than-air balloon releases. The paper will be informed by over 5,000 survey responses and written submissions during public consultation on the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper. Of the survey respondents, 98 per cent supported the policy objectives set out in the paper to reduce plastic litter and microplastics, eliminate harmful chemicals from plastic items and harmonise approaches to dealing with plastic pollution across Australia; 94 per cent supported phasing out the release of lighter-than-air balloons; and 93 per cent supported phasing out the supply of plastic balloon accessory items. The EPA plans to publish a consultation summary in the coming months.

The New South Wales Government has a comprehensive and systemic approach to address unnecessary or problematic plastics. In my local area many stakeholders and organisations do a lot of good work in environmental protection. We have places like Plucktastic, the Parramatta River Catchment Group, the Friends of Toongabbie Creek and the City of Parramatta Council with its liveable city programs. Many others also do incredible work. Their job is not just to advocate for change, which they do on a regular basis to all levels of government, but also to take action. I have had the privilege of being out with them cleaning up around the shoreline of the Parramatta River and cleaning up around Toongabbie Creek. People who have been there know how disappointing it is to see what is in our waterways and up on the banks. Even though balloons and fragments of balloon accessories end up in our waterways, the reality is so much more than that.

That is why the Government is focused on a comprehensive approach that is not piecemeal. It is not focused on dealing with one plastic issue at a time. It wants to ensure that all of the issues are encompassed as one. Balloon litter causes significant harm to the environment and to our wildlife. I acknowledge that many people still enjoy releasing balloons for birthdays and also for the increasingly popular gender reveals. I look on in horror when I see that happening on social media. I think many of us would respond in a similar way. We know from the responses of the surveys that have been conducted by the EPA that the community is obviously very concerned about this activity. We do not want to take the fun out of people's lives, but we want to make sure that we are not affecting their lives into the future or our wildlife. By including lighter-than-air balloon releases as part of a broad and comprehensive approach to address problematic plastic items, we can methodically consider all the feedback we have received and weigh up our options to ensure the action we take delivers the best outcomes for the environment, communities and businesses in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government will release an action paper in the coming months with more detailed proposed actions on a range of single-use, unnecessary and problematic plastic items, including lighter-than-air balloon releases and plastic balloon accessory items. The paper will be informed by the feedback received by the EPA during its consultation on the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper. The bill duplicates work already underway, but only insofar as it relates to lighter-than-air balloon releases. Passing the bill will undermine the progress of the New South Wales Government in tackling highly littered plastic items, as well as the views shared by members of the community, industry, businesses and other stakeholders on the next steps to address plastic litter. I do not support the bill.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:05):** I think we should ban all balloons as soon as humanly possible. I am not scared of many things but I do have a bit of globophobia. My children used to terrorise me with balloons, and I banned them from children's parties a long time ago. I can't ban them soon enough! Regarding the bill, the reality is that the Labor Party committed long ago to reducing plastics overall, particularly plastics that get into our marine environment. That is why the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, has taken a holistic approach. She has consulted with stakeholders. I take exception to the comment made by the member for Newtown

that the Labor Party says one thing but does another. I have been in Parliament for 17 years and the Hon. Penny Sharpe has been here the whole time. I have to say, I sometimes roll my eyes when I hear Penny carrying on about plastic bags and straws, and the bills that she has introduced in the other place to ban them.

From 2019 she single-handedly drove the ban plastic bill in the upper House. It was the Government's commitment, but Penny was talking about banning plastics long before that. Despite what some members from other parties might say, the reality is that the Labor Party has had a long commitment to preserving the environment. That commitment was not invented just yesterday. Looking back, we can see that the Wran-Ferguson Government made significant changes. People wanted to build on sites all along the Sydney foreshore, like the Bondi to Bronte walk, but they were protected by Jack Ferguson. Labor has always been committed to protecting our coastlines and improving our water systems to preserve marine life. That is why we constantly invest in the environment.

But we will not do it by window-dressing the cause and creating sound bites that state we will ban balloons. We want to ban all plastics that impact our environment. We have set targets to reduce plastics by 60 per cent by 2050. The Hon. Penny Sharpe has a long history of advocacy in this area and she is trying to do just that. She is taking a holistic approach to bring all communities along with her to help them understand how important it is for our environment to reduce plastic use. One Opposition member said, "People who do not live in coastal areas probably do not understand." We do not live under rocks—of course we understand the impacts. Some of us have diverse communities and some of us have people who struggle to understand. But when the law changes, we want our community to come with us and to understand exactly what is going on. That is the approach the Hon. Penny Sharpe has taken when dealing with plastics. She has done that from the day she entered this Parliament.

We can look back on the environment movement and see what the Labor Party has contributed. Delcia Kite came into the Parliament in the 1970s and spoke about climate change. Nobody was talking about that in the 1970s, but the Labor Party was. I know that he is not everybody's favourite person, but I encourage members to look up Graham Richardson and what happened in the Daintree. Members can laugh, but Graham Richardson was brave when he went to Ravenshoe in Far North Queensland and heritage listed the Daintree. He was assaulted by the timber workers he spoke to, while the police stood back and did nothing. The then member for Leichhardt got him out at that time. The Labor Party has always fought for protection.

We will not put together piecemeal legislation. We will take a holistic approach that will make a huge difference to our community. We will do that through Minister Sharpe's process because she has worked in this space for a long time and is committed to it. That is no reflection on the member for Balmain, who is also very committed. We should get rid of balloons—globophobia—and a lot of other things, including all plastic that harms our sea life. We will do that as a job lot and encourage an understanding within the community that this is how it is going to be. Some 97 per cent of respondents agreed with this. We will not do a piecemeal approach; we will do it properly. The Minister is not a newbie to this matter. She has been working on this for a long time. Nobody is more committed to removing plastics from the environment than the Minister for the Environment in the other place.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:11):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. I acknowledge the member for Balmain for bringing the bill before the House today and providing us with the opportunity to talk about the protection of our environment, which is special to most of us in this place. I acknowledge the passion of the member for Balmain and her commitment to this issue. While we do not support the bill, that is not a reflection on the member for Balmain; it is a reflection on the work that is already underway, as I am advised by the Minister's office. It is important for me to acknowledge that and the member for Balmain. As stated by my colleague the member for Auburn, Minister Sharpe has done a lot of work on this matter. She has had an enduring passion over many years for the protection of the environment. She has led the charge on many environmental issues, particularly plastic bags. I give her credit for that passion.

It is important to note that the Government is committed to reducing the environmental impacts of unnecessary and problematic plastics. Steps have been put in place already because we know that plastics harm the environment in many ways. They harm habitats, particularly in waterways, on the seaside and in the ocean. In my electorate I am about 40 minutes from the ocean via Appin Road, but we have the Nepean River and the Georges River. Around those river inlets are very important species of wildlife, including our koalas, which we cherish and love so dearly in Campbelltown, as the member for Balmain knows.

I acknowledge our local Greens member, who is also active in this space. Young Jayden is giving it a good crack and doing a great job as an advocate for The Greens. Not much further south is platypus habitat. I am aware of the importance of environmental protections against plastics and anything that can harm the environment and, by extension, our valued wildlife. If we do not take action now, the environment will be destroyed for the future and forever. When it comes to environmental protection and preservation, we must learn from the past. While we

must not focus on the rear-view mirror, we must glimpse back to see what we did in years gone by to help make changes for the future. If we do not make changes, then my children and my grandchildren and so on will not be able to enjoy the good lifestyle that we have been able to enjoy. That is the most important thing to note.

It is vital to find a balance between environmental protection and population growth, which my electorate has been experiencing for some years and will continue to experience for many years to come. The preservation of environment and habitat must be as much of a priority as private sector profits from homes built in green space areas. With the indulgence of the House, I note that I am a massive supporter of urban development and density around train stations in Campbelltown. Building homes near train stations means we do not have to bulldoze trees and green space. That is the reality. That is the position of Campbelltown City Council, which is fortunately unanimous. The Greens have championed that agenda in Campbelltown and the south-west. I commend The Greens and appreciate their support for many of my positions on urban development over the years.

I am advised that the Government has already started a comprehensive and systemic process to address unnecessary or problem plastics. That is set out in the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper, which includes a proposal to phase out any number of lighter-than-air balloon releases as well as plastic balloon accessory items that are often littered, such as sticks, clips and ties. On 29 October last year the New South Wales Government released the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper for a 14-week public consultation. I am advised that the Environment Protection Authority is currently reviewing the feedback received on the paper and has been working closely with stakeholders to help inform the Government and council on the next steps and the way forward, which will, ultimately, address the matters in the bill before the House.

I am advised that Minister Sharpe has met with the member for Balmain to discuss these and other related matters, and is working closely with her. That is not only essential but also a really positive step. I thank Minister Sharpe. All of our Ministers are wonderful and engaging, but I cannot speak highly enough of Minister Sharpe and her work on the environment in my electorate, including the establishment of the Georges River Koala National Park, an investment of a quarter of a million dollars. But we know that into the future that will not be enough and we need to do more. We do not have a tick-and-flick approach to environmental sustainability or the Government's policies and positions. We must keep our foot on the accelerator, remain focused and keep our eye on the end prize, which is ultimately to find the balance between urban population growth and protecting our environment.

Everything increases with the increasing rate of urban population growth. It is not only the number of houses that increase with more people but also an increase in waste. The private sector, in cooperation with the Government, is examining some good innovations at the moment, and I truly welcome that. I have never claimed to be an expert on the solutions for environmental preservation and I have not always been able to implement everything that I have wanted to, either. But I always do my best with what I have at hand. I engage with my community, talk to stakeholders, take advice from experts and follow through with any actions I can take as an appropriate representative for the pursuit of environmental preservation.

I am also advised that the Government and the Minister are carefully considering the impacts of any proposed action on the environment, communities and businesses, and finding the balance when tackling the problem around plastics. That includes balloons and all other associated matter that comes with balloon usage. The reality is kids love their balloons, and we see them at parties and other places. We need to take a sensible approach and find a solution that provides a balance. It is an issue that we need to address, and the Government is taking appropriate steps.

I am also advised that in the period to 2019 government prevention programs contributed to a 43 per cent reduction in litter volumes. Obviously, that was before the time of this Government and was the result of work done by the previous Government. But environmental preservation and waste management is a major priority for Minister Sharpe and for the Government as a whole. Again I thank the member for Balmain for bringing the matter to the House for discussion and debate. It is important that we keep environmental protection matters on the agenda, and I respect the passion that the member has for the issue. I thank the House.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:20):** I acknowledge the member for Balmain and congratulate her on her work on the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024. Members will have different views on it, and it is important that we continue to work together until we get the environmental protection outcomes that this State absolutely deserves. Lighter-than-air balloons, also known as helium balloons, can travel vast distances and cause significant harm, especially to our waterways, our oceans and the wildlife that lives in and around those areas. The electorate of Shellharbour has numerous waterways that could be harmed by such balloons, including our beautiful beaches and our majestic Lake Illawarra. Protecting those natural assets from pollution, including discarded plastics, is a top priority of mine and always will be.

The Minns Labor Government is currently progressing action to address unnecessary and problematic plastics, including lighter-than-air balloon releases. That is being done in close consultation with the community and with industry, businesses and local government. The poor management of plastic items, which are ever present in our day-to-day lives, impacts us all. I have seen that firsthand whenever I walk the shores of Lake Illawarra, which is just around the corner from where I live—a few hundred metres, in fact. In her contribution, the member for Ballina spoke about the blue states in America, where even someone who wanted to would not be able to see any plastic at all. It would be great if the State of New South Wales could get to that point. We must tackle unnecessary and problematic plastics, and we must reduce plastic waste.

Plastic waste has far-reaching impacts on our communities and businesses and, more importantly, on our future generations, who are relying on us to do the right thing. We have all heard the saying "We have to leave the place in a better state than we found it in." At this point that is not happening, but I am confident that a Minns Labor Government will ensure it does happen. I again congratulate the member for Balmain on her work in this space. We need a considered, methodical and holistic approach to ensure that we consider the views of the public and other stakeholders. We need to weigh our options carefully, and we need to take the action that delivers the best outcomes for the environment, communities and businesses, and ensure that they will be not long lasting but forever lasting.

To that end, in October 2023 the Minister for the Environment released the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* issue paper, seeking feedback on action targeting problematic and unnecessary plastic items. That included potential action to phase out the release of any number of lighter-than-air balloon releases. I live in an area where I am surrounded by boundless natural beauty, which includes Killalea Regional Park. For 13 years members have heard me talk about ensuring the protection of Killalea Regional Park by stopping any further builds in it. Any building is one too many for me; I know that we need to fix some of the public toilets, which is a different issue. In that part of the world, we can swim in the ocean, turn around and see the same shoreline that our Indigenous brothers and sisters would have seen. That is what we need to protect.

Protecting the environment is about more than plastic waste; it is also about being extremely careful with infrastructure. Social media shows images of oceans that have turned into the biggest tips in the world, and that is a part of our world. It is important that we get this right, and the Minns Labor Government will continue to work carefully and methodically until we do. The Environment Protection Authority is now reviewing the feedback that has been received, and we have been working closely with environment, industry, business and government stakeholders to help inform ourselves about the next steps that must be taken.

By including action on lighter-than-air balloon releases as part of the broader consultative approach to addressing problematic plastic items, we can consider the way in which we tackle balloon and balloon-related litter. That means considering the impacts of any action on the environment, as well as on the community and on businesses, which is crucial to designing fair and effective regulations. Balloon releases pose significant risks to the environment and to wildlife. But they also have a role in important celebrations and sorrow-filled events, like funerals. We must listen to the perspectives of the public and other stakeholders to work through the issues to get the balance right. I note the comment of a previous speaker that it might be more appropriate to plant native trees and look for other ways of celebrating the events that inevitably will continue to happen. We must avoid unintended consequences and deliver the best outcomes for the environment, communities and businesses.

Taking the time to engage with the community, industry and businesses also ensures that those who are impacted understand what the proposed changes will be. Importantly, it will ensure that they are supported through the transition towards more sustainable alternatives to balloon releases. I look forward to seeing an end to balloon releases. Successful implementation of a new regulation requires businesses and the community to be aware, engaged and supported. In contrast, the bill's standalone approach to regulating the release of lighter-than-air balloons does not take those ongoing consultative processes into account, nor does it offer any support for the community or businesses. Thorough public engagement is the best way to deliver fair and effective regulation. Therefore, I will not be supporting the bill.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (13:27):** My brief contribution to debate on the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Balloons) Bill 2024 will be minute. I also acknowledge and recognise the member for Balmain for her passion and dedication in this particular area, and I thank her for bringing the bill to the House. Like many of the bills that come before the House, I acknowledge that sometimes it is just a matter of timing. I recognise that the Government, through the Environment Protection Authority, has had a feedback session on the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* paper. It is working closely with stakeholders and methodically going through the feedback that has been received to work out a comprehensive plan. In doing so, the Government is recognising that we need to bring the community with us.

I have had some prior experience with this issue. Penrith City Council was the first metropolitan council to put in place the food organics and garden organics—FOGO—system. That was back in 2010. We have come

a long way since then, but there were a lot of learnings along the way, including that there needed to be a comprehensive education program for community about how we would do that and what the benefits were. There was some pushback by community. In fact, we had to redo what we thought we had right in the first cut but, clearly, missed the mark on. We went back. We reconsidered what we were looking to do, refined it and put it in place. It has now been an exceptional program for 14 years.

The New South Wales Government wants to deal with the issue. No-one wants to see plastics in our waterways. The beautiful Nepean River is in my electorate. Balloons released by the community in the Campbelltown electorate flow into the Nepean River and down through our drinking water in the Warragamba Dam—because the river flows through there—and flushes over the dam and through our communities and all our water catchments and tributaries. We have lots of creeks in our area as well. The balloons then pass through the Hawkesbury and eventually flow out to sea. I absolutely agree that we need to deal with that in a very considered and comprehensive way.

I agree with the previous speaker, the member for Shellharbour, that balloons are released for celebrations and funerals, and I also agree we need more environmentally considered ways to commemorate or celebrate. I take on board that planting trees as a lasting tribute to people who may have passed or to celebrate a wedding or a significant birthday would be more environmentally friendly. We need to educate the community on that, otherwise it will fall over. The Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Minister in the other place, has been working on the issue for a considerable amount of time. I know the passion that she has for it, which the Parliamentary Secretary and member for Blue Mountains shares. I recognise her contribution to the debate. It is important because we do not do anything in isolation; everything we do has consequences and repercussions. We cannot take the environment for granted. We must be mindful of our children, our grandchildren and the wider communities that we represent. Unfortunately, I cannot support the bill in its current form. I look forward to when it comes back to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The time allocated for debate has expired. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

### *Motions*

#### **BACK TO SCHOOL VOUCHERS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:29):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Government for axing the popular Back to School vouchers.
- (2) Notes that the former Government introduced the Back to School vouchers to help families purchase school supplies and provide cost-of-living support.
- (3) Calls on the Government to reinstate this vital program to ease cost-of-living pressures for families in the electorate of Oatley.

This is a huge issue not only in Oatley but right across New South Wales. There are some things that governments should not do in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and that includes cutting cost-of-living measures. All members in this place are here for one very important reason: We are here because the people in our communities have entrusted us to represent their views, concerns and needs in this place. Indeed, the needs of local residents and working families in my electorate drive me each and every day to come into this place, fight for them, represent them and speak on behalf of them. Every day that I am out and about in my local area, whether it is at train stations in the morning, during shopping centre visits, out doorknocking or at listening posts, the single biggest issue that is troubling local families is the cost of living.

The cost of living is the current defining issue of many people's lives, whether it is the extra zeros that are added to the end of our weekly grocery bill or the rising costs of mortgages, energy and child care. We all know because we hear it each and every day in our communities. Local families are doing it really tough. Life is already very hard. Whether it is rushing to get kids to school on time or waiting on the train platform because someone forgot to open the metro line, the people of New South Wales should not need to worry about whether they will have to sacrifice or go without because they simply cannot afford it. That is why the decision to cut back the vital Back to School vouchers was so shameful and cruel.

Many members who are parents would know that raising kids is not easy, and it is certainly not cheap. From food to clothing, housing supports, extracurricular activities, child care and school supplies, costs seem endless and enormous. In fact, figures published by the Australian Institute of Family Studies show that the weekly cost of raising a child ranges between \$140 and \$170 per child, per week, and it is climbing. That is why it was so astonishing that during this cost-of-living crisis, the New South Wales Labor Government has cut the only support measure that is targeted towards helping parents with the cost of schooling. In moving the motion before

the House, I hope to demonstrate to the people of New South Wales that at least members on this side of the Chamber understand their challenges, and we are fighting for them each and every day.

The Back to School vouchers were introduced by the former Liberal-Nationals Government because even then we knew that families were doing it tough and schooling costs were a significant drain on the family budget. That is why ripping away \$150 per child from local families is so cruel. During a time when families need help the most, why take \$150 away from our kids' education, of all things? Some 3.4 million Back to School vouchers were redeemed in this State before the scheme was slashed by the Government, highlighting the ridiculous absurdity of its decision to axe them. Millions of families across New South Wales, including in my electorate, in Drummoyne, in Heathcote, in Campbelltown, in Leppington, in Riverstone and in Liverpool—even in the electorate of the member for Liverpool—are now missing out on the \$150 to go towards shoes, stationary, backpacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, books, laptops and much more, all of which are necessary and expensive when they are added up together.

Schoolkids should not have to go to school with holes in their shoes, old backpacks or broken laptops due to the heartlessness of this Government. Community anger at this decision is clear. In my electorate we have received hundreds of calls and emails from mums and dads who are furious about the cuts. Our petition has received over 700 signatures from angry working families and parents right across my community. Wherever I go throughout my electorate, this issue is brought up time and again, because it is such an important issue. In the middle of a crisis, Government members have cut one of the many rebates that working families rely on. Our kids deserve better than what the Government is offering them. Cutting the Back to School vouchers is just another cruel cut from this Government. Families are already missing out on vital cost-of-living support through Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers—all these vouchers were cut, slashed and burnt by the Government. This is just another cut by the Government. When times are tough, members of the Opposition are all on the side of working families.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (14:36):** The Government will not support the motion. I will point out a couple of very important things. As a former teacher I have the experience to talk about this very important topic. Good educational outcomes are not about having things. In 2003 famous educational speaker John Hattie said:

... the focus is to have a powerful effect on achievement, and this is where excellent teachers come to the fore – as such excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on achievement.

Let us unpack that for a minute. The single most powerful influence on achievement for a student is a teacher. We know that over the 12 years of the Liberal-Nationals Government, teachers were undermined, under-respected and underpaid; they were overworked, overstressed and leaving in droves. Thousands of classes were being covered by a very small number of teachers. In fact, teacher vacancies reached the highest record ever of 3,220 in November 2022, and resignations were at record highs. For the first time in history, resignations outstripped retirements. We have never seen that before. Most alarmingly, there were resignations from early-career teachers. These people came to teaching bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and full of ideas about what their wonderful classroom would be like but, because they were undermined and underpaid, they left in droves. In fact, one day when I was out doorknocking I spoke to a young lady in Currans Hill. She opened the door and said, "I was a teacher," to which I said, "I was also a teacher."

**Mr Rory Amon:** Why do you hate working families?

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** I am so pleased that the member walked in. I really look forward to talking to him. I love being told about what it is like to be a working mum! The young lady said to me, "I think it is really interesting that this is your way out of teaching, because we all know that every teacher is looking for a way out." That is absolutely diabolical. That is what 12 years of being completely under-respected had done. We were losing teachers at a rate of knots. Since we formed government, we have put a record \$27.9 billion into the education budget, more than at any time under the former Liberal-Nationals Government. We have had an investment into what is so—

**Mr Matt Cross:** Point of order: My point of order is about relevance. We have given the member for Camden a lot of latitude. The motion is clearly about vouchers. I ask that the member be brought back to the leave of the motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** There is no point of order. The member for Camden will continue.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** We have also wanted to look at cost of living for everybody, not only people with children. Let us be honest. The cost of living does not choose to affect someone because they have children or not. The cost of living affects everyone, regardless. The cost-of-living crisis is fixed in one of two ways. Either



we can hand out money to a select few groups, or we can lift the wages of all the employees of the Government, which is what we have done, starting with removing the wage cap, which has meant that each different group can negotiate for its own pay rise, which helps to ease the cost-of-living crisis. This has resulted in the biggest pay rise in a generation for the 95,000 public schoolteachers in New South Wales. The Liberals and The Nationals have been against this from the start. In fact, they are still against it. They do not want it and have talked about rolling it back.

One of the most important things we can have in front of our children is not a new pair of shoes or the latest backpack. It is not any amount of stuff. What is important for our students are teachers. Another member said to me earlier today that a good teacher can teach under a tree, with one pencil. That is what a good teacher does, and some of our teachers do that every day. Teachers all over New South Wales are providing school supplies for their students. If students need those things, no teacher will stop until they have them. Students have come to schools in dirty uniforms because something happened at home over the weekend. I know of teachers who have given them somewhere to change, taken the clothes into the school laundry, washed and ironed the uniform and put it back on the students. That is what teachers do. We do not allow students to go without.

It is also important that we have made temporary teachers and support staff members permanent. That allows teachers to do things like take out a loan because they know what they will be doing next year. When we came to government there were 20 per cent more teacher vacancies than there are now. The one thing that helps our students more than anything else is having an experienced, qualified teacher at the front of the room—not buying more stuff. We have ensured 20 per cent fewer teacher vacancies than at the beginning of March 2023. We have expanded the Foodbank school breakfast program because students having food in their stomachs when they come to school massively affects their learning. If their stomachs are full, they are ready to go and they can learn. It is important that we highlight the hypocrisy of the former Government not funding something and then blaming us for it not being funded. It was clearly stated that the Back to School vouchers expired at the beginning of 2023. It was outlined everywhere on the website. That is why we do not support this motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Before I call the member for Davidson, I welcome Councillor Dr George Greiss, the Mayor of Campbelltown, who is in the advisers area to my right.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (14:43):** On behalf of the House, I thank the member for Oatley for turning up to move this motion. Last private members' day I think about 10 motions were postponed because members did not turn up. If anyone knows how to support families and their communities, it is "Hooray for Coure", who continually upsets the Labor Party by getting re-elected. I want to go back in time to when back-to-school supports were introduced. An article from 1 February 2024, written by Michael Easson, was about the Treasurer who delivered nine balanced budgets and the Olympics. I am not talking about Daniel Mookhey. We know he will not do that. I am talking about Michael Egan. The article said that the back-to-school bonus that Premier Unsworth tried to introduce in 1987 and was resisted in Cabinet was then introduced by Egan with little fanfare in 1995, in his first budget. Where did the back-to-school vouchers come from? They came from Michael Egan.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Point of order: We are almost halfway into the speech, and the member has only just mentioned school vouchers.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** There is no point of order.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** It is astonishing that the Labor Party is taking a point of order while I am thanking a former Labor Treasurer. That says quite a bit. Michael Egan was passionate about being chair of the New South Wales waste watch committee, and I am proud to continue his strong legacy. My mother appreciated the back-to-school bonus from the Carr Government. That meant I could get my school shoes that year. The Back to School voucher is about supporting families with their cost of living, whether that includes shoes—like it did for me—textbooks, school bags or even stationery. Who else in this House likes stationery? I know 28,000 reasons why the education Minister sports lots of stationery. The \$28,000 she spent on it in the last financial year is enough for 500 vouchers.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the member for Davidson wishes to attack the education Minister, he must do so by way of substantive motion. His comments are out of order. He should be asked to withdraw them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism has asked the member to withdraw his comments. Will the member for Davidson withdraw?

**Mr MATT CROSS:** No. I am talking about fact. I find it fascinating that certain members of this House are defending the cutting of these vouchers. Some 3.5 million vouchers were claimed under the previous Government. How many vouchers did the Camden electorate claim?

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** How many?

**Mr MATT CROSS:** Some 73,000 vouchers. What is the two-party preferred margin in Camden? It is 2,835. Government members should not take the Premier's office's word when they come to this place. I see that the member for Liverpool is in the Chamber. Some 113,000 vouchers— [*Time expired.*]

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:47):** I am delighted to briefly contribute some sense and facts to debate on the motion. It is no wonder that those opposite do not like the good education Minister. The simple reason is that the education Minister has been investing her time in fixing the damage they did. Mussolini in 1945 had more friends than they do in the education system. The reality is that they did not fund the vouchers. If they believe in them so much—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat while I hear the point of order.

**Mr Mark Coure:** I ask that the member withdraw that comment. I also take a point of order on relevance. The member has not mentioned vouchers at all in almost the last minute.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Will the member for Campbelltown withdraw his comment?

**Mr GREG WARREN:** No. The vouchers were not funded. They were a one-off. If Opposition members believe in the scheme so strongly, why did they not fund it? They never put it in the budget. The scheme was unfunded. The reality is that we are talking about education funding. I will defend the education Minister not because she is my friend and colleague but because of the effort she puts in to revitalise the education system and put students at the forefront of the Government's agenda, something that Opposition members failed to do during their 12 years of tyranny, which we all had to live through. For more than a decade, no group was punished more than the students at our schools.

The Government is investing a record \$27.9 billion in the education budget. That is more than at any time under the former Liberal-Nationals Government. This Labor Government is investing in 100 new public preschools. There is groundbreaking and historical investment because we now have an education Minister who does what good education Ministers do: supports the education system. That is a foreign concept to Opposition members. The former Government imposed tyranny and damage on our students and staff. Teachers were fleeing the tyranny of Liberal governance to the prosperous lands of Victoria and Queensland—social democracies under Labor governments that ensure students are getting the support they need.

After 12 years of Liberal tyranny, there was hope in sight. Like Joan of Arc herself, Prudence Car came in to rescue all our students and teachers. She is revitalising the education system to make it fit for purpose and modernised. She is giving children the best opportunity to get the best education that they need and deserve. Unfortunately, Opposition members struggle with the facts. We know and they know that they did not fund the vouchers. It is as simple as that. If the former Government believed in the program, it would have funded it. This is political opportunism at its greatest, all at the expense of our students. This Government has invested record funding in the little over a year that it has been in government. There is so much more to do. We on this side are going to keep doing what is right to support our students, something the former Government never did.

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (14:51):** I thank my good friend the member for Oatley for all his hard work in representing his community. He is a great member. Members are elected to represent the people of our electorates and the people of New South Wales. I am not sure what Labor members are hearing on the ground, but quite clearly it is not about the need for more cost-of-living relief. To be honest, I do not know what they are hearing if it is not about the cost of living. Whilst young families on dual incomes are struggling to get by, the Minns Labor Government made the gutless decision to axe the popular Back to School voucher program introduced by the former Coalition Government. Many families in my electorate and south-west Sydney struggle to buy school uniforms and stationery at the start of the school year. Research shows that families in the Liverpool local government area are one of the communities most vulnerable to mortgage stress. Temporary Speaker, I ask that I be heard in silence.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! Members will cease interjecting. I am struggling to hear the contribution of the member for Holsworthy. Members will be respectful.

**Mrs TINA AYYAD:** Research shows that families in the Liverpool local government area are one of the communities most vulnerable to mortgage stress. It is up to the Government to implement targeted financial support measures to take the burden off those who need the most help. Yet the Labor Government has cut the Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers, despite claiming to be the party of the working class. These

programs were designed to encourage physical activity and creativity among our youth, and to promote a healthy and well-rounded development. But actions speak louder than words. The decisions being made by this Labor Government are hurting the very people it claims to champion.

More than 3.4 million vouchers have been redeemed since the program's inception. But this is not just about statistics or reports; these are real families, real children and real struggles. The people of south-west Sydney deserve better. They deserve a government that listens and acts in their best interest. They deserve leaders who will fight for them and provide the support they need to thrive. Put simply, this Labor Government is ripping \$150 out of every child's education every year in our State. That is on top of the existing Labor Government cuts to education in this State, particularly in Holsworthy, where not a single public primary or high school received funding for upgrades in the 2024-25 State Budget.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! The member for Holsworthy will resume her seat while I hear the point of order from the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** In response to a request from the member for Holsworthy, the Temporary Speaker asked members to listen in silence. Government members have adhered to that request, but I am finding it difficult to hear the member for Holsworthy because there is so much chatter coming from the Opposition front bench.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** There is no point of order. I remind members to be respectful.

**Mrs TINA AYYAD:** Opposition members can credibly claim that we are trying to support families with cost-of-living pressures. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:55):** I reluctantly contribute to debate on the motion moved by the member for Oatley, because this motion is founded on dishonesty and deceit. I like to think this House has a better model of governance than what is happening in America, but Trump-style politics are being played today. It is very, very disappointing. I really feel for the newer members of Parliament who are being led by the nose down towards the MAGA swamp. We do not have to go there.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Point of order: I know the Opposition is usually a puppet show, but I do not think it is appropriate to have Healthy Harold the giraffe in the Chamber. Props are not allowed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Leppington will resume his seat while I confer with the Clerk. I have been advised that the use of props while a member is speaking is not allowed. I ask the member for Terrigal to remove the prop from the Chamber. The member for Cessnock will continue his contribution.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I appreciate the Temporary Speaker for trying to bring some decorum to the House, because this motion does not. This motion is based on dishonesty and deceit. When members speak in support of the motion, they are being fundamentally dishonest with their communities about the budget and the funding that sits behind the voucher scheme. They are deliberately going out of their way to mislead their communities. But their communities are smarter than this. Opposition members need to start respecting just how intelligent their communities are. To help that along—because I know the member for Oatley will probably apologise for moving this motion in his speech in reply—I will quote what some significant members of the Liberal Party team had to say on these vouchers. When the vouchers were announced in June 2022 the then finance Minister, Damien Tudehope of the other place, stated it was:

a one-off \$150 back-to-school subsidy for every child undertaking primary or secondary school in 2023.

The significance of that statement is that this money was not baked into the budget on any ongoing basis. This money was in the form of grant funding, which means that it was borrowing to make it happen. In what year did it happen? It was the lead-up to the election year. That is how dishonest and deceitful this debate is. After 11½ years the former Government did not ever contemplate, initiate or, more importantly, bake into the budget this type of funding on a long-term, recurrent basis.

The financial truth of this set of vouchers is that those opposite took out a loan to fund this to try to get themselves re-elected. Then Treasurer Matt Kean also said that the program would run from 1 January 2023 until 30 June 2023. What happened in the middle of that six-month window? There was an election. The entire basis of this motion is dishonest and deceitful. To use the word of the lunatic in the United States of America, Donald Trump, it is a lie—a big, fat lie, because he is big on them. Sadly and unfortunately—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Oatley.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** Can we stop the clock?

**Mr Mark Coure:** There is no need to stop the clock. That word is unparliamentary. I ask the member for Cessnock to withdraw it. I notice that the member's time has expired.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** To the point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I will hear the point of order from the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Members will cease debating across the Chamber.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** A point of order is still being decided. I am trying to be helpful. The member for Cessnock used the word in the context of it being said by somebody else. He was not calling the member a liar.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Apology accepted.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! The member for Oatley will come to order. I note that the member's time has expired. However, the member for Oatley has asked the member for Cessnock to withdraw his comment. Does the member wish to withdraw?

**Mr Mark Coure:** Clayton, you're better than that. I have never used that word.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member's commentary is not needed.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Madam Temporary Speaker, as explained by the Minister, I was using the word in the context of quoting a human being called Donald Trump.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Will the member withdraw the comment?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** If that offends the member—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:02):** In reply: I accept the apology from the member for Cessnock. Little Sammy Coure is turning five tomorrow. Happy birthday, Sam Coure. He starts school next year at Mortdale Public School. He and his childcare classmates will be the first year for which this voucher does not exist. There will not be any help for millions of kids like little Sammy. Back to School vouchers were an essential cost-of-living measure for local families to help secure the household budget in the face of enormous financial difficulties. When it comes to schooling, no expense should be spared to ensure our kids have what they need to succeed in education. Parents should not have to decide between buying their kids new school uniforms or supplies—

**Mr Matt Cross:** Or stationery.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Or stationery. Labor is full of cuts, lies and broken promises.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**Mr MARK COURE:** The people of New South Wales deserve better than this mean and tricky Government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Oatley will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Cessnock.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I ask that you stop the clock.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I will hear the point of order from the member for Cessnock.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I am deeply, deeply hurt by the language of the member for Oatley, who suggested that somehow I have told a lie. I ask the member to withdraw his comment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Cessnock has asked the member for Oatley to withdraw his comment. Does the member wish to withdraw?

**Mr MARK COURE:** No. Apology accepted. Some 3.4 million Back to School vouchers were redeemed in this State before the scheme was slashed by those opposite, highlighting how ridiculous the decision to axe them was. Millions of families right across New South Wales are missing out on the \$150, which could go towards shoes, stationery, backpacks, lunch boxes and so forth. Schoolkids should not have to go to school with holes in their shoes, old backpacks or broken laptops thanks to the cruelty of this Government.

The cut to the Back to School vouchers is just another cruel, unnecessary cut the likes of which we have seen under this Government. Already thousands of families in my electorate and millions across New South Wales are missing out, with cuts to vital cost-of-living support like Active Kids, Creative Kids, or the First Lap vouchers that supported these families to encourage young kids to learn to swim. Thousands of families are now missing out on crucial financial lifelines that once were in place under the former Government.

Members on this side of the House will always stand up for families. We on this side of the House will always support young kids and working families across New South Wales. We will always fight for measures that take pressure off the household budget. When times are tough, members on this side of the House will always be on the side of families across New South Wales. The community has made it clear, not just in my electorate but in electorates right across New South Wales, that they want Back to School vouchers restored once and for all.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....39  
Noes .....48  
Majority.....9

#### AYES

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

Hannan, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
McGirr, J  
Moylan, B  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provost, G

Regan, M  
Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R (teller)

#### NOES

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

Hagarty, N (teller)  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

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

#### PAIRS

Taylor, M  
Wilson, F

McDermott, H  
Hornery, S

**Motion negatived.**

**TAFE NSW**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:15):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the vital role TAFE plays in equipping students with industry-aligned skills.
- (2) Recognises the need for industry-standard equipment to ensure that TAFE students graduate with job-ready skills.
- (3) Congratulates the Government on investing \$2 million to upgrade campus infrastructure and improve digital connectivity at Liverpool and Miller TAFEs.

I proudly bring forward this motion that seeks to acknowledge the essential role that TAFE NSW plays in providing high-quality education across our great State, equipping students with industry-aligned skills to support our economy. I am particularly proud of the TAFE that serves my local community of Liverpool. I acknowledge how important the TAFE is to communities across New South Wales and the important role that TAFE plays in training and delivering the workforce of tomorrow.

Operating in more than 150 metropolitan, regional and remote locations across the State, TAFE is dedicated to addressing the evolving needs of the community. That commitment is displayed in TAFE NSW's training, which is planned to reflect statewide and localised needs and aspirations of our communities. It offers a range of delivery modes, providing flexibility and choice to its students, including face-to-face, virtual, self-paced online and workplace-based training. TAFE NSW serves a wide range of learners, including students trying taster courses while still at school; post-school learners seeking technical, trade and specialist skills development; and people who want to update their skills or change careers, including refugees and new migrants.

The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that TAFE NSW campus infrastructure is maintained and updated to support industry-aligned training and to provide learners with the best possible learning experience. For example, in the previous financial year, the Liverpool campus at Bigge Street benefited from upgrades to essential amenities and improved signage. At the campus on College Street, electrical systems were updated, new flooring was installed and signage designs were developed. At the nearby Miller campus, security cameras were upgraded, heating ventilation and cooling systems were replaced, entry upgrades were made and new flooring was installed. That represented a significant investment, with the capital expenditure on the upgrades for both Liverpool and Miller campuses totalling over \$1.6 million.

The work continues, with proposed works at Miller campus for this financial year including the replacement of all fire indicator panels and detectors at a cost of around half a million dollars. We know that upgrading outdated digital infrastructure and devices directly improves the student experience, equipping students with industry-aligned skills. For years, many small businesses and other stakeholders in the community have been calling for that. To this end, more than half a million dollars was invested last year at Miller campus to replace approximately 219 devices. That investment included the provision of new 65-inch panels in most classrooms in the plumbing section, and approximately 100 new laptops. The Liverpool campus also received significant upgrades last financial year, with an investment of over half a million dollars replacing 187 devices.

I make special mention of the fact that TAFE NSW works very closely with local communities in Liverpool, addressing their specific skills needs and contributing to the development of vibrant and thriving places to live and work. By doing so, TAFE NSW is better positioned to deliver vocationally aligned education and training to support individuals in securing meaningful jobs and progressing their studies and careers; provide inclusive and accessible programs to support learners living in regional communities and experiencing disadvantage; and offer upskilling and reskilling programs to enable individuals, enterprises and communities to succeed in a rapidly changing world. It does that to create equitable educational opportunities that drive socially inclusive outcomes.

Liverpool TAFE has a significant presence in the hair and beauty sector and is a key provider of pathways to education and employment for the local community. Miller TAFE delivers training in the critical skills area of early childhood education and care. Students access local childcare centres to complete their work placements, which develops practical skills with potential employers and helps fill the skills need in our broader community. Both Liverpool and Miller TAFEs deliver a large Adult Migrant English Program, or AMEP. The AMEP is a Commonwealth-funded program that enables newly arrived migrants and refugees in the local community to access English, employment preparation and vocational education. That includes accessing vocational courses in their existing or chosen areas of occupation.

On a personal note, my parents accessed a similar program when they first arrived in Australia. It helped them to not only improve their English skills but also transition their skill sets and qualifications so they could use them in our local economy. They are so grateful that they had that opportunity. Over the past decade, many

migrants or refugees who have come to our community have not been able to access those opportunities, which is a great disappointment for them and a great loss to the broader New South Wales economy, unfortunately.

TAFE has established strong connections with all major community providers in the area to support students to settle successfully in Australia. I am pleased to advise the House that enrolments at TAFE in Liverpool and Miller in the past few years have grown under AMEP. In addition, TAFE facilitates career pathways in health for refugees and migrants, which is another area with a massive skills shortage. In collaboration with the local health district that covers Liverpool and Fairfield hospitals, and CORE Community Services, TAFE is delivering two tailored training programs to train participants as ward clerks or administration officers. I am advised that there will be eight job vacancies available for participants on completion of their courses. The programs commence this month and aim to help refugees and migrants within the Liverpool local government area to meet local skill needs and gaps identified by the local health district.

The students participating in the program have all been identified to have overseas experience in a health setting in their home countries. Those initiatives demonstrate the important role that TAFE plays in the local community. It also enables people with skills and qualifications from their home countries who want to contribute to our local economy through meaningful work to do that rather than to languish on unemployment lists or to feel like they are a burden on the broader community. That is a conversation that I have had with many migrants and refugees within my community. They want to access those opportunities and contribute to this great State and this great country.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:22):** I welcome the opportunity to speak to the motion. I thank the member for Liverpool for bringing it before the House. I reflect on the member's words and acknowledge her pride in her TAFE campuses. To the member's point, we have a lot to appreciate in our TAFE and the contribution that it makes to our community. In particular, I note the Adult Migrant English Program [AMEP] that the member said was offered at Liverpool TAFE campus. In Albury also we have an AMEP, and it does invaluable work. Recently I met with members of the Syrian refugee community, some of whom only recently located to Albury. They told me of the challenges that they are facing. Certainly, the Adult Migrant English Program is an important part of that.

The motion reminds me that earlier this year I was asked by the media about a press release put out by the Minister about how well the New South Wales Labor Government is doing with TAFE, particularly around capital funding. I remember that vividly because at the time I was standing outside the Institute of Applied Technology at Kingswood, which came about from an \$80 million investment made by the former New South Wales Coalition Government to bring together universities, TAFE and industry. It was opened in February 2024. I was visiting in March 2024 when the cameras rolled and the press asked me why Labor is rebuilding TAFE and about its investment in capital infrastructure—and there behind me was the brand new, \$80-million facility, of which the current Minister said:

I'm so pleased to see that learners across Australia have already enrolled in more than 10,000 micro-skills or micro-credentials delivered by The Institute of Applied Technology Construction.

The Institute will help upskill the next generation of construction workers, who will be able to continue to build the much-needed homes this state needs.

That infrastructure was funded and built by the then Coalition Government. I reflect on the member's words about the TAFE campuses at Liverpool and Miller. It is interesting—it is almost bucolic when we read about the Miller campus on TAFE NSW's website. It states:

Situated amongst the serene landscapes of Sydney's south-west ... campus is strategically located ... provides a tranquil learning environment while boasting accessibility.

It sounds quite bucolic. One can almost imagine the birds and the bees dictating some notes to me and doing a bit of research. I recognise that it is home to TAFE NSW's second and largest electrical pole farm in the State. It is a thin market, and it is important that we provide those educational opportunities. The facility is used by students to train in electrical supply, which is fantastic. It stems from a \$7.6 million investment in a carpentry, construction and electrical training facility that was opened at TAFE NSW Miller campus in 2019 by the former New South Wales Coalition Government.

Returning to the member's words about health and skills training in Liverpool, it is something that we very much agree on. There is something to be said about TAFE campuses collaborating with hospital precincts, and we need to look at that further and drive that collaboration. It is also important that we look at workplace-based learning. I draw members' attention to several articles around March 2022 when construction began on the \$790 million Liverpool Hospital redevelopment. At that time the Coalition Government invested in a skills and employment hub, one of the key components of the project. The then Minister Henskens said at the time:

Working in partnership with NSW Health, TAFE NSW and Liverpool City Council, the hub will offer construction pre-employment programs and Aboriginal employment initiatives to support people of all ages to acquire new skills for construction and health-related roles.

In that sense, I would like to again endorse the member's motion and thank her for bringing it to the House. I recognise the importance of investment in capital infrastructure, reflecting that the Miller and Liverpool campuses were significantly enhanced by the New South Wales Coalition Government during its term. That leads me to talk about investment and capital budget. The fact is, this year's capital budget is down on the former Coalition Government's 2022-23 capital budget for the second year in a row. In 2022-23 it was \$318.9 million. In 2023-24, the first Minns budget, it was \$237.2 million. In 2024-25, the second Minns budget, it was \$300.6 million. So two years down the track the Minns Government is still not meeting the record investments in capital that the Coalition Government made during its term of government.

Importantly, the 2024-25 budget is less than actuals for 2023-24, in particular for employee-related expenses. At the time, I wrote in my notes, "How is TAFE expected to meet this?" We now know the answer. TAFE is embarking on an organised restructure that will see the loss of up to 200 jobs. It is part of a sweeping organisational restructure. The Government is taking a knife to TAFE NSW at a time when the State is facing unprecedented challenges with skills shortages impacting on housing and productivity. I conclude by saying that I came across an article from 2015 that asked, "Is Liverpool TAFE haunted?" The article detailed how former FBI investigator Ben Hansen spent the night there to search for paranormal activity. Liverpool TAFE is haunted by a government that has taken a knife to it at a time when jobs are needed. That will impact on the ability to give support to students. It is an action we should condemn.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:29):** I am pleased to contribute to debate on the motion moved by the member for Liverpool regarding TAFE funding. TAFE—Technical and Further Education—plays a pivotal role in equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in industry. TAFE provides industry-aligned skills and the necessity of industry-standard equipment for ensuring job readiness. TAFE institutions are integral to our educational landscape, offering practical, hands-on training that is directly aligned with the needs of various industries.

I take the opportunity to make a few remarks about TAFE Mount Druitt. Mount Druitt is a predominantly trades-focused campus, delivering courses such as hospitality and commercial cookery, automotive panel and paint, engineering, electrotechnology, plumbing, hairdressing, barbering and beauty. Facilities at Mount Druitt include a training restaurant called Create, a long day care childcare centre, and hair and beauty services. These are all open to the general public. In the last financial year, fire safety upgrades were undertaken, along with Zip hot water system upgrades, heating ventilation and cooling unit replacements, a lift installation and a roofing upgrade. Building works, signage and wayfinding design, and campus entry upgrade works were also undertaken. The total investment was \$3.9 million.

Significant investments were also made last financial year to enhance the digital learning environment at the Mount Druitt campus, with approximately \$680,000 spent to replace 252 devices. Proposed works for the Mount Druitt campus this financial year include upgrades to the campus entrances to improve accessibility and functionality, replacements of electrical distribution boards, and investigations into options for expansion of electrotechnology training delivery, totalling \$850,000.

I am pleased to advise that enrolments at TAFE NSW Mount Druitt in the past few years have grown under the Adult Migrant English Program and the part qualifications offered to support disadvantaged students who require additional support, including language, literacy and numeracy support. TAFE NSW Mount Druitt delivers the Adult Migrant English Program to hundreds of students and has established strong connections with all major community providers in the area, supporting students with settling successfully in Australia and accessing vocational courses in their existing or chosen occupation.

Mount Druitt is not the only beneficiary of the Minns Government's forward-thinking investments. The Government is to be congratulated for the \$2 million investment to upgrade campus infrastructure and improve digital connectivity at Liverpool and Miller TAFE campuses. That investment is a testament to the Government's commitment to enhancing the quality of vocational education and training in our region. In conclusion, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting TAFE institutions and recognising their crucial role in our education system. Improved infrastructure means better classrooms, workshops and laboratories where students can engage in hands-on learning. By acknowledging the importance of industry-aligned skills, ensuring access to industry-standard equipment and celebrating the Government's investment in TAFE infrastructure, we are taking significant steps towards securing a skilled, competent and job-ready workforce for the future.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:33):** I contribute to debate on the motion about TAFE funding. I bring really good news to the House about some of the great work that has been done in the Upper Hunter, particularly after the efforts of the former Coalition Government to invest in our facilities. The



Government is now opening those facilities and taking the glory for itself. It is well and truly worth discussing those investments and how they have changed some of the available training opportunities in the Upper Hunter. Members opposite were strongly opposed to the sale of the Scone Race Club to Racing NSW. I report that that is a great centre. TAFE NSW is still there working hard, with additional courses training jockeys from all over the world. The biggest problem now is getting accommodation.

On the other side of Scone is the Connected Learning Centre, which is one of the beneficiaries of that investment. That facility is top notch. Students can basically do a course there from all over New South Wales, and trainers in Scone provide training services all over New South Wales. But that is not all. This is truly a good news story. The new facility in Muswellbrook is absolutely outstanding. I remember working very hard with the former Minister, the member for Wahroonga, to secure the extra money required to invest in that facility. It is now complete and it is outstanding. I have taken a walk through the facility. We are waiting for the Minister to open it up. It has amazing mechanical and welding facilities. In fact, one piece of welding machinery there is worth \$1 million and is the best in the world. There are cameras that record students' welding, give them a score on how good it is, and take an X-ray to show them afterwards. Imagine that!

The Upper Hunter needs those facilities and that training. We have jobs galore and opportunities for apprentices. There has been a massive expansion of the Singleton campus thanks to the great investment by the former Coalition Government. That investment introduced all sorts of new courses at Singleton. The great irony of that is that the only thing holding the area back is getting teachers. This Government is holding us back from additional courses. I have sent numerous letters to the Minister about this problem. We need more courses. We have jobs and opportunities for young ones, but we cannot get the investment from this Government. That is exactly what the Government says it does. What an absolute joke!

The Government is letting down the people of the Upper Hunter. We need more courses on the ground. I will finish by saying this: The other day I met a young apprentice panel electrician who wanted to upgrade her skills. She wanted money to go to Sydney as she is doing her course through Queensland TAFE because NSW TAFE refused to budge and refused to be flexible. I spoke to the Minister about that and he also refused to be flexible. No wonder members on this side of the House are frustrated. We have invested in the facilities and we just want the people and the courses so we that can train our young ones. Stand up and be counted.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:37):** There is nothing like the hypocrisy and disingenuous statements made by members of the Opposition today. They were in government for well over a decade and they made these cuts. They put us in this position. I am proud to support the motion on TAFE.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** I thank my friend the member for Liverpool for moving the motion. I am proud to speak about TAFE for many reasons. I myself am a beneficiary of TAFE and gained a full-time and secure job after my studies. In addition, whilst I was campaigning I heard so many powerful stories about how TAFE changed lives. I remember one chap in particular who said to me that he was in a really bad place in his life and he could have taken one path or another. He chose to take the path of TAFE and became an apprentice, and he said to me that TAFE saved his life. Another chap said, "I did hospitality and chef studies at TAFE." So I asked him where he works now. His answer was, "New York."

Recently I met Eliza Armstrong, who was schooled at Heathcote High School and went on to become a nurse at St George Hospital via TAFE. Eliza found TAFE provided the support that she needed for her attention deficit disorder, dyslexia and verbal dyspraxia. The teachers catered to her preferred learning style and used lots of practical work to help solidify the teachings. It is a beautiful story, and Eliza is so happy and proud of herself, and so she should be. The Minns Labor Government takes a whole-of-government approach with everything that we do. We have been left with a skills shortage, cost-of-living pressures and a housing shortage from the now Opposition. We are providing fee-free courses and scholarships for skills and jobs that are required quickly to get housing, including social and affordable housing, built as soon as possible.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** It being 3.40 p.m., debate is interrupted for Government business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

*Bills*

## **COAL MINE SUBSIDENCE COMPENSATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

**Returned**

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

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATOR) BILL 2024****First Reading**

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

**Second Reading Speech**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:41):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024 is to place the New South Wales registered CFMEU Construction and General Division into administration. The bill is not aimed at any other union and does not apply to any other union than the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division. The intent and purpose of this scheme is consistent and complementary with the proposed Federal scheme. As the Premier and the Government have strongly stated and made clear, illegal behaviour of any kind cannot be tolerated, and the Government has undertaken a number of strong actions.

We stand with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions that are responding to the same issue by moving to appoint an administrator to manage the affairs of the union. This requires strong action, and the Minns Government is doing exactly that through this bill. The bill establishes powers to appoint an administrator to the union. The bill will achieve this by requiring the Minister to make an administration order that establishes an administration scheme that places the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division into administration; and requiring the Minister to appoint an administrator of the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division to implement the administration scheme.

The New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division is registered in both the Federal and New South Wales industrial relations systems. The law regards the federally registered body and the New South Wales registered body as two separate incorporated entities. Strong action from both the Commonwealth and the New South Wales governments is required to address the serious issues and serious allegations that have been raised. We are working in close cooperation with the Commonwealth, and it is an absolute necessity.

Schedule 1 to the bill provides that, on the appointment of an administrator and the establishment of an administration scheme by the Minister, the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division will be under administration. The administration scheme provides the power to suspend or remove office holders. The functions of the administrator include administration of the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division; performing the functions of the State executive of the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division; performing the functions of the divisional council and office holders and bodies of the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division under the division rules; and controlling union assets and funds, including funds and other assets transferred before the administrator is appointed. The administrator will be able to bring proceedings to recover funds, impose penalties and award compensation under the Industrial Relations Act 1996 or another Act. The administrator will be appointed for a period of five years.

The bill will provide the ability for the administrator to request the provision of documents or any other information required to exercise the functions as the administrator. There will be penalty provisions, with a maximum penalty of up to \$11,000 for noncompliance. There is also a provision included in the bill that deals with anti-avoidance provisions, with a maximum penalty of up to \$11,000 for any conduct or course of conduct that hinders the administration of the scheme.

The Minister must, by order, establish a scheme for the administration of the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division if satisfied it is in the public interest, having regard to the objects of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act and any other matters the Minister considers relevant. The bill contains a provision that permits the New South Wales Minister to, by order published in the gazette, terminate the appointment of the administrator and appoint another person as the administrator. The bill contains a regulation-making power, if required, for matters dealing with functions and remuneration of the administrator and the administration of the scheme.

The regulation-making power also enables regulation to be made to amend the schedule proposed by the bill to make any changes necessary or convenient for the administration and to ensure consistency with the Commonwealth Act, which appoints an administrator to the CFMEU or an instrument made under the Commonwealth Act for the appointment of an administrator. This is essential to ensure that changes can be made to the New South Wales scheme so it will operate effectively and consistently with the Commonwealth administration scheme.

The proposed bill also contains a sunset clause for provisions regarding the ability of the Minister to appoint an administrator and establish an administration scheme. The sunset clause means that either on the fifth anniversary of the schedule's commencement or the day that the administration scheme expires, clauses 2 and 6 will be repealed. I note and foreshadow that the Government will likely be moving technical amendments to the bill when the bill is debated to ensure consistency with the Commonwealth scheme.

The Government does not relish having to take this action. However, the integrity of the building industry and of our industrial relations system is a priority for the Government and for the people of New South Wales. The bill strikes the balance between not interfering with the important role and functions that unions perform as democratic organisations of their members, and stamping out corruption and gross misconduct when a union does not seem to be able to fix it on its own. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

### *Budget*

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2024-2025**

**Debate resumed from 20 June 2024.**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:48):** I am delighted to contribute to the take-note debate on budget estimates and related papers for 2024-25. At the outset, I acknowledge the efforts of Treasurer Daniel Mookhey, the Hon. Courtney Houssos and all the other parties that were involved. I also acknowledge all the Cabinet Ministers, including the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and their efforts to bring a budget together during challenging circumstances. The budget contains the priority agenda items of the Government and the most important priority of budget repair. As we know, the New South Wales budget, like every other budget around the world, was heavily affected by COVID. But it is comforting to know that the Government is giving budget repair the priority that it needs and deserves so that we can fund and implement the priority agenda items that we need into the future.

During the course of my contribution, I will speak at a micro and a macro level. I will refer to my own electorate. But, more broadly and in my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney, I will outline some of the priority agenda items that are seeing funding at this time. Without any doubt, one of the highlights of the budget was the investment in social and affordable housing. In many conversations taking place around dinner tables—or at shopping centres, pubs and cafes—people are talking about affordability. If they own a home, they are talking about how they afford to pay for it. If they are trying to get a home, they are talking about what capacity they have to save for a deposit. Many other people, including me—and other members in this place—are thinking about how our children get into the market.

The enormous record investment in social and affordable housing will see new homes built in the areas we need them and will also see many homes fixed and repaired. Many houses have lain dilapidated for a very long time. One of the biggest social challenges in my electorate of Campbelltown has been providing for those communities that have been living for generations in what used to be the Housing Commission areas. Now, of course, social housing has been redeveloped in Airds, Claymore, Rosemeadow, Ambarvale and St Helens Park. All of those areas are beautiful communities, but they have had their challenges. The Government is not pretending otherwise. The Premier makes no apologies for that; we do have a lot more to do. But the budget found the balance between having those important steps of budget repair in place and also funding the commitments that we took to the election in 2023.

This is our second budget. We inherited the first one. We are now continuing the measures to repair the mistakes of the past. To be fair, not all of them were mistakes. There were many things that had budget implications that were totally out of the control of the former Government. I have no doubt that at that time it was doing its best to try to put measures in place. COVID, particularly, was a very unique circumstance that we have not ever seen in history. We cannot look past the inflation issue that we continue to grapple with, as does every other government in Australia, including the Federal Government.

Getting inflation under control means that we keep interest rates under control, which, of course, means we have an affordable market in which the consumer can spend. When you break that down further, it ultimately comes down to the spending capacity of the consumer: what they can and cannot afford. Right now, many people are struggling to afford just their groceries and rent—and that is if they can find a house to rent. That is an important and welcome measure. The feedback has been encouraging from my electorate and other areas in the State that I have visited. It is a good step, but it has also been brought to my attention—and we concede—that there is still much more to do.

I am very proud of the fact that there was also record funding in education. The overwhelming majority of casual teachers have been transferred to permanent positions, because the system was just bleeding staff. It still struggles to get staff. The education Minister and her team have been doing a lot of work to try to bring teachers back into the fold, including those who have retired. They have been looking at any and every measure to support having educators in schools teaching our kids so that they can have every opportunity to get the best education they can, which will be the foundation and platform that they will build their lives on in the future.

In terms of health funding, what a shocker of a flu season it has been, despite the efforts of the health Minister, Ryan Park, who has been working very hard. There have been major investments in our health system. But we on this side of the House know that it is people who cure people. Bricks and mortar are great, but at the end of the day we need to be fund a fair day's pay for a fair day's work for those people who work in our system. We cannot overlook the damage that we are now continuing to play catch-up with. The wage cap was an abhorrent initiative and policy in a lot of ways. It was simply not fair. People deserve to be paid and remunerated their worth.

Members on the other side of the Chamber are very critical of the Government because of the wage rises. The reality is we are playing catch-up. People are leaving Sydney to go to the Hunter or the coast or the regions. That is great. I was born and raised in country New South Wales. It is a beautiful part of the world. But the reason they are going there is because they cannot afford to live in Sydney. People are going to other States. Over the time the wage cap was in place, paramedics, nurses and teachers were going to Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and even Tasmania, because they were being remunerated appropriately in those places for the professional contribution that they made in their chosen industry.

Whether you are a nurse, a teacher, a paramedic, a truck driver or a lawyer—no matter what you do—you deserve to be remunerated adequately. That just did not happen. It affected our frontline workers immensely, which is why they went to other States. They were getting paid adequately there. In relation to the health system, I again acknowledge Minister Ryan Park and his team, who work very hard. I am in constant contact with them and know the issues they confront every day. We also know how wonderful the staff are in our hospitals. I know the Minister is motivated by supporting those good people to do good things in our hospitals, but there are only so many of them.

I have a great relationship with my local health district and the general manager and all the workers at Campbelltown Hospital. One of them told me, "We're having patients that are appearing at the emergency ward at Campbelltown Hospital who have influenza A, respiratory syncytial virus [RSV] and COVID that developed into pneumonia." It is just the whole kit and caboodle. I remember going to the children's ward at Easter time, which I like to do to see the kids and say g'day and take a few Easter eggs around for those who can have them. Nearly every child in the place had this respiratory virus, RSV. It has been absolutely devastating. It has really affected the seniors in our community. But, that said, our staff have stepped up to the plate. They are doing what they do best, which is caring for our patients. I want to publicly acknowledge and thank them.

I would also like to say how delighted I am about the investment in the environment, particularly in my own electorate, with \$80 million for the Georges River koala national park. I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who has been an enormous supporter of koala preservation. Koala preservation is very important and precious to us in Campbelltown because we have the only chlamydia-free koala colony, I think, left in Australia. A lot of that is because of the two rivers, the Nepean and the Georges. They do not drift outside that, and other koalas do not come inside the area where the koala colony is.

I do not have the specific data, but I am advised that the koala colony in Campbelltown has grown, despite the many ongoing challenges that exist with urban population growth and development. We are trying to find the balance between environmental preservation and habitat conservation while also building the homes that young people need now and into the future. It would be remiss of me to not commend the initiative of the police Minister, who is in the Chamber, to pay graduates and trainees down in Goulburn. I did not know that they did not get paid. I thought, "Struth, how does that happen?" We have seen a turnaround. I look forward to continuing the good news at another time in future.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 4.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

#### *Petitions*

#### **MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE HOSPITALS**

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

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (16:00):** I acknowledge members of the Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group and other Myall Lakes community members who are in the public gallery, including Eddie and Trish Wood, Carmel Bartlett, Anne-Marie Barry, Roger Dixon and Mary Yule, who have travelled to Parliament House for this debate. It is wonderful to have them here. Obtaining over 12,000 signatures is an incredible achievement, and I congratulate everyone who was involved. It shows how strongly the community feels about better health outcomes in Myall Lakes. This has been such a long campaign for many of those who were involved, and I sincerely thank them for their advocacy. I take a moment also to acknowledge my predecessor, the late Stephen Bromhead. Brommy fought incredibly hard, both locally and in this place, for Manning and Forster hospitals. In preparing for this debate, I read through his previous speeches and private members' statements, and so many were dedicated to health. On 20 October 2020 he said:

... nobody plans to plan for planning's sake. You plan to build something, and that is what we are going to do. I call for the funding now for the stage two redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital and planning for a public hospital in Forster.

Again, we are in this place calling for more funding to complete the stage two and stage three redevelopment of the Manning hospital and emergency department for the people of the Great Lakes region. It is important to note that this debate is not about pointing fingers or placing blame; it is about ensuring that these redevelopments are finished without further delays so that Manning hospital is properly equipped to serve the people who depend upon its services. I acknowledge and thank the previous—and the State's first—Minister for Regional Health, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, for her contribution to the redevelopment of Manning and Forster hospitals. She went up against Minister Brad Hazzard for Forster. I thank her for fighting for not only the good people of Myall Lakes but also Brommy's legacy and knowing just how much it meant to him.

Manning hospital is being stretched well beyond its limits. Patient loads have increased, wait times are blowing out and our frontline workers have to bear the load. For the past 10 years emergency presentations to the Manning have almost doubled, but its resources have stayed the same. Despite servicing a community of over 100,000 people—a number that quadruples during the holiday season—the hospital has approximately 142 beds only, and that number fluctuates depending on the number of staff available. Under the Government's own formula, it should already have 250 inpatient beds, and it is the electorate's only public hospital. As a result, Manning hospital is unable to keep up with demand, leading to bed blocks in the emergency department [ED] and inpatient beds that are competing with the intensive care unit [ICU], high-dependency unit, coronary care unit and surgical patients for beds.

We have patients stuck in the ED well beyond the target of four hours, sometimes waiting over 24 hours for a bed. This blockage also leads to ambulance ramping. It is not unusual to see four or five ambulances waiting at the Manning to offload people to the ED. We are talking about people who are in the most vulnerable moments of their lives stuck in a hospital waiting room or out the front of the hospital, waiting for the care they urgently need. We are talking about our frontline heroes who work around the clock in a hospital system that is bursting at the seams. Overworked and under-resourced, they deserve better. Some \$180 million is now allocated to the stage two redevelopment of the Manning and for Forster to have an ED or urgent care centre, but we desperately need more. That is what the petition and the people of Myall Lakes are calling for.

Not only does the hospital urgently need more beds, but also it needs an upgraded ICU and emergency department, a hybrid theatre and a cath lab. Myall Lakes has the oldest demographic in New South Wales and absolutely no cardiac services to offer. A lack of emergency services in Forster, Tuncurry and Bulahdelah has a huge impact on Manning's ED, further increasing patient load. We need a multipurpose service in Bulahdelah. This impacts on constituents from neighbouring electorates in the Upper Hunter and Tea Gardens as they too must travel longer distances for basic healthcare services. I welcome to the gallery the Minister for Health and Regional Health. Our residents deserve a health system that they can rely on in their darkest days, and our frontline workers—our paramedics, doctors, nurses and hospital staff—deserve a modern and well-resourced workplace. I look forward to hearing contributions from members on both sides of the House. Again, I thank those who have travelled from Myall Lakes to be here for this debate.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:05):** I welcome those in the gallery from the beautiful Myall Lakes—the second nicest place in New South Wales, after Cessnock. I spend a lot of time up there. My wife and I discovered Black Head Beach about 25 years ago and we have been going there ever since. I met about five doctors in Black Head—anyway, it is magnificent. The good member for Myall Lakes is a member of Black Head Surf Life Saving Club. I absolutely appreciate, adore and applaud the ability to get 12,000 signatures. A lot of work goes into that—of course it does; all members know that. Many members in this place have tried to do that but have not been able to, particularly in regional areas, because our populations are more dispersed in small towns and villages. I applaud the member for Myall Lakes—well done. Because I have spent time up there with my four children and a couple of nieces, I have spent a bit of time also at Manning hospital's emergency department.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** Recently?

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** No, not recently. My kids' coordination got better. But the service was magnificent and the kids were looked after. I acknowledge the member's comments that our emergency departments across the entire State have seen an explosion in presentations. It is very difficult to name a single hospital that is able to get on top of, and stay on top of, the emergency presentations because there has been a shift in our society away from visiting a GP. It is no-one's fault; getting into a GP is difficult. There has been a shift away from going to the local GP to now presenting to EDs. That is a reality. I defy any member in this Chamber to say that that is not happening in their neck of the woods. The other issue raised by the member was the cost and the money that has already been allocated. Some \$180 million has been allocated to the project at Manning.

I acknowledge also that a number of projects across New South Wales have experienced that same price pressure. That is fundamentally because the cost of building and construction, especially since COVID, has gone up by some 30 per cent or more. I can honestly say that one of the line items in the budget is a redevelopment for Cessnock Hospital. It was originally touted at \$111 million. Of course, we had to fight to get a little extra money, but we will still not get enough money to do what was originally proposed. There are also health infrastructure projects across the State that, sadly and unfortunately, have fundamentally been told that there is no more money in the bucket—that is the truth. There is no more money in the bucket because—Opposition members are about to cry and yell—when the budget was handed over to the new Government, we found record levels of debt. We had debt that the Coalition handed over, which was \$180 billion. When it came into government, the debt was \$20 billion. When it left, it was \$180 billion.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: It is relevance. The good people of Myall Lakes have come to Parliament and we would like to hear about Manning Base Hospital.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** We have a financial crisis on our hands. We have a health crisis, an emergency department crisis, a health staffing crisis, and a financial crisis. They are all truths. They are all realities. The financial crisis was left to us. If an Opposition member wants to explain to me how we will fix \$180 billion worth of debt in 18 months, I am all ears. Go ahead. They were at the helm of Treasury when this hospital was not delivered. They were at the helm of Treasury when they created the financial crisis and when they allowed the health crisis to develop. I congratulate the petitioners. At least \$180 million of expenditure is coming their way, which will build a great new facility. I hope we have the staff to fill it. I know that the health Minister will have more to say at the end of this important debate.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:10):** I support the petition brought before the House, calling on the Minns Labor Government to allocate funds to enable the completion of the Manning Rural Referral Hospital redevelopment plan. I recognise and thank the dedicated members of the Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group and the Myall Lakes community for their tireless efforts. I acknowledge those in the gallery today and also those online. More than 12,000 signatures were collected, which echo the community's concern and commitment to better health outcomes in Myall Lakes.

This hospital plays a vital role for the Mid North Coast community, providing health care to nearly 100,000 residents. Despite its importance, we know the services at Manning Rural Referral Hospital are not on par with similar B2-classified hospitals. The hospital's redevelopment plan was initiated to address the critical service deficiencies, and now it is imperative that we see it through to completion. The Myall Lakes electorate is characterised by a significant retired population, Indigenous residents and lower socio-economic groups, and it relies heavily on an effective and accessible public hospital.

I thank the member for Myall Lakes and her predecessor, the late Stephen Bromhead, for their strong and continued advocacy. I call out the former Minister for Regional Health, Bronnie Taylor, who is in the gallery, and the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health, for being in the Chamber for today's debate. It is essential to acknowledge that this issue is not about assigning blame but about addressing longstanding service deficiencies that have accumulated over decades. The decline in services at Manning has been gradual and spans multiple governments of both stripes. I acknowledge the Minister's commitment of an additional \$80 million allocated for stage two of the redevelopment. However, the reality is that this is not enough. The current capabilities of the Manning hospital are already stretched to their limits. We are witnessing increased patient loads, extended wait times and immense pressure on our frontline healthcare professionals, who work tirelessly under challenging conditions.

According to government guidelines, the hospital should have 250 inpatient beds; it has 142. The inadequacy of the number of beds is contributing to severe access and exit blockages in both inpatient areas and the emergency department [ED]. In the emergency department, the data paints a worrying picture. In the January

to March quarter, emergency department attendance was up 5.3 per cent, to 9,571; the percentage of patients starting their treatment on time was down 10 per cent, to only 43.8 per cent; the percentage of patients leaving the ED within four hours was also down, to 43.1 per cent; arrivals to the ED by ambulance were up nearly 10 per cent, to over 3,000; and, most alarmingly, the number of patients who are transferred to the emergency department staff from paramedics within 30 minutes is down 15 per cent, to just 62 per cent.

That means that paramedics are held up waiting to hand off patients instead of responding to emergencies in our community. Patients frequently wait up to 24 hours or more in the emergency department, increasing the risk of adverse events. The situation is further compounded by the lack of essential services, such as a cardiac unit and advanced emergency care. Manning Base Hospital, which serves as the only public hospital in the region, faces an overwhelming influx of patients, especially during peak holiday seasons.

We must also address the need for a multipurpose service in Bulahdelah to alleviate pressure on the Manning hospital. This will ensure that our neighbouring communities in the Upper Hunter and Tea Gardens receive timely and adequate healthcare. The entire completion of stage two and stage three of the redevelopment—which include upgrading the intensive care unit and the emergency department, and adding critical facilities like a hybrid theatre and a catheterisation lab—is not just a luxury; it is an urgent necessity. The health and wellbeing of people in the Myall Lakes electorate depend on it. I urge the Minns Labor Government to prioritise and fully fund the Manning Rural Referral Hospital redevelopment plan and to commit to providing the Myall Lakes electorate with the health care and infrastructure it deserves.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:15):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for highlighting regional and rural health initiatives. I know that, like me, the member has a very good understanding of the issues faced in regional areas. I welcome members from the community, and I too congratulate them on getting 12,000 signatures. Manning Base Hospital has a long history of caring for the local community and dates back more than 120 years. The main hospital building, which stands in the York Street site today, was built in 1954. It has a similar story to Milton Ulladulla Hospital, in my local area. Manning Base Hospital has served its purpose well, but further investment is required to help it meet the demands of modern health care. The stage two redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital will enable it to do just that and more. The \$180 million government investment towards public health services announced in the most recent State budget will boost health services for communities along the lower Mid North Coast.

The Manning hospital project will deliver modern healthcare facilities that support the healthcare needs of the community, with enhanced acute and inpatient services. Patients, carers and loved ones will have an upgraded hospital that will aid in their healing and recovery. Access around the hospital will be improved as part of the redevelopment, with better connectivity between different health services and departments across the campus. The project team has recently remobilised, following a project pause, and the scope for the redevelopment will be confirmed in the coming months. The priority remains on increasing clinical capacity, particularly for inpatient services. The Government's investment in these projects will help to cater to the needs of people and communities across the region.

Some 95,000 people currently call the lower Mid North Coast region home. Spanning an expanse of more than 10,000 square kilometres and taking in more than 195 towns and villages including Gloucester, Forster, Bulahdelah and Harrington, the region is home to a substantial number of older adults and people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. By 2041 the Mid North Coast's population is expected to grow to just under 109,000 people, with more than 40 per cent of the population expected to be over 60 years of age. The future demographics of this region mean that the investment we are making now in Manning Base Hospital, and more broadly across the region and the Hunter New England local health district, will ensure that local health services will continue to meet the health needs of local communities.

The project's new construction timeline will be confirmed once planning has been finalised. Health workers, patients and the wider community will continue to be kept updated and informed as the project progresses. There will also be plenty of opportunity for people to provide their feedback. Their input will, in fact, be an essential component in the delivery of a modern health facility that everyone can truly be proud of. I thank the wonderful doctors, clinicians, nurses and all the staff at Manning Base Hospital. Those opposite need to be reminded that under the former Government a wages cap was imposed for 12 years, which caused many people to leave the health profession. We are rebuilding our healthcare system so that people can receive the care they deserve, when they need it the most.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Order! Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** We are saving while building. We are relieving our emergency departments; building an engaged, capable and supported workforce; delivering the health infrastructure to meet the growing needs of our community; and improving access to care in our regional, rural and remote communities. Once again,

I thank the good member for Myall Lakes for highlighting regional health. I look forward to touring the Manning Base Hospital later this month with her and other members of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health, including the chair, the member for Wagga Wagga.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:19):** Members might think that I, as the member for Balmain, am out of my depth contributing to a debate on a regional hospital, but I have lived in Forster. I did years 1 and 2 in Forster, so I do know the area. On behalf of The Greens, I acknowledge this petition and the incredible amount of hard work and organisation in the community to get the 10,000 required signatures to introduce the matter in Parliament. I make it clear that The Greens support the Manning and Great Lakes communities, and call on the Government to finalise these plans and get on with the job. We know that NSW Health and the Minister for Health are on record saying that the scope of the upgraded plans is being reviewed because of escalating costs. Stage one of the redevelopment is complete. Stage two funding was announced in 2018. The staging of the project was supposed to allow continuity of hospital operations during the redevelopment. It was not an excuse for the Government to delay necessary upgrades.

The *Heart of Inequality* report showed that the Federal electorate of Lyne has the worst cardiovascular outcomes in regional Australia. There is only one cardiologist at Manning Base Hospital and it is almost impossible to recruit specialists without infrastructure such as a cardiac catheter lab. The population of the hospital catchment is ageing and has high rates of chronic, complex medical illness, and the area is home to a large First Nations population. There is a clear need. The community needs and deserves a world-class health facility. The community has voiced concerns that they were not included in the development of the clinical services plan. The local health district now states that the clinical services plan will be reviewed again. The Government needs to commit to including the local community and clinicians in that process.

I thank Carmel Bartlett and the Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group for their tireless advocacy on behalf of the community. Securing an additional \$80 million in funding shows that community pressure really works. I know the action group has worked hard to raise this matter with my colleague in the other place Dr Amanda Cohn, who is a regional member and The Greens spokesperson for health. I know how much Amanda appreciates this advocacy. I bring to the attention of the House some of the feedback from the Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group that Ms Bartlett has passed on to us. The letter states:

Our area desperately needs a fully functioning, well-resourced hospital brought up to the standard of being able to treat trauma and to perform interventional angiography.

It was very pleasing, and we are grateful, that the Manning Great Lakes area was granted a further \$80 million in the recent State Budget (on top of the \$100 million already appropriated) which will enable commencement of the Stage 2 development.

Presently, we have 121 whereas the appropriate bed numbers are at least 250 in order to service a population of approximately 100,000 permanent residents. This population increases to double that number during peak holiday periods.

Whilst Stage 2 of the redevelopment will immediately begin to address the problem of bed shortages with the building of the new in-patient block, without the completion of the whole re-development, the bed shortage will not be satisfactorily addressed. However, we believe that substantially more funding—a realistic figure of a further \$240-\$250 million—will be required to complete Stage 3, so that there is an immediate and seamless transition from Stage 2 to enable the hospital's re-development to be completed in its entirety. This will require a realistic budget allocation in the 2025-2026 budget to fund those works. The longer the funding is delayed, the greater cost import and the greater the stress on our community.

I thank the action group for those comments. The Government must fund the services that communities need and not continue to work backwards from the funding commitments of the previous Government. If the Government is looking for savings to assist with this funding requirement, it need look no further than the recent Public Accountability and Works Committee inquiry into government use and management of consulting services, which was chaired by my Greens colleague Ms Abigail Boyd. The inquiry recommended that the Government introduce legislation to amend the Payroll Tax Act 2007 to require large consulting firms to pay payroll tax on partnership earnings, which could raise an estimated \$200 million. I note the Government just implemented another Greens policy to bring the management of locum doctors in house, which will save \$37 million per year in commission fees to private agencies. There really is no excuse. The Government must listen to the community, allocate the funding and get on with the job.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:24):** In response: I begin my contribution by acknowledging the advocacy of the member for Myall Lakes and the community members in the gallery and those who are watching the broadcast from home today. Normally, it is only my mum and dad who watch my speeches, so I say hello to all those watching. I have been very impressed during my interactions with the member for Myall Lakes. Very early on she reached out to me and engaged with me in this process. I acknowledge that because I want to listen and engage with the people who give a damn about rural, regional and remote health care. While the member for Myall Lakes and I do not sit on the same side of the Chamber, she advocates strongly for her community, as we all should. I have engaged with her on this issue.



I acknowledge also my colleagues who have spoken today, including the member for Cessnock, who has been a regional member in this place since 2011, and the member for South Coast. I acknowledge Emily Suvaal in the other place, who has advocated for this area. This is a challenging issue. The Government is investing \$180 million into the lower Mid North Coast. We now need to try to get the solution right. I do not want people to think the \$180 million is final and the lower Mid North Coast will never get any more money. That is not the case at all. But we have experienced escalations in costs. I am not blaming the former Government because it is not its fault. There have been escalations in the costs of capital projects of approximately 20 per cent to 30 per cent. When I was first made aware of the escalations, I thought it might be a bit of bureaucratic you-know-what. But it is not; it is real. I am sure local councils in our communities that have been trying to build infrastructure like a swimming pool for two years will be experiencing these issues. We are working through that.

The Government is committed to making sure that \$180 million is delivered. It is part of the Government's overall commitment to regional and rural health care. I make it clear to community members and the member for Myall Lakes that as part of the rollout of our ratios reform, there will be an increase in the number of nursing and midwifery staff in the hospitals. I have a very strong focus on ensuring that regional, rural and remote hospitals are included in rollouts where appropriate. The community can be assured of two things. The first is that I have heard their message loud and clear. The second is that I will continue to engage with the local member in the lead up to the next budget to figure out what we can do to continue to improve and boost health services in the great lower Mid North Coast area.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (16:27):** In reply: I thank the Minister for being present in the Chamber during the debate today and for his kind words. I thank him also for continuing to work with me and the community on this matter. This petition has been eight years in the making. I thank the Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group for not only being in the gallery today but also bringing this issue and petition to the attention of the House. The group's members should be commended time and again for their advocacy for better health outcomes for the people of Myall Lakes. If members were allowed to give applause, I would ask for a round of applause for the members of this action group. I thank all members who contributed to debate on this petition, including the member for Cessnock and the member for South Coast. In particular, I thank the member for South Coast for her Wikipedia lesson on my electorate—I know it very well.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Oh, come on!

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON:** No, we did not need a history lesson. If the member knows the area, she should have said that. I thank also the member for Coffs Harbour and the member for Balmain for their support. As I have mentioned before, the Manning Base Hospital is overwhelmed and has been for a really long time. It is under-resourced and has been struggling to meet the needs of residents. I am grateful for the \$180 million allocated for the stage two redevelopment and for Forster hospital. I have said it before in this place and I will say it time and again: Every person in the great State of New South Wales should have the right to the best healthcare services regardless of their age, their address or their political preference. The people of the Myall Lakes electorate deserve better. They are calling for better. It is about time that we got on with the job.

**Petition noted.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I thank the guests in the gallery who visited to listen to debate on the petition.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **KELL WOODS**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:30):** I recognise Kell Woods of Vincentia, who recently had her latest novel published. The Shoalhaven author's fantasy novel *After the Forest* is on shelves around the world. Recently Kell officially launched it in the Shoalhaven. It is a dream come true for the former librarian, who used to stock shelves at the Nowra Library and would dream of her own name lined up amongst the authors in the stacks. That dream is now a reality for Ms Woods. *After the Forest* is a fresh yet dark and grown-up take on the fairytale Hansel and Gretel. Her version of the story has been a long time coming, with Kell spending several years getting the book ready to print. The South Coast is home to so many remarkably talented and widely acclaimed people in so many different fields, but particularly literature. I believe Kell is working on her next book already. I congratulate Kell on this amazing accomplishment.

#### **KOGARAH COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:31):** There are truly so many wonderful community organisations across my electorate and the St George area. However, among the cream of the crop is Kogarah Community Services. It does some fantastic things across the St George area. Today I congratulate Marisa Turcinkis, who

has been made the new chief executive officer after a very successful year. The work that Kogarah Community Services does is special. It engages with communities in south-eastern Sydney, providing aged care, before and after school care, as well as programs that provide social support for those who experience isolation and disadvantage. I have known Marisa for many years. She will lead the team very well, having many years of experience within both the sector and the organisation. I also congratulate Shelley Ross, who retired last year after more than 24 years of service. The work she did during her time was extraordinary as she engaged with the community in Kogarah and surrounding suburbs. I again congratulate Marisa on this fantastic achievement. I wish her all the very best.

### **CARRAMAR PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:32):** Carramar Public School holds a special place in the hearts of thousands of families. Since 1924—100 years of service as of today—Carramar Public School has been a pillar in the area, nurturing countless generations of future leaders. Carramar Public School also caters learning to an incredibly diverse community. Of the 240 current student enrolments, approximately 81 per cent are students with a language background other than English. I acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the generations of teachers, principals, staff and parents who have contributed to the success of the school and supported students to chase their dreams. I commend the principal, Anthony Mazzitelli, and the leadership team of Helen Simmons, Vanessa Holland, Seba Ayache, Ramona Wassink and Baxter To for their contribution to this significant milestone.

### **MARINA GRAY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:33):** I congratulate Marina Gray. Since she was just 13 years old Marina has been volunteering for her community. She embodies the true spirit of volunteering, helping the community with no expectation of recognition. But someone as passionate and selfless as Ms Gray truly deserves recognition, which is why her name will remain in history on the 2023 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll. The roll acknowledges the important volunteer roles that women play within New South Wales regional, rural and remote communities. From the police boys club to St Vincent de Paul and the NSW SES, Ms Gray has dedicated countless hours to helping those in need. For over 24 years she has volunteered for the SES, attending natural disasters, accidents and helping in emergency management centres. As president of St Vincent de Paul in the Bathurst region, Ms Gray travels far and wide to assist people needing food, clothing or other support. Her own initiatives, such as supporting the homeless and sourcing graduation outfits for kids, have further contributed to benefiting those in need. I thank Ms Gray for her dedication and passion for helping her community. She should be proud of her achievements.

### **TRIBUTE TO GRACE MARTIN**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:34):** It is with a heavy heart that I announce the recent passing of the founder of the Roselands Football Club and dear friend Grace Martin. Grace held many roles in the club, from founder to life member, and worked tirelessly to grow the community club and improve the facilities at Bennett Park. Grace was instrumental in the creation, development and fostering of female participation in football throughout Football Canterbury, so much so that the association's flagship female competition, the Grace Martin Trophy, is named in her honour. She believed that female participation is not just about being a player but also through officiating and administrative roles in football. She served as Football Canterbury registrar, competition secretary and judiciary committee chair for several decades. In 1982 she was bestowed life membership of Football Canterbury, and in 1992 she was recognised with a Football NSW State Award. In 2022 Grace was inducted into Football Canterbury's hall of fame, an amazing achievement for our grand lady. Grace was an inspirational woman who gave everything for her beloved green-and-gold Roselands. She will be dearly missed. I offer my sincere condolences to the Martin and Bartels families. Vale, Grace.

### **TOY LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:35):** Today I congratulate Toy Libraries Australia, which has been awarded Marie Claire's 2024 Sustainability Award in the parenting category. The award celebrates companies, organisations and individuals who are doing their bit to recycle and re-use goods in the community. Toy Libraries Australia is most certainly committed to an ethos of sustainability. It offers high-quality educational recycled toys to 183,000 families around the country, preventing a countless number of toys from going to landfill. On 6 June Kerry Dominish, CEO of the EarlyEd Cubby House Toy Library on the Northern Beaches, and the Toy Library Australia representative for New South Wales, accepted the award on behalf of toy libraries across the country. This award is for every toy library in Australia, with 72 in New South Wales alone, plus the 11,000 amazing volunteers who help out each year and are critical to the success of these services. Toy Libraries

Australia is well deserving of this award for not only giving children access to toys but also teaching children the importance of sustainability through play. Well done.

#### NANCY WEE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:36):** They say that a good teacher changes lives. Today I acknowledge one of those teachers who has left their mark on generations of young people in my community. I congratulate Nancy Wee on her retirement after many decades as a public school teacher. Mrs Wee has taught at Marsden Road Public School for almost 30 years, with students and staff coming together last month to wish her a happy farewell as she ends a long career in public education. The staff and students at Marsden Road Public School recognised Mrs Wee for her infectious smile, and many of them shared memories and stories about her journey of teaching and learning. It is fitting that this week marks Public Education Week. I am so privileged to have wonderful schools like Marsden Road in my electorate. Teachers in Liverpool are lifting up our kids and helping them reach their fullest potential. That is in no small part due to the work of teachers like Mrs Wee. I wish Mrs Wee all the best in her well-deserved retirement and thank her for her service.

#### FORESTWAY FRESH

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (16:37):** Today I congratulate Forestway Fresh on winning the Outstanding Specialised Retail Business Award and being named Business of the Year at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. I also congratulate Forestway Fresh's cafe, The Tasting Deck, on winning the Best Cafe Award. The Polistina family migrated to Australia in 1949, working on farms and selling produce at various locations across Sydney. Forestway Fresh Terrey Hills was born in 2003, when Domenic Polistina discovered the former Terrey Hills fruit barn and enlisted the support of his sons to open a produce store. Over 20 years later, Forestway Fresh is now an ultimate food destination offering a wide variety of everything gourmet, from grocery items to cheese and breads. I congratulate Domenic, Pasquale, Tony and the whole team on this amazing achievement. I thank them for their ongoing dedication to providing the best quality food and produce for our community to enjoy.

#### XAVIER DEATH

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:38):** The community of Riverstone collectively held their breath last week as they searched for a three-year-old missing for four hours in bushland bordered by the treacherous Garfield Road traffic and the banks of Eastern Creek. What started as an adventure for little Xavier Death became a harrowing experience for his parents when, armed with a walking stick and a thirst for adventure, Xavier slipped under the fence and set off. A call-out over Facebook saw our close-knit community rally as night fell, and hundreds scoured the paddocks and the creek bed. Thankfully, at 6.10 p.m. a triumphant Adam Goncalves, who had local knowledge of the paddocks and creek line, announced "I've got him." Frightened by the peril of the untamed region and driven by his imminent fatherhood, Adam had set out across the paddocks armed with a high-power torch when he heard Xavier's cries. A piggyback ride home while he played spotlight with the kangaroos and cows ended the big adventure, and he was safely returned to his parents. I thank the Riverstone community, the Riverstone police, Blacktown SES and the Quakers Hill Tigers for their prompt action.

#### PAULA TAYLOR

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:39):** I congratulate Paula Taylor and her team from The Agency on holding a recent Coast Shelter Sleepout Fundraiser at the Davistown Progress Hall. Paula and her hardworking team put on a great evening, which was well attended by the local community. There was entertainment from the local 3 Villages' musicians Jackie, Andy and Blue, who donated their time to perform along with a cappella group the Silver Ferns. The fundraiser included an art auction of donated paintings by local artists Lorraine Parker, Robyn Kinder, Marlene Palagyi, Francis Melrose and Diane Stafford Smith. I was delighted to pick up two beautiful paintings by Lorraine on the night. One is hanging in my electorate office and the pelicans are in the New South Wales Parliament. Many local 3 Villages small businesses and donors from all over the region provided items for auction, raffle, and door and guessing competition prizes, including Davo Cellars, Six String Brewing and EastCoast Beverages. I also thank Davistown Progress Association's new president Julie Hale and former president Jenny McCulla for supporting Paula and her team in this fundraising event. The night raised over \$1,000 and all proceeds will help Coast Shelter continue its work with not just the homeless but also men, women and children across the Central Coast affected by domestic violence.

#### NOAH BARTOLO-STAFFORD

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:41):** We have many generous and compassionate residents in our East Hills electorate. They work to build community and strengthen our shared humanity. Instead of birthday presents, 12-year-old Noah Bartolo-Stafford from Milperra Public School asked his loved ones to donate to Bully Zero, an Australian charity that works to prevent bullying through education, advocacy and support. He

is aiming to raise \$1,000. It is not the first time Noah has chosen a charity to support on his birthday. Over the past 10 years, Noah has raised over \$16,000 to support charities, such as the Sydney Children's Hospital, Legacy and the Fred Hollows Foundation. This inspiring young person is already making a positive impact on the world and plans to continue helping people when he grows up. A budding psychologist, Noah is a fantastic example for young people in our community. I thank Noah for helping those less fortunate. He has a bright future ahead.

#### **BLOKES NOTES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:42):** I recognise Port Macquarie's exceptional male a cappella choir Bloses Notes. The enthusiastic group crossed the Tasman recently to compete at the thirteenth World Choir Games in New Zealand. They were one of 250 choirs from 41 countries, and took out the bronze diploma award in the category of Senior Choir of Equal Voices. Guided and encouraged by musical director Leanne Johnson, the choir competed for the first time in the games. This year's choice of location meant that competing was more affordable and manageable for Australia to participate. Competition was fierce, as a record-breaking 30 Aussie choirs attended due to the venue's proximity. Almost a flash mob, Bloses Notes delivered their harmonies all across New Zealand. They shared their voices with the public in various spaces, including outside the competition venue and at the thermal pools in Rotorua, as well as combining with the Waikato Male Voices choir in Hamilton and various pubs. I am particularly proud of Bloses Notes, who, on top of their many public performances, continue to support Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Services and have become a mainstay at the annual coastal walk. I congratulate them.

#### **PROFESSOR GEORGE WILLIAMS, AO**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:43):** Parramatta is home to six tertiary institutions, with Western Sydney University a world-leading force amongst them. I am pleased to announce that Professor George Williams, AO, has been appointed as the next vice-chancellor of Western Sydney University, commencing as the fifth vice-chancellor on 22 July 2024, having previously served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Transformation, Planning and Assurance, and as a professor at the University of New South Wales. A national thought leader in higher education, Professor Williams is a respected expert in constitutional and human rights law. Exemplifying his commitment to social justice through decades of experience in constitutional law, Professor Williams brings immense talent to the role and will be vital as he guides the next phase of growth and development at the university. He has contributed significantly to public policy through his role in the establishment of the Victorian bill of rights and involvement in the Northern Territory's attempt to become the seventh State of Australia. Congratulations, Professor Williams, and welcome to Western Sydney University.

#### **ELLIE COLE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:44):** I congratulate local champion 17-year-old Ellie Cole, who this week finished seventh in the women's 10-metre platform diving final at the Paris Olympic Games. Ellie is a Balmain local who has been diving since the age of 11. She joined the New South Wales Institute of Sport's diving team in 2018 and has been a member of the Australian National Diving Squad since the beginning of 2024. Not only is Ellie an elite athlete who has had an amazing performance at the Paris Olympic Games but she is also currently studying for her HSC. She is such an inspiring young woman, and the Balmain community is incredibly proud to support her. I congratulate Ellie on all of her fantastic achievements at the Paris Olympic Games. We look forward to seeing many more in the future. I wish her all the best with her HSC.

#### **BELMORE EAGLES FOOTBALL CLUB 100TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:45):** Late last month I joined many in my electorate in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Belmore Eagles Football Club—100 years is a long time. For a century, the Eagles and Football Canterbury have been kicking goals both on and off the field. From their home ground at Rudd Park in Belfield, the club has grown to include a friendly community of players and supporters of all ages, skill levels and backgrounds, with a focus on not just football and the scoreboard but also sportsmanship and togetherness. On the occasion of its centenary, we celebrate the Eagles and recognise the contribution that generations of players and supporters have made to local sport and the building of that community. I congratulate the club and thank club president Susie Boughton and event organiser registrar Luca Circelli for the invitation to join them on this special occasion.

#### **TRIBUTE TO EDNA WILDE, OAM**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:46):** I ask the House to join me in farewelling Edna Wilde, OAM, who dedicated half a century to the Ryde community. Edna's service as a City of Ryde councillor spanned 34 years, from 1974 to 2008. Notably, she was a trailblazer, serving three terms as Ryde's first female mayor. In 2000 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to Ryde and local government. Her passion for the arts was evident through her leadership of the City of Ryde Eisteddfod and her active involvement in numerous

community organisations. Her tireless advocacy significantly enhanced the Ryde community, and her legacy was cemented when City of Ryde Council established an annual eisteddfod award in her honour. She was forthright and passionate, and I feel privileged that I had the opportunity to visit Edna in the hospital before her passing. In her typical fashion, she had read every word of *The Weekly Times* newspaper that morning, and was offering loads of insight and wisdom about our area. I will cherish that memory, and offer the sympathies of the New South Wales Parliament to her friends, family and loved ones for their loss. Vale, Edna Wilde. You were Ryde personified.

#### TRIBUTE TO JACK KARLSON

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:47):** "What is the charge? Eating a meal? A succulent Chinese meal?" I mark the death of Australian cultural icon Jack Karlson, who passed away today at age 82 from cancer. Karlson was born Cecil George Edwards in 1942. A colourful character, Karlson spent a significant period of his life at Her Majesty's pleasure. Starting in his childhood, he found himself frequently on the wrong side of the law, and it was one of those run-ins with the local constabulary that made him a genuine Australian legend. Footage of Karlson's October 1991 arrest by Queensland police outside the China Sea Restaurant in Fortitude Valley has become, in the words of the BBC, "Australia's most viral meme", and in the words of the *New York Post*, "legendary". It has inspired T-shirts, a musical, a million-dollar racehorse and a red wine called "Get Your Hands Off My Pinot". As part of his important legacy, may democracy manifest long in this place. Jack Karlson, ta ta and farewell.

#### FRIENDS OF THIRLMERE LAKES

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:48):** On 13 July my husband, Neil, and I were delighted to attend a morning tea at Lake Couridjah to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Friends of Thirlmere Lakes. The morning tea had a turnout of more than 25 community members, all of whom are dedicated to the preservation of the lakes. Local activist and environmentalist Julie Sheppard delivered the keynote speech, which was on the history of the lakes. The friends group was formed in 2014 by a group of community members who were concerned about the disappearing water levels of the lakes. For over 10 years, the friends have advocated for and looked after the lakes in cooperation with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The friends have been part of the Thirlmere Lakes Research Program, which is a genuine collaboration and engagement with the National Parks, university researchers, Indigenous Elders and the community. The Friends of Thirlmere Lakes represent the best of our community, and Neil and I are proud of our association with the group. We look forward to future monthly catch-ups and future celebrations of the group.

#### COLIN BROOKS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:49):** I pay tribute to Colin Brooks, a farmer from Murwillumbah and someone who has stepped up to represent farmers and serve his local community in many ways. As the President of the Combined Tweed Rural Industries Association for many years, Colin was a strong advocate for local landholders and rural producers. Colin engaged with various levels of government on critical issues for the viability of the rural industry to rural producers, including livestock protection, local sugar industry marketing and rural land planning. Colin was also a bus driver and played an active role in the community on roads and traffic issues. Colin has served as my representative on the Tweed traffic advisory committee since 2019 and he represented the former member for Lismore Thomas George before that. I thank him for bringing his local knowledge and diligence to that role for all those years. At this year's Murwillumbah Australia Day event, Colin and his wife, Beth, were recognised for their years of outstanding service to the community, which includes volunteer transport for people who are unwell. It is now Colin who is very unwell, and I send to him my thanks and warmest wishes.

#### GRACE STEWART

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:50):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Hockeyroo Grace Stewart from Gerringong in New South Wales. From juniors at the Gerringong Women's Hockey Club, and seniors at North Coast Raiders in Perth, to Rio in 2016, Tokyo in 2020 and Paris in 2024 as a captain of the Hockeyroos, Grace Stewart has again made Gerringong proud. "Train hard but have fun" is Grace Stewart's advice to her younger self, and I hope that resonates with the next generation of Hockeyroos. I commend Grace and the Hockeyroos team, who bow out proudly after going down in a narrow loss to China 3-2 in the quarterfinals on Monday, earlier defeating Spain 3-1, the United States 3-0, and drawing with Argentina 3-3. The Parliament commends Hockeyroo No. 481 Grace Stewart on her third Olympic games. She is an inspiration to young hockey players and aspiring Olympians. I also acknowledge Grace's mother, Mandy Stewart, and the efforts a parent takes to foster and support not just a great sportsperson but a great Olympian and an outstanding Australian.

**THE HON. MICHAEL KIRBY, AC, CMG**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:51):** I had the opportunity to meet the Hon. Michael Kirby, AC, CMG, former judge of the High Court of Australia, in Sydney. This was a particularly meaningful experience for me, as I had previously read many of his judgements during my law studies at the University of Sydney. His rulings have always stood out for their depth, creativity and compassion, reflecting a profound understanding of both the law and the human condition. Meeting Justice Kirby in person was a remarkable honour. His judgements are renowned for their innovative approaches and empathetic perspectives, which have significantly influenced Australian jurisprudence and legal thought. Engaging with him firsthand was an invaluable experience, allowing me to gain deeper insights into his judicial philosophy and approach. I am grateful to the Australian South East Asian Network for organising this special meeting. My thanks go to founder Sawathey Ek, member Rox G Molavin, and youth ambassador Dylan Ek. This week is also Public Education Week, and I have been advised that Justice Kirby was probably the first High Court judge educated in our public schools.

**NORTH COAST TOURISM AWARDS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:52):** Coffs Coast businesses climbed the podium at the 2024 North Coast Tourism Awards. The awards are a celebration of success, determination and innovation in the tourism industry across the North Coast region. Seven of them brought home medals—a remarkable achievement by these outstanding Coffs Coast businesses. Tiga Cross from the Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary won gold in the Outstanding Young Tourism Business Leader category, Coffs Harbour Trike and Private Tours won gold in the Tour and Transport Operator of the Year category, the Big Banana Fun Park won gold in the Tourism Attraction of the Year category, Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary won silver in the Tourism Attraction of the Year category, Giingan Gumbaynggirr Cultural Experience won silver in the Excellence in Cultural Tourism category, Pacific Bay Resort won bronze in the Event Venue of the Year category, and Shearwater Restaurant won bronze in the Excellence in Food Tourism category. I congratulate all of our tourism operators on continuing to put the Coffs Coast on the map.

**RUBY PAYNE**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (16:53):** Last year 12-year-old Ruby Payne received a remarkable gift: a double lung transplant. Ruby's dad, Robbie, is a coach for the mighty Windale Rugby League Club. To mark the close of DonateLife Week, last Saturday the club hosted a special event at Mick Bird Oval in Windale: Ruby's Day, a fundraiser for DonateLife. I was so glad to go along and support this very worthy event. The mission of DonateLife is to increase the number of organ and tissue donors in Australia. While the majority of people support donation, only around one in three are registered to be a donor. Only around 2 per cent of people who pass away in our hospitals meet the criteria for donation. While rates of awareness and consent are increasing, there is more we can do to help the 1,800 Australians waitlisted for a transplant. In 2023, 513 people across Australia became organ donors, helping 1,396 recipients. I encourage everybody, if they can, to register to donate organs. It could mean saving a life like Ruby's.

**NICOLE BALDRY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:54):** I recently enjoyed talking with Nicole Baldry of Bethunga, a proud mother of four beautiful children. Nicole recently shared a deeply emotional story about her young son Henry, who bravely fought against mitochondrial disease but sadly lost the battle. The children's book *Mito Warrior*, beautifully illustrated by June local Aidan Judd, is not just a book. It is a powerful tool that ignites conversations and raises awareness about mitochondrial disease, commonly known as "mito", inspiring many along the way. It helps people understand how Henry was a warrior and just one of the many who are born every week with a severe or life-threatening form of mito. Nicole and her friends and family actively participate in numerous walks to raise funds and awareness for treatments, preventions and cures for mitochondrial disease. Their dedication is truly inspiring. I commend Nicole for her courage in sharing her deeply personal story about her son Henry and his battle with mitochondrial disease.

**BOAT PEOPLE: A 50-YEAR JOURNEY FILM**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:55):** On 2 June 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the screening of *Boat People: A 50-year Journey* at the Bryan Brown Theatre in Bankstown. Directed by Vietnamese Canadian filmmaker Ms Thanh Tam, the documentary commemorates the 50-year journey of millions of Vietnamese who fled their homeland by boat in search of freedom after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Through intimate interviews and raw footage, the film reveals the emotional toll of separation, the struggle for survival and the enduring hope for a new and liberated life. As director Thanh Tam poignantly notes, "Fifty years is a short period in the history of a nation, yet long for a lifetime." The film honours this milestone while inviting the younger and future generations

to cherish the legacy of their predecessors. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to director Thanh Tam for the film's success and commend the efforts of everyone involved in this significant and very valuable work.

#### JILLIAN SEGAL

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:56):** I congratulate Jillian Segal on her appointment as Australia's first Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism. Since 7 October the events in the Middle East have reverberated throughout the world. Unfortunately, we have seen a sharp rise in antisemitic behaviour here in Australia. As a former President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and as Chair of the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce, Ms Segal has the leadership experience for this role. Upon her appointment, Ms Segal said, "Antisemitism erodes all that is good and healthy in society. As such, it poses a threat not just to the Jewish community but to our entire nation." I know Jillian's decades and extensive career will be instrumental as we preserve social cohesion in Australia. No Australian should be intimidated, threatened or made to feel unsafe based on their religion. I wish Jillian all the best in her role, and I look forward to working with her in these achievements.

#### LISMORE TINNIE ARMY MURAL

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:57):** It was an honour to add a personal message of thanks to a 50-metre-long mural in Lismore's CBD commemorating the Tinnie Army, which saved so many lives during the 2022 floods. About 450 members of the Tinnie Army rescued about 4,000 people on 28 February. I congratulate the Back Alley Gallery on facilitating the mural in collaboration with Summerland Bank, Lismore City Council and the Hotel Metropole, or the Met, as we call it. Planning for this large-scale mural, located on the wall of the Hotel Metropole in Larkin Lane, had been underway for the past 12 months. The mural depicts the courageous and selfless folk who hitched up their boats—some on jetskis, canoes and all sorts—and headed into floodwaters to rescue locals from floodwaters engulfing their homes. Special mentions go to Dr Bridie Cullinane, artists Holly Ahern and Erica Gully, Liz Shepherd and Nick Lake for helping drive this wonderful project. I also thank Uncle Gilbert Laurie.

#### CAMMERAYGAL HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:58):** On 30 July, I had the honour of attending celebrations to mark the tenth anniversary of Cammeraygal High School. I express my congratulations and appreciation for the contributions this young school has made to education in our community. Located in Crows Nest, the school takes its name directly from the original inhabitants of our area, the Cammeraygal people. The tenth anniversary celebrations featured a Winter Soiree with wonderful musical performances, and cake-cutting as well, in the West Street Campus Hall. It was a wonderful occasion for the school community to gather together with current and former staff, students, alumni and the broader community to celebrate and reflect on the many successes of the past decade. I thank Cammeraygal's hardworking and successful principal, Ms Kathy Melky, for her kind invitation. I am very proud of all that Cammeraygal High School has achieved in its first decade. I have every confidence that the school will continue to provide a high-quality education for the students of Willoughby.

#### RENTERS FORUM

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:59):** I draw to the attention of the House the great work of the Sydney Alliance, the Tenants' Union of NSW, Parramatta Mission and others hosting the Renters Forum in Parramatta last week. It was an opportunity for the Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, and me to hear firsthand the challenges that renters in Parramatta and across Greater Sydney are experiencing—challenges that, in Homelessness Week, really do bring home how close people live on the edge of homelessness, and the risk of homelessness when they do not have secure housing. Many people in our communities live in fear of what the future may bring. I give a big shout-out to those people that spoke honestly and openly about what they are experiencing in the renters market in Parramatta today.

#### GOSFORD MUSICAL SOCIETY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:00):** I was delighted to attend last week the gala night of the Gosford Musical Society production of *Shout! The Legend of The Wild One*, which is based on the life of Australian music legend John O'Keefe. As always, I am in awe of the talent we have on the Central Coast. We have awesome singing voices, talented dancers, great band players and very clever production and set designers, all of whom are, of course, volunteers. The cast did an excellent job telling the tale of John O'Keefe's life, from his start in 1957 in a local band, rising to become a major figure in establishing rock-and-roll and pop music in Australia with a series of hit records and performances. He supported some of the greatest names of the rock era, including Buddy Holly, Little Richard, Chuck Berry and the Platters. Even though John O'Keefe's popularity was well before my time, I was surprised at how many of the songs I could sing along to during the performance, which just proves how popular they were and how they made an impression on our lives. Well done to the Gosford

Musical Society for a truly amazing production and a great night. I look forward to attending future productions, including the upcoming one at the Laycock Street Theatre.

*Private Members' Statements*

**LANE COVE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (17:01):** I speak today about the Community Building Partnership grants program. I have had the pleasure of visiting and thanking many community organisations that have been successful in receiving funding under the most recent round of that great program. There were many worthy applications across the electorate of Lane Cove and I was pleased to inform hardworking volunteers that their applications had been successful. A great example of a worthy recipient is Sydney Community Services. Based in Lane Cove, the not-for-profit organisation strives to ensure our seniors and most vulnerable community members live a quality and independent life. Its CEO, Branka Ivkovic, and a great team of volunteers deliver 2,000 meals a month. To house those meals, they need good freezers but, unfortunately, theirs had become faulty. I am delighted to see them receive \$32,500 for four high-quality freezers to keep those meals going.

The Community Building Partnership grant also supports our sporting clubs and can be the difference between fees being raised or training programs being scrapped. I am thankful to see the Hunters Hill Tennis Club supported with a \$15,000 grant to refurbish its clubhouse. The club is the oldest lawn tennis club in continuous existence in Australia. We are blessed with great waterways in Lane Cove and I am glad to see that the North Shore Rowing Club, Concord and Ryde Sailing Club and Lane Cove 12ft Sailing Skiff Club received grants. Those clubs in particular run fantastic learn to sail or learn to row programs and I am thrilled that such initiatives continue to be supported.

I also want to thank the hardworking P&C associations for constantly striving to improve our schools. Greenwich Public School and Lane Cove Public School will receive new shade covers and Hunters Hill High School will receive \$50,000 for a new outdoor sports and recreation centre. Christ Church Gladesville Preschool will receive over \$50,000 for safety enhancements to its playground. Girl Guides, the fantastic organisation for fostering leadership skills in confident young women, will receive almost \$9,000 to refurbish its hall at Blackman Park. Lastly, Link Wentworth housing will receive a much-needed upgrade to its community room.

Behind those good stories is the sad reality that more could have been done. Unfortunately, the Labor Government cut funding for the program by over \$9 million. Under the Coalition, each electorate received \$400,000, and even then many great projects could not be supported. The decision by Labor to cut funding means each electorate only receives \$300,000. Not only is there less money going around, but because of inflation and rising costs, particularly in the building and construction industry, the remaining money does not go as far. I would like to see the Community Building Partnership grants program strengthened with additional funds to keep doing the important work of improving local infrastructure across New South Wales. I call on Labor to stop finding ways to waste money and instead put it back in organisations that make the places we live in better.

**TRIBUTE TO BISHOP KEVIN MANNING**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:04):** It is with deep sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Bishop Kevin Manning, the second bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta. A much-loved local leader with a powerful commitment to social justice, Bishop Manning died peacefully on Monday 15 July 2024 aged 90. One of seven children, Bishop Manning grew up in Coolah, New South Wales. He left school at just 14 years of age to work and contribute to the family income. That hardship, and a desire to share what little he had with those in need, shaped his life of service to the community and his solidarity with the disadvantaged. He later undertook his studies for the priesthood at St Columba's Catholic College in Springwood before being selected to study at the Propaganda Fide college in Rome, where he was ordained in 1961.

Prior to his appointment as a second bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Manning served as a priest of the diocese in Bathurst, then as assistant secretary and secretary to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in Canberra, as well as the eighth bishop of the Armidale diocese in New South Wales. He was known as a no-nonsense, straight-down-the-line country priest focused on what was right and just, who was not lured by the trappings of office or power. On 10 July 1997 Bishop Manning was appointed as the second bishop of Parramatta and installed in the Morley Centre at Parramatta Marist High School. He diligently served as bishop until his retirement in March 2010 and was often seen jogging in Parramatta Park, where he got to know many members of the local homeless community, providing them with meals and a friendly chat.

He is fondly remembered for his outreach to the marginalised and the poor. Bishop Manning is revered for leading the youngest diocese during a period of rapid growth. As more migrants and people chose to live in the western suburbs and the Blue Mountains, Bishop Manning oversaw the Parramatta diocese to become the fastest growing and one of the most multicultural dioceses in Australia, spanning seven local government areas and now



including 47 parishes, 80 Catholic schools and countless social service agencies. Bishop Manning is renowned for restoring the new St Patrick's Cathedral after a disastrous fire in 1996. In delivering the homily at Bishop Manning's funeral, Bishop Emeritus of Toowoomba Robert McGuckin shared that Bishop Manning was deeply moved when some of his homeless friends approached him with a collection they had gathered in support of rebuilding the cathedral.

Bishop Manning was dedicated to campaigning and advocating for justice for First Nations people, migrants, refugees, women, children, youth and workers. Bishop Manning was also notably the first bishop to reach out to the Muslim community in Western Sydney, aiming to foster relationships based on mutual respect, which he also employed with other Christian communities and faiths. Passionate about communication, Bishop Manning launched the monthly newspaper of the Diocese of Parramatta, *Catholic Outlook*, in 1998, writing in the first issue himself. Bishop Manning's dedication to equitable access to Catholic education is honoured through the Bishop Manning Support Fund. That initiative is continued by Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese to assist struggling families to make ends meet with support with school needs such as uniforms, textbooks and technology. We acknowledge Bishop Manning's years of dedication to social justice and to the people of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, where he has left behind an unforgettable legacy. Vale, Bishop Manning.

### JASON NEWPORT

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:08):** I acknowledge my constituent Jason Newport, who served with the NSW Rural Fire Service for 16 years, although not in my area. He was deputy senior captain in the Taree district and served in the 2019-20 bushfires. I acknowledge his service, for which he has received commendations. I want to talk about his experience living with injuries, which he says have been compounded by his service with the Rural Fire Service.

Mr Newport was diagnosed with lung and bowel cancer as well as brain tumours after the bushfires of 2020. I acknowledge the counselling that he received through the Rural Fire Service chaplain at the time, which assisted him in making a compensation claim. In addition to the cancers that I have already referred to, Mr Newport claimed workers compensation for melanoma. As members would be aware, under section 19A of the Worker Compensation Act 1987 and section 10A of the Workers Compensation (Bush, Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1997, certain cancers are presumed to have occurred as a result of volunteer firefighting, undertaking authorised duties.

As part of the presumptive legislation, the claimed cancers need to be confirmed as primary cancers and be one of 12 specified cancers. Regrettably, Mr Newport's treating specialists were not able to make that diagnosis. Further assessment identified that the melanoma was a primary metastatic melanoma, originally diagnosed in 2017, making the lung and bowel cancer and brain tumour secondary to his condition. Understandably, Mr Newport was disappointed with his experience of the workers compensation system, and he feels there has been a strong link with his service as a member of the Rural Fire Service, under trying conditions, and his current physical condition.

His experience, as he relayed it to me, was quite traumatic. He had surgery. He then was on immunotherapy. For a short time, he ended up in the palliative care unit of one of the Newcastle hospitals. That was not a pleasant experience, as Mr Newport did not have family connections in Newcastle. He was away from the people he knew in Taree. Because of the damage to his health, due to these medical conditions, he can no longer serve with the Rural Fire Service. That brought him to my area, and I am pleased to have him as a constituent and to try to help him through his experience.

I have provided advice to Mr Newport on avenues still available to him to appeal through the workers compensation system. I understand that, following my representations, the RFS commissioner has contacted Mr Newport personally, thanked him for his service and offered to provide any further assistance that the Rural Fire Service can. I am aware of the good work of the Rural Fire Service Association throughout the State. However, knowing the isolation that Mr Newport has experienced since his service with his condition and moving house, I suggest that there is an opportunity for the association to reach out more to former members, especially those members who suffer medically, to stand by them through their journey. I will continue to work with Jason. I am proud to have him as a member of my community. On behalf of The Entrance community and, I am sure, this Parliament, I again thank him for his service. I will continue to do what I can to see him get justice for his service.

### TWEED ELECTORATE EVENTS

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:13):** The days may be shorter and the nights colder than we are normally used to in the glorious Tweed, but that has not stopped the winter months brimming with events

showcasing the many qualities of this great community we call home. In late June I visited the Tweed Unlimited Arts exhibition at Banora Point. It was a special midyear open weekend that showcased pieces from very talented artists we have in the Tweed. The exhibition featured art demonstrations, wheel throwing and spinning, and wheeling displays. This year was its fifty-third year of operation in bringing fabulous arts and crafts to the Tweed shire. The group does some amazing work. I congratulate Tweed Unlimited Arts.

During the Parliament's winter recess, the Tweed celebrated NAIDOC Week, and I was honoured to attend the official opening and flag raising of the Tweed Heads NAIDOC Week 2024 celebrations. Held at the Minjungbal cultural museum complex, the service was attended by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community, Tweed Shire Council representatives and members of the local police force. It was a poignant commencement to a wonderful week of celebrating and recognising the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This year's theme was "Keep the fire burning! Blak, loud and proud". It celebrates the unyielding spirit of Indigenous communities and invites all to stand in solidarity, to amplify the voices that have long been silenced. My wife, Kirstin, and I were proud to join the NAIDOC Week march from Tweed Heads north to Jack Evans Boat Harbour, where the Tweed march met the mob from Queensland at the border.

Last month I was privileged to lay a wreath at the inaugural Middle East Area of Operations Commemoration service on 11 July at Rowan Robinson Park in Kingscliff. The remembrance service was held in honour of the dedication and sacrifice of our armed forces personnel who served in the Middle East between 2001 and 2021. The Rowan Robinson Park was named after a young fellow who lost his life while serving in the Australian Defence Force in Afghanistan. Kingscliff RSL Sub-Branch president Russell Maddalena gave an incredibly moving address about his time serving in the Middle East. His reflections personalised the experience of our returned service men and women. I thank all those who served and continue to serve our beautiful country. We are forever in their debt.

In mid-July, on a sunny Tweed winter's day, I attended the official opening of the upgrades of the Captain Cook Memorial and Lighthouse. Located at Point Danger, which was named by Captain Cook on his 1770 journey up the coast to warn mariners of dangerous coral reefs off the coast, the upgrades were undertaken as a joint venture between City of Gold Coast, Tweed Shire Council and the State Government, as the lighthouse also marks the border between New South Wales and Queensland. The headland holds considerable cultural significance for the Bundjalung Aboriginal people of the Tweed Valley, who refer to it as "Chubbo" or "Ngagambi", which means "black dingo". I was delighted to see the renowned Bundjalung-Yugambeh artist Christine Slabb, who was commissioned to create storyboards to explain the significance of the site. This can be seen embedded in the stonework on the top viewing deck and inside the Black Dingo Cafe.

The \$6.5 million upgrade was required after the lighthouse was found to be affected by concrete cancer, which compromised the structural integrity of the building. The upgrade will provide longevity to the 53-year-old building, which will provide improved state-of-the-art facilities for Marine Rescue, whose volunteers ensure the safety of ocean-going vessels at sea that cross the Tweed River bar to the south of Point Danger headland. It is one of the most dangerous coastal bars in New South Wales. Two lives were unfortunately lost at the bar only recently. Clearly, the Tweed does not slow down in the winter months. We have been able to enjoy and appreciate several memorable and significant events in my electorate. It continues to flow. I inform the House that, unfortunately, overnight a baby humpback whale passed away and washed up on our coastline. It is very sad but it does occur. We are also visited by a number of great whites at this time of the month—people have lost their lives to them in the past. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed, even in the winter months.

### FAIRFIELD CONNECT

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (17:17):** Last year I spoke of the need for changing the educational landscape of Fairfield, specifically because only one in five people in Fairfield has a tertiary education qualification. When that is nested with high unemployment, low income and significant economic and social stress, it is clear we need to do more. I am pleased to report to this House that we now have a university footprint in Fairfield. The Fairfield Connect Western Sydney University hub, located on the ground floor of Fairfield City Central, is a game changer for local students and residents.

It offers a range of crucial services and facilities designed to support educational aspirations and career development. These include modern study spaces, computers, videoconferencing facilities, free wi-fi, enrolment support and future student engagement workshops. This hub will make a difference; this hub will change lives. I urge those seeking to further their education to please visit Fairfield Connect. It is open to the public, including high school and university students. Special mention must also go to Chris Bowen and Jason Clare for their strong contributions via the Federal Government that made this hub a reality. This is just the first step in bolstering tertiary education in Fairfield. I look forward to the endless possibilities we will pursue tomorrow.

### WOLLONDILLY SHIRE COUNCIL

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (17:19):** The date of 14 September will mark the end of my time as a councillor on Wollondilly Shire Council—a time that I have enjoyed, but a time during which I have also been frustrated, to be honest. Since 2004 I have represented the community of North Ward and the wider Wollondilly area as deputy mayor and mayor, along with a very eclectic group of people who also call Wollondilly home. There are too many staff, councillors and community members to mention all in one single speech that covers 20 years—so much so that this speech will comprise just a few memories of mine from 2004 until 2016. I will wait to comment on those councillors who retire or are not elected after the election. Even if those councillors have not given me respect over years, their position and their community support deserves respect.

I hope that, on reflection, some of the councillors with whom I currently work think about their actions and change the way they act towards their colleagues in future. The best way to speak about some of my many campaigns on council is to focus on who was with me at the time and how, together, our band of independent-thinking heroes that I have been able to call my friends have taken the voice of the small communities in Wollondilly all the way to the halls of Canberra, and Macquarie Street in Sydney. In 2004 the world was a different place. The growth would come later to Wollondilly. But our concerns about our infrastructure needs started with battles, together with Peta Seaton, for a maternity ward at Camden Hospital. While we lost that campaign, I formed many relationships.

I started to speak to farmers and community members like Will D'Arcy, Caroline Graham and Julie Sheppard about their concerns around a new thing called fracking. The movement against coal seam gas [CSG] would lead to a battle for our land and rights in Wollondilly. I went down the river with Rivers SOS and saw the flames that were lit by bubbles on the water's surface that had risen from the mines far below. As mayor, I needed to defend the area from other things too. A joke song, *Picton Girls*, was released by Merrick and Rosso, which, while light hearted, said some terrible things about our community. I was not afraid to take up my concerns with them both, and their apology to the community was worth the effort.

During the election in 2008 I first met with a young man who would later become a friend, Benn Banasik. Together with Jai Rowell in Campbelltown and the new leader of the Opposition at the time, Barry O'Farrell, we fought against the gas-fired power plant at Leaf's Gully in Appin and the connected CSG projects that would have spread through my community. Wollondilly is home to our drinking water. Together, we stopped that plant. Benn was a bit of a radical at the time. He was unpredictable. Knowing him now, it is funny to look back on him saying that he would like to handcuff himself to me and the fence at Bargo tip to stop it from being closed. Another friend of mine, Shane Read—whom we sadly lost too early—was happy to step in. He was even keen to provide the handcuffs. I am not sure where he would have got them from, but I will not go there. Shane is probably looking down on us, smiling from the pearly gates, waiting for Benn and me to join him—with his handcuffs.

There were sad moments too. The deaths on Picton Road were terrible. We were fortunate to have State and Federal elections at the time. I worked with my friend and the then member for Wollondilly, Phil Costa, to get funding commitments. Through Benn and Jai we managed to speak to Barry O'Farrell to get that extra commitment. Back and forth it went for many months, and more funding was promised to fix the road. The final amount of funding came when we had a visit from the then Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott. Benn did not tell the old mayor, Col Mitchell, that Tony would turn up in lycra. The photos of the line-up of Liberals, with Tony in lycra, looked ridiculous, but it was a good show in the end—and, at the end of the day, we won.

We also worked together to find some funny ways to win. Benn and I helped get a slight upgrade to the Pheasants Nest shed. The upgrade was actually a whole new shed built over the top of the old one, saving the need for a development application at the time. They were different times. While we had those wins, not everything was easy. The placement of the Outer Sydney Orbital is still uncertain, which has concerned residents. Likewise, the Maldon-Dombarton corridor, which I have protected, sits incomplete—a lost opportunity. However, I did win the pumpkin growing competition—little wins, I suppose. A more lasting win was in the infrastructure upgrades to fields, halls and walkways during my time on council. It would be wrong to take credit for them all on my own as many voices were needed to bring them about. One of my fondest memories was of Livvi's Place. My friend Sandra Harlor, who is often overlooked for all the good she does in the community—I think she is the real mayor of Warragamba—created the inclusive park.

### PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:24):** The Pacific Highway upgrade through Wyong Town Centre is a project that has been in planning since around 2009. During that time, many options were looked at. There were two bypass options, a centre corridor through the town, and a cut-out or tunnel through the town as well. A range of options were looked at, but the

final decision was to create four lanes through the town, do up the railway station and improve commuter and public transport access. The community was comfortable with that plan. While some planning detail needed to happen, we hoped that it would move forward. With the election of the Minns Labor Government, together with Federal member for Dobell, Emma McBride, we finally secured significant funds to push the project towards construction.

Emma was able to fast-track \$80 million, along with the \$219 million that was allocated by the New South Wales Government in the last budget. There were smiles on people's faces after all those years. It looked like things were going to move ahead at speed but, as happens with these projects, final detailed planning began. They started doing test drilling and geotechnical studies and came back to us with a redraft of key features of the plan, which has caused a lot of concern to the community and me. Originally, public transport access into the town centre itself would be oriented through Alison Road, which leads to a number of shops, the central Wyong plaza, and then on to the high school and TAFE.

In 2015 it was envisaged that a pedestrian bridge would provide access to the station. After the planning came back—it has gone out on public display and people were asked to put in their comments; I encourage people to put in a submission—one significant change was made, which was to move pedestrian access down to Church Street on the next block. So older people now have to use the lights, walk across the road and then up two hills to get to those different shops and services from the station. It simply does not make sense. Community members, people with disabilities, the elderly and shopkeepers have contacted me to say they hope Transport for NSW listens and returns to the original plan, which we agreed upon in 2015.

I add weight to those calls to return to the original plan. I agree with the community that the new plan has a lot of disadvantages. While an overhead pedestrian bridge will not have to be built—which would save some money—the inconvenience to local residents who use the station does not make sense. I will put in a submission, and I encourage all members of the community who are concerned to put in a submission as well. I spoke to the Transport for NSW regional director, Anna Zycki, to express our concerns. She encouraged us to put in submissions. Of course I will let the Minister know that the community preference is for the original pedestrian access plan and not the new access point.

I hope that commonsense prevails. I do not want the project slowed down, because 14 years is a long time to wait. Some \$40 million has already been spent on planning alone, although some of that included purchasing some land and some buildings. But we really need to get on with this. We need to get it resolved as soon as possible in a way the community is happy with, because it has waited a long time. We need to get on with the project, and we need the right outcome.

### FOREST AREA BUS SERVICES

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:29):** Tonight I advocate for fixing our Forest buses. The Forest bus service covers the suburbs of Davidson, Belrose, Frenchs Forest and Forestville. As Forest commuters know, the bus service has become completely unreliable. It must be so frustrating to have buses cancelled or drive past full. Commuters have almost no choice other than to hop in a car, which causes further congestion on our roads. It is just not good enough, and our community deserves better. Every week Parliament sits, I ask the Minister for Transport questions on notice about cancellation rates. I thank the Minister for sharing the statistics and shining a light on the bus service that is meant to be provided by CDC. It is about making sure that the Minister and Transport for NSW are aware of the statistics to ensure that CDC is held to account.

The contract should be an ironclad agreement. I note the following statistics shared by the Minister about services that were cancelled in region 14—which covers a larger region than just the Forest, but they still paint a concerning picture. In March 1,349 services were cancelled; in April, 132; in May, 466; and in June, 484. There have been improvements from the high figure in March, but there is still a long way to go. To keep the pressure on CDC and to ensure that Transport for NSW does likewise, I have started a community petition about the service cuts to advocate for reliability. I thank the 191 people who have signed my petition, which commenced only in late June, and the 1,502 people who signed the petition that was commenced at the start of the year by Virginia Johnstone. I thank her. I will read some of the comments from my petition. They include:

There have been significant bus cancellations lately, which is impacting about ability to get to the city for work.

Bus service in Belrose, Frenchs Forest have severely declined. Myself and others now clog the roads by driving to work due to the unreliable/non existent service.

The bus problem in the Frenchs Forest has gone on too long. Complaints from residents are not resulting in noticeable change. CDC needs to be held to account for not delivering a reliable and essential service to residents.

I am tired of full buses going past my stop in peak hour

Sometimes I arrive at the bus stop a few minutes early, but it turns out that the bus has left ahead of schedule. I understand that it is important to arrive early, but they shouldn't leave early.

The number of cancellations mean it's impossible to rely on buses to get to work. Private bus companies need to be held to account by Govt.

I completely agree. Before anyone accuses the former Liberal Government of privatising buses in this area, I am happy to confirm that private bus companies have always serviced the Forest area. This includes Royle Brothers, which was founded in 1930 and renamed Forest Coach Lines in 1964. CDC became the new contract holder in May 2023, under the Labor Government.

I call on the Labor Government and the Minister for Transport to undertake the following. First, they should release the Bus Industry Taskforce's final report, which I understand is being considered by Cabinet. When that report is finalised they should be able to implement its recommendations. I understand that when you are in opposition and you put a policy forward, you do not have all the resources of government at hand. The Bus Industry Taskforce was about diagnosing the problems, getting expert advice and then implementing recommendations, so I look forward to those recommendations being implemented. The second point is to recruit more bus drivers. Lack of drivers is a part of the overall skills shortage that has occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to support frontline workers, including bus drivers. They do an amazing job under difficult circumstances. I am in favour of doing anything we can to support existing bus drivers and attract new drivers.

Finally, the Government should hold CDC to account and ensure that it fulfils its contract arrangements. This should include disincentives or penalties for unreliable or cancelled bus services. Finally, I say to the commuters, residents and constituents of the Forest area—as I said in my first speech in this place—that I will work hard and advocate passionately for them. Together as a community, we can help fix our buses. We need to put pressure on the Government to hold the company to account and make sure we are getting the services that we rely on, that we need and that as a community we deserve.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (17:34):** I acknowledge the member for Davidson and his contribution and strong advocacy on behalf of the good people of his electorate. As a cancer survivor, I want to let his community know that he is a great member. It is wonderful to see him back in the Chamber and fighting fit.

#### AUSTRALIA-KOREA TRADE

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:35):** My electorate of Strathfield is a real hub of Korean culture, food and business activity. It has one of the largest proportions of Korean residents in the State. But it is not only about fried chicken, K-pop or K-drama; there is a tremendous opportunity for increased collaboration, investment and trade between Korea and New South Wales and Australia. I was fortunate and excited to be invited to visit the Republic of Korea by Chungnam National University, one of Korea's top universities, to look at how we improve this collaboration. It was fantastic. Arriving there, it was interesting to compare our two countries. Korea has a population of 52 million, which is almost exactly double the population of Australia. Our GDP is almost exactly the same, at about \$1.7 trillion. However, the GDP per capita in Korea is about US\$34,000 per person. In Australia, it is about \$65,000 per person. We are wealthier per capita here in Australia.

But what really struck me is something that has underpinned the Australian-Korean trade and investment relationship for a number of decades since the establishment of diplomatic relations: the high complementarity between our economies. Korea is a high-technology, advanced manufacturing nation that is heavily driven by exports. We all know the big brands—the names like Hyundai and Kia in automobiles, and Samsung and LG in consumer electronics. The Australian economy, however, is buttressed by our exports of natural resources, as well as by our burgeoning service industries. That has been the pillar of the Australian-Korean trade and investment relationship so far. It makes sense. It is the traditional, usual sort of trade relationship that Australia has with its Asian neighbours. We export our natural resources as well as our services, and international education is also really important. In return, we import high-tech manufactured goods from Korea.

It is time to think about how we deepen that relationship and take it to the next phase, where there is greater integration through the investment of equity capital—Australian firms in Korea and Korean firms in Australia—and where there is the mixing and integration of management capability and, importantly, technology. A framework for thinking about this cooperation is how Korea helps Australia to meet our national challenges, such as solving the housing crisis or, importantly, a big national challenge such as how we achieve the energy transition we need in order to hit net zero by 2050. The same thing applies to New South Wales. We have ambitious energy transition targets. We have legislated targets to reduce emissions in New South Wales by 50 per cent by 2030 and by 70 per cent by 2035, and of course to reach net zero by 2050.

I believe that we would benefit greatly from the sort of advanced research and development in renewable energy technology and hydrogen technology that the Republic of Korea is developing now. Korea spends approximately 5.6 per cent of its GDP on research and development. Australia spends only 1.68 per cent of its GDP on research and development. In other words, Korea spends three times more than Australia on research and

development. We can do more, and I hope we will do more to attract Korean investment, Korean capability, Korean technology and Korean research and development to help our State meet the challenges we are facing in the energy transition, building new housing and bringing manufacturing back to New South Wales.

#### **DR AKRAM MALAK**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:40):** Not all heroes wear capes. For some, their capes are face masks, their weapons are stethoscopes, and their superpowers are healing a community for more than 20 years. In the little coastal village of South West Rocks, our hero is Dr Akram Malak. He does not wear a spandex suit or have a double identity, but Dr Malak is a proud man and the frontline hero for community health and wellbeing. Today I congratulate Dr Malak and his wife and practice manager, Waffa, on two decades of service. I thank Dr Malak for being a pillar of community, a reliable ear, a professional hand and, above all else, a friend. Dr Malak's journey began far from our Australian shores. In 1993 Dr Malak graduated from the University of Gezira, nestled in the heart of Sudan. That remarkable achievement led him to embark on a career dedicated to helping others.

For two years Dr Malak serviced the people of Sudan with diligence and care before his quest for knowledge and his calling to health took him to Egypt, where he spent the next seven years honing his craft and deepening his love for patient care. In 2002 Dr Malak made a monumental decision that brought him to the shores of our great country. That decision was not only a grand geographical shift but also a step towards a new community and a new home. In July 2004 Dr Malak's influence began taking root in our South West Rocks community. That chapter began at the Rocks Fair Medical Practice. His arrival marked more than the start of a medical practice; it marked the beginning of a transformative journey for many of us. Dr Malak created a hub, a place where we can trust a person wholeheartedly.

Dr Malak quickly became a cherished figure in the community and in August 2017 he undertook another significant milestone and turned a new leaf in his calling to health care when he opened the doors to a purpose-built, cutting-edge health facility called Seascope. Seascope was not only a medical facility in a small village that already struggled to acquire medical professionals; it was and is a symbol of Dr Malak's vision to create an integrated and accessible healthcare system. Seascope accommodates and provides comprehensive care with an emphasis on preventative health and patient-centred service. Dr Malak coordinated the build with the local physiotherapy company, podiatry company and pathologists. I have known Dr Malak and his wife since 2005 and have worked closely with him as a landlord, referrer and clinical practitioner dedicated to excellent medical care since co-locating my business to Seascope seven years ago.

Akram is genuinely loved and cherished by the whole South West Rocks community. On 1 July this year, with the help of his beautiful and supportive wife, Waffa, a room full of his most loyal patients and friends celebrated 20 years of Dr Malak's medical service to the South West Rocks community. What a night! Somehow, Waffa kept the secret right up until Dr Malak's appearance in his scrubs. Of course, he did go home and change. Dr Malak is a humble hero who does not want any praise. In his view, the pleasure is all his. He is blind to the benefit he brings to our local area. What a leader; what a man.

As I celebrate Dr Malak's 20 years of service, I acknowledge not only his medical expertise but also his role as a friend, neighbour and hero to Macleay Valley. His dedication has been a source of comfort and strength, and his influence has reached far beyond the consultation room. His journey from Sudan to Egypt, and ultimately to South West Rocks, is a testament to his unwavering commitment to the principles of care and service. As I reflect on Dr Malak's remarkable achievements, I recognise also the collaborative spirit that has supported his work. I thank his family, colleagues and the entire South West Rocks community. Together, they have built a foundation of health and wellbeing, strengthened by Dr Malak's vision and dedication. I congratulate him on this extraordinary milestone. I am grateful for Dr Malak and look forward to many more years of his impactful and dedicated service as an outstanding leader.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** That was a lovely tribute to a local GP and doctor. GPs make a huge difference to their communities, and we thank and value them all. I thank the member for Oxley for that beautiful tribute.

#### *Bills*

#### **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL) BILL 2024**

#### **Returned**

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

*Private Members' Statements***TRIBUTE TO BILL MCNAMARA**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:46):** Today I celebrate the remarkable life of Bill McNamara, whose unforgettable legacy is etched into the very fabric of Riverstone. Sadly, 96-year-old Bill passed away recently. Bill was born on 19 October 1927 in Riverstone, on a street known locally as Butchers Row. From an early age, he displayed the qualities of hard work, dedication and resilience that would define his life and career. Bill attended Riverstone Public School and later completed his secondary education at Auburn High School. Bill's father was killed when he was young. With his brothers Jack and Tommy away at war, Bill took on the responsibility of the family farm, demonstrating his commitment to family and community from a young age.

Bill's passion for building began during his school days. He was very handy with a hammer and would often repair structures on the farm. That led him to become an apprentice carpenter at the Riverstone Meatworks and attend Granville Technical College. With a shortage of men in town during the war, Bill helped out around the community while completing his trade. After World War II, Bill decided it was time to leave the meatworks and he transferred his apprenticeship to local builders Jim Hanney and Athol Rankin and set about building new homes. Barely a week after finishing his apprenticeship, Bill launched his own business and secured a contract to build a home for a local Riverstone family.

Bill's ambitions were underway, and he was dreaming big. He built homes, offices and factories, including his own office and joinery factory at the corner of Loftus Street and Riverstone Parade. He built the home of Mac's Hire, a beloved local business still thriving today. In 1960 a devastating fire consumed much of his factory, but Bill persevered and, in fact, stepped it up a gear. He rebuilt the factory and expanded the business to an office in Parramatta. He eventually created the McNamara Group, which became one of the biggest employers in the district. Always willing to give someone a start, Bill's only prerequisite was that an employee must be able to read. He has even been credited for funding reading courses when he saw raw potential.

Over the decades, Bill personally trained hundreds of apprentices, inspiring them with his big dreams and ideas. More than a few of his apprentices went on to become the heads of large building corporations, including Gremmo Homes and Deicorp. Bill built the Riverstone RSL club, the Riverstone Bowling Club, much of the RAAF Base Richmond, and various other large-scale developments. He left his mark on the district with Westpoint Shopping Centre in Blacktown, Riverstone Marketown, MarketPlace Leichhardt and the McNamara Centre in Parramatta. Bill was a true master builder in every sense of the word. His impact extended way beyond construction and he was an inspiration to all who met him.

Bill was a passionate advocate for the community, serving as chairman of St Gabriel's School for deaf children for 30 years. He was a trustee of Parramatta Stadium for 10 years, supporting his beloved Parramatta Eels, and chairman of the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board for four years. Yet his dedication to Riverstone was unwavering, earning him the Order of Australia Medal in 1985 for his significant contributions. Throughout his life, Bill remained deeply connected to Riverstone. He played rugby league for the Riverstone Razorbacks, served on the club's committee and later became its patron, dedicating his time to coaching junior teams. He was also responsible for building the footballers hall, a place that served as a hub for community events for many years. Bill's generosity to our community was unmatched both in time and in money. He touched every corner of our community.

Bill was a man who inspired others. Perhaps the most important thing he built was a community of respect and trust. His pride in his staff and their contributions to the success of the McNamara Group was immense. He valued each individual, recognising that their efforts were integral to his own achievements. His deep respect and gratitude both for his colleagues and employees was always evident. As Riverstone remembers Bill McNamara, we honour a man who helped build not only our structures but also our community. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations and his contributions to Riverstone will never be forgotten. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family—his beloved wife, Pat, and their six children—and all who were fortunate enough to know him. May we find comfort in the memories we shared with Bill and in the enduring impact of his life's work. Rest in peace, Bill. You will be deeply missed, but your legacy will live on in the heart of Riverstone.

**COOKS RIVER TITANS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (17:50):** I congratulate the Cooks River Titans Football Club on its tenth anniversary in the community. Established in 2014, the club was created to better utilise Gough Whitlam Park and provide an opportunity for young people in the communities of Rockdale, Marrickville and Canterbury to get involved in football. The club has worked closely with the Inner West Council, City of Canterbury Bankstown and Bayside Council. In its first year the club started with 282 players, forming 20 teams. Today the club is almost 500 players

strong, with 35 teams. The vision of the club is to create and foster a safe and family-friendly environment in which children and adults feel a strong sense of belonging, whether it be players, parents, carers, families, supporters, sponsors, staff or coaches. The amazing volunteers and committee members do an incredible job. If you go out to the ground you will get a great souvlaki or sausage sizzle. There is lots of fun there.

The club's focus on juniors is key. It is at this stage that children can develop more rapidly but, more importantly, understand and appreciate the fundamentals of sportsmanship, respect, camaraderie, teamwork, competition and simply having fun. The club strongly believes by creating this environment and providing these opportunities, the health and wellbeing of the children and, in turn, society will benefit. This mantra forms the family-friendly culture that the club is renowned for in the community and is the cornerstone of its growth and success. I thank the club for inviting me to its tenth anniversary celebration at the Tempe Hotel. The club has had a hugely positive impact on surrounding communities.

Tonight in the House I acknowledge the club's president, Nick Kambounias, who has worked relentlessly not only to increase the number of young people playing football but also, along with different groups in our community, to make sure that Gough Whitlam Park, Waterworth Park and surrounding areas are utilised by the footballers and our local natural environment is looked after. When Football Canterbury reached out to Nick to look at establishing the club, of course he and the committee said yes without hesitation. He said:

... it is not often you get the opportunity to start a brand new club but more importantly be part of something which can have such a huge positive impact on children and adults in terms of physical and mental health, as well as emotional and social wellbeing.

Although the club is surrounded by three huge, historic clubs that are between 75 and 100 years old, with player bases between 1,100 and 2,300 players, the Titans have managed to create a strong and respected club in a short space of time.

I am proud to be able to work with a community club that has such an important and fundamentally positive impact upon the youth in our community. I love seeing the joy and delight on the faces of the footballers, whether they are five years old or 50 years old, when they are out there being active during training. One of the Matildas games was screened at Gough Whitlam Park. The young kids were excited and inspired, especially the young girls. I thank the club for its efforts to engage young girls in sport. I have worked closely with the club, and will continue to do so for years to come, to secure funding through sports grants and community infrastructure grants and to advocate for investment in the local oval. I look forward to working with the club over the next 10 years.

### **WALLAROO SOLAR FARM**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:55):** Today I speak again on a recurrent theme. I am disappointed to discuss yet another proposed solar farm in the Goulburn electorate. I remind the House that the Goulburn electorate is not part of a New South Wales renewable energy zone. It is yet another project where the location picked is not optimal. Recently, Andrew Dyer, the former Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, conducted a review into energy infrastructure and made several recommendations, all of which have been accepted by the Federal Government. Notably, the recommendations included only selecting reputable developers for new project developments; only selecting the best project sites, avoiding poor and inappropriate sites; re-engineering the assessment and approval processes; introducing a new, relevant ombudsman scheme; ensuring governance to manage impacts and oversight of nationally significant projects; and identifying opportunities to enable sustainable benefit sharing in communities.

The Wallaroo Solar Farm has been proposed in complete contradiction of almost all of those recommendations. I detail my objection to the project on behalf of concerned constituents in the Goulburn electorate. Once again, we are seeing foreign-owned companies capitalising on an exposed Australian energy market. The land is to be leased by a joint venture of Spanish and Japanese entrepreneurs, along with New Energy Development, which misleadingly promotes itself as "an Australian renewable energy project developer". But a little digging reveals the deceptive nature of that claim, which uses the word "Australian" to mask its foreign ownership. I am troubled that the department may not have thoroughly considered the character and history of the individuals involved in the development, nor the likely consequences.

The proposed site is located in an area of significant agricultural importance. Wallaroo is renowned for its microclimate, which produces award-winning wines. For the department to suggest that those soils have little agricultural potential is an insult to the thriving vineyards and flourishing tourism in the area, all of which significantly contribute to the New South Wales economy. I have said time and again that my electorate of Goulburn is already saturated with renewable energy projects. Furthermore, a waste-to-energy incinerator is proposed to burn Sydney's rubbish in the villages in my electorate. That will directly impact not only those communities but also the viability of the surrounding agricultural and vineyard businesses. The Transgrid HumeLink project, one of New South Wales' largest infrastructure ventures, will connect those renewable energy projects. Adding to that, the proposed Gundary Solar Farm, Merino Solar Farm and Wallaroo Solar Farm are in



my electorate. It feels as if almost every day my office is contacted by constituents who are negatively affected in one way or another by corporate cowboys looking for a government-subsidised project with little genuine care for the communities.

I raise the matter again in this House because the New South Wales Government must truly consider the impacts that the projects are having on my electorate. This is not a case of "not in my backyard" because we have them in our backyard. We have heard all the benefits promised. We have seen just how short the promises fall. I have landholders who have leased their farms only to have their biosecurity rules breached by contractors who either do not know any better or will claim not to. I have contractors who are undoubtedly used as planning ammunition by multinationals to ensure that their multimillion-dollar projects get approved because they will employ hundreds of locals only for a local contractor to receive a \$50,000 job and then never be paid, which has happened on numerous occasions. Pledging job creation and economic growth to get their approval, the corporation is sold and the asset passed to another owner.

I urge the Government to consider the effects of the projects and to advocate for energy solutions that are compatible with communities. There must be an approach that respects our environment, supports our farmers and ensures a sustainable future for our community. I call on the Government to adopt the recommendations of the commissioner, review the planning framework and take a more pragmatic approach to what is becoming a nightmare for communities. We must stop ignoring communities. We must stop ignoring local government concerns, and we need to make sure that this energy transition is done in a pragmatic way. We cannot rely on neighbourhood agreements that silence people by offering large amounts of cash to overlook noise, traffic and environmental impacts. That is happening. I call on the Government to consider the planning framework around these renewable energy projects for the benefit of all communities.

### WASTE-TO-ENERGY INCINERATORS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:00):** As a member who represents a regional area, I am always ready to raise issues that affect regional communities. I speak to make sure we are not overlooked, disregarded or, even worse, used as a dumping ground for problems that cannot be solved in the city. In this instance, I speak about the urgent issue of waste incinerators. I fully support my local communities who have said no to waste-to-energy—also known as polluting—incinerators in my regional areas. I stand in good company on the issue. Last year the Country Women's Association [CWA] adopted a policy at its New South Wales conference to advocate for the New South Wales Government to rescind its decision to establish waste-to-energy incinerators. The CWA instead called for the immediate introduction of technology and waste reduction programs that use methods that minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the current New South Wales Energy from Waste Infrastructure Plan from 2021, there are four proposed sites in New South Wales and all in regional areas—Richmond Valley, Parkes, South Goulburn near the Australian Capital Territory and West Lithgow. Members may remember that a few years ago a proposal for an incinerator in Western Sydney attracted a lot of opposition from the community. The Department of Planning received more than 600 submissions on that project, and only four were supportive. That Western Sydney project was withdrawn.

One has to ask why an incinerator is okay for a regional area and not for the city, especially when the supporters of the incinerators insist the emissions will be filtered so that only clean air is produced—ha-ha! If the technology is as clean and safe and wonderful as the supporters would have us believe, why not build one in the North Shore, in the eastern suburbs or in the CBD? That is discrimination by postcode. I note that the Australian Capital Territory Government has banned waste-to-energy technology. I note that some of the Territory's residents are ready to campaign against the South Goulburn proposed site because of concerns that the pollution will affect them. If it is not okay for the people of the Australian Capital Territory, then it is not okay for the people of regional New South Wales.

At a seminar last year distinguished scientist and doctor from the Richmond Valley Dr Jurriaan Beek, OAM, presented a comprehensive analysis of the danger of incinerators. His report is conclusive that there need to be better ways to solve waste problems. Some of his points were as follows. According to United States Environmental Protection Agency data, municipal waste is made up of approximately 22 per cent carbon. So a waste incinerator would be pumping out significant levels of carbon pollution. The chimney stack releases not only carbon dioxide but also a toxic soup of gas, including dioxins, oxides of nitrogen, carbon, sulphur and chlorine. The remaining ash contains—among other things—lead, chrome, arsenic, mercury, cadmium, lithium et cetera.

The leftover ash is made up of heavy ash, which remains and creates disposal problems, and fly ash, which goes up the chimney, with a percentage escaping into the atmosphere. There will be an accumulation of toxins in the soil and water, which will be absorbed by grass-eating animals and contaminate eggs, honey, meat, rainwater

et cetera. We do not want dioxins in the food chain via farm produce, our water supply and the air we breathe. In 2021 in *Renew Economy* online magazine journalist Michael Mazengarb said this of the Berejiklian Government:

In a bid to foster new ways of managing the state's growing waste problem, the NSW government will effectively push controversial waste-to-energy incineration projects out of Sydney and into regional areas – but could still face community opposition.

Opposition was faced then and it is faced now. The community opposition has continued under both governments. I am here as part of that community opposition, along with the CWA—I am in good company on this one—and all those in regional areas who want to see jobs growth in clean industries. We want economic development but not at the cost of our farms, water, biodiversity and health. I think it is clear that I oppose this incinerator.

### ALBURY ELECTORATE SOLAR FARMS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:05):** A few weeks ago, in the depths of the Albury winter and with temperatures dropping well below freezing, 90-year-old East Albury man Colin visited my office looking for ways to reduce his power bills. Soaring utility bills are leaving their mark on the vulnerable and elderly, with many needing to make a hard choice, weighing up whether they can afford to switch on their electric heater or they go cold. Whilst everyone can agree that the cost-of-living pressures for many are extremely high, one of the most polarising issues in recent years in the Greater Hume Council area is the emergence of solar farm developers in the region. That has been a challenge for the communities of Walla Walla, Culcairn, Glenellen, Jindera and, most recently, Morven, as they grapple with the prospect of multiple solar farms across the landscape for no greater reason than the presence of high-voltage powerlines.

The question is whether the burden being shouldered by those small farming communities is fair or equitable. With the New South Wales Government setting a target of generating 12 gigawatts of renewable energy and creating two gigawatts of long-term storage by 2030, it is an important question to answer. In 2019 the former New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government established renewable energy zones as part of the State's Electricity Strategy. The aim was to build a bigger, stronger, cleaner and more reliable energy grid, while also driving down the cost of electricity for consumers like Colin. Known as REZs, five locations were selected—New England, Hunter-Central Coast, Central-West Orana, Illawarra and South West. Those sites were selected based on their abundance of high-quality wind and solar resources, proximity to existing and planned high-voltage powerlines, relative land-use compatibility, regulatory compliance and coordinated development, laying the path for a strong pipeline of proposed projects. All the zones, grouping new wind and solar power generation projects, are now in the planning phase, requiring additional transmission infrastructure. The Transgrid website states:

REZ development goes beyond infrastructure; it incorporates active engagement with communities to foster collaboration and inclusivity. In NSW, strategic planning is grounded in up-to-date data and involves coordinated community consultation to facilitate the integrated development of these zones.

I emphasise that consideration needs to be given to the impact on communities living within these REZs. To date, making use of the renewable energy zones has been impeded by the challenge of how the sector taps into our wider power grid. As energy policy expert and founder of Nexa Advisory Stephanie Bashir warns, "Transmission is the missing link." These comments from Ms Bashir highlight why we must start capitalising on Transgrid's \$2.3 billion EnergyConnect project. That high-voltage interconnector is dubbed the energy superhighway. The project—the largest of its kind in Australia—will see constructed a 700-kilometre transmission line from Wagga Wagga to the South Australian border, including through the Albury electorate, to the north of Urana. Construction on the project has started and, with the interconnector passing across the State's South West Renewable Energy Zone, this is where we need to start locating our solar farms.

I welcome the establishment of a committee inquiry in the Legislative Council this week to examine the impact of renewable energy zones on rural and regional communities and industries in New South Wales. This committee will inquire and report back on the current and projected socioeconomic, cultural, agricultural and environmental impacts of projects within renewable energy zones in New South Wales, including the cumulative impacts. While renewable energy is a necessary part of our transition to a more sustainable future, it is equally clear that we must approach this transition thoughtfully and inclusively. This includes genuine engagement with communities within renewable energy zones.

Ensuring we have the right processes and consultation in these REZs is necessary to reduce the burden on farming communities such as those within Greater Hume, with the placement of further renewables directed to where the Government has strategically assessed they would best be placed. If the Government fails on this task, we risk the shift to renewables being, in the words of NSW Farmers President Xavier Martin, a "headlong, gung-ho, unholy rush, full of illogical decisions that lack commonsense". Like Colin, we cannot afford that.

## GRANVILLE ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:10):** This week is Public Education Week. I place on the record some of the incredible things happening in public education in the Granville electorate. I congratulate the fantastic former principal of Merrylands High School, Lila Mularczyk, on her well-deserved recognition as an outstanding advocate for public education at the Public Education Awards on Monday night. Lila was a transformational principal at Merrylands for over 15 years of her 40-year public education career. It was great to see so many of her former colleagues who are still at the school, including principal Amika Prasad, the deputies and other teachers, come along to celebrate Lila's award—seven years after she left the school. That says a lot about her impact there.

There are great things happening at the schools in Granville. I will start with our local high schools. For the first time ever, Granville Boys High School has a waiting list and has absolutely transformed in recent years under Principal Noel Dixon and his predecessor Dr Linda O'Brien. The school achieved remarkable HSC results last year, and not just for boys in the selective stream. They have a robotics team, the Granbots, which has competed in the United States of America many times now. This year the Granbots was the only Australian team and finished fourteenth out of 84. The school has won the Bachar Houli Cup. It is the only New South Wales public school with a pipe band, in addition to its fantastic Arabic drumming group and the Pacific Islands dance group. The annual Eid dinner is an absolute highlight, and this year the school raised \$10,000 to support people suffering in Gaza through Médecins Sans Frontières and Human Appeal.

Merrylands High School has held a wonderful Harmony Day concert every year to showcase the cultural diversity of the school. The school's dance ensemble has performed at the Synergy Dance Festival, at Our Spectacular and even at the opening of the Merrylands Civic Square last year. Merrylands High offers school-based apprenticeships and exposure to a wide range of TAFE and university opportunities. Merrylands even has its own school podcast.

Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School has about 10 per cent of its student population in the CAPA stream and offers great opportunities. The school band is incredibly talented and loves performing in the Opera House as part of Our Spectacular. The new principal, Joumana Youssef, is making a profound impact. The school celebrates NAIDOC week every year and this year, for the first time, held a wonderful Harmony Day concert. The dance group has performed at the In the Spotlight Dance Festival. The school also supports students to start apprenticeships while they are still at school through the TAFE educational pathways program and the Start Your Future access courses. Granville South has some amazing former students, including former Wallaby Tatafu Polota-Nau and, more recently, the super talented R'n'B star, A.Girl, whose first single *2142* in 2019 put her and Granville on everyone's radar. And that is just the high schools—our local public primary schools are doing great work, too.

Hilltop Road Public School holds fantastic celebrations for the entire school community for Ramadan and Diwali, and it has a massive Christmas carols event every year. It is wonderful to see families from Christian, Hindu and Muslim backgrounds all celebrating festivals together. Hilltop Road always sends the school leaders to the Merrylands RSL Sub-Branch's Anzac Day dawn service and works closely with them so the students understand the sacrifices made by service men and women. Granville South Public School has an impressive partnership with the Australian Children's Music Foundation, providing a trained early career music teacher to work with the students and, more importantly, their classroom teachers to teach music.

Blaxcell Street Public School has Arabic classes and the students also attend the Sydney Writer's Festival, as does Merrylands East Public School, which also has a lovely veggie patch and ducks, and was one of the first schools to install solar panels and water tanks. It also recently unveiled a great mural dedicated to its neighbour, Aboriginal Elder Uncle David Williams, who is a navy veteran. Merrylands Public School has introduced a beautiful Aboriginal artwork uniform designed by Daren Dunn. Westmead Public School has installed a yarnning circle as well as some stunning Aboriginal art murals around the school, ensuring the students, many of whom are new to Australia, learn about our traditional owners. Academically, it is a high-performing school. It also performs in Our Spectacular and has a community hub onsite, which has been a huge support to mothers who have recently arrived in Australia and who could otherwise be quite isolated when their husbands are at work and children are at school.

Granville Public School also has a fantastic community hub for the families of students and, like Westmead, it has been great for connecting the school community. The Holroyd School for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities from kindergarten to year 12 has an incredibly supportive learning environment with really dedicated teachers. Public education supports all students, and the Holroyd School is a wonderful example of a school where no student is left behind and where, no matter how much support a student needs, they receive it. They also work closely with NDIS providers to align their support. The work they do is astonishing. And that is not all—Granville East Public School, Sherwood Grange Public School, Guildford and Guildford

West public schools are also doing extraordinary work. I thank all the teachers, principals and support staff at those wonderful schools for their support for public education.

### **COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE COMMUNITY AWARDS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:15):** Residents of the Coffs Coast are making immense contributions each day in our local community. They do not seek recognition for their work, but some have been honoured recently for their passion and positivity in helping others. Coffs Harbour couple Jim and Jill Woodlock have been honoured for their service to the Australian Football League with their induction into the New South Wales Australian Football Hall of Fame. Their achievement recognises their near four decades of devotion to growing football on the North Coast. Jim became president of the North Coast league in 1987, ushering in a period of leadership that continued in different roles until 2013, when management of the game was turned over to AFL NSW/ACT.

Jill was Jim's number one supporter. She performed executive roles as secretary, treasurer and registrar as well as tribunal secretary from 1995 to 2012. The Woodlocks also were instrumental in the establishment of the North Coast Umpires Association. The Woodlock Medal is presented to the best player on ground in the AFL North Coast Senior Men's grand final each year. I congratulate Jim and Jill on this much-deserved accolade and for their sterling service to the AFL community.

In another coup for the Coffs Coast, two local women have been honoured for their dedicated work in our refugee community in the 2024 NSW Humanitarian Awards. Organised by the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and the Refugee Council of Australia, the prestigious awards recognise individuals and organisations making exceptional contributions to the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in New South Wales. Michele Greenwood has played an exceptional role in supporting refugees who are making a new life on the Coffs Coast, so much so that she has been recognised with the Refugee Supporter Award. Michele is a multicultural health clinical nurse consultant with the North Coast Population and Public Health Unit.

Michele has been acknowledged for more than two decades of dedication to making the health system more accessible and responsive to the needs of refugees. She has been praised for facilitating the integration of refugees into the Coffs Harbour community and for her unwavering commitment to humanitarian service and supporting vulnerable populations. Her recognition of the healthcare challenges faced by refugees spurred her to establish the Coffs Harbour Refugee Health Clinic in 2006.

Coffs Harbour's Aye Win, a Khumi Chin woman, has also been acknowledged for her exceptional work with a Highly Commended recognition in the Rural and Regional category. Aye Win is recognised as a beacon of support and advocacy for the Myanmar community in Coffs Harbour. Her home serves as a community hub, where she offers invaluable assistance with legal, educational and social services. Her efforts extend beyond her professional role as an interpreter for NSW Health and Centrelink and touches every aspect of community life. Among her notable projects is the Free Myanmar Arts and Cultural Exhibition, a self-funded event supporting civilian minority groups affected by the military conflict in Myanmar. Both women were presented with their awards by the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AC, KC. I thank Michele Greenwood and Aye Win for helping our local refugee communities and I congratulate them on their awards.

Elsewhere in our community, inspirational leadership and driving positive outcomes were recognised in the Yandaarra Aunty Grace Roberts Community Awards. The City of Coffs Harbour announced the awards during NAIDOC Week celebrations. The award winners were: Aunty Grace Roberts Memorial Community Development Award, Des Ahoy; Aunty Award, Aunty Jenny Skinner; Uncle Award, Uncle Kevin Wilson; Aboriginal Community Organisation or Business of the Year Award, Jalay Jalay Dance Troupe; Sports Achievement Award, shared between Matthew Montgomery and Tigerlilly Green; Arts and Cultural Achievement Award, Darryl Lockwood; and Youth of the Year Award, Ace Findlay. For 26 years now, these awards have been celebrating the positive contributions that people make to improving the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Coffs Harbour. I congratulate the winners and everyone who was nominated.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:20 until  
Friday 9 August 2024 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**KIRRAWEE AND WOOLLOOWARE FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE AND EXPRESS PATHOLOGY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Kirrawee and Woollooware Family Medical Practice on winning the Health Improvement Services Award at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Located across two sites, both are focused on being 'a quality practice with compassionate care'. Their doctors are locals who love the shire and are specialists in looking after the health and wellbeing of families. The practices focus on evidence-based preventive health care, endeavouring to ensure that their patients are and remain healthy. I congratulate Woollooware-based Express Pathology on winning the Outstanding New Business Award at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Run by Shire locals Michele Byrne and Andrew Byrne, Express Pathology provides its clients with the ability to take control of their own health by choosing their own set of blood tests. Clients can choose between seven different panels of blood tests and either receive a pathology form to take to a collection centre, or have a nurse come to them. Results are then reviewed by the company's doctor before being sent directly to the client. Express Pathology boasts reliable and accurate results, fast turnaround times, and excellent customer service.

**PLUMBERS PLEASE AND MOUNTAIN ASSET PARTNERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the team from Caringbah-based Plumbers Please on winning the Outstanding Plumbing Services Award at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Plumbers Please says with almost three decades of collective plumbing experience and a long list of happy and satisfied clients, its team is dedicated to keeping customers' plumbing, drainage and gas systems working perfectly, taking pride in delivering complete plumbing solutions and quality workmanship. The company says it works to take the stress out of repairs, maintenance and installations and has become trusted by real estate agents, strata managers, homeowners, business owners and private customers alike. I congratulate Mountain Asset Partners on winning the Outstanding Professional Services Award at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. The Caringbah-based firm is a finance brokerage consisting of experts with a combined professional experience of 30 years, who have a diverse background in promoting various asset classes globally. Mountain Asset Partners specialises in connecting private wholesale investors with property developers in the National Disability Insurance Scheme and commercial property sectors. Its goal is to provide passive income opportunities for investors while assisting disadvantaged Australians to secure purpose-built accommodation.

**WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB – SUTHERLAND 2 SURF**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise another successful running of the Sutherland 2 Surf fun run and walk last month thanks to the efforts of hardworking volunteers of the Wanda Surf Life Saving Club. It was a sparkling sunny day for the 52nd running of the event, which continues to be a vital fundraiser for surf lifesaving equipment and training for the Club. The spectacular winter weather saw 7629 people take part, the largest turnout in 10 years. The leading male was Thomas Do Canto who finished in a time of 32:23, while Paige Campbell was the first woman home in a time of 36:17. I acknowledge the efforts of the more than 300 volunteers who gave their time in the lead up and on the day to help organise and run the event. I particularly highlight the efforts of the dedicated Sutherland 2 Surf Committee: Michael Brannock OAM, Sue Brannock, Anne Caterson OAM, Mark Sargeant, club president Fiona Sutton, Richard Smith, Gary McNamara and Ben Sutton. I also acknowledge the event's sponsors, including major supporter Tradies which gives so much back to our community. The Wanda Club says it was a "great community day".

**WESTONFENCE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I never cease to be amazed by the ingenuity of people on the land and their problem-solving capabilities. In this instance I speak of Westonfence, a family business run out of Parkes by Maria and Duncan Abbey and established by Maria's father, the late Peter Weston OAM. Westonfence turns a waste product into a durable fencing material that is easy to install and plays an invaluable role in stock management and the control of feral and native animals. I visited the Westonfence factory where Maria showed me the process of turning discarded chemical drums into resin which is moulded into posts for electric fence lines. In its 20 years, Westonfence has produced 21,000km of fencing from 3800 tons of material which would otherwise have ended up as landfill. As a plastic drum, the life-span of the plastic is dictated by the chemical, usually two years. Westonfence extends that to 30. It's great to see this innovative Parkes family company at the forefront of recovering a resource that is underutilized. Well done.

**GARY WILLIAMS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to applaud the amazing career of a much-loved member of the Orange community, Gary Williams. After 52 years delivering the mail, Gary is retiring as arguably Orange's most-loved postie. Rain, hail or shine he has delivered the mail to west Orange residents, often adding an individualized touch by taking it to the door of elderly or infirm locals. Gary's career started as a 14-year-old

delivering telegrams for Australia Post. He was promoted to a full-time job at 16 and has remained with them ever since, with his loyalty a reflection of his gratitude for the company employing a boy barely into his teens. Apart from being a reliable, helpful and friendly postie, Gary is also an Australian boxing champion having stepped into the ring in the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Canada where he made the semifinals. He is also an Oceania champion and won an Australian amateur title and the Australian featherweight professional belt in 1981. Gary is a well-known and well-liked member of the community and on behalf of the residents on his west Orange route, and wider community, I thank him for his service.

### **MOLONG PLAYERS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to the never-say-die attitude of the quirky Molong Players theatrical group. It has been four years since the Players last trod the boards, the COVID pandemic putting them into hiatus while in 2021 Molong's old theatre was demolished to make way for the Cabonne Community Centre. Now that building is up and running, so too are the township's amateur thespians. And up and running they are, again writing their own script for their production of Two Weddings and a Nervous Breakdown which will have its opening night in November. Successfully performing for around 40 years, the Molong Players embody and reflect the resilience of country communities, battling through pandemic, drought, flood, whatever gets thrown their way, and this resilience, I hear, is the underlying theme of this latest production. I commend the Molong Players for their creativity, comradery and their resilience and I look forward to their return to the district's entertainment scene.

### **SURFING THE WAVES OF PAIN**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Local Olivia Ottaway has surmounted obstacles that most people would never have to. Olivia was surfing at Teahupo'o, French Polynesia, in August of last year when She inadvertently scratched the jagged coral reef during her visit, which led to a bone infection. This little injury turned into a nightmare very quickly. Olivia's condition swiftly worsened after her return to Australia. During an ordinary shopping trip, the teenage Australian surf champion collapsed in excruciating pain, initiating a battle that nearly resulted in the amputation of her foot. The teen had no idea that a seemingly minor cut might cause the serious illness that almost took her life and her leg. Despite her excruciating discomfort in the hospital, Ottaway had amazing strength and determination to keep fighting, and her development is astounding. Just eight months after being admitted to the hospital, Olivia has tackled surf competitions and competes in the local League tag competition with the Smithtown Tigers. I have no doubt with the determination Olivia has, she will make it back to Teahupo'o and pursue her surfing career as she desires. You are a true inspiration, Olivia.

### **REMEMBERING DAVID MORROW**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—NRL Hall of Fame inductee and former ABC sports broadcaster David Morrow has sadly passed away at age 71. Sydney-born, Morrow started his famous career in Kempsey as a general announcer before establishing himself in the sports broadcasting world, most notably when he joined ABC Sport in 1980. Alongside Warren Ryan and Craig Hamilton, he was a key figure in ABC's rugby league coverage for more than thirty years. Morrow's career went much beyond rugby league, including six Commonwealth Games and eight Olympic Games. This demonstrated his adaptability and commitment to sports broadcasting. In 2005, he received an OAM in recognition of his achievements. Following his departure from ABC in 2014, Morrow remained active in the sports world until 2023, contributing to Sydney's 2GB. . For somebody such as David Morrow, being inducted into the NRL Hall of Fame represents both a long-lasting legacy in rugby league and excellence in sports broadcasting. The lasting influence David Morrow had on sports broadcasting and the community at large, in addition to his professional accomplishments, is what defines his legacy. His passion and knowledge will be greatly missed.

### **MACLEAY NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—It is with immense pride and admiration that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the representatives of the Macleay Netball Association who competed in the 2024 Hart Junior State Titles for Netball. Your participation, including the 12s, 13s, and 14s teams, is a testament to the countless hours of effort, dedication, and teamwork that you have put in over the season. On the court, each of you have demonstrated remarkable individual skill and an exceptional level of connection and cooperation, proving yourselves to be an incredible force. I am particularly thrilled to highlight the Under 13s team for their outstanding achievement of finishing as the Division 3 Runners-Up for 2024. This accomplishment is a direct result of their hard work, perseverance, and the strong team spirit they brought to every game. Achieving second place in such a competitive division is no small feat and reflects their dedication and talent. Once again, congratulations to the Macleay Netball Association on this fantastic achievement. I wish you continued success as you move forward and look forward to celebrating your future accomplishments on the court. Your achievement is nothing short of incredible.

### MARIAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE, SHREK THE MUSICAL

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recently attended Marian Catholic College annual musical. This year's musical was 'Shrek, The Musical'. I purchased tickets and on 28 June 2024 I attended the final performance at The Showroom, Hornsby RSL. I was pleased to have been able to watch the terrific performance. The vocals in this production were outstanding. I particularly commend the artistic and vocal performances of the main cast members, Shrek performed by Hanz Monjardin, Fiona performed by Joan Bautista, Donkey, performed by Emily Jang and Lord Farquaad performed by David Parada. The main cast members were wonderfully supported by, Teen Fiona performed by Chloe Eltakcki, Young Fiona performed by Hayley Phielix, Pinocchio performed by Will Fraser, Dragon performed by Hannah El-Akhras and Gingy/Blind Mouse performed by Jelena Tolentino. The costumes, the sets were wonderful. I also acknowledge and recognise the dedicated CAPA teachers, Linda Austin, Yossi Cascun, Sarah Curran, Patricia Huggett, Anthony Quelch, Lesley Watters, Jackson Camporeale, Vanessa Edwards, Natalie Hanlon, Belinda Judson, Erika Monk, Kieron Monk and Jenny Scotney for incredible work to help the show come to life. Thank to you to the entire cast, production team, orchestra, and crew. Another wonderful Marian Catholic College production.

### HILLS OFF ROAD RC CLUB

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I record the achievements of the Hills Offroad RC Club. The Hills Offroad RC Track, situated within the bushland of the Fred Caterson Reserve at Castle Hill, is the premier offroad track in the country. The Club, established in 1985, caters for 1/10 scale electric radio-controlled cars. The Club will be hosting competitors from all over the country for the 2024 Radio Controlled Racing Authority [RCRA] Australian Titles which will be held in October this year. As a further testament RCRA, has announced the Hills Offroad RC Track as the host venue for the 2025: IFMAR 1:10 Electric Offroad World Championships, to be held in October 2025. The RCRA posted, "We would like to extend a big congratulations to Peter Couper and rest of the Hills Off Road Club for presenting a strong submission that will form the basis of the Stage 1 Report to be presented to IFMAR for Final Approval." I also acknowledge, recognise, and commend Peter Couper and the Hills Offroad RC Club for contributing to our society through promotion of Offroad 1/10 scale electric radio-controlled racing.

### PRITISH A R, AUTHOR OF THE OPPORTUNITY MINDSET

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to record the world record breaking achievement of a young musician and author who resides in my electorate. Pritish A R has achieved some remarkable achievements, and he is only in Year 9 attending a local school. Pritish was born in 2010 and his story is a testament to his love and dedication to music. At the age of ten he achieved the Trinity Grade 8 drumming exam. Pritish's ambition led him to break to attempt to break of Guinness World Record. After many months of training, it was on 16 December 2021 that Pritish succeeded in becoming the world's "fastest drummer". Pritish broke the record for the most drumbeats in a minute using drumsticks, with a total of 2,370 – per minute that's 39.5 beats per second. Pritish has recently authored a book, titled, 'The Opportunity of Mindset' telling his strong of a love of music, passion, perseverance, and his own record-breaking success. Pritish provides readers with inspiring tips to help fuel success. The last tip, 'Never Stop dreaming and pushing boundaries.' I recognise and commend Pritish for his own perseverance and achievements. Well done Pritish!

### MANNING RIVER AERO CLUB

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Manning River Aero Club for their contributions to the aviation community. Formed in 1960, the Manning River Aero Club has grown, now boasting 123 members – a significant increase from just 50 members three years ago. Located at Taree Airport, the club also serves as a flying school, providing comprehensive flight training in their modern Cessna 172SP aircraft, catering to all license levels from recreational to commercial. In addition to training pilots, the club offers scenic flights around the beautiful Manning Valley and Barrington Coast areas, sharing the natural beauty of our region from the sky. In the recent Australian Light Aircraft Championships, club President Gary Tonkin demonstrated exceptional skill by achieving three perfect spot landings and circuits, competing against the best pilots in the country – this is the second year in a row he has achieved this. I congratulate Gary and the Manning River Aero Club on their continued growth and success.

### MANNING VALLEY ANGLICAN COLLEGE

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Manning Valley Anglican College on their successful Grease is the Word musical performances at the Manning Entertainment Centre from June 20 – 22nd. It was electrifying, as the audience was transported back to Rydell High with Sandy, Danny and the gang. Retaining its catchy musical numbers, vibrant characters, and nostalgic atmosphere, the school edition of Grease was a fun and lively exploration of teenage life, love, and self-discovery, with memorable songs like

"Summer Nights," "Greased Lightnin'," and "You're the One That I Want." It was great to see the theatre packed full of excited MVAC students, parents, locals and guests who had their toes tapping – myself included. I congratulate the musical cast, crew, live band, dancers, directors, choreographers and teachers for working hard behind the scenes to bring this wonderful high calibre musical to our community – it was sensational!

#### **WENDY ORMAN**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Wendy Orman from the Manning River Dragon Boat Club who has been appointed as the newest member of the Australian Dragon Boat Federation [AusDBF] Athlete Committee. AusDBF has various sub-committees tasked with considering key topics relevant to the growth and development of the sport of dragon boating in Australia. The sub-committees include members from all across the nation, and they use their wealth of paddling knowledge to help shape the future of the sport through making recommendations to the AusDBF Board. I congratulate Wendy, I know her insights and energy will greatly benefit the committee and the broader dragon boating community.

#### **CENTENARY OF GOLFING CELEBRATED**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Marking a significant milestone in its illustrious history, the Riverina District Golf Association [RDGA], once renowned as the largest golfing district in New South Wales, recently celebrated its centenary. This momentous occasion was commemorated with a combined celebration alongside its Grass Green Championships at Narrandera Golf Club on Saturday, 04 May 2024, a testament to the enduring legacy of the RDGA. Despite the ebb and flow of numbers in recent years, the Association has stood strong, thanks to the support and dedication of its member clubs. Today, the Riverina District Golf Association proudly stands with a total of 15 clubs, each playing a crucial role in the Association's journey. These clubs include Coolamon Sport and Recreation Club, Ganmain Golf Club, Goolgowi Golf Club, Griffith Golf Club, Grong Grong Golf Club, Henty Golf Club, Hillston Golf Club, Junee Golf Club, Leeton Golf Club, Lockhart Golf Club, Narrandera Golf Club, The Rock Golf Club, Wagga City Golf Club, Wagga Wagga Country Club and Yenda Golf Club. The centenary celebration included a dinner at Narrandera Golf Club following the RDGA Grass Green Championships. I thank everyone involved in achieving this incredible milestone.

#### **COOPER RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Despite being a newcomer to the greens, Cooper Gersbach of Temora, a young 15-year-old, has discovered his love for bowling. His journey, which began three and a half years ago under the guidance of the Temora Ex-Services club members, is a testament to his dedication to the sport. Cooper has improved and developed his skills, allowing him to compete for the first time at the NSW Combined High Schools Sports Association Bowls championships. Cooper was one of the players making up the Riverina School Sports Association team. The two teams, eight boys and eight girls, travelled to the coast to represent the area. Ten representative regions recently battled it out on the greens at the Warilla Bowling Club, with the Riverina Team placing seventh. Cooper was awarded the prestigious Riverina Medal, recognised and celebrated by his fellow teammates. Congratulations Cooper, on representing the best area in the State and for being recognised and awarded for your commitment to bowls.

#### **CELEBRATING 20 YEARS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The Grenfell Car Club Historic, Classic, and Modern recently came together to celebrate their 20th anniversary with dinner at the Grenfell Bowling Club. The evening was filled with laughter, reminiscences, and a sense of camaraderie that only a group of car enthusiasts can understand. Members and guests were treated to a display of memorabilia and a slideshow presentation showing activities the club has participated in. The Grenfell Car Club Historic, Classic, Modern is not just a club, it's a community of like-minded individuals dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and enjoyment of all makes of cars and literature. With a strong membership of over 80 members, the group enjoys traveling around the region, showing off their cars as they attend club-run activities such as Cars and Coffee mornings, surrounding car and truck shows, and various swap meets. The members have hosted several successful Car Shows, which are not just about showcasing their cars, but also about bringing communities together. These events are a testament to their commitment to local support and community engagement. The always pressing conversation is about which vehicle is the best on the day, but the real winner is the community spirit.

#### **JP - IRENE KING CHI NG**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Irene King Chi Ng who was recently appointed a Justice of the Peace in my electorate of Ryde! JPs play such an important role and reflect the community face of our justice system. At its core, the appointment of a person to Justice of the Peace is all about service. I thank Irene King Chi for this service. As a JP, you are responsible for upholding the values of honesty and impartiality as you execute your official duties for the benefit of our local community. In a fast-growing



community like Ryde, the demand for JP services is growing exponentially, and I feel fortunate as the local Member of Parliament to see so many high-quality individuals willing to raise their hands. Your appointment as a JP underscores your character, integrity, and dedication to public service. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved appointment and thank you for the difference I know you will make in the lives of those you serve.

#### **JP - ERIC AGLIECO**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Eric Aglieco who was recently appointed a Justice of the Peace in my electorate of Ryde! JPs play such an important role and reflect the community face of our justice system. At its core, the appointment of a person to Justice of the Peace is all about service. I thank Eric for this service. As a JP, you are responsible for upholding the values of honesty and impartiality as you execute your official duties for the benefit of our local community. In a fast-growing community like Ryde, the demand for JP services is growing exponentially, and I feel fortunate as the local Member of Parliament to see so many high-quality individuals willing to raise their hands. Your appointment as a JP underscores your character, integrity, and dedication to public service. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved appointment and thank you for the difference I know you will make in the lives of those you serve.

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - HUGO WU**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Hugo Wu a joyous 28th birthday! Hugo's partner, Yan, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy birthday my neighbour!." 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 Hugo'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 Hugo!

#### **WOLLONDILLY OLYMPIANS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The Wollondilly electorate is proud that our very own Shane Rose, Hilary Scott and Joshua Azzopardi are competing as part of the Australian Olympic Team in Paris. Shane is a three-time Olympic medalist and is on the equestrian team. The whole electorate is overjoyed that he overcame the challenge of recovering from an accident in March that resulted in 18 broken bones. He has recovered and quite literally jumped back on the horse. Hilary is a showjumper and was on horseback before she could walk. Her showjumping journey began at The Oaks Pony Club and now, she is part of the equestrian jumping team in Paris. We are proud of her and her mount Milky. Joshua is a local of Theresa Park and is part of the 4 x 100m relay squad. He is among the 75-member track and field squad and is among the 231 first timers at the Olympic Games. On behalf of the Wollondilly electorate, I express our joy at Shane, Hilary and Joshua for making it to Paris as part of the Australian Olympic Team, and I am extremely confident that they will bring home the Gold - not just for Australia, but for Wollondilly!

#### **THE KOALAS SCREENING**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I inform the House that on 6 July, I was delighted to attend the screening of the film *The Koalas* at Narellan. The film is, to quote its tagline, 'a movie... about survival'. It tells stories of resilience of an iconic species in the face of threatened extinction in the wild and highlights the need for better land management solutions. I want to commend Gregory Miller and Georgia Wallace-Crabbe, the producers and directors of the film, for their work in putting it together. The question and answer session that followed enabled me to hear about what led us to this point and I am still full of hope that our koalas will be saved. The *Koalas*, which stars koala rescuers, carers, advocates, conversationalists and veterinarians from across the country, is a reminder that we all have a duty to advocate for koalas and to ensure that we fight to protect them. We are yet to turn the corner, but the hard work of our advocates is vital to the survival of our cutest residents. I encourage all residents who care for the preservation of these koalas to see the film and I commend it to the House.

#### **GERALDINE HUNT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—It is with deep sadness that I inform the House of the passing of Mrs Geraldine Hunt, a widely loved resident of Thirlmere. She was somebody who was admired by the people of Wollondilly; indeed, someone they wish they could be. In addition to being a science teacher, Geraldine was an active member of the Arts Group, an active member of the Friends of Thirlmere Lakes, and she was involved in *Bach in the Dark* at Classics at Picton. In addition to her community service and teaching career, Geraldine was admired by the local community as an environmentalist with a deep sensitivity for our fauna and flora. Her advocacy led to her running for this Parliament in 2013 as the Greens candidate for Wollondilly. Geraldine was married to her husband David for half a century. Some years ago, David was made Citizen of the Year, but it was really a joint recognition for both David and Geraldine. Together, they raised four children Julien, Samuel, Emily,

and Madeline. Our thoughts are with all of them, as well as their partners Monica, James, Dave, and Rupert, and her ten grandchildren, who remember her as 'Ninjr'. May Geraldine rest in peace.

#### **GREY WOLF AWARD RECIPIENT SOPHIE PENISINI**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I commend Sophie Penisini for earning the prestigious Grey Wolf Award, the highest achievement in the Cub Scouts. I was delighted to join Sophie, her family and her fellow Cub Scouts on 25 July 2024 at 1st/2nd Merrylands Scout Hall in Merrylands, in my electorate. The Grey Wolf Award requires six projects, a hike, a leadership course, and active participation throughout a cub's journey. Sophie demonstrated remarkable initiative and determination, completing the core components, including extra special interest projects, with minimal assistance. Sophie is not only a dedicated scout but also an avid performer in the Cumberland Gang Show and the Holroyd Musical Drama Society, and a gymnast at Merrylands RSL Youth Club. Her community involvement is truly commendable. Despite facing various leg injuries that required her to be in and out of leg braces, Sophie adapted by planning and leading a city hike with a scavenger hunt for her fellow cubs, showcasing her resilience and creativity. Congratulations, Sophie, on this well-deserved honour. We are incredibly proud of your achievements and the example you set for others.

#### **UNITY IN DIVERSITY 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 1 June 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the "Unity in Diversity" NDIS Expo at the William Inglis Hotel in Warwick Farm. This event was a remarkable gathering that highlighted the collective efforts of various organizations dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the hosts—HiCom Care, Andurance Care, Skilled Health, and JPlus Care and to their sponsor, Terry White Chemmart Guildford. Their collaboration and commitment were evident in the seamless organization and engaging presentations throughout the Expo. The event was a testament to the importance of coming together to foster inclusion and support within the disability sector. The diverse range of services and resources showcased offered valuable insights and connections for attendees, reflecting a true spirit of unity and cooperation. I would also like to express my gratitude to Olga Suchodolak and Julie Nguyen for the kind invitation. Their efforts in bringing this Expo to life were truly appreciated and contributed to its overall success. The Expo served as a powerful reminder of the positive impact that dedicated organizations can make when working together towards a common goal.

#### **MR CHAU VAN KHAM**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr Van Kham Chau (written in Vietnamese as Chau Van Kham) is among a number of prominent members of the Vietnamese Australians actively involved in my Cabramatta Electorate. Behind the humble guise of an ordinary man, Mr Chau embodies a passionate and courageous social and political activist. Born in Vietnam, Mr Chau arrived in Australia in 1983 as a political refugee after a harrowing escape from Vietnam and the communist regime. Inspired by Australia's multiculturalism, Mr Chau encourages everyone within his circle to embrace the Australian society and its policies. As the President of the NSW Chapter of Viet Tan, in 2019 he went on a mission to understand the status of democracy in Vietnam. Mr Chau was unfortunately arrested and unjustly sentenced to 12 years imprisonment on "terrorist activities" charges by the communist authority for simply meeting with his fellow Vietnamese. Due to the Australian Government's intervention Mr Chau returned home in July 2023. He is now fuelled with an even stronger purpose and commitment to dedicate for a good cause. I wish Mr Chau good health, joyful reunions with his family, and continued success in his future endeavours to promote democratic values.

#### **REMEMBERING THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE JOURNEY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I had the privilege of attending the "Remembering the Vietnamese Refugee Journey" event at the Vietnamese Community & Cultural Centre in Bonnyrigg on the 23rd of June 2024. The event was organised by the Vietnamese Community in Australia - NSW Chapter [VCA-NSW], an organisation dedicated to representing and supporting the Vietnamese Community in NSW. The heartfelt stories shared by community leaders and members painted a vivid picture of their migration journey and the refugee landscape in Australia during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. These narratives offered insight into the historical context, including policies and legal frameworks that shaped Australia's humanitarian approach of the time. I extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Peter Cao Thang Ha, President of VCA-NSW, for his kind invitation. I would also like to recognise the VCA-NSW team for their dedication in organising this event. Next year will mark the 50th year anniversary of Vietnamese Settlement in Australia. I look forward to participating in the many planned commemorations and celebrations to honour this significant milestone.

#### **MAICYN TODEV**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Maicyn Todev, from Corpus Christi High School, on his dedication & commitment to martial arts that has

culminated in him successfully earning a place in the Australian Martial Arts Championships Squad for 2024. Maicyn will travel to Tokyo, Japan this month to compete in these Championships. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Maicyn and wish him well in his future sporting endeavours.

#### **OAK FLATS HIGH SCHOOL – DAPTO POULTRY SHOW**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Oak Flats High School at the Dapto Poultry's 70th Anniversary Show on 22 June 2024. Their hens provided a range of eggs to choose from over the week leading up to the show. Oak Flats High School students collected and saved the best eggs, looking for uniformity in shape, size and colour. Two students, from Year 9, Nayte and Luke, selected the top six eggs for their entry and their keen eyes paid off and they took home the first prize in their division. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Oak Flats High School for their win at the Dapto Poultry's 70th Anniversary Show.

#### **MELISSA SPERO**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Melissa Spero, from Warilla High School, for being selected as the Assistant Coach of the New South Wales Under 19's Rugby League Women's Team The NSW Blues team won the match 46 to 4 at Leichhardt Oval on 20 June 2024 in a spectacular display of skill and determination. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I would like to congratulate Melissa and wish her well in all her future coaching endeavours.

#### **JON BURGUN AWARDED ROTARY'S PAUL HARRIS FELLOW AWARD**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Jon Burgun of Tumbarumba, who received the Paul Harris Fellow Award for his exceptional contributions to the community. The award was presented at the latest changeover dinner and presented by past President Julie Giddings of Tumbarumba Rotary Club. The award was established in 1957 in memory of Rotary founder Paul Harris and is presented to Rotarians who display many years of dedicated and selfless service. Jon's contributions to the Tumbarumba community are significant, placing him among the town's notable community leaders, including being named the Tumbarumba Citizen of the Year in 2022. His exceptional commitment is evident in his long-term involvement with the youth development program Tumba2Kokoda [T2K], and his leadership in local sports, including the honour of being named the 2020 Male Coach of the Year for the Tumut Blues by NSW Rugby League. Beyond his work with T2K, Jon's diverse involvement extends to the local business community through Burgun Electrical Tumbarumba and governance roles with Tumbarumba Financial Services Limited. Well done Jon for your tireless efforts in making a difference for the betterment of the Tumbarumba community.

#### **VALE JAN HUNTER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—It is with the deepest respect that I remember and honour the late Jan Hunter of Albury, who passed away on June 25 at the age of 86. Jan will be forever cherished for her contributions preserving the history of Albury and its surrounding district. Her remarkable knowledge and dedication to historical research led to the publishing of more than twenty booklets for the Albury and District Historical Society. Born at Albury's Meramie Private Hospital on September 8, 1937, Jan Hunter devoted her life to documenting and sharing the rich heritage of our community. Her works covered a diverse range of topics, including the histories of Albury families such as the Abikhair family, local groups and individuals, Tennis Clubs, the Albury Show Society, the Albury Pioneer Cemetery, and personal accounts from World War II diaries. Jan's legacy is a treasured part of Albury's historical journey. Her meticulous documentation and passion for history have left an indelible mark on our community. She will be remembered not only for her historical publications but also for her enduring commitment to preserving the stories of Albury for future generations. Rest in peace Jan Hunter.

#### **ST PHILOMENA'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL MOREE**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of St Philomena's Catholic School of Moree, for enabling their students to attend the NSW Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service held in Sydney, as part of Reconciliation Week. This important annual event serves to bring together Australians, to remember and honour the service and sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans. I congratulate St Philomena's Principal Simon Fleming and staff, for preparing and securing a grant to assist with the travel and accommodation, and to parent helpers who accompanied the group throughout this trip. Special thanks also to Catholic Schools NSW, the Association of Independent Schools and the NSW Office of Veteran Affairs, whose collaboration and support greatly assisted in the student's participation coming to fruition. I commend all involved in this accomplishment, for their commitment, hard work and expertise, and for providing

a valuable opportunity for the students to be part of a very special event, with this experience sure to be remembered for many years to come.

#### **GLEN INNES ARTIST LLOYD HORNSBY**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Glen Innes local Lloyd Hornsby, on his successful career as an international Artist and recently being requested to contribute his art to a world tour, adding yet another feather to his bow. Lloyd is an Artist who draws on his heritage, specialising in Aboriginal art, through sketching, drawing and painting. I congratulate Lloyd on this wonderful recognition of his talent and on taking this one step further by opening the Gawura Gallery, which he started in 2017 and operates with his wife Wendy. The gallery is not only a space for contemporary and traditional artworks, but also serves to provide education to others about the history of First Nations people. I commend Lloyd on his acclaimed career and how he has used his expertise to give back to the community, whether this is through fundraising initiatives, education and art therapy programs.

#### **RECOGNITION OF JAYDE JAMES**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Moree local Jayde James for being selected to represent the north-west to play Tennis at the NSW PSSA State competition, held at Broadmeadow recently. I congratulate Jayde on her selection, which followed three levels of competition to make this impressive selection. Jayde began by winning against her peers from Moree Public School to gain school team selection, going on to play against schools across the shire and being selected to join the Moree Zone team. From here Jayde played at Gunnedah for the north-west selection trials and gained second-seed for the north-west team, to play in the PSSA State competition. I commend Jayde for the hard work and commitment shown to her chosen sport of Tennis. I thank Jayde's family Jeremy and Kelly James, along with the Principal and staff of Moree Public School and to Coach Margie Buckley, for their support and encouragement given to Jayde to achieve these wonderful accolades.

#### **MANLY, WARRINGAH AND PITTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY CENTENARY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to celebrate the Centenary of the Manly, Warringah & Pittwater Historical Society. Since 1924, the Society has met to hold meetings, publish a newsletter, and research local history, hosting tours from the southern point of Manly at North Head and Seaforth to the tip of Barrenjoey in the North, and west to Killarney Heights at the Roseville Bridge and Cottage Point in Ku Ring Gai National Park. Their regular newsletter holds a wealth of detail on incidents, people and historical events that have occurred on the Peninsula throughout the years. To help celebrate the milestone, a number of events have been organised by Society members – a book on the history of the Society will be launched in August at a high tea at Manly Town Hall, followed by a Centenary lunch in September. Mounted images of historic photographs will be on display at each of the public libraries up and down the Northern Beaches from mid-August to mid-September. I congratulate the many passionate members who have kept the Society going for these past 100 years and wish them a Happy Centenary!

#### **ROLLERS' 6TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge Roller's Bakehouse in my electorate of Manly who last month celebrated their 6th anniversary. Since opening their doors in 2018, Rollers has quickly become a staple of Manly, blending classic French pastry techniques with unique and adventurous flavour combinations. Tucked behind the Corso in Rialto Lane and just a short walk from Manly beach, Rollers offers an ever-changing menu of sweet and savoury items with a no-rules approach which has seen them amass an impressive and loyal following. From croissants stuffed with hummus and marinated eggplant to Japanese vegetable curry pies and maple bacon cannoli, Rollers has both tourists and locals flocking to Rialto Lane in the early hours of the morning to snap up what's on offer. The coffee is excellent too. Rollers is one of Manly's great success stories and I congratulate the entire team on six years of servicing the Manly community with pastries that are as delicious as they are innovative.

#### **MEET IN MANLY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I am very pleased to recognise Meet in Manly, who were recently named as a finalist in the Northern Beaches Local Business Awards for Outstanding Specialised Business. Meet in Manly are a unique, passionate and dedicated event management business who have devoted themselves to planning and delivering meetings and events in my electorate of Manly and across the Northern Beaches. Led by Natalie, the team at Meet in Manly bring a wealth of experience and expertise enabling them to coordinate, manage and execute a multitude of projects. These projects range from large scale award nights and conferences to more intimate, signature experiences and results-driven meetings - all while showcasing the very best that Manly has to offer. I congratulate Natalie and the entire team at Meet in Manly on this wonderful acknowledgement and

commend them for all they do in delivering unique and tailored experiences which blend local knowledge of the Manly area with outstanding professionalism.

#### AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS 110TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—Australian Red Cross St George District Branch is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. This is a major milestone for such an important organisation, and I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the St George District Branch and their President Meg Lawther for their dedication to community services. The St George District Branch is a founding member of The Australian Red Cross, forming after the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914 and plays a crucial role in supporting the community and fundraising for a variety of programs which allows people living in difficult situations change their lives for the better. St George District Branch President recently told the Leader, "We are proud of our long history serving the St George community and surrounding areas. Our members and volunteers continue to raise funds and support the good work of Australian Red Cross. We always welcome new members too." The Australian Red Cross are largely supported by volunteers who give up their time to offer support and help to others in need. All these selfless volunteers should be proud of themselves and the positive impacts they have made to so many peoples lives.

#### ARTHUR GODDEN

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate and extend my sincerest wishes to Arthur Godden on his 101st Birthday. Arthur was born on 19 August 1923. At 18, Arthur was conscripted to the National Service and was posted to the Heavy Anti-Artillery Battery at Clarendon to protect Richmond RAAF Base and Darwin during the air raids. Thereafter, Arthur was transferred to the 8th Mechanical Equipment Co. Engineers and served in New Guinea and Morotai. Following his service, Arthur married Gloria Perkins and have been together for the past 76 years. Together the couple has 2 children, Gail and Paul, 3 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Arthur and Gloria moved to Lake Macquarie 50 years ago and have been an active part of the Swansea community. Arthur was heavily involved in the Swansea Men's Probus Club, the Clerical Officers Association Newcastle Branch, and the Swansea RSL, demonstrating his commitment to enhancing the local area. I wish Arthur all the best for his 101st birthday as well as good health and prosperity.

#### MARINE RESCUE LAKE MACQUARIE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie for their tireless and heroic efforts in the search for the missing boater in the Swansea Channel. On 6 July 2024, a small tinny tragically capsized after striking a buoy on the Swansea Channel. While three men were fortunately rescued from the water and survived the incident, one man remained missing, prompting an extensive and urgent search operation. Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie played a crucial role in a multi-agency search effort, which spanned over two weeks. Their dedication, expertise and unwavering commitment were instrumental in the mission to locate and recover the missing individual, bringing closure to the family and community. The volunteers of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie perform extraordinary work, often under challenging and difficult conditions. Words cannot adequately express the profound gratitude we owe them for their selfless service and their vital role in ensuring the safety and security of our waterways.

#### ANGELA O'BRIEN

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Angela O'Brien for her more than 40 years of dedicated public service at Lake Macquarie City Council. Angela has been a cornerstone of Lake Macquarie City Council's operation, serving seven successive Mayors. She has worked across the political spectrum, for NSW Labor MPs and the Speaker of the House. Angela's unwavering commitment and passion for public service have made a profound impact on our community. Her warm personality and tireless work ethic have earned her the love and respect of all her colleagues. She has been a mentor and friend to many, always willing to lend a helping hand and share her wealth of knowledge. Her positive attitude and commitment have made the workplace better for everyone. Thank you, Angela, for your invaluable contributions. Your impact on Lake Macquarie City Council and the broader community is immeasurable. I wish you the very best in your well-deserved retirement.

#### CANREVIVE 29TH ANNIVERSARY CHARITY DINNER

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently attended the CanRevive 29th Anniversary Charity Dinner and would like to highlight the fantastic work they do in my community and throughout the State. CanRevive was established in 1995 to help Chinese-speaking people throughout their cancer journey. They have

since helped well over 8000 cancer patients and their families. Every week, over 250 people attend activities in their four centres and their services touch the lives of about 350 new cancer patients and carers each year. Many of these people living with our community and these services ensure that these people will not face cancer alone. Both Cancer and Multiculturalism are two causes that are very near and dear to my heart, so to see an organisation of such calibre operating throughout New South Wales is absolutely incredible. I would like to thank the talented executive committee, President Eric Yeung, Vice Presidents Professor Stephen Li and Raymond Chan, as well as all other staff and members who continue to make Cancer more bearable for thousands of people. I look forward to working alongside CanRevive to help deliver positive outcomes for years to come.

#### **COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS SPECTACULAR 2024**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the opening of the 2024 Community Language Schools Spectacular. This was the second year of the Community Language Schools Spectacular and I must say, it was not only entertaining, but also educational. There were some incredible cultural performances, showcasing the traditions that shape our communities through music, song and dance. Community language schools are truly such an important part of our communities here in New South Wales. They educate over 30,000 students in over 55 different languages, across more than 250 schools in NSW. I truly believe that this shows how diverse we are and the success of multiculturalism within New South Wales. By educating the next generation, not only do we preserve our heritage, but we also enhance the cultural understanding of those around us. I would like to thank the Federation of Community Language Schools, including CEO Michael Christodoulou AM and President Lucia Johns. They did a wonderful job hosting this event and I very much am looking forward to attending next year. Thank you.

#### **DON HUTTON**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr Don Hutton, a valuable member of my community. Don was recently recognised as a Rotarian of Long Standing at the Rotary Club of Hurstville's 72nd Annual Changeover Dinner. Mr Hutton's service to his local community over the years has been absolutely outstanding. Whilst he was born in Batlow, Don soon moved to Sydney in 1947, where he completed an apprenticeship as a diesel bus mechanic. Don then moved into insurance at the age of 28 and went on to start his own Insurance Brokerage in 1978. His company, still located in Penshurst, now employs more than 15 people, and he continues to serve as the Managing Director. Don is passionate about supporting charity, which is one of the reasons he joined the Rotary Club of Hurstville in 1983. With over 40 years of service, he has supported the club as its President and provided the Rotary District with insurance over many years. Individuals like Don are truly one in a million and I would like to thank him for all that he has done for our local community over the years.

#### **TOP MODEL**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It's a long way from the quiet streets of Tumut to the runways of Europe, but that's the path that a rising star of the modelling world, Keely Wickman, is carving out – with a career on international catwalks hopefully just a few steps away. Keely, 19, recently won the Top Model Australia award and with it, a ticket to compete for the international Top Model title during London Fashion Week in September. It's an amazing journey for Keely who has wanted to be a model since her early teens and entered the competition to learn and 'have fun' - and now her dream is within reach. Keely recently moved to Sydney to advance her career but loves coming home to Tumut when she can. She has thanked her parents Le and Jeff Wickman, siblings Jemma and Aaron, and boyfriend Jack Gould of Batlow for giving her the confidence to aim for the top. Keely hopes her London experience will lead to an international career with global fashion houses – and based on her success so far, we can be confident she'll reach her goal. Congratulations, Keely, and best wishes for an amazing career. Tumut is proud of you!

#### **SISTER PATTY**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It is my honour to recognise one of Wagga Wagga's greatest servants of education, community and the church, Sister Patty Barry, who passed away recently at the age of 100. Born in Sydney, Sister Patty is described as a city girl who fell in love with the country after moving to Wagga to begin her novitiate with the Presentation Sisters in 1951. Previously a seamstress with a delightful sense of colour and style, Sister Patty became a teacher in 1954 and taught thousands of children in Wagga, Tarcutta, Lockhart and other centres. Her long-time friend and colleague Sister Margaret Walsh remembers her talent for relating to people, especially her students. Diminutive in stature but large in care and compassion, she changed many lives for the better. After working in a pastoral role late in life, Sister Patty retired and celebrated her 100th birthday last February. This year was a special milestone for the Presentation Sisters as they celebrated 150 years of service to the community – an event I was proud to support. My condolences to Sister Patty's friends, Congregation Leader Sister Margaret Barclay, and nephews Christopher and Peter Barry. Vale, Sister Patty – a life well lived.

**TRINA THOMSON**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—A lifetime of service to education has come to an end for Snowy Valleys councillor Trina Thomson, who has retired after more than 46 years at Tumut High School – a place she calls her 'daily compass'. Cr Thomson's connection to the school started when she was a student there before joining the staff as a science assistant. She has since worked in the office, library, vocational education and the school's Wellbeing Hub. Outside of school, she was involved in sport, Rotaract, raised money for charity as a Miss Australia Quest entrant, trained debutantes, and served almost 16 years on council, having been Mayor, Emeritus Mayor and is currently Deputy Mayor. Throughout it all, Tumut High has been a centre of learning, friendship and inspiration, and her retirement comes with many special memories. Cr Thomson thanks her husband John – who recently retired from teaching –their daughters Alexandra Thomson, Amelia Bell and Gabrielle Arragon (all three daughters also attended Tumut High) for their love and support over the journey and acknowledges her role model parents Pat and Edna Cruise. Congratulations to Cr Thomson for doing so much to improve young lives and best wishes for a wonderful and well-deserved retirement.

**LONG'S HOUSE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was pleased to join Richard Kelaher, Vince Capolupo and the team at Long's House for the official opening of Long's House restaurant in Castlereagh. I congratulate Richard and Vince on the opening of their restaurant. Long's House is a beautiful historic home that is around 100 years old and has been lovingly restored in the manner of times gone by with pressed metal ceilings and magnificent chandeliers. Once a home, the venue maintains its individual rooms offering an intimate dining experience. The menu offers a contemporary Australian theme with some European delights. Vince is one of the area's longest standing restaurant owners and is well respected across the community. How exciting to have such a quality restaurant with an amazing team open in our region! I wish Vince, Richard and the team at Long's House the absolute best with this new business venture.

**MACARTHUR ANGLICAN SCHOOL – MARY POPPINS MUSICAL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—It was an absolute thrill and joy to join with Macarthur Anglican School last week for the opening night of the school's Mary Poppins musical! The musical score was also performed with excellence. The quality of the acting, singing and props was exceptional. Everyone involved with the evening should be very proud of their remarkable achievement. Congratulations to all the performers, backstage and lighting crew. They delivered an amazing event!

**MELISSA AND SHANE BEDWELL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—It was fantastic to see Glenmore Park represented on the national stage recently with local residents Melissa and Shane Bedwell appearing on Channel 10's Ready Steady Cook. Cooking alongside renowned chefs Khanh Ong and Alastair McLeod, it gave the couple a platform to showcase their appreciation for food and love of cooking. I commend Melissa and Shane for challenging themselves to grow through new experiences. Qualifying for the show was a great success, with Melissa and Shane having gone through a selection process which involved a series of online submissions, video submissions and online and in-person interviews. It is great to see couples like Melissa and Shane taking full advantage of life's opportunities, learning new skills, and having fun. I wish them all the very best in their future endeavours and I hope that we'll be seeing more of their culinary skills.

**CITIZENSHIP 6TH AUGUST 2024**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—It is with great pleasure that I congratulate all those new Australians who became Australian Citizens at the Penrith Council ceremony yesterday 6th August. The Penrith community are certainly richer for the diversity of culture they all bring to our city. Ms Joanna Bantuan, Miss Jen Borromeo, Mrs Linda Brown, Mrs Vinita Chavan, Miss Maryam Hassanvand-Gandaei, Mr Jean Jhabeemissur; Mrs Martine Pierre Jhabeemissur, Miss Joanne Mhande, Mr Munish Sharma, Mrs Parveen Sharma, Ms Vodad Ghanbarirad, Yahya Mousakhani, Mr Mohammad Mousakhani, Mr Mark King-Hazel, Ms Abby Townend-Vile, Mrs Repeka Vaiouga Levi, Mr Tesimale Vaiouga Levi, Mr Des Vaiouga Levi, Mr Randy Euese, Mr Danny Euese. I wish them all the best for their futures as Penrith locals.

**ERIC WRIGHT**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Congratulations to Eric Wright Principal of Nepean Community College [NCC] on 36 years of dedicated service in the Penrith area, after a long-distinguished career Eric has decided to retire. The College has been a stable and loved institution in Penrith for decades and this is largely down to the vision and passion of Principal Wright. Eric's contribution to adult education in Penrith is immeasurable there are many thousands of residents who have benefited from the courses provided at the college.

He is a passionate advocate for life-long learning. The College has always moved with the times and diversified its courses to meet the needs of locals. NCC regularly takes its lessons out of the classroom and into community-based contexts. It's not unusual to find a class in the neighbourhood coffee shop so that the environment is comfortable and familiar for learners. The learners at NCC are as diverse as their courses from new migrants, the disadvantaged, and people with disabilities to digital skills for senior citizens. There has also been a strong focus on teaching newly arrived migrants English and computer literacy skills. Penrith community wishes Eric all the best for the future in his well-earned retirement.

#### **CHRISTINA AND EMMANUEL MACARIOS – 70TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**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 my constituents, Christina and Emmanuel Macarios on reaching an incredibly significant milestone. What a wonderful achievement for these two individuals, who recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on 11 July 2024. Both Emmanuel, 93 and Christina, 90, are of Greek heritage. They were born in Romania, before migrating back to Greece after World War 2. They travelled separately to New Zealand as post war refugees in 1951, where they met and married in 1954. They have one daughter who married and moved to Australia. They followed their daughter and moved to Australia in 1986, proudly becoming Australian citizens a short time later. Emmanuel worked at the Garden Island naval base prior to his retirement. They currently live independently in their own home at Bardwell Park and have 2 grandsons and 4 great granddaughters. I take this opportunity to wish both Christina and Emmanuel good health and cheer as they celebrate their ongoing commitment to each other.

#### **LAKE MAC 2024 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The 2024 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards were on Friday, 2 July. It was my pleasure to go along and celebrate excellence in local business, and I wish to acknowledge the Charlestown electorate-based individuals and businesses who were celebrated on the night. The annual awards acknowledge and support business accomplishments in Lake Macquarie City, recognising and highlighting achievements, and encouraging all businesses across the city to strive for excellence. Charlestown's Lake Group Strata Property Services was named Employer of Choice in the twenty-one or more employees category, while CEO Melanie Bird was named Outstanding Business Leader in the twenty-one employees or more category. Cardiff-based Flying Colours Education won Excellence in Diversity & Education, while software company Definiti (?) won Excellence in Innovation. Gateshead's Design Anthology won the Excellence in Small Business award, and Outstanding New Business went to Warners Bay-based psychologists Telethrive. My congratulations to all the nominees and finalists, and well-done to these outstanding Charlestown electorate businesses on their well-deserved recognition.

#### **LAKE MAC 2024 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

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#### **SELINA MCCLOSKEY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—My congratulations to Eleebana's Selina McCloskey on being crowned Miss International Australia 2024. As part of her pageant duties, Selina had to choose one of the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to focus on, and she chose the gender equality goal. Selina wants to use her platform to highlight this issue, empowering women and helping to shorten what the UN projects will be a 140-year struggle to eliminate gender inequality. Aside from competing in pageants, a challenge she undertook three years ago in an effort to surround herself with like-minded women aiming to make a difference, Selina volunteers with the extraordinary Dress for Success charity, which aims to



help women from all backgrounds gain confidence before joining the workforce. Selina wants to see equal representation of gender in workplace leadership positions, an aim we can all get behind—and it's fantastic to see an energetic young woman take up this goal and work to achieve to achieve it. Selina is off to Japan in October to represent Australia at one of the four biggest beauty pageants in the world, in a glitzy league with Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss Earth. I wish her all the best.

#### **BOOMER JACK MCVEIGH DOES US PROUD AT PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Born in Murwillumbah, Australian basketballer Jack McVeigh has done the Tweed Valley proud with the Boomers at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. The Boomers were looking like a medal chance until their heartbreaking 95-90 overtime loss to Serbia in the quarter finals at the Pierre Mauroy Stadium in Lille. In that game, the 6-foot 8-inch McVeigh shot a valuable 13 points off the bench. Jack spent his early years at Cabarita Beach before moving to the Gold Coast to pursue his basketball dreams, according to a Tweed Valley Weekly mini profile. He led Queensland to second place in the 2014 Australian U20 Championships, then spent three years playing US college basketball in Nebraska, before signing with the Adelaide 36ers. In 2021, Jack joined the Tasmania JackJumpers who went on to win the 2023-24 NBL Championship Series. Described as a 'shooter with range', Jack came up against basketball royalty in LeBron James and Steph Curry when the Australian men's team lost 98-92 to the United States in Abu Dhabi in the USA Basketball Showcase 2024. The 28-year-old has just realised his NBA dream by signing with the Houston Rockets.

#### **NIMBIN CENTRAL FAREWELLS FORMER PRINCIPAL CATH MARSHALL**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I WISH to pay tribute to former Nimbin Central School principal Cath Marshall, who retired last November and is being formally farewelled at the Nimbin Bowling Club on August 19. The festivities will include afternoon lawn bowls, a dinner and live music by the school's staff band. Cath Marshall was appointed to Nimbin Central as an art teacher at the beginning of 1998. She became Head Teacher Secondary Studies in 2005 and the Deputy Principal in 2014. She was relieving Principal in 2018 and appointed Principal in 2019 until her retirement. Before her time at Nimbin, she taught in a variety of south-western Sydney schools as a casual teacher and had her first appointment to East Hills Boys High Sydney, where she taught for three years. She moved to the Northern Rivers and taught at Casino High in 1997 before her permanent appointment at Nimbin. Cath was with the Department for 36 years, 25 of those at Nimbin Central. Nimbin Central current Principal Sally Thompson thanked Cath for making herself available while transitioning to retirement. "She paved the way with the community to ensure a positive and smooth transition between principals," Sally says.

#### **SOUTH LISMORE'S JOEL JENSEN WINS YOUNG BUILDER OF THE YEAR**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I was delighted to see respected South Lismore builder Joel Jensen Constructions win five awards at the Master Builders Association of NSW Regional Awards, including the prestigious Young Builder of the Year Award. Other awards included: Historic Residential Restoration (a 120-year-old farmhouse in Casino); Commercial Projects \$450K to \$750K (the new La Baracca rebuild); House Renovation under \$400K (East Lismore flood renovation); Commercial Shop Fit-Out (187 Cantina – the Mexican restaurant in Nesbitt Lane, Lismore CBD). This is a great achievement for Joel, still only in his early 30s, his wife Brittany and their talented, hard-working team. Joel Jensen has won a reputation throughout the wider region – from Tweed to Coffs Harbour and west to Tenterfield – as a builder who goes the extra mile for his clients, and importantly, his community, as is evidenced in his flood recovery work. Of his Young Builder Award, Joel told The Lismore App: "That's up to the age of 40. I've had a crack at that in the last few years, and there's just been better people in front of me, and this year, I was lucky enough to jag it. That was pretty special."

#### **MIA SZUMOWSKI COMPETES IN WORLD JUNIOR SANDA CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise Mia Szumowski, a 16-year-old Port Macquarie student, who has been selected to compete in the World Junior Sanda Championships to be held in Brunei in September. I understand that Mia has shown a real talent for this fast-paced, little-known sport. Having risen quickly through the ranks of competition, Mia is the only female selected in the Australian team which is a real achievement for women's sport! For those who do not know, Sanda is a fighting system which was originally developed by the Chinese military. Officially a Chinese boxing full-contact sport, Sanda combines traditional Chinese martial arts with modern combat fighting techniques. It utilises boxing, full-contact kickboxing, close range and rapid successive punches and kicks, wrestling, takedowns, sweeps and allowing knee and elbow strikes. Mention must also be given to Mia's coach, Rodel Glanville who is also the Australian Assistant Coach for Sanda and is heavily involved in developing and promoting the sport. Currently training six hours per day, 6 days a week, I admire Mia's complete commitment and strenuous preparation. I sincerely wish her every success in the upcoming competition and look forward to hearing her results.

### **HARRINGTON RIVERWALK RESERVE VOLUNTEERS RETIRE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I would like to thank five outstanding volunteers from the seaside community of Harrington who have tirelessly maintained the beautiful gardens at the Riverwalk Reserve since the walkway was constructed in 2004. Merrilyn Duckett, Carmel Connor, Bronte Dupen, Heinz Klenk and Noreen Bennett are the inspiration behind the Riverwalk Reserve which runs approximately 3.5 kilometres along the picturesque Manning River. These five stalwarts have generously donated their time and energy to the lawns and gardens on a weekly basis for many years. Bronte has served eight years in her role. Merrilyn was the former co-ordinator of the Garden Group, alongside Carmel who have served the organisation for 10 years. Noreen will match this impressive milestone in September, but it is Heinz who has surpassed the group, serving a total of 15 years. As a visitor to the area, the Riverwalk Reserve is a hub for tourism boasting stunning natural beauty. Clearly, the Harrington Waters Volunteer Group demonstrate considerable pride and love for their community in the meticulously maintained landscape. I congratulate these wonderful volunteers for their longstanding commitment to their community and wish them well in their retirement.

### **MAKE-A-WISH AUSTRALIA**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I acknowledge Make-A-Wish Australia Port Macquarie for the service they provide in making dreams a reality. Founded in 1985, the Make-A-Wish Australia charity seeks to brighten the lives of sick children and their families by offering a wish that will make a meaningful difference. The charity is run by volunteers and operates from Crescent Head to Hallidays Point. President Tammy Frater has been a dedicated volunteer since 2017 and alongside her team aim to create hope and joy from the wishes they grant. Their goal is to create a positive impact to all who use their service. Five-year-old Bronson is a perfect example of the impact a wish can make in the life of an unwell child. Bronson is diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and his wish was to own a golden retriever, and true to their word it was granted. Teenager Jeremy is another recipient of Make-A-Wish Australia with a dream of attending the Melbourne Grand Prix, the pinnacle of motorsports. Jeremy achieved this recently and even met up with his hero Oscar Piastri. I encourage the community to support this wonderful cause and congratulate everyone involved for making such a difference!

### **WINNERS OF GOULBURN BUSINESS AWARDS 2024**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise winners of the Goulburn Business Awards 2024. Hosted by the Goulburn Chamber of Commerce. The event acknowledges and celebrates the talents and achievements of local business - rewarding business excellence through the presentation of awards to category winners at a gala dinner. Business of the Year Award - RJ Sidney Craig; Outstanding Young Business Leader-Ashleigh Pakis - Panache Financial; Outstanding Business Leader (Under 20 employees) - Tennille Skelly- Dream Admin; Outstanding Business Leader (Over 21 employees) - Steve Shelley - One Raceway; Excellence in Small Business - Jigsaw Plan Management; Excellence in Micro Business - Tristyn Joyce and Bonnie Martin; Business Woman of the Year - Inica Spillane - Beauty With inn. The winners of each category become finalists in the Business Regional Awards to be held in September with possible progression to the NSW State Awards in October. I take this time to congratulate all winners and acknowledge the genuine outstanding performance and achievements by each category winner and wish them all longevity, growth and development within each of their chosen areas of expertise.

### **JAZZY GORDON AND TULLY PICKERING**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Jazzy Gordon and Tully Pickering who were announced as the joint winners of the 2024 WRAS Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Award at the Western Regional Academy of Sport (WRAS) Presentation Night. This award is presented to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander athlete/s within the WRAS programs who have demonstrated outstanding sporting achievement and success within their sport. Jazzy and Tully are both outstanding young basketballers. They have both had an incredible 12 months, both being named in the U16 NSW Countryside to compete at the 2024 National Junior Championships. They both also represented U16 NSW Country at the Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup. Jazzy was selected in the 2024 U16 NSW CCC basketball team while Tully won a gold medal and was named MVP in the gold medal match of the 2023 U15 NBA Basketball School Australia Abu Dhabi tournament. They were also both named squad athletes of the year (highest achievements in their sport) at the WRAS presentation night. I congratulate both Jazzy & Tully on their outstanding achievements. It is wonderful to see your talent, hard work and dedication being rewarded. Well done girls!

### **MIA RICHARDSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Mia Richardson of Dubbo who was awarded the Chairman's Award for Excellence at the 2024 Western Region Academy of Sport Presentation Night. 15-year-old Mia has a significant presence in the Dubbo community. Mia is volunteer coach

with Dubbo Basketball's "Rookies". She also acts as an assistant coach for their under 12s representative side and on a Friday night, Mia can be found umpiring basketball. She was also selected in the U15 Basketball NSW Shootout and D-League programs. In addition to this significant sports load, Mia balances her studies at St Johns College, volunteers at the junior rugby league canteen, and she has shaved her head twice for sarcoma research raising \$14,000 reflecting her ambition to contribute to the community. Mia was also named as Dubbo's 2024 Young Citizen of the Year. This recognition is very well deserved of Mia's outstanding contributions to Basketball and the community. Her civic mindedness is an inspiration to us all, and she has an extremely bright future ahead of her. Congratulations Mia!

#### **CLAIRE BYNON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Claire Bynon of Dubbo who was announced as Western Region Academy of Sport (WRAS) Coach of the Year at the 2024 Western Region Academy of Sport Presentation Night. Claire is a driving force within the Dubbo Basketball. Her passion for investing and committing to the development of players in Dubbo is well known and valued. She was recognised as the 2024 Coach of the Year for her coaching talents, her ability to identify player strengths, and her continuous efforts to build skills within players. A particular highlight of her coaching career that was featured as part of the presentation was that Claire, along with Dubbo Basketball Association Coaches, have achieved 4 players gaining selection into the state teams! Congratulations Claire on this well-deserved accolade. Your dedication to basketball and nurturing players is truly commendable. The players and basketball community are extremely lucky to have such a supportive mentor guiding them. Thank you for all you do!

#### **DOUGHHEADS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to DoughHeads in the Junction, who have won the award for Australia's best doughnut for the second year running. Hosted by the prestigious Baking Association of Australia, the National Donut Competition in Melbourne saw DoughHeads take home two incredible awards. Their "Pump Up the Jam" doughnut, filled with house-made raspberry jam, won 1st place in the Traditional Jam Doughnut category. Meanwhile, their "Original Glaze" doughnut earned 2nd place in the Glazed Doughnut category. Head chef Kallan Bragg had a 22-hour day crafting these masterpieces, getting them on a flight to Melbourne, and then to the competition. His commitment to his craft is inspirational and commendable. Congratulations to owner Anna, Kallan, and the whole team at DoughHeads on this fantastic achievement, everyone should head over to DoughHeads in The Junction to experience the award-winning doughnuts yourself!

#### **THE FALCON**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—The inaugural Newcastle Bar Awards saw The Falcon Newcastle swoop in and secure the prestigious Bar of the Year accolade. This award recognises a bar that has excelled in creating a unique and unforgettable drinking experience. The Falcon does just that with their Southern-inspired menu, mouthwatering cocktails, and joyous atmosphere. It's a little slice of America, right here in Newcastle. Well done to the team at The Falcon, this recognition is well deserved and you've become a Newcastle institution.

#### **BIG THREE TREK**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to the 64 trekkers who took part in this year's Big Three Trek, raising money and awareness for the Mark Hughes Foundation. These walkers start from Allianz Stadium in Sydney on Friday, and hike 150km to McDonald Jones Stadium to make watch the Newcastle Knights in the NRL Brain Cancer Round. This year, the trekkers faced rough conditions, with heavy rain all throughout the weekend. Through their arduous journey and fundraising endeavours, the Big Three Trek participants have raised \$220,000 for the charity. These funds will go towards brain cancer research and patient support. They have shone a beacon of hope for those affected by brain cancer. I congratulate all of the trekkers for stepping up to the challenge and surpassing expectations. You are all champions in the fight against brain cancer.

#### **MR GEOFF O'ROURKE RETIREMENT**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge Mr Geoff O'Rourke for his dedication to the last 57 years working at the Evans Head Fish Co-op. Now stepping into retirement, Mr O'Rourke has enjoyed his many years of early mornings and fish scaling, starting out as a young 14-year-old teenager riding his pushbike to the local fish co-op to get himself a job so he didn't have to return to school. Mr O'Rourke has seen the fishing industry change over the years and the local co-op thriving, with up to 40 working trawlers moored, at its peak. Busy days those were, unloading and cooking up the many 55 kilo boxes of green prawns to be repacked and sent off to the Sydney Fish Market. Congratulations on such an amazing effort Mr O'Rourke, one

for the record books that is for sure, putting in the hard work for over 57 years you now deserve to enjoy what is to come in your retirement.

#### **MACLEAN BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge the Maclean bowling club for their recent successful fundraiser fashion parade and high tea raising \$2750 for the Maclean Hospital Auxiliary. Along with the models for the day, local businesses including Ta'Chele Australis, Heart of Space and Clovelly Fashions showcased the latest fashions during the event. MC for the day, Vicki Gulaptis did a wonderful job keeping the crowd informed and entertained. Annual contributions were made to the raffle prize pool by Maclean Variety Meats and Shoes at Carneys Arcade. The raffle alone raised over \$1000. Sweet treats and traditional English finger sandwiches were kindly catered for and donated by Anne Farrell, Marilyn Donelan, Helen Hamilton, Helen Phelps, Margaret Dobin, Nola Baker and Judy Anderson from the Maclean Hospital Auxiliary committee. Congratulations to all involved in this worthy event.

#### **SENSATIONAL CRAFTS - CASINO**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Casino based business, Sensational Crafts, being announced winner of the 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards in the Arts, Crafts & Gifts category at the Awards' National Presentation Evening Gala Event held earlier this year at Sydney's The Star. This year marked the 26th consecutive year of the Australian Small Business Champion Awards, and its most successful year to date, with more entries received this year than any year prior and a total of more than 100 categories. The Awards specifically highlight the finest of Australia's small businesses in the retail, services and manufacturing industries with this year's Awards seeing more than 5,500 small business submissions from every Australian state and territory. Based on many key elements of success Sensational Crafts were selected as 2024 sole Champion of the Arts, Crafts & Gifts category, what a fantastic achievement. Well done to Gary and his team at Sensational Crafts and I wish you every success in the future!

#### **BAND TOGETHER FESTIVAL**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—The Band Together Festival in July was a wonderful two days of music and talent, where school bands from across western Sydney came together to collaborate. School Bands Australia organised the festival, with 540 students performing from over 30 schools, with a guest appearance from the NSW Police Band. The festival also precipitated the launch of the 'Band Together Foundation', a charity aimed at strengthening music education in NSW. The Foundation's purpose is to enrich the lives of students and children, fostering cognitive, emotional and social development through providing access to musical tuition. I understand the transformative power of musical education, having experienced it in my own life. Thanks to School Bands Australia for organising the festival at Riverside Theatres, and to the supportive parents and carers that instill young people with the confidence to showcase their talents on the big stage. Congratulations to Co-Executive Director of the Band Together Foundation Martin Davison for a successful debut and a big shout out to the students of our local public schools that participated Dundas Public School, Parramatta Public School, Cumberland High School, Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School, Burnside and Oatlands Public School.

#### **JAMES THOMSON AND BINDI**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I was so pleased to hear that my office was able to assist my constituent, James Thomson with registering his rescue dog, Bindi. Approximately 200,000 stray or surrendered dogs are admitted to shelters and rescue facilities every year in Australia, and sadly, many of them are not adopted. Bindi was abandoned in the ACT after suspectedly being used in a puppy farm. Thanks to the kindness of James and his wife, Rosalie, Bindi the fox terrier has found a new, loving home in Padstow Heights. As a fellow dog owner, I know that Bindi the dog is bringing so much benefit to the Thomsons as well. If you are thinking of getting a new best friend, I encourage you to visit your local shelter and adopt one of the thousands of dogs looking for a new start. Thank you, James and Rosalie, for opening your doors to Bindi. I'm so pleased we could assist in helping you register your beloved companion. My staff and I look forward to catching up with you and Bindi in future.

#### **CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN MAYOR SLEEPS OUT FOR HOMELESSNESS**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Thank you to Mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Bilal El-Hayek for hosting a Lights Out Sleepout for Homelessness at Belmore Sports Park last month. Approximately 120,000 Australians are experiencing homelessness on any given night. Sadly, Canterbury-Bankstown experienced a 10% increase in homelessness between 2021-2023. The sleepout saw 40 sleepers join the Mayor on a cold, winter's night last month, experiencing what many are faced with night after night on the streets. The event raised \$11,849 for Mission Australia, Brothers in Need and Maronites on a Mission to help support those facing homelessness with proceeds going towards vital services to help people at risk or people experiencing

homelessness in the Bankstown-Canterbury area. Thank you to Mayor El-Hayek, for taking action to help address the growing issue of homelessness for many in our community. Your leadership and dedication will make a significant impact to providing much-needed support and services. Thank you also to all of the community organisations and charities that support people experiencing homelessness.

#### **ILKER DELI - DARETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Ilker Deli, Manager of the Dareton Youth and Community Centre. For many years, Ilker has shown unwavering commitment to the young people of Dareton. Each week, he and his team provide a space and activities that help nurture youth development and provide a supportive environment helping young people improve their self-confidence and life skills. Ilker is dedicated to walking alongside young people through mentoring. Recognising how we help kids think about life through different perspectives. For Ilker, fostering a stronger, more connected community is very important. He prioritises supporting young people throughout their lives. Not only while they attend the centre but as they transition into adulthood. I congratulate Ilker in sowing hope for a better future for the young people and thank him for his service to the Dareton community.

#### **DENILIQIN BLUE HEELERS - DENILIQIN**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today, I would like to acknowledge the successful efforts to re-establish of the Deniliquin Blue Heelers Rugby League Club for the first time since 1970. After nearly 50 years, the club is making a triumphant return to the rugby league scene in Deniliquin, thanks to the tireless efforts of Kurt Longford and the newly formed committee of Andrew Scott as vice president, Pauline Longford as secretary, and Kelly Scott and Angie Lewis-Kelly as treasurers. Together, they have laid the groundwork for the Blue Heelers' return, including a fundraising raffle featuring a signed NSW Blues State of Origin jersey. They hope to join the ProTen League which reintroduced Rugby League to small communities which once were part of Group 17, providing a much-needed platform for men and women to come together socially and play sport. I would once again like to thank Kurt Longford and the entire committee for their dedication and hard work to provide a sport for everyone, and wish the Deniliquin Blue Heelers all the best as they prepare for the 2025 season.

#### **GAYE LAMB - WENTWORTH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise Gaye Lamb of Wentworth for her valued and varied contribution to the community. Gaye is an active member of the Country Women's Association, serving 46 years in varied pivotal roles including several years as Group President, International Officer, and State representative. Her volunteer input over 25 years has been part of the rejuvenation of the New South Western Standard bulletin writing, managing subscriptions and emailing of the weekly community publication. Gaye is a foundation member of both Ruby's Cargo, a shopfront for a wide range of locally made products, and the Ellerslie Fire Brigade. In addition, Gaye has been a member of the Far West Health Advisory Council, a volunteer at the Wentworth Country Show and a board member with the restoration of the Paddleboat Ruby. She was responsible for a successful submission for an environmental grant to redirect the drainage water from the river to the local sports ground at Ellerslie. Gaye is to be commended on her community involvement over many years.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH PIPE BAND: BASEL TATTOO 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—In July 2024, the Manly Warringah Pipe Band journey to Switzerland to play at the Basel Tattoo, where they will be representing Sydney's northern beaches that includes the Davidson electorate. This will be the third time the Manly Warringah Pipe Band has represented Australia at the Basel Tattoo, second only to the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, in which the band has also played on three occasions. Joining them at the Basel Tattoo will be the Australian Army Band, the NSW Police Pipe Band and the South Australian Pipes and Drums, giving the Tattoo a real Australian flavour. The band will give 11 Tattoo performances in Basel, together with a street parade before an audience of over 100,000 spectators. Leading the band is Drum Major Chloe van der Velde and Pipe Major Nick Roelvink. I recognise and congratulate them, and all the members of the Manly Warringah Pipe Band. Founded in 1949, the band has a strong community connection and makes a stirring impression in both sight and sound at the Forestville Sub-Branch RSL Anzac Day and Remembrance Day commemorations. Thank you for all your ongoing contribution to our local community.

#### **MATT HUNT – 2024 WORLD ATHLETICS UNDER 20 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—The World Athletics Under 20 Championships will be held in Lima, Peru in late August 2024. Amongst the athletes representing Australia will be Davidson electorate resident Matt Hunt of Roseville, competing in the 400 metre hurdles event. Matt has been competing in athletics since he was six years old. His recent achievements include winning gold in the under 18 400 metre hurdles at the 2023 NSW

Championships; and gold at the 2022 Australian All Schools Championships. I have no doubt that Matt aspires to be the best he can and to continue to represent Australia at the World Championships, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games. As we celebrate Australian successes at the Paris Olympics, I look forward to Matt realising his ambitions and representing Australia in international competition in future years.

#### **GLEN STREET THEATRE IN BELROSE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Tuesday 9 July 2024, I attended the Glen Street Theatre to announce \$71,812 for new stage lighting from the NSW Government's 2023 Community Building Partnership Program. This is being matched by Northern Beaches Council, making the total contribution of \$143,624. What a community win for the arts! I was proudly joined by Northern Beaches Council Mayor Cr. Sue Heins, Deputy Mayor Cr. Georgia Ryburn and dedicated theatre staff. Glen Street Theatre has been a congregating point for the Northern Beaches community since it first opened in 1985. Its stage has seen performances by the likes of Jackie Weaver, John Gaden, Max Gillies, Max Cullen and in recent years, Jonathan Biggins and the cast of the Wharf Review. It has also been a strong supporter of local productions, in particular, Davidson High School, who stage their annual Season of Performing Arts at the theatre. No stage production would be complete without dramatic lighting. I am pleased to have been able to assist Glen Street Theatre. I recognise and congratulate Glen Street Theatre Director Belinda Gibson for her role in bringing these improvements to fruition and Northern Beaches Council for their co-contribution to the project.

#### **CHELSEY WAYNE 2024 WORLD ATHLETICS UNDER 20S CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of all members of the Keira electorate and community. We are lucky to live in a region that provides so many avenues and opportunities for individuals to showcase their talent, whether this be through sport, education, music, art or more. The talent in the Illawarra is unmatched. That's why I take great privilege in informing the house of one of the outstanding achievements of Illawarra Christian School attendee and Keira constituent, Chelsy Wayne, who has been selected to represent Australia at the upcoming 2024 World Athletics Under 20s Championships in Peru, which will take place from 27-31 August of this year. At just 16 years of age, Chelsy has been selected to represent Australia in the Discus Throw event. Chelsy has worked incredibly hard through countless hours of training to be selected as a part of the team that will represent Australia at the championships. From everyone here in this place, good luck Chelsy. No matter the outcome, I know you will do your family, friends, community and country proud. We cannot wait to see your future successes unfold.

#### **OLYMPIAN KENDALL BRODIE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I am incredibly proud of the Aussie men's eight for placing 6th overall at the Olympics in Paris! Ably led by Haberfield local Kendall Brodie in the coxswain's seat, they've done a phenomenal job and made us all very proud. A true pioneer in her sport Kendall created history in 2018 when she became the first woman to steer the Australian men's coxed eight in international competition after rule changes from World Rowing allowed for coxswains to become gender neutral. Kendall has since gone on to become an integral member of the team. In 2023, Kendall was the rudder for the men's eight for a successful season, with the highlight being a first-place finish at the World Rowing Cup III in which the Australians upset the favourites the United Kingdom in the final. Later that year Kendall would also be coxswain in a second-straight bronze medal finish for Australia at the World Championships. Congratulations Kendall!

#### **MARRICKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations to the dedicated past and current members of Marrickville Historical Society [MHS] on reaching the Society's 40th anniversary in 2024. Established in 1984, the founding principle of MHS was to promote the study, research and documentation of the heritage, history, and environment of our locality and to encourage an appreciation of our diverse cultural inheritance. At the time, 'our locality' meant the area under the Marrickville Municipal Council Local Government Area. This included the suburbs of Dulwich Hill, Enmore, Lewisham, Marrickville, Petersham, St Peters, Stanmore, Sydenham, Tempe, parts of Camperdown, and Newtown. MHS continues to remain dedicated to the areas it covered at its formation and has created a profound legacy for our community acknowledging, documenting and sharing our history. Dedicated volunteers are the lifeblood of organisations such as MHS and I wish to recognise the contribution of so many people over these forty years to the enduring legacy of MHS; President Scott MacArthur and other current office holders Mary Barthelmy, Lyndal Gowland, Stuart Grigg, Iain Carolin, Lorraine Beach, Rod Aanensen, Richard Blair, John McGrath, Elda Ribeiro and Ian Tyrrell. Congratulations all!

### **SOLSTICE SUMMER HILL**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Summer Hill welcomed a vibrant new cafe in June of this year. Solstice was created when friends Ben Johnson and Carolin Jung combined their talents to establish their small specialty coffee bar with a focus on single origin coffees and seasonal local pastries and sandwiches. Ben brings his experience and amazing coffee from his business The New Paradigm Coffee Roasters, the Sydney-based micro-roastery launched by Johnson with the intent to enact social justice through coffee. Ben and Carolin have taken great care in the curation of the cafe, from the chairs with coverings sourced by Carolin's mother in Germany, to the extensive pour-over coffee menu, the ongoing Saturday collaboration with Bloods Bakery – a small Inner-West based bakery, and the subtle nods to both their respective Chilean and German heritage, the pair have created a unique and amazing environment. Carolin and Ben set out to create a warm cozy spot that they would love to go and have a coffee at, and they have certainly done that! I strongly encourage everyone to head on down to Solstice and experience this exciting new addition to the thriving cafe scene in Summer Hill.

### **MINI WOOLIES – HOPE AND CARE INITIATIVE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—The impact of having a job which gives one a sense of independence and capacity can't be overstated. So, it is with immense pride and enthusiasm that I share and celebrate a groundbreaking initiative launched by Woolworths in collaboration with Fujitsu and Hope and Care. The unveiling of Mini Woolies in Denham Court marks a monumental step forward in our collective journey towards inclusivity and empowerment. Mini Woolies is designed to creating a more inclusive educational and skills training environment for individuals living with disabilities. It represents a significant step towards ensuring that every person has access to the opportunities and support they need to thrive in the workforce. Having started my working life at 16 in the supportive but tough environment of Woolworths Westfield Liverpool, I know that valuable skills like communication and problem solving will be provided in a safe and engaging space for students of the initiative to build confidence and independence. Congratulations to all who have worked to deliver this extraordinary milestone. May it serve as an influential example of what we can accomplish when we are united in our pursuit of enhancing job-readiness and equity.

### **CECIL HILLS PROBUS CLUB**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Social connection is so important in today's world, increasingly so when people transition into retirement. Workplace friendships can be lost and finding new modes of connection can take time. Probus Clubs are vital local initiatives that allow seniors and retirees to open doors to new experiences and friendships. They offer a range of activities including trips and outings for members, guest speakers, and workshops for over 110,000 retirees across Australia and New Zealand. I was so excited when I met with Probus earlier this year to discuss the establishment of a new Probus Club in Cecil Hills – and last week, I attended a meeting of the club as their inaugural guest speaker! It was great to see that Cecil Hills Probus Club is off to a fantastic start, gaining over 30 members in just 2 months! I had a ball reaching into my training as an occupational therapist to share with members some tips and tricks on staying active and healthy in retirement. Congratulations to all the members of the Club on your enthusiastic support for this initiative and I look forward to working with them to support many in our community.

### **CROOKWELL MEALS ON WHEELS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Crookwell Meals on Wheels for their remarkable service and dedication to our community. On the 19th of February, 1975, Dr. Krishnan and Reverend Bill Langley identified ten community members who could no longer prepare meals for themselves, leading to the establishment of Crookwell Meals on Wheels. Approaching its 50th anniversary next February, this service has been a cornerstone of support for countless individuals in our community. This milestone will be a momentous occasion, celebrating the incredible support provided over the years. In the last financial year alone, 4,132 meals were delivered to those in need. Such a significant achievement is made possible by a steadfast group of volunteers. Currently, 104 volunteers each dedicate an hour every five weeks or more to ensure meals are delivered. The dedication of the kitchen staff at Crookwell Hospital is also crucial to this operation. I extend my heartfelt thanks to President Greg Seaman, all the volunteers, and the staff at Crookwell Hospital for their significant contributions and unwavering commitment to supporting our community members.

### **MR WILLIAM KENNETH BELL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to pay my respect to the work of Mr. William Kenneth Bell. A proud Wallabaloos / Ngunnawal man, Mr. Bell was born in 1946 in Yass. From a young age, he demonstrated a remarkable work ethic and a broad skill set, becoming a trusted name throughout the region. Mr. Bell was highly engaged in sporting and social events across Yass, forming many enduring friendships. His

professional journey took him from shearing sheds in Moree to Canberra, where he contributed to the installation of retaining walls on Capital Hill, the site of the New Parliament House. He later worked with the Yass Valley Shire Council and, in his later years, collaborated with and represented Aboriginal groups. In recognition of his lasting impact on the local sporting community, a grandstand at Walker Park in Yass bears his name. With sincere respect, I acknowledge Mr. Bell's significant contributions to the Yass Valley. Vale, Mr. Bell.

#### **FOX WARDROBES AND CABINETRY - WARRIEWOOD**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Congratulations to the Fox Wardrobes and Cabinetry Warriewood on winning the Best Home Renovations and Improvement category at the 2024 Northern Beaches Business Awards. Founded in 2010 as Volpe Cabinetmaking by Vic Volpe, the business quickly grew due to Vic's focus on quality and customer service. In 2014, Vic's brother Chris came on board and the Fox Wardrobes brand was launched. A decade later, with the two brands now merged, Fox Wardrobes and Cabinetry is a thriving, local business specialising in sustainable and stylish storage solutions. Fox offers high quality custom wardrobes and storage options like home office spaces, entertainment units, and pantry storage. Fox are dedicated to ensuring that their designs enhance their clients' daily lives by decluttering and organising their home, and ensuring that families have functional and beautiful spaces for what they value most. Congratulations to the whole team on this amazing achievement: Chris, Vic, Tom, Simon, Phil, Monique, Mitchell, Matty, Mark, Marcelino, Leah, Jenny, Jamie, James, Jai, Luca, Esera, Diego, Dan, Chris, Alison. I am pleased that acknowledgement of the Fox Wardrobes and Cabinetry is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **BLATCHFORD'S KITCHEN - ELANORA HEIGHTS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge a northern beaches gem, Blatchford's Kitchen, located in the beautiful Elanora Heights. Established in 1928 by Eric and Doris Blatchford, and now proudly operated by their grandson Chris, Blatchford's Kitchen is a warm and welcoming place to grab breakfast, lunch or a treat. Blatchford's is a cherished local institution, loved for their gourmet sandwiches, fantastic choice of pies, cakes and pastries as well as quality coffees, and cosy atmosphere. Blatchford's Blatchford's provide catering options perfect for parties and celebrations, offering a delightful array of flavours and presentations that elevate any gathering with a touch of culinary elegance. Blatchford's Kitchen is celebrated for its dedication to using fresh, high-quality ingredients sourced from reputable suppliers and local farmers. From meticulously prepared platters and grazing tables to their dynamic pop-ups and paellas, Blatchford's Kitchen delivers not just food, but an experience. Their openness to collaboration and new ideas showcases a forward-thinking approach while honouring their rich heritage. I am pleased that acknowledgement of the Blatchford's Kitchen is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **ZALI STAMOPOULOS – BARRENJOEY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to host a coaching session with the Barrenjoey High School debating teams. Thank you to student, Isabella W, for her initiative to invite me. The session would not have been possible without the facilitation of their debating teacher and coach, Ms Zali Stamopoulos. Ms Stamopoulos is a teacher at Barrenjoey High School who goes above and beyond for her students, running debating coaching sessions during lunch time and before school. When it hasn't been possible for the debate teams to travel for competitions, Ms Stamopoulos ensures they do not miss out – instead coordinating for the competitions to occur online. On top of debating coaching, Ms Stamopoulos has a full teaching load and is the year seven year advisor, dedicating much time to help students navigate life and school. Teachers are too often underappreciated. To Ms Stamopoulos I say – you will never know the depth of the positive impact you leave on your students, and you may very literally be changing the course of their lives through your service. Thank you, Ms Stamopoulos, for your service and contribution. Barrenjoey High School and our community is lucky to have you!

#### **BEN BRADLEY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Following his recent semi-retirement announcement, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank my constituent Ben Bradley for his fantastic contribution to our community here on the Central Coast. Ben has dedicated an impressive 34 years to the club industry, including over 20 years as the General Manager of the Davistown RSL Club. Ben has been a cornerstone of the club, guiding it to where it stands today. His tireless efforts and the unwavering support from the community have made a lasting impact. Ben's journey has been marked by the many people who have supported him along the way, and he acknowledges their invaluable contribution to his success. As Ben bids farewell to this chapter of his life, he looks forward to new adventures and opportunities. In his own words, he is excited to embrace the 3F's: Family, Fishing, and Frothies! I wish Ben all the best as he embarks on this new journey, enjoying the simple pleasures of life and new opportunities ahead.



**BERYL DOBELL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I am delighted to take this opportunity to congratulate Beryl Dobell of Terrigal, who has been awarded Life Membership at the Terrigal 50+ Leisure & Learning Centre. Beryl has also recently received a Certificate of Achievement for raising over \$50,000 for the centre through her dedicated craft sales. Beryl has been an active member of the centre for over 25 years, participating in activities like bus trips and fetes, and initiating a successful craft group that continues to thrive today, producing beautiful items that help raise funds for the centre. Her passion for crafts, whether knitting, crocheting, or sewing, has fostered creativity and lifelong friendships among the group. Beyond crafts, Beryl shares her love and training for Tai Chi and 'Prevention of Falls' exercises, contributing to the well-being of many. Beryl has been involved in many Auxiliary committees working for charities and she continues to be an inspiring presence and very active member at the centre. At 92 years young, Beryl lives by her motto, "If you eat well and keep moving, you will keep going, you won't stop." Her unwavering spirit and dedication are a true inspiration. Thank you, Beryl, for your remarkable contributions to our community.

**NSW SES – GOSFORD UNIT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Ongoing blood donation is of critical importance, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the NSW SES blood donors who generously give the gift of life. Recently, 12 members of the NSW SES - Gosford Unit visited Lifeblood at West Gosford to donate blood and plasma as part of the annual Emergency Services Blood Drive. With Lifeblood reserves reaching critical levels, the Gosford unit members rolled up their sleeves to help meet this urgent need. The Australian Red Cross has highlighted an alarming trend: the current demand for blood is outpacing donations. Lifeblood urgently requires 1,200 donations daily in the coming week to meet patient needs. Last year, the NSW SES made 537 donations, saving an incredible 1,611 lives, and I know they aim to surpass this achievement and lead the drive this year. Lifeblood states that while over 58% of the population is eligible to donate, fewer than 3% do. I encourage everyone to take the online eligibility quiz and join the effort. Donating blood or plasma is simple and quick, and like myself and the NSW SES members, you will be well cared for by the Lifeblood team.

**TAMIL SAFE SPACE - LAUNCH**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 3 August 2024, I was pleased to celebrate the Tamil Safe Space launch in Wentworthville. A new community-led facility, The Tamil Safe Space offers intersectional, holistic mental health support to our Tamil diaspora. Supported by Roses in the Ocean, the Tamil Safe Space is piloting an innovative and non-clinical approach to mental health care. The capable and compassionate peer-led workforce at the Tamil Safe Space connect our community to informed and meaningful crisis support, delivered by people with real lived experiences. These services are helping shatter the taboo around seeking support. Our Tamil community have endured the effects of unspeakable cruelty as a result of the prolonged civil conflict, and many still carry mental wounds from terrible tragedies and suffering. We are fortunate to have this new service available in Western Sydney— a service that will combat the vacuum of isolation that accompanies mental health challenges, by offering a culturally-considerate and welcoming hub. Thank you to the dedicated members of Tamil Safe Space Committee Dharmarajah Dharmakumar, Thava Seelan, Viji Dhayanathan, Kalyani Inpakumar, Iyngaranathan Selvaratnam, Shanthi Senathi, Cheryl Webster and Sneha Anthony for your efforts to bring this vital community space into fruition.

**WETHERILL PARK WESTERNERS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Sunday 4th August, I was happy to meet with players and officials from Wetherill Park Westerners Sports Club and present them with a Local Sports Grant. Wetherill Park Westerners is a community-based football club that has competed in the Southern Districts Soccer Football Association for 40 years. With a diverse player membership base, the Club provides a career start for footballers based in our local Prospect Electorate and across Western Sydney. Their Emerson Park ground is home to 11 Juniors, Seniors and All Age teams in 2024. This year, Wetherill Park Westerners successfully applied for a Local Sports Grant to upgrade their training equipment, including portable goal posts and training kits, as well as supporting their volunteer coaches with credentialed training, to help them help their players become the best footballers they can be. It was great to join the Westerners family and watch the All Age match on a Sunday morning, with quality football on display, the barbecue sizzling and a family-friendly atmosphere throughout. My heartfelt thanks go out to Harry Wojciechowski, President, Gary Metten, Treasurer, all the Committee and volunteers at Wetherill Park Westerners on another great season serving our local community.

**ASSYRIAN MARTYRS DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Sunday 4th August, I was honoured to address members of our Assyrian-Australian community in commemorating Assyrian Martyrs Day, at the offices of the Assyrian

National Council – Australia, Fairfield. Assyrian Martyrs Day, also known as the National Day of Mourning in the Assyrian diaspora, is observed annually on August 7th, the anniversary of the Simele massacre in Iraq in 1933. Up to 3,000 Assyrian men, women and children were murdered and over 100 nearby villages were destroyed, displacing them from their ancestral home in the Nineveh Plains. Assyrian-Australians are an essential part of our diverse Western Sydney community, particularly in our local Electorate of Prospect. I support our dedicated and hard-working Assyrian-Australians in their pursuit of justice for their ancestors, who suffered and sacrificed so that they may live in freedom. It was great to be joined by Fr Ramen Youkhanis, Assyrian Church of the East, Federal and State parliamentary colleagues, as well as students from St Narsai Assyrian Christian College, Horsley Park. My thanks go out to Presidents Hermiz Shahan, ANCA and Breteil Tigris David, The Young Assyrians, and all our Assyrian-Australian volunteers at the ANCA for their continued efforts supporting our local community.

#### **KINGSGROVE COMMUNITY AID CENTRE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to commend and recognise the efforts of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre over the past 56 years. Offering an array of services, Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre has become a cornerstone for residents facing life's challenges, providing an indispensable lifeline to those in need. Seniors, often facing isolation, find joy and companionship through the organisation's social support program. Beyond this, the community centre also provides essential services and empowerment to individuals with disabilities. From social activities to community participation and practical assistance, the centre helps local residents live more engaged and fulfilling lives. Organisations such as Kingsgrove Community Centre are essential for the wellbeing and cohesion of our community. Its dedicated staff and volunteers work tirelessly to ensure that every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, receives the support they need. I want to thank everyone at the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre for the invaluable contribution you have made to the lives of the St George community.

#### **EULA GUTHRIE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to pay tribute to Ms Eula Guthrie who recently passed away. Eula was an outstanding orator, a brilliant writer and a much loved and acclaimed teacher at St George Girls High School. A graduate of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in the late 1940s, she changed the lives of many young women who then went on to have outstanding careers themselves. One of her many achievements in education was to open agricultural schools and colleges to girls which were previously restricted to male-only. Ms Guthrie is considered to be one of the most influential female figures in the history of NSW education. In 1992, Eula was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to education and to the community. She will be remembered by us all with the utmost respect and admiration. On behalf of the Kogarah electorate, I send our sincere condolences to the Guthrie family and wish to express my deepest appreciation for the work Eula did to improve educational outcomes across our community.

#### **CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE ST BEDE'S HOME**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to congratulate and commend Catholic Healthcare St Bede's Home at South Hurstville on its 30th anniversary. St Bede's Home offers an extensive range of events, activities and specialised wellness programs. Residents participate in arts and crafts, exercise classes, social activities in outings, bus trips, personalised lifestyle activities and a pastoral care program. The staff at St Bede's Home are well-known to our community for their unwavering passion for promoting positive social interactions and striving to improve the quality of life for residents. Aged care services are such an important aspect of our local community. They support our health, wellbeing, social life and safety at a time when we need it most. I would like to thank and acknowledge all the volunteers who have continuously sacrificed their time and energy over the years at the St Bede's Home. Thank you to Catholic Healthcare St Bede's Home for looking after our local community for the past 30 years. The contribution you have made to the senior residents of Kogarah is truly invaluable, and we are grateful for everything you do to make our lives better.

#### **SERVICE FOR SCHOOL REFUSERS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I wish to acknowledge a new service that has been started in the Maitland area to support youth in our community. The service seeks to re-engage young people that have given up on attending school and is a collaboration between Wahroonga Aboriginal Corporation, two Hunter high schools and PCYC. Former School Principal Gab McIntosh is leading the volunteer program, Help for School Refusers, which works with each individual former students to plan what comes next for them; whether it be work experience, employment or even returning to school. The program runs three days a week in central Maitland and is for those aged between 12-17 years old who have not attended school in six months or over. For many of these young people often both parents and the schools feel they have run out of options. The program offers basic English and Maths lessons as well as some fun activities.

The service acknowledges that anxiety and depression are major issues for these students. Parents or caregivers are welcome to attend the program as a support. Congratulations to Ms McIntosh and all involved in the program.

#### **MAITLAND CAMERA CLUB**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the Maitland Camera Club, who recently triumphed at the NSW Top Shot competition. This remarkable achievement is testament to the exceptional talent within the club. The Maitland Camera Club members won eight out of the 27 awards on offer, including three first prizes and five minor awards. Brad Le Brocq and Debbie Sutton demonstrated their excellence in nature photography, with Brad winning first place in Nature Prints and Debbie earning third place. In the Nature Digital category, Peter Ryan garnered second and third places with his impressive Kenyan images. Julie Rathbone's portraiture skills were recognised with a first-place award in Monochrome Digital. Additionally, Grahame Smith achieved first and third places in Colour Digital, while Allison Hayes received second place in Monochrome Print. This success highlights the diverse and passionate talents of the 48 club members, ranging from novices to seasoned photographers. The Maitland Camera Club's achievements reflect its dedication to the art of photography and its commitment to fostering excellence among its members. Congratulations to all involved!

#### **DIVIJA BHUPATIRAJU**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Divija Bhupatiraju who has been named, along with 9 other NSW young people, as a 2024 World Literacy Foundation Youth Ambassador. Divija was inspired to apply for the role by her Indian grandparents who only recently learned to read. Divija and her family moved to Australia from India in 2008 and settled in Metford and Divija attends Merewether High School. Divija will be part of a global collective of 15 to 19 year-olds from 40 countries who will work to improve literacy outcomes for disadvantaged children worldwide. In her new role, Divija will serve as an advocate to increase education and community awareness about the importance of reading and writing and lift literacy rates in our community. Divija's family know firsthand the power of education to change the trajectory of one's life. Her parent's example of studying hard to ensure a better life for her family in Australia inspires her efforts. Divija sees literacy as transformative and her new role as empowering. We look forward to hearing more about the program over the coming year. Congratulations Divija.

#### **MARINE RESCUE READYING FOR BUSY SUMMER**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker Local volunteers from Middle Harbour Marine Rescue NSW have recently taken part in a major practice search and rescue operation in Sydney Harbour. Twenty five Marine Rescue volunteers practiced their skills alongside members of Police Marine Area Command and Surf Life Saving NSW. The real time exercise involved a capsized vessel off Dobroyd Head, drifting towards Balmoral with multiple people in the water requiring urgent assistance. These exercises are vital to ensuring that our local volunteers are equipped with the skills necessary to respond to emergencies on the water, as well as communication and multi-agency response. As we head towards summer the volunteers at Middle Harbour will be ramping up their training ready for a busy season out on the water. They will be protecting our local community based out of their brand-new facilities that was funded and delivered by the former NSW Liberal Government. I thank all our Marine Rescue volunteers who support our local community and for keeping us safe out on the water.

#### **VALE PHIL CLINTON**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker Today I acknowledge the sad passing of long-standing Middle Harbour Yacht Club member, Phil Clinton. Phil was a valued member of the community and dedicated an astounding five decades to the club. During his time at the Middle Harbour Yacht Club, Phil shaped the culture of the club, embracing a position on the Race Management Team, getting involved out on the water in volunteer teams, serving as the Vice Commodore of racing for five years, and chairing the Sailing Committee. For over a decade, Phil also served as the Crew Board Manager during Thursday Night Twilight Sailing. It is clear to see that Phil had a deep passion for and understanding of sailing, and loved the dedicated and caring community at Middle Harbour Yacht Club. Phil leaves behind a legacy of kindness, generosity and good humour, as well as his outstanding contributions to Middle Harbour Yacht Club and the broader North Shore community. Vale Phil Clinton.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF MOSMAN CHANGEOVER 2024**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I congratulate the Rotary Club of Mosman on another successful changeover dinner that they held in July. These dinners are a celebration of the year that has been within rotary clubs and an official handover of the clubs leadership positions. I especially acknowledge outgoing Club President, James Humphrey, whose passion, leadership and guidance saw the club achieve many goals over

the past year. Thank you James for all the time you have dedicated to the club. I would also like to congratulate Halyna Koscharsky and Ruth Thompson as the newly elected Co-Presidents and wish them both every success and good fortune in the coming year. I also acknowledge the new Rotary District Governor Niranjan Deodhar, the immediate past Rotary Governor Christine Owen, and all the Rotary members and their partners. Congratulations Rotary Club of Mosman on another successful year and I look forward to seeing what you'll achieve over the coming year.

#### **HUNTERS HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Hunters Hill High School and its incredibly active P&C. Thanks to the Community Building Partnership Grant program, the school will receive \$50,000 to develop an outdoor sports and recreation area for students to use during free time with a goal of improving social and communication schools. I want to thank the Hunters Hill High School P&C and particularly its President, Ms Olejuru Lanfear, for the successful application which will benefit both the school and local community.

#### **CHRIST CHURCH GLADESVILLE PRESCHOOL**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Christ Church Gladesville Preschool. Thanks to the Community Building Partnership Grant program, the preschool will receive \$52,000 to enhance the safety of playgrounds. Christ Church Gladesville is an active parish with strong outreach in the local community and a worthy recipient of this grant. I'd like to thank Christ Church Gladesville for their application and their role providing early learning education in Gladesville.

#### **HUNTERS HILL ROTARY CHANGEOVER**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Hunters Hill Rotary and congratulate its new president, Barbara Enright. Ms Enright will become the organisation's second female president and takes the reins from Charles Amos who has led Hunters Hill Rotary for over 2 years and boosted its membership to more than 60 people. I wish Hunters Hill Rotary every success going forward as it continues to support many worthy initiatives within the local community and internationally.

#### **CENTRAL COAST RIDING FOR THE DISABLED**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Central Coast Riding for the Disabled [RD], what an absolute fabulous organisation! With a team of 70 volunteers, Central Coast RD provides support for schools and students with disabilities from across the Central Coast. Led by Garry Kirkby & Jenny Cameron, the team makes an incredible difference, and you can feel the warmth, dedication, and commitment from the moment you arrive. I had the privilege to watch students from Northlakes Public School arrive for their weekly lesson and hear from their fabulous teacher about the impact it has on their lives. Not only did they see improvements in the young people's riding skills, they also see improvements in confidence, communication, and social interactions across a much broader spectrum of their lives. The systems that Central Coast RD have in place are fantastic and easy for students of all abilities to follow. Visitors are greeted by Eddy, the 31-year-old short horse, retired from his famous days at Old Sydney Town and the special fibreglass physiotherapy horse which helps kids prepare for being on a real horse. Central Coast Riding for the Disabled is truly wonderful for everybody involved – thank you ever so much!

#### **MIRANDA TITSHALL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Tonight, I would love to recognise a very special student, Miranda Titshall, a Year 12 student, who has been with NG Central School for 3 years. Miranda joined NG needing a fresh start after her previous school. After some adjustments, Miranda broke down the barriers and started soaring! Her attendance peaked, her engagement in learning went from 'just couldn't care' to 'I want to and can do this', her motivation to succeed, and rise above the mundane is impressionable. What a super star! Miranda is a representative on the School Leadership Team, and enjoys working on her construction projects. Although her journey has had its adversity, Miranda's resilience and mature outlook have seen her through. I also want to give a special shout out to NG Central School team and Miranda's family for supporting her goals and believing in her. As a former teacher, I truly believe in the magic of communication between the school and family when it comes to helping the students thrive. Not long to go until Miranda sits her HSC exams, and I want to wish her all the best! You have a bright future ahead of you Miranda.

#### **KATHRYN STAPLES**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Tonight, I have the utmost pleasure to acknowledge Kathryn Staples who joined NG Central School as a full-time teacher from Term 1, 2023. Having graduated from Avondale University with a Bachelor of Education majoring in English and Modern History, Kat joined the NG Central School family as a new scheme teacher with a growth mindset and positivity. Kat accepted the position of Maths and Geography

Teacher and has been teaching 'out of subject' to our young people who experience multiple barriers to learning, from Year 9 – Year 12. Despite the often-challenging environment, Kat has built strong relationships with her students, and is an extremely valued member of staff. She commenced and completed her teacher accreditation within 18 months and has made significant process improvements that benefit not only other teachers but the wider school. It makes me smile seeing dedicated teachers like Kat blossom because I understand treasures like her guide our young people and help them to build a reachable future. From the bottom of my heart, I thank Kat for her remarkable contributions to the school as well as the students' lives.

#### KRISTINA SMITH

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—** Congratulations to Coffee Manager Kristina Smith for taking out the Individual First Prize in the National Barista Competition Soul Origin, representing Lake Haven store and for the first time in history a non-Franchise Partner won the day. On the day Ms Smith demonstrated composure to deliver an exceptional routine and delicious coffee. 2024 turned out to be the biggest and most competitive Barista Competition yet, with over 100 stores contributing to the 125 individual Baristas and over 50 teams who took part. Ms Smith has worked with Soul Origin at Lake Haven since they opened their doors in 2017 and the team environment is fun and energetic, making it a great place to work. Supporting local industry, Soul Origin source their plant-based milks from 'The Alternative Dairy Co.', 100% animal free, based on the Central Coast and only use Aussie grown almonds and oats. The soy milk is made using an old recipe by the pioneers of plant-based milks in Australia being low in sugar and a great source of protein. All coffee supplied to Soul Origin comes from St. Ali in Melbourne, and they are committed to the long-term sustainability of the coffee industry.

#### ZIVA EATS AND PIZZA

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—** Ziva Eats & Pizza restaurant at The Ary Toukley took out once again the Perfect Plate Awards 2024, placing first in the Regional Award, State Award and Best Dessert. The Chefs served up a storm in their first tasty dish preparing the Queensland king prawn ravioli, winning the Regional and Sate Award. Following the win on the new Best Dessert was a tower of Belgium chocolate fondant with creme anglaise, vanilla ice cream and vanilla fairy floss. The competition's ambassadors, celebrity chefs Matt Moran and Courtney Roulston, visited 55 participating clubs including 7 clubs across the Central Coast to meet the competing chefs and taste their creations. Congratulations to the Chefs from Ziva Eats & Pizza on their great achievement. The community look forward of the return to the 2025 Perfect Plate Awards with another bang!

#### WYONG VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—** Congratulations to Wyong Vinnies Support Centre Team for being acknowledged in the Volunteering Central Coast 2024 awards by receiving the Dream Team Award. The award celebrates volunteer teams whose collaborative efforts provide comprehensive support to the community. The Vinnies team have more than 50 dedicated volunteers providing comprehensive support to the Wyong community, answering hundreds of calls daily, assisting community members with food, vouchers, furniture, clothing, medication, toiletries, household items and travel costs. An inspiring example of their work is their assistance to a single mother of six who lost everything in a house fire. They manage not only the immediate needs of individuals but also ongoing support through various programs. The comprehensive support system is vital for the wellbeing and stability of the Wyong community. The first Australian conference of St Vincent de Paul Society was established by Father Gerald Ward at St Francis' Church, Melbourne, on 5 March 1854. The compassionate outlook, enthusiasm and vision of the Society's founders continues today with over 45,000 members and volunteers across the country who share their time, care for humanity and energy to make a difference.

#### TESLA CHATSWOOD SITE VISIT

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—** It was my pleasure to visit the showroom and service centre both at the Tesla Chatswood site on Friday, 5 July. In what was an eye-opening visit, I had the opportunity to see EV servicing in action and learn about the technology in EVs such as Teslas. I discussed the current motor vehicle tradesperson certificate requirements with apprentices and heard a master technician's career journey. I was also given a brief tour of the showroom and an overview of delivery numbers. To cap off my visit, I got to test-drive a Tesla and experience a vehicle first-hand. I would like to thank the team at Tesla Chatswood for hosting me and allowing me to inspect their impressive local site.

#### 14TH ROTARY CHATSWOOD INTERNATIONAL CHANGEOVER

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Rotary Club of Chatswood International is a special club, exemplifying both the multicultural and volunteer-minded character of Willoughby. It is comprised of people from many tongues and cultures all united in doing good for the community. On Wednesday 3 July, it was my pleasure to attend the Club's annual Changeover dinner at Chatswood RSL Club. Featuring a delicious three course meal, it was a wonderful occasion for the Club to reflect on its past year of achievements and recognise many of its members for their distinguished contribution to the community. I would like to congratulate the new President of Rotary Chatswood International, Grace Zou, and commend the outgoing President, Dickson Mak, for his past year of service to the Club. Rotary Chatswood International support many great charities and worthy causes including the Streetwork charity for disadvantaged youth, the Shelterbox charity for natural disaster relief, Destiny Rescue to save children from sexual trafficking, and cancer research. I applaud the selfless contribution that the Rotary Club of Chatswood International makes to the community of Willoughby and beyond.

#### SALLY FENTON - PETER FALKLAND AWARD

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to warmly congratulate Sally Fenton of my community who was recently awarded the Peter Falkland Award for Youth Leader of the Year in recognition of her service to St John Ambulance. A resident of Chatswood, Sally is a youth leader who runs the Harbourside Division of St John Ambulance in Chatswood. Sally started with St John Ambulance as a cadet in 2016 and rose through the ranks, recently graduating as a paramedic and now works for NSW Ambulance. The Peter Falkland Award for Youth Leader of the Year is awarded annually to the most outstanding youth leader (under 25 years old) in NSW. Peter Falkland was a former Commissioner of St John and a big supporter of the youth programs. In receiving this Award, Sally is an amazing role model for the cadets in the Division and a great contributor to the Willoughby community and beyond. I am very proud of Sally's service to St John Ambulance and our community.

#### VIVIAN NGYUEN – YOUTH PARLIAMENT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—The chambers of the NSW Parliament witnessed a remarkable transformation last week as almost 70 dynamic young people, including Punchbowl's Vivian Nguyen, stepped into the roles of parliamentarians for the 2024 Y NSW Youth Parliament Sitting Week. The Y NSW Youth Parliament Sitting program has been shaping young leaders for over 20 years, offering high school students in years 10-12, a unique platform to voice their concerns and propose solutions on issues critical to their communities. Youth Bills were the focal point of debate during the sitting week, reflecting the participants' commitment to advocating for meaningful change. Vivian's Bill was to reform school suspensions for rehabilitation and behavioural change. It is incredible to see such initiative and advocacy work from the young people and the passion to one day make systemic changes in our community. I would like to congratulate Vivian for her dedication to addressing critical issues through thoughtful debate which showcases not only her passion but also her potential as a future leader of our community. The NSW Youth Parliament Sitting Week has empowered the young people in our community to be active participants in shaping their futures. Congratulations to Vivian!

#### CAREER FUTURE BRIGHT - FAST FORWARD UNI PROGRAM

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge and commend Lidya Rivai, for participating in Western Sydney University's Fast Forward Program. This initiative, in partnership with local high schools, encourages students from Year 9 and above to recognise the value of continuing their studies in tertiary education. The program assists students with subject selection based on their career and future aspirations. Whilst being a high school student, Lidya actively engaged in the program, attending various Western Sydney University campuses, information sessions, leadership workshops, and career seminars. These experiences motivated her to pursue higher education with the university. Through the program, Lidya was awarded the Academic Excellence Scholarship, which secured her place at Western Sydney University. Recently graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Pathway to Teaching Secondary), Lidya has exemplified dedication and hard work in her academic journey. The Fast Forward Program highlights the significant role Western Sydney University offers in guiding students toward transformative tertiary education opportunities. As a former teacher and principal, I deeply appreciate the combined efforts of our local students and universities in providing these crucial educational pathways, which help shape the future leaders of our community.

#### PETER BOUKOUVALAS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Bankstown's very own Peter Boukouvalas is Australia's

only archery contender in what will be his first Olympics in Paris this month. Peter will be among the best 128 archers in the world who will line up at the Esplanade des Invalides next to the Eiffel Tower. It is incredible to not only be representing Australia but also our Canterbury-Bankstown community. Peter only took up archery eight and a half years ago after a 'come and try' day at Sydney Olympic Park. The selection qualification for the Olympics was rigorous, with Peter completing in a domestic trial, three World Cup qualifiers and an international tournament. I would like to offer my congratulations to Peter for this incredible achievement qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympics. This achievement demonstrates the hard work and dedication you have put into archery over the last eight years. Embrace this opportunity to showcase your skills and passion for the sport. The journey to this point has been remarkable, and now it's time to shine. The Canterbury-Bankstown community, Australia and I will be cheering you on as you embark on this exciting adventure. Congratulations once again!

#### **FIVE DOCK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to congratulate the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce on their successful Annual General Meeting which was held in July. Five Dock Chamber of Commerce is a local organisation supporting and representing businesses from across our local community including businesses in Abbotsford, Chiswick, Five Dock, Rodd Point, Russell Lea, Wareemba and Canada Bay. It is great to see local businesses working together for better outcomes for our community. The Five Dock Chamber of Commerce provides all member businesses with important support including networking events, growth opportunities and support and mentoring. I would like to congratulate the newly appointed board members including President Gianni Musumeci, Vice President Joseph Rupolo, Secretary Fahad Gul, Communications Coordinator Razz Khan, Social Media Coordinator Alexander Rupolo, Events Coordinator Angelo D'Angelo and Member Onboarding Coordinator Matthew Massasso on their election and wish them all the very best in their service to our community. I thank the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce and its members for their continued support of small businesses in our local community.

#### **WEST HARBOUR RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I recently attended the 2024 West Harbour Rugby Football Club annual luncheon. The West Harbour Pirates are our local rugby union club, calling Concord Oval their home. The Club fields Grade, Colts, Womens and Junior teams across a range of competitions. It's always encouraging to see local sporting clubs competing at the highest standard and fostering a club with great community spirit. I would like to congratulate General Manager David Lyme and all Office Bearers. I recognise President Lloyd Mills, Chairman Matt Games, Secretary Roy Sidey and all members of the Board. I acknowledge all of the players for the dedication they have shown and for creating an outstanding sporting environment in our local community. I would also like to thank all of the hard-working staff and volunteers who help manage teams, facilitate matches and organise competitions. Without these tireless efforts, this level of competition would not be possible. I thank everyone involved in the West Harbour Pirates RFC, your success in all areas of the club is to be commended.

#### **MONTESSORI ACADEMY KIRRAWEE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at Montessori Academy Kirrawee on winning the outstanding Early Childhood Centre category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. The Montessori Academy Kirrawee is an early learning centre that teaches the Montessori method of education, a style of learning that is personalised to a child's stage of development and personal interest. The team at the Academy have attributed their success to their strong teamwork and ability to build relationships with the children's families since opening in January 2023. I acknowledge the team behind Montessori Academy Kirrawee. I recognise Rami Nassif, Kellie Chahroua Catherine Owen, Donna Brown, Evelin Contreras, Anna Ten Cate, Anisha Thapa, Cassandra Durose, Rita Tamang, Matina Boutsikaki, Erni Lim, Debaki Timilsima, Doma Lani, Sharlienne Kennan, Luna Parati, Fiona Makvandi, Cassia Pirino, Mary Jane Hee Song, Jannatal Ferdous, Annie Lie, Phoebe Kim and Jessica Dias for their efforts. Small businesses like the Montessori Academy are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services, and jobs. I again congratulate the team at Montessori Academy Kirrawee on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **WANITA BOWLES**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the exceptional service of Wanita Bowles as Principal of Oyster Bay Public School ("Oyster Bay") as she concludes this chapter of her story. As an educator, Wanita is one of a kind. Having started as a teacher in 1990, she previously served as Assistant Principal at Burraneer Bay and Illawong Public Schools, Principal at Menai Public School and worked as a leader of professional development in the Department of Education before joining the team at Oyster Bay in 2016. Wanita was a much-loved principal at Oyster Bay and will leave an indelible mark. She developed strong links with families

and worked closely with the school's Parents and Citizens Association to secure funding for projects including the school's adventure playground. Never one to sit behind a desk, Wanita was regularly found engaging with students and staff to help them realise their potential. This guidance saw two of her assistant principals, Matt Egan and Liz Rudder go on to become principals at local schools, happily still in the Miranda electorate. I thank Wanita for her service at Oyster Bay Public School and look forward to continuing to work with her as Principal at Sylvania Heights Public School.

### NSW ACADEMY OF GYMNASTICS

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the team at the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastic for being recognised at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. The New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics in Miranda has been named winner of the Most Outstanding Fitness Services category, a title the team also won in 2023. This family run business boasts the largest gymnasium facilities in the Sutherland Shire and has operated locally for over half a century. It is a testament to the team that so many second and third generation families are now in attendance. This would not have been achieved without the work and dedication of the team at the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics. I acknowledge Bill Parson, Chrystalle Hurst, Chris Kanevsky, Elise Baxter, Keenan Pennini, Sarah Rice, Georgina Ngapoula, Bailey Nicolai, Jayden Lucas and Will Stewart. Businesses like the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services, and jobs. I congratulate the team at the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### BERRY MEN'S TABLE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the new Men's Table group forming in Berry. I encourage anyone wanting to join the new group in Berry to join them on 20 August. In 2011 a group of men decided to have dinner with the intention of having a place to connect with other men and talk about the highs and lows of their lives. Belonging to a Men's Table contributes to mental, emotional and social wellbeing whilst being a powerful support to individual members travelling their life journeys. Each Table has its own personality and all Tables are supported by the Kitchen of The Men's Table, a registered not for profit organisation formed in 2019 by co-founders Ben Hughes and David Pointon, both members of that first Table. So come along for a Men's Table entrée at the Coach Room at the Berry Hotel on 20 August from 6:30 PM for an introduction to the group and be part of the new local Men's Table. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge John Carnegie, co-host of The Men's Table in Kiama and the good work these groups do in the Shoalhaven, Kiama and Shellharbour communities.

### HOMELESSNESS WEEK

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament recognises the Kiama electorate's contribution to Homelessness Week that runs 5-11 August this year. During the week homelessness services and community groups raise awareness of the impact of homelessness, and the solutions needed to end homelessness, and advocate for change. The theme this year is Homelessness Action Now, and I take this opportunity to give a shout out to Peter Dover and Salt Care who provide essential services for the homeless and disadvantaged in the Shoalhaven. In the Kiama electorate, on any given night, 139 people experience homelessness with a burgeoning wait list and many others experiencing rental stress. The Parliament of NSW also acknowledges the Care Essential in Winter Donation Drive and the Kiama community stepping up for those doing it tough this winter. I acknowledge Kerry Fahey, local business owner of Kerry's Klothess and Margie Tweedie from Care Essentials, who with other volunteers started a winter donation to help those doing it tough, providing blankets and clothes sleeping bags and other essential items. I acknowledge the Nanak Free Community kitchen and the members of the Sikh community cooking heartwarming curries. I thank the communities of Kiama, Berry, Shoalhaven Heads and Gerringong.

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