

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Friday 9 August 2024**

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

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

## *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 1445 to 1471 have lapsed.

## *Notices*

### **PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** I ask the member for Heathcote to withdraw her comment.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear the comment. I will deal with the matter later.

*Later,*

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I seek leave to give an additional notice of motion with the approval of the House.

**Leave not granted.**

## *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (10:18):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House today as the Chair of the Legislation Review Committee. On Tuesday the committee tabled its sixteenth digest of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament, entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 16/58*. In the digest, the committee examined nine bills that were introduced during the previous sitting week. It also reviewed 11 regulations and statutory instruments, three of which it commented on. As members are aware, the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced and all statutory instruments tabled in Parliament. The committee's scrutiny of legislation informs members of both Houses and the community about the potential impacts of legislation on personal rights and liberties and any potential inappropriate exercise of government or legislative power. I draw members' attention to some of the key issues raised in the digest.

The committee reported on the Appropriation Bill 2024, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2024 and the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which together comprise the budget bills and give effect to the 2024 New South Wales State budget. The Appropriation Bill 2024 appropriates various sums from the Consolidated Fund for the departments of the public service and various special offices. The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2024 appropriates money from the Consolidated Fund for the services of the Legislature for the 2024-25 financial year. The Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 modifies various revenue streams by increasing the surcharge on purchaser duty payable by foreign persons from 8 per cent to 9 per cent, enabling the Treasurer to make transfers between statutory funds, and freezing the tax threshold for land tax for years after 2024, as well as making other tax and surcharge related changes. Although the budget bills passed through both Houses of Parliament before the tabling of the digest, the committee is still required to scrutinise and report on them. Ultimately, the committee made no comment on the bills in respect of the issues set out in the Legislation Review Act.

Turning now to private members' bills, the committee also commented on the Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024. This bill seeks to amend the Road Transport Act 2013 to prohibit a person from recklessly or deliberately driving through floodwaters, to impose penalties for breaches of the

prohibition, and to require that penalties for breaches of the prohibition are paid into the NSW State Emergency Service [SES] fund. The committee acknowledged that the bill intends to deter people from driving through floodwaters and also provide support to the SES in its flood response activities. However, the committee raised concerns about the penalty notice and offence elements of the bill, which may be insufficiently defined. The bill seeks to allow the offence of deliberately or recklessly driving through floodwaters to be addressed through the issuing of a penalty notice.

With respect to the particulars of the offence and the penalty notice, the committee noted that the bill did not refer to or amend the related regulations, making it unclear as to whether the offence would be considered a penalty notice offence under the parent Act. The committee commented that penalty notices allow a person to pay a fine instead of appearing before a court to have the matter heard, and the lack of clarity about this offence meant it was unclear whether a person would retain the right to have their matter determined by a court. The committee raised the point that this might impact a person's right to a fair trial. Secondly, the bill does not provide definitions of key elements of the offence, including "floodwaters" and "deliberately or recklessly". The committee noted that this may create ambiguity when determining whether an offence has occurred. For those reasons, the committee has referred the matter to Parliament for further consideration.

Finally, the committee reported on the Electoral Amendment (Technology Assisted Voting at By-elections) Regulation 2024. This regulation amends the Electoral Regulation 2018 under the Electoral Act 2017. It provides that technology-assisted voting, except telephone voting for voters who are blind or have low vision, is not to be used at a by-election held before the 2027 general election. The committee acknowledged that technology-assisted voting may present risks to electoral security and integrity, and that the regulation may be intended to address those risks. The committee also noted that article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects a person's right to vote by universal and equal suffrage, and that the regulation may impact this right for some individuals. However, because the limitation applies only to by-elections held before the 2027 general election and because telephone voting remains a feasible option, the committee made no further comment.

That concludes my remarks on the *Legislation Review Digest No. 16/58*. I encourage everyone to read the digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest, and the hardworking members of the secretariat for their enduring support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (10:24):** It is great to be here on a Friday. I update the House on the ongoing work of the Legislation Review Committee and, in particular, the *Legislation Review Digest No. 16/58*. As always, I thank the chair for her leadership of the committee, and the secretariat for its extensive work to support the committee and enable us to perform our function. Nine bills were considered in the period under review. No issues were raised with the Appropriation Bill 2024, the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024, the Coal Mine Subsidence Compensation Amendment Bill 2024, the David Berry Hospital Amendment (Prohibition of Sale) Bill 2024, the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Amendment (Tender Moratorium) Bill 2024, the Road Rules Amendment (Mobile Phones as Navigation Aids for Provisional Licence Holders) Bill 2024 and the Water Management Amendment (Central Coast Council) Bill 2024.

Two bills were identified as having issues under section 8A of the Legislation Review Act 1987. The Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024 was found to have incorporation of extrinsic material. The Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024 was found to have insufficiently defined penalty notice offences. In further detail, the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024 would create obligations on the Government that are subject to the standards of an external non-government body. The International Association for Public Participation instrument could be changed arbitrarily and create new duties on the Government without oversight. The committee prefers substantive matters to be set out in primary legislation or to be published in the gazette and tabled in the Parliament as regulations, where they can be subject to disallowance and therefore appropriate parliamentary scrutiny.

However, the committee acknowledges that the standard would be introduced to mandate the Government to act in a transparent, fair and consistent manner when dealing with government-funded projects in regional communities. The bill would standardise consultation and engagement so that regional communities could have a regulated and auditable process. The committee notes that the standard has been drafted by a leading professional organisation and has been developed according to evidence-based best practice. It has the safeguard of proposed subsection 4 (3) to protect the validity of consultations. For those reasons, the committee makes no further comment.

The Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024 raised issues about the defined penalty notice offence, in particular the definition of "floodwaters" and the definition of "deliberately or recklessly", as they were not defined within the proposed section. That may create ambiguity when determining

whether the offence has occurred. For those reasons, the committee refers the matter for Parliament for further consideration. That concludes my comments on the report.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:28):** On behalf of The Greens, I make a brief contribution on one of the bills considered by the Legislation Review Committee: the Appropriation Bill 2024. Given reports in the news today that the Minister for Climate Change, and Minister for Energy requested more conservative modelling in order to support the decision to extend the life of the Eraring coal-fired power station, I highlight that the appropriation bills and the budget include \$450 million of public money to be handed to fossil fuel giant Origin Energy to prop up its unviable coal-fired power station.

Members debate the issues of the day in this Chamber, as we should be able to do. This morning we have seen a massive report in the news suggesting that the Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage requested more conservative modelling to support a decision to extend the life of the unviable Eraring coal-fired power station. I absolutely put on record the fact that The Greens have serious concerns that this morally bankrupt New South Wales Labor Government is pretending to care about climate and the environment—

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Point of order—

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** —while at the same time providing \$450 million of public money to the fossil fuel project.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Leppington rises on a point of order. The member for Newtown will resume her seat.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** While I appreciate the member's passion for the subject, it has absolutely nothing to do with the Legislation Review Committee and its report.

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

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** So we can use this report to talk about any issue we are whipped up about?

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Newtown is speaking about legislation that is contained within the Legislation Review Committee's report.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** I am on that committee and there is nothing in that report about Eraring or the topic that the member for Newtown is addressing.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Newtown will continue.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** Maybe the member for Leppington did not hear what I said at the start. To clarify, the chair of the committee spoke about the budget and appropriation bills. My understanding is that \$450 million of public money being handed over to an unviable coal-fired power station absolutely would have been in the budget and appropriation bills. Where else would it be? In fact, if it was not in those bills or the budget papers and it was in some other dodgy place, that raises bigger concerns. If the Government has handed over \$450 million to a private fossil fuel company, I hope that money is in the budget and appropriation papers; otherwise, we have much bigger questions to deal with in this House.

If the Government had handed over \$450 million of public money to a private corporation and it was not in the budget appropriation papers, I would have serious concerns. To return to the point I was trying to make, it is absolutely morally bankrupt of NSW Labor to form government on an election platform of pretending to care about climate and the environment and then to do this. It is a disgrace. The environmental and climate devastation to come as a result of this is disgusting. The Greens will have much more to say on this when Parliament returns next week.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:32):** I will make a few remarks in relation to the private members' bills and one other bill that I do not have carriage of. I start with the electoral amendment regulation dealing with technology-assisted voting, as the only vision-impaired member of this House. The former Government—of which I was a part—sought to introduce technology-assisted voting called iVote. That was relatively successful—although I was involved as an advocate in a case before the Supreme Court concerning its failure, which resulted in a number of councils having to re-run elections. I encourage the Government to persist with iVote because, for people like me, it provides a greater level of independence when casting a ballot. Each election I even struggle to vote for myself, but this technology makes a very big difference.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Wise decision.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** It was a joke. I know you have no sense of humour. Just be quiet; you're a goose. Anyway, this is very important and I hope the Government—

**Ms Maryanne Stuart:** Point of order: The member for Kiama called the member for Mount Druitt a goose. That is unparliamentary. I would like him to retract it.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Members will come to order. I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Kiama to withdraw the comment.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Yes, I withdraw the comment. It is important that technology-assisted voting be resumed as part of the electoral system because, for thousands of people with vision impairments, it is a very important part of the electoral system. It was a great innovation. I was pleased to chair the electoral matters committee that recommended it many years ago. The only thing I say to the Electoral Commission is that it needs to make sure it tests that technology, because it clearly faltered in the 2021 local government election, which meant a number of councils, including ward A in my own electorate, had to re-run the election. I was sorry to see that the Electoral Commission had initially opposed compensation to those councils that had to re-run, but we were successful on that point in the court. I hope we do not have to revisit that issue.

In relation to the two private members' bills that the committee made comment on, I note that no comment was made in relation to the David Berry Hospital Amendment (Prohibition of Sale) Bill 2024, which was my private member's bill. I thank the Minister for ruling out the sale, in this place, after having so many months to do it. In this Chamber this week we finally saw the community have the victory that it sought, which was the Government confirming it will no longer consider the sale option. I thank the Minister for that, although I note that the Government has announced consultation. I look forward to seeing what form that consultation takes to ensure that the community is adequately and genuinely listened to.

Finally, I thank the committee for its comments on the Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024, a private member's bill that I introduced. There are already definitions in the law in relation to floodwaters and the penalty thresholds around deliberate and reckless behaviour. When that bill comes back to the House, I will outline that further and clarify the committee's points. I appreciate the committee raising them, although I believe those comments are not correct in that those definitions already exist. That is why they were inserted into the bill. If that needs greater clarification, I will make sure that we enlighten the House during the debate when the bill returns to the Chamber.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (10:36):** I speak in this take-note debate specifically in relation to the appropriation bills. I particularly note that the appropriation bills appropriate funds for the Office for Veterans Affairs. I think that is particularly pertinent this week, as we lost our last Rat of Tobruk, who passed away aged 102. It is in that context that I would hope the Office for Veterans Affairs is able to expend some of the appropriated funds to, first, commemorate the Rats of Tobruk for their World War II heroics; secondly, mourn the passing of the last Australian Rat of Tobruk, Thomas "Tom" Pritchard, on 3 August 2024, aged 102; thirdly, acknowledge that the Rats of Tobruk inspired the Warringah Rats rugby club's longstanding association with the Rats of Tobruk; and, fourthly, thank the Warringah Rats rugby club, which will honour the passing of the last Rat of Tobruk on Saturday 10 August. I thank the Minister for considering commemorating the last Rat of Tobruk in the context of the appropriated funds that are being considered in the matter before us.

**Report noted.**

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY

### Reports

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

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:37):** As Chair: I note the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety's report entitled *E-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales*, tabled on 7 August 2024. In recent years e-cigarette use, or vaping, has become a significant public health issue. Ease of access to e-cigarettes in retail settings has contributed to widespread vaping, which threatens to undermine the important progress made in tobacco control. High rates of vaping among young people are particularly concerning. Last year the committee self-referred an inquiry into e-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales. The committee examined the prevalence of e-cigarette use among children and young people, the health risks associated with vaping, and the impact of programs and services to prevent e-cigarette use.

The committee also examined the effectiveness of New South Wales' current regulatory framework in reducing harm from vaping and preventing illegal supply, and considered challenges to enforcement and compliance. Finally, the committee considered how New South Wales can work with the Australian Government to implement reforms on e-cigarettes. Throughout the inquiry serious concerns were expressed about the rise of

vaping among young people. The committee heard that disposable e-cigarettes, the kind preferred by young people, are addictive. They can contain high levels of nicotine, which is often not reported on the product label. We heard also that e-cigarettes are deliberately designed to appeal to young people. They are available in many novel flavours and can be sold in packaging featuring cartoons or resembling products like juice cartons.

The committee heard mixed evidence on the effectiveness of nicotine vaping products for smoking cessation. We were told by some that those products can help adults to quit smoking tobacco. Others highlighted the risks associated with this strategy. The committee recognises that nicotine vaping products, when combined with support from healthcare providers, may help some people to quit smoking. They are not recommended as the first line of therapy to cease smoking. Quitting smoking is difficult; however, we must acknowledge that vaping, too, is difficult to quit. It is important that people wanting to quit vaping be referred to appropriate supports. The committee recommended that the Government partner with government and non-government organisations to create, streamline and promote vaping cessation pathways; and to develop an online tool or app in collaboration with young people to support them as well as act as a one-stop shop for information about vaping.

Until recently, laws permitting the sale of non-nicotine vaping products as consumer goods have created a loophole that undermined enforcement efforts. Often those products contain nicotine and have been intentionally mis-labelled, which can be verified only through laboratory analysis. This is a costly and time-consuming process that can delay legal action. The committee recommended that the Government consider providing additional resources to NSW Health so that it can undertake more extensive enforcement and compliance activity. Strong enforcement will help to ensure that stockpiles of illicit vaping products are identified and seized as quickly as possible. Intelligence from the public, too, will play a role, as inspectors work to disrupt the supply of illicit vaping products throughout New South Wales. That is why we are recommending also that NSW Health develop strategies to better inform the public about avenues to report suspected illicit supply of nicotine vaping products.

When the committee started this inquiry, the Australian Government foreshadowed extensive reforms that would progressively ban the importation, domestic manufacture and supply of recreational vaping products in Australia. The Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024 was before the House of Representatives when the committee held its public hearings in April 2024. The bill initially restricted therapeutic access to nicotine vaping products to a medical prescription pathway. It was later amended to allow pharmacists to supply vaping substances for smoking cessation without a prescription. The classification of therapeutic vaping products as schedule 3, pharmacy-only medicines will allow easier access for smokers seeking to quit.

The Australian Government's reforms will play an important role in limiting supply of and access to e-cigarettes. However, regulation alone will not change community perceptions and behaviours around vaping; we also need to get targeted information out to communities. During this inquiry, we heard about the various school-based learning initiatives and public health campaigns underway in New South Wales to dispel myths—*[Time expired.]*

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:44):** I thank the committee chair and the committee for this most excellent report and the work they have done in this regard. They have highlighted some important issues. I would like to see the House expand upon not only e-cigarettes but also illegal cigarettes that are being imported into Australia. The member for Wagga Wagga has raised the issue in his own community and has done some exceptional work in that particular area. The issue that I have is around not only consumer protection but also enforcement, which the member for Mount Druitt spoke to—that is, whether it is appropriate for NSW Health to be the enforcement agency. NSW Health does a lot of things very well, but the enforcement of that area of the law is not something that it should be doing.

The South Australian Government has rightly moved the enforcement function from SA Health to its equivalent of Fair Trading. The Government should consider that more broadly, not only for e-cigarettes but also for illegal tobacco that is being brought into Australia, and should also consider the penalties for people selling it. All sorts of things go into those cigarettes, and it cannot be guaranteed that people are getting the product that they think they are purchasing—in fact, far from it. A lot of those cheap imports come from China, and we need to do more to stop them coming into Australia. That needs to be reflected in the regime of fines and also in the most appropriate agency to enforce them. It may be a good area for the Parliament to consider establishing a short, sharp inquiry to build on the committee's good work on e-cigarettes.

I agree with all of the comments made by the member for Mount Druitt, but I think there is more work to be done on consumer protection around illegal tobacco. I look forward to joining with my crossbench colleagues in pushing for more reform in that area so that we can protect consumers and ensure the health and wellbeing of users.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (10:45):** I am a new member of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety, and I joined it after the inquiry into e-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales, but I acknowledge the work that went into this great report. I thank the secretariat for all of their hard work in putting the inquiry together, including gathering the submissions and getting in contact with stakeholders. All of that is such a big job, and I thank them very much. Vaping is a big issue not just in my electorate of Heathcote but also right across the country. We need to tackle it because we have come from a good place in addressing smoking in general over the years. We have put a lot of work into education, information and campaigning. Because of that, the level of smoking has decreased. It was a great result until vaping products came onto the market. We are seeing an increase in health issues caused by vaping products.

I thank the chair of the committee for his great leadership and all of the committee members who worked on the inquiry. I thank all those who took the time to make submissions and attend the hearings because that has helped put this great report together. Some of the findings were that vaping products can contain chemicals that pose a risk to human health and that nicotine levels in disposable e-cigarettes are highly variable and are often not reported on the product label. Another finding was that manufacturers and suppliers of illicit vaping products employ predatory tactics to market them to children and young people. In my electorate of Heathcote there are four shops in close proximity to each other just in the suburb of Engadine, and they are in very close proximity to primary schools. They advertise that they sell American lollies, with flashing lights, so they are trying to get young people into the stores to buy those products. We need to protect young people.

Another finding was that e-cigarettes are not recommended as the first line of therapy for smoking cessation. E-cigarettes may, however, help some people quit smoking when delivered in a controlled way and with advice from a primary healthcare provider. Another finding was that, until recently, non-nicotine e-cigarettes and e-liquids could be legally sold as consumer goods in Australia. Often those products contained nicotine and were mislabelled, which created serious challenges for enforcement. Recommendation 3 states:

That NSW Health develop strategies to better inform the public about avenues to report suspected illicit supply of vaping products.

I wholeheartedly support that recommendation. The committee made other findings. The report will be made public and I encourage members to read it. In closing, I congratulate the fabulous Minister for Health—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Don't mislead the House.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** —and the New South Wales Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, and all their staff on their hard work. I sit at the back of this Chamber near the member for Kiama. I ask him not to call the Minister for Health an idiot. The standard you walk past should be the standard you accept.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: I ask the member for Heathcote to withdraw her comment. I did not call the Minister for Health an idiot. I have called him lots of other things but not an idiot.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** To the point of order: Hand on heart, I heard him say it the other day.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Mr Assistant Speaker, what is going on? What is this?

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Kiama will resume his seat. Will the member for Heathcote withdraw her comment?

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** I will not withdraw my comment and I put the member for Kiama on notice.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:50):** As a member of the Committee on Law and Safety, I thank the committee chair, committee members and the secretariat for the work they have done to prepare the committee's report on its inquiry into E-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales. The committee received a large body of evidence from a number of key stakeholders and industry participants, as well other organisations, agencies and individuals who made a number of submissions. It was an extensive committee process and we gave the matter a great deal of consideration. I address recommendation 4, which states:

That the NSW Government consider providing additional resources to NSW Health to undertake more extensive enforcement and compliance activity.

In my electorate of Orange, and more broadly in regional New South Wales, there is one enforcement officer who covers a huge area of the State. That person needs additional resources and support to do her job properly. That is a key recommendation in the report. I will not repeat the comments made by other members, but this is obviously an area of concern. There were some developments in the Federal legislation during the course of the inquiry. The committee heard evidence that this is an alarming health concern for members of the public, especially young people, to whom e-cigarettes are often targeted. We need to do more to educate young people and enforce the regulations for people doing the wrong thing. I commend committee members, the chair and the secretariat for the report.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (10:52):** I make a contribution to debate on the report of the Committee on Law and Safety inquiry in E-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales. I thank the committee members and secretariat for their work. For some time we have known that vapes are a significant issue for young people and older people. The illegal dealing and purveying of vapes is getting worse, not better, notwithstanding the attempts of the Government to date. I have raised this issue with Government members for some time now, as the scourge of vapes is proliferating in schools and throughout younger communities. The issue is not necessarily people over the age of 18 who are making more informed decisions. Young people are being taken advantage of by the people who seek to ply them with vapes.

Notwithstanding my attempts to elevate the issue with the Government, the situation is not improving. Governments and political parties of all persuasions need to start treating vapes with the seriousness they deserve. In 20 years time the impacts of vapes on our younger people are going to become apparent. I sincerely believe that vaping is the asbestos of today because we do not know the impacts these devices and substances are having on young people. They are the asbestos of today. They are the heroin of today. We do not fully know the impacts so we should be treating the matter with the seriousness that it deserves. Whilst a report and a round table is one thing and should be congratulated, we need more serious action and we need it now. We need to be sending a serious message to those who are breaching the law that they will be punished.

As other members have referred to, it is not good enough to entrust NSW Health with what are effectively inspection and enforcement powers. Whilst they do the best they can, that is really not what the department of health or local health districts are set up to do. Greater powers need to be given to other authorities. I am not going to prescribe which authorities, nor when or how; that is a matter for the public service to determine under direction from the Government. But what needs to happen urgently is a substantial increase in the fines on individuals and corporations that are dealing these vapes illegally. At the moment those penalties are not nearly severe enough, and they need to be increased tenfold. People who repeatedly do these things need to face jail time. We need to send a clear message that if you are purveying vapes, you will be punished.

This problem is easier to deal with than the dealing of illicit substances like heroin and other hard drugs because it is happening in broad daylight—in shops, in stores, on street corners, in schools and in bathrooms across our communities. Governments are not taking this seriously enough. I implore the New South Wales Government to do more and do it quicker, to send a clear message that if a person breaks the rules, they will face the wrath of this Government and society, rather than a slap on the wrist. Every young person addicted to vapes will face significant health complications that are not yet known. We should be treating those complications as if they are the worst-case scenario. If we do not deal with this urgently, the death of every young person from vapes in the future, through yet-unknown diseases or afflictions, will be on our hands as elected representatives and as a Parliament. I call on the Government to do more and do it quicker. It must do whatever it takes to eliminate this scourge immediately.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (10:56):** I thank the Committee on Law and Safety for its report on e-cigarette use and endorse the remarks of the members for the electorates of Pittwater and Kiama in relation to the role of NSW Health and the scourge we face. The good news is that the Commonwealth, I believe, has passed substantial increases in penalties for vaping that will have a big effect. But those penalties do not apply to illegal tobacco, and that is a scourge at the moment. The member for Kiama rightly noted that this is beyond NSW Health's ability to inspect and manage. I would not take the function from Health, because at the end of the day we are dealing with a health issue. For decades it has been able to do its role, but the problem we now face is an absolute explosion in the illegal tobacco trade. It is out of control. Come July next year, there will be significant restrictions on the sale of tobacco. As the restrictions on use and sale get tighter, this will only get worse. It will make a mockery of the Government's attempts to tax tobacco and also to improve people's health.

There needs to be an urgent response that considers a number of aspects, one of which is clearly that the NSW Police Force needs to be brought into the enforcement, at least in the short term, to get on top of the current crisis around the provision of tobacco. There also needs to be a substantial increase in fines, which at the moment are just a slap on the wrist. I know the committee chair is aware of that. I understand the Federal Government is bringing legislation and the State has committed to bringing in mirroring legislation. It cannot happen soon enough. I urge the Government to act on this. It is a public health issue of serious consequence. It is also affecting small businesses throughout regional New South Wales. Again, I thank the committee for its report and for raising this issue, and I thank members for their comments in this debate and endorse those comments.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 11.00 a.m., the time allocated for the consideration of committee reports has expired. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I acknowledge in the gallery guests of the member for Penrith from Jamison High School, Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School, Penola Catholic College, Penrith Selective High School, St Dominic's College, Penrith Christian School and St Paul's Grammar School.

*Bills***OMBUDSMAN AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:00):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill proposes amendments to the Ombudsman Act 1974 and the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993. The bill will also repeal the Ombudsman Regulation 2016. These amendments were requested by the NSW Ombudsman and were prepared in consultation with the Ombudsman's office. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the Ombudsman's office is an effective, strong and independent integrity agency. It is critical that our integrity agencies are equipped with appropriate legislative frameworks that enable the efficient and effective exercise of their principal functions. This bill is a continuation of, and delivers upon, that commitment. I note that the bill was the subject of amendments agreed to in the other place.

Schedule 1 to the bill makes amendments to the Ombudsman Act. Some are minor or consequential amendments; others are more substantive. I will deal with the amendments in the order that they appear in the bill. Schedule 1 [2] to the bill proposes to amend paragraph (f) of the definition of "public authority" in section 5 (1) of the Ombudsman Act. This is a cross-referencing update that needs to be made as a consequence of amendments made to the Ombudsman Act in 2021. Paragraph (f) currently includes a cross-reference to a type of accounting fund that is no longer mentioned in paragraph (e) of the definition. The amendment will remove this cross-reference and clarify the meaning of a person intended to be covered by paragraph (f) by providing that a person entitled to be reimbursed from public funds for expenses associated with attending meetings or carrying out the business of a body constituted by an Act is a public authority.

Section 12 (1) of the Ombudsman Act currently provides that, subject to that section, any person may complain to the Ombudsman about the conduct of a public authority unless one of the limitations in paragraphs (a) to (d) applies. Paragraphs (b) to (d) of that section limit by time the matters about which a complaint can be made. Paragraphs (b) and (c) apply to conduct occurring before the royal assent was given to the Ombudsman Act. That occurred on 18 October 1974. Paragraph (d) applies to conduct that occurred prior to 1 December 1976. Given that paragraphs (b) to (d) exclude conduct that occurred prior to 1 December 1976, there is no longer any useful or practical purpose to be served by this wording. Removing these limitations will make our statute book and the Ombudsman Act specifically more readily understood by those who may wish to make a complaint. Further, these paragraphs have the potential to cause confusion for complainants because the relevant dates they refer to are not in or near the provisions.

For these reasons, schedule 1 [3] to the bill proposes to remove paragraphs (b) to (d) in section 12 (1), while continuing the effect of the existing section 12 (1) (a), which provides that any person, including a public authority, may complain to the Ombudsman about the conduct of a public authority unless the conduct is of a class described in schedule 1. Schedule 1 [4] to the bill proposes to omit section 13AA (1) and replace it with a new provision. In addition to the current provision that the Ombudsman may make preliminary inquiries for the purpose of deciding whether to investigate the conduct of a public authority, the proposed new provision will provide that preliminary inquiries can be made for the purposes of deciding whether the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over particular conduct, considering the exercise of a function of the Ombudsman under the Ombudsman Act or another Act. This will facilitate the efficient and effective performance of the Ombudsman's functions in circumstances where an investigation is not available or is not indicated.

Any information disclosed to the Ombudsman as a result of preliminary inquiries would be protected by the statutory confidentiality obligations of the Ombudsman and its officers. Section 20 of the Ombudsman Act provides that the Ombudsman may, in an investigation:

- (a) enter and inspect premises occupied or used by a public authority as a public authority, and
- (b) inspect any document or thing in or on the premises.



The bill proposes at schedule 1 [5] to amend section 20 of the Act to expressly provide that the Ombudsman may take copies of documents in or on premises that are being inspected by the Ombudsman. A new subsection (2) is also proposed by schedule 1 [6] that requires a public authority that occupies or uses the premises to provide the Ombudsman with reasonable assistance and access to facilities to enable the Ombudsman to exercise powers under section 20. The amendments are consistent with similar provisions relating to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. Given the potential complexities in identifying and accessing relevant documents during an inspection of premises, the assistance of public authorities should lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency regarding the exercise of those powers.

The bill proposes to amend the definition of an Aboriginal program to which part 3B of the Ombudsman Act applies. I note that this aspect of the bill was the subject of amendments agreed to in the other place. Part 3B of the Act provides that the Ombudsman is to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs. Section 25K currently provides that part 3B "applies to Aboriginal programs prescribed by the regulations". Part 3B was inserted by the Ombudsman Amendment (Aboriginal Programs) Act 2014, which also established the position of Deputy Ombudsman, Aboriginal Programs. That Act was passed in response to the final report of the New South Wales Government Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs that recommended the implementation of a new accountability framework to improve service delivery and accountability in Aboriginal affairs. In formulating its recommendations, the taskforce conducted extensive Aboriginal community consultation.

In 2014 the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment program [OCHRE] was prescribed as the first program to be within the definition of Aboriginal programs. At the time, OCHRE was envisaged to be a unifying and overarching framework for all aspects of the Government's Aboriginal Affairs portfolio. OCHRE has continued to be the one and only Aboriginal program prescribed by the regulations since 2014. In recent years, new services and programs have been initiated in the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio without referencing OCHRE. That has resulted in a lack of clarity and potential gaps as to what part 3B covers. Given that, the Ombudsman requested that the definition of Aboriginal programs be changed to a general definition that includes, but is not limited to, OCHRE. This amendment has been progressed in consultation with the Ombudsman's office, Aboriginal Affairs NSW and relevant government agencies. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill will omit section 25K and replace it with a new definition of Aboriginal program:

*Aboriginal program* means the following—

- (a) the OCHRE program,
- (b) other Government programs primarily directed to the health, or cultural, economic, educational or other wellbeing, of Aboriginal persons or communities.

This definition will encompass the OCHRE program and other programs conducted within Aboriginal Affairs as well as other government agencies. The words "primarily directed to" are intended to clarify that the definition is not intended to capture all government programs that happen to benefit Aboriginal persons or communities but rather programs that are primarily directed to the wellbeing of Aboriginal persons or communities. The bill also amends section 25L (1) of the Ombudsman Act so that it will provide that the Ombudsman "is to monitor and assess the OCHRE program, and may monitor and assess other Aboriginal programs".

As I previously noted, that aspect of the bill was subject to amendments in the other place. While the first print of the bill was prepared in consultation with the Ombudsman's office, the Government accepts the amendments agreed to in the other place. Section 25M (4) of the Act will continue to provide that the Ombudsman and the Minister responsible for an Aboriginal program may consult with each other during the monitoring and assessment of, or other matters relating to, the program. The new definition of Aboriginal program supports the oversight of delivery of the Government's services and programs for Aboriginal people so that the original policy intent of part 3B continues to be achieved.

Schedule 1 [13] and [14] to the bill propose to insert two newly numbered sections into the Act, sections 36A and 38AA. New section 36A imposes an express duty on a public authority to cooperate with the Ombudsman in the exercise of the Ombudsman's functions, including its complaints, investigative and oversight functions. If asked, a public authority must also use its best endeavours to assist the Ombudsman in exercising its functions. The Commonwealth Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme recommended that a statutory duty to assist be imposed in the Commonwealth Ombudsman context. The recommendation is also valuable in the New South Wales context. While public authorities should already cooperate with and assist the Ombudsman, an express requirement to do so will set the tone for those relationships. This may facilitate more timely and effective resolution of complaints, particularly in the early and informal stages of Ombudsman matters. It may also reduce the need for the Ombudsman's office to escalate to a formal investigation and resort to compulsory powers.

New section 38AA inserts, for the avoidance of doubt, an express statutory power for the Ombudsman to provide education and other training services in specified areas, including any matters relating to the

Ombudsman's functions. Education and training activities have long been viewed as essential to the Ombudsman's role of capacity building, proactively improving complaint handling and promoting good administrative conduct in the public sector. The new section also expressly provides that the Ombudsman may charge reasonable fees for services provided under the section.

That provision is consistent with existing section 38A of the Act, which expressly allows the Ombudsman to charge reasonable fees for conciliation and training services provided under the Public Interest Disclosures Act. Schedule 1 to the Ombudsman Act sets out the conduct of public authorities that is excluded from the scope of complaints that can be made to the Ombudsman. Schedule 1 [17] to the Act currently excludes conduct "of a public authority relating to alleged violations of the privacy of persons". That wording is based on an outdated privacy regime. Schedule 1 [15] to the bill proposes to amend and update schedule 1 [17] to the Act to exclude conduct of a public authority for which a complaint may be made to the Privacy Commissioner under current privacy legislation.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes minor amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993. Some of those are amendments that arise as a consequence of earlier changes made by the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022, which removed the deaths of persons with a disability from the scope of deaths that are reviewable by the Ombudsman. The other amendments, schedule 2 [1] and [5] to the bill, are consequential to the amendments made by this bill to section 13AA of the Ombudsman Act. Schedule 3 to the bill repeals the Ombudsman Regulation 2016 because the definition of an "Aboriginal program" will now be in the Ombudsman Act rather than in the regulation, and the regulation does not deal with any other issues.

The first print of the bill introduced to the other place proposed to repeal section 31Z of the Ombudsman Act. The amendment was requested by the Ombudsman, who has advised that the provision is problematic and is causing practical impediments to the proper discharge of the Ombudsman's functions of handling and resolving complaints, and that the non-disclosure duty in section 34 of the Ombudsman Act will continue to provide sufficient information disclosure protections in the absence of section 31Z. An amendment to the bill was agreed to in the other place which removed that amendment from the bill.

Whilst the Government maintains that the repeal of section 31Z was appropriate, the Government accepts the amendments agreed to in the other place to ensure the passage of the bill, and the other amendments requested by the Ombudsman. I foreshadow that the Government intends to move a minor amendment relating to this matter during the consideration in detail stage. The amendments proposed by the bill honour the Government's commitment to ensure the effective functioning of strong and independent integrity agencies in New South Wales. As I have previously noted, the amendments in the bill have been requested by the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman's office. The Government greatly appreciates the important and essential work that the Ombudsman's office is doing and is happy to support it by bringing forward this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (11:13):** On behalf of the Opposition I make a short contribution to debate on the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I indicate that the Opposition will be supporting the bill and will also be supporting the proposed further amendment to the bill, for reasons that I will make clear. As the Minister for Transport correctly identified, the bill as it was originally presented in the upper House was changed in three manners, which dealt with two separate issues. The first was to prevent the proposed deletion of section 31Z of the Ombudsman Act, which was proposed in the first print of the bill in the Legislative Council.

The reason that the Opposition opposed the deletion of section 31Z in the original bill was that that section provided important whistleblower protections with regard to the disclosure of people who had made complaints. The Opposition was not satisfied that deleting those whistleblower protections under section 31Z was in the public interest. Ultimately, the Government agreed to take out that deletion within the bill, and the bill has come to this place in that manner. I add that those important whistleblower protections were introduced by the Coalition in 2022 as part of the Public Interest Disclosures Act, and we do not think that it is appropriate to take them away.

The other proposed change in the original bill in the upper House was to take away the Ombudsman's oversight of OCHRE programs—which is defined as Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment programs—run for the benefit of Aboriginal persons or communities. That initiative for the Ombudsman to have oversight of those programs was initially introduced by the Coalition in 2014 to ensure the efficiency and the efficacy of the delivery of programs for the benefit of the Indigenous population in New South Wales. Indeed, I acknowledge that that was an initiative of the Hon. Victor Dominello, who was Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in 2014.

Minister Dominello then went on to make a huge contribution, I believe, to this State with how he reformed digital delivery of government services, which was such a big benefit to our State during the COVID pandemic. New South Wales was the only State in Australia that had QR codes that were able to track people's entry into premises, which was important in enabling the Government to track contact tracing during the pandemic. We were the only State in Australia that had government QR code tracking that went automatically to the health department that could trace the movements of people with that infectious disease during the pandemic.

Earlier than that, as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Victor Dominello introduced the requirement for the Ombudsman to monitor Aboriginal programs. In his second reading speech, when he introduced that provision in 2014, he said the following:

The idea for this initiative came from Aboriginal community leaders and demonstrates the commitment of the Government to listen to communities and to work in genuine partnership with them to implement much-needed reform. This is an Australian first—no previous State or Federal government has opened itself up to this level of independent scrutiny of its Aboriginal programs. In three recent independent reports both the New South Wales Auditor-General and the NSW Ombudsman have called on government to have greater accountability in the design and delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal people. In May 2011 the Auditor-General stated in his report on the previous Labor Government's Aboriginal Affairs Two Ways Together plan that, "...it has not delivered the improvement in overall outcomes for Aboriginal people that was intended." The Auditor-General recommended that an independent auditor undertake an annual review of government programs and services delivered to Aboriginal people, to build an evidence base of what works in Aboriginal affairs, and to appoint an independent advisor as a champion for Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

The Coalition introduced that provision 10 years ago. Our members in the other place were very insistent that we keep the oversight of Aboriginal programs to ensure that they were effective and providing good value for money to the State and good outcomes for Aboriginal people. That is why we opposed the deletion of that oversight in the other place. Ultimately, members opposite agreed to that deletion, which was part of two of the three amendments in the other place. I commend them for agreeing. I am not sure they ultimately had the numbers in the other place; that is probably why they agreed. But at least they did agree to take those two matters out of the legislation.

It was originally proposed that section 31Z be deleted. It is no longer deleted, but two other provisions that assume its deletion were not taken out in the other place. They formed part of items [11] and [12] of schedule 1, being lines 13 to 16 on page 4 of the bill. That is the source of the further amendment that was foreshadowed by the Minister for Transport in this place. Having reviewed the proposed amendments to lines 13 to 16 on page 4 of the bill in this House, the Opposition agrees that those consequential changes should be made to implement the intent of what occurred in the other place. I indicate that the Opposition will support the bill as amended by the other place. The Opposition will also support the foreshadowed further consequential amendment in this House to reflect the changes that were made in the other place.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:21):** I speak in support of the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I make some key points to recognise the position of the Government. It seems that there is agreement all round, but the Government proposed the changes in the bill. It did that in good faith at the request of and in consultation with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman had identified issues with some provisions of the Ombudsman Act. As is appropriate, Legislative Council members and MPs carefully considered the proposals put forward. The member for Wahroonga, the Hon. Susan Carter, the member for Balmain and Ms Cate Faehrmann attended personal briefings with the Ombudsman to discuss the issue. The Government thanks those members for engaging and taking the time to let the Ombudsman make his case.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Mr Assistant Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: I was not here when standing orders were suspended to allow for the sittings on Friday. Mr Assistant Speaker, can we seek clarification from the Clerks in terms of quorum, with your indulgence? I was not here, but I recall that there were certain separate provisions or rules around Friday sittings. I seek clarification to ensure that we are compliant with the standing orders and any potential changes.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I will seek clarification from the Clerk. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Mark Coure:** To the point of order: There is a call for a quorum. While the provisions regarding Friday sitting days are being checked, I ask that the bells be rung. The point of order taken by the member for Campbelltown seems to be a delay tactic by members opposite.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** To the point of order: There is no delay tactic. We seek clarification.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I am seeking clarification from the Clerks. A quorum call is permitted. [*Quorum called for.*]

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** The position of the Legislative Council was that amendments should be made. When balanced with the importance of the issues and any unintended consequences, the Legislative Council did not think that what the Ombudsman had raised warranted the requested changes. There was a substantive, nuanced debate in the Legislative Council, as there should be and as happens in that place. While the final result did not match the Government's position, the Government listened to the feedback and accepted the amendments that were passed in the other place. The Government amendment is some housekeeping to fully implement the intended amendments. The Government respects the will of the Parliament in this matter. That is part and parcel of our democracy.

I will go through some of the detail. In the original bill, schedule 1 to the bill proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Act 1974, including to make provision for the Ombudsman to make preliminary inquiries to determine whether the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over particular conduct, and for the purposes of any other function of the Ombudsman under the Act or another Act. It also changed the definition of "Aboriginal program", which the Ombudsman has jurisdiction to monitor and assess under part 3B of the Ombudsman Act, to a general definition that includes, but is not limited to, the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment program that is referred to as OCHRE.

It repealed a provision inserted by the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 on 1 October 2023 that was imposing an unnecessary administrative burden on the Ombudsman's office. I note that we often talk about freeing people from administrative burden, but that was not able to be achieved in this instance. The first print of the bill included an express statutory duty for a public authority to cooperate and, if asked, assist the Ombudsman in the exercise of the Ombudsman's functions, including its complaints, investigative and oversight functions. That was in schedule 1 [15]. That seemed reasonable, but we were not able to achieve it. It also included an express statutory power for the Ombudsman to provide a range of education and other training services and charge reasonable fees for those services.

There were other miscellaneous amendments to the existing provisions of the Ombudsman Act. Schedule 2 to the bill proposed amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act. There were minor changes of a statute law revision arising as a consequence of earlier amendments by the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 and consequential amendments that would arise as a result of the amendments proposed to be made by the bill to the Ombudsman Act. Schedule 3 to the bill was to repeal the Ombudsman Regulation 2016, because the definition of Aboriginal program would be in the Ombudsman Act rather than the regulation, and the regulation did not deal with any other issues.

As members would be aware, part 3B of the Ombudsman Act provides the Ombudsman with monitoring and assessment powers regarding Aboriginal programs—the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment program. The Ombudsman requested the definition be changed to a general definition so it was not limited to that particular program. The first print of the bill proposed an amendment to define Aboriginal program as "a government program that is primarily directed to the health, or cultural, economic, educational or other wellbeing, of Aboriginal persons or communities", with the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment program identified as an example of an Aboriginal program.

The first print of the bill also proposed a consequential amendment providing that the Ombudsman "may" monitor and assess Aboriginal programs, instead of using the words "is to". The amendment was intended to emphasise the Ombudsman's discretionary exercise of part 3B powers, consistent with the role of the Ombudsman's office as an independent integrity agency and in the context of the proposed broad definition of Aboriginal program. In the other place, contributions to the debate were made emphasising the importance of the program and raising concerns about the proposed change from "is to" to "may". Instead of the program being referred to as an Aboriginal program, the first amendment included the program in its own paragraph of the definition, followed by the more general definition. The second amendment in the other place changed the Government's proposed drafting so that the Ombudsman is to monitor and assess the OCHRE program and may monitor and assess other Aboriginal programs. While the Government did not consider the amendments to be necessary, it has accepted them.

The third amendment was to omit the Government's proposed amendment to remove section 31Z from the Ombudsman Act. After the bill was passed in the other place, the Ombudsman kindly provided briefings to members of the Opposition and the crossbench and provided further information about why his office had requested section 31Z be omitted. While it considers that the Ombudsman had sound reasons for requesting the repeal of section 31Z, the Government accepts the decision of the Parliament to retain that provision. The Government amendment gives effect to the Legislative Council's amendment by removing some consequential provisions regarding section 31Z that were not removed in the amendments made in the other place. Schedule 1 [11] and [12] to the second print of the bill will need to be removed because they omit parts of the Ombudsman

Act that refer to section 31Z, and these parts should stay in if section 31Z is being retained. The Government accepts the will of the Parliament in making these changes to the bill as originally proposed.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:35):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The Ombudsman's office is an independent integrity agency that oversees the public sector of New South Wales and investigates complaints regarding most government agencies, local councils and community service providers. The Ombudsman requested amendments to legislation governing the functions of the Ombudsman's office, which the Government advanced in the bill.

Schedule 1 to the original bill proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Act to make provision through schedule 1 [4] for the Ombudsman to make preliminary inquiries to determine whether the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over particular conduct and for the purposes of any function of the Ombudsman under the Ombudsman Act or another Act; through schedule 1 [7] to change the definition of "Aboriginal program", to which the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs in part 3B of the Ombudsman Act applies, to a general definition that includes but is not limited to the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment [OCHRE] program; through schedule 1 [12] for the repeal of a provision inserted by the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 on 1 October 2023 that is imposing an unnecessary administrative burden on the Ombudsman's office; through schedule 1 [15] for an express statutory duty for a public authority to cooperate and, if asked, assist the Ombudsman in the exercise of the Ombudsman's functions, including its complaint and its investigative and oversight functions; through schedule 1 [16] for an express statutory power for the Ombudsman to provide a range of education and other training services, and charge reasonable fees for those services; and for other minor miscellaneous amendments to existing provisions of the Ombudsman Act.

Schedule 2 to the bill proposed amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act to make minor changes in the nature of statute law revision, arising as a consequence of earlier amendments by the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 and consequential amendments that arise as a result of the amendments proposed to be made by the bill to the Ombudsman Act. Schedule 3 to the bill repealed the Ombudsman Regulation 2016 because the definition of "Aboriginal programs" will now be in the Ombudsman Act rather than this regulation, and the regulation does not deal with any other issue.

As members are aware, part 3B of the Ombudsman Act provides the Ombudsman with monitoring and assessment powers regarding Aboriginal programs, prescribed as the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment program. The Ombudsman requested that the definition of "Aboriginal programs" be changed to a general definition that includes but is not limited to the OCHRE program. The first print of the bill proposed an amendment to define "Aboriginal program" as "a Government program that is primarily directed to the health, or cultural, economic, educational or other wellbeing, of Aboriginal persons or communities", with OCHRE identified as an example of an Aboriginal program.

The first print of the bill also proposed a consequential amendment providing that the Ombudsman "may" monitor and assess Aboriginal programs, instead of providing that it "is to". The amendment was intended to emphasise the Ombudsman's discretionary exercise of part 3B powers, consistent with the role of the Ombudsman's office as an independent integrity agency and in the context of the proposed very broad definition of "Aboriginal programs". In the other place, contributions to the debate emphasised the importance of the OCHRE program and raised concerns about the proposed change from "is to" to "may". Instead of OCHRE being referred to as an example of an Aboriginal program, the first amendment included OCHRE in its own paragraph of the definition, followed by the more general definition. The second amendment made in the other place changed the Government's proposed drafting so that the Ombudsman "is to monitor and assess the OCHRE program" and "may monitor and assess other Aboriginal programs". While the Government does not consider the amendments to be necessary, it is prepared to accept them.

The third amendment was to omit the Government's proposed amendment to remove section 31Z from the Ombudsman Act. After the bill was passed in the Legislative Council, the Ombudsman kindly provided briefings to members of the Opposition and crossbench providing further information about why his office had requested that section 31Z be omitted. While considering that the Ombudsman has sound reasons for requesting the repeal of section 31Z, the Government accepts the decision of the Parliament to retain that provision. The Government amendment gives effect to the Legislative Council amendment by removing some consequential provisions regarding section 31Z that were not removed in the amendments made by the Legislative Council. Items [11] and [12] of schedule 1 in the second print will need to be removed because they omit parts of the Ombudsman Act that refer to section 31Z, and those parts should stay in if section 31Z is being retained.

The Government accepts the will of the Parliament in making these changes to the bill as originally proposed. At the end of the day, the Parliament must ensure that we have adequate legislation and make amendments where required, and particularly in this case when it includes the Ombudsman. The Government proposed the changes in the bill in good faith at the request of, and in consultation with, the Ombudsman, who

identified issues with the workings of some of the provisions of the Ombudsman Act. As is proper, the Legislative Council members carefully considered the proposals. However, the position of the Legislative Council was that the amendments should be made and that members did not think that the Ombudsman's concerns, when balanced with the importance of the issues and the potential unintended consequences, warranted the requested changes. That being said, the Government amendment is just some housekeeping to fully implement the intended amendments. In conclusion, the Government, like all members in this place, respects the will of the Parliament in this matter. It is all part of the rich tapestry of our democracy and the role of Parliament. I thank the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:43):** I speak in support of the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The Ombudsman's office is an independent integrity agency that oversees the New South Wales public sector and investigates complaints regarding most New South Wales government agencies, local councils and community service providers. The Ombudsman requested amendments to the legislation governing the functions of the Ombudsman's office, which the Government advanced in this bill. The Government proposed the changes in response to a request and in consultation with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman had seen issues and believed that changes could be made to the Ombudsman Act 1974 to make provision for some of the identified issues. As is proper, Legislative Council members and MPs in this place carefully considered the proposals.

I note the member for Wahroonga, the Hon. Susan Carter in the other place, the member for Balmain, and Ms Cate Faehrmann in the other place attended briefings with the Ombudsman to discuss this issue. I thank those members for taking that time to let the Ombudsman make his case. However, the Legislative Council took the position that amendments should be made and the Ombudsman's concerns and requests for change were not warranted when balanced with the importance of the issues and potential consequences. The issue was the subject of a substantive debate in the other place, as it should be. That is what democracy is all about. In the first print of the bill, schedule 1 [4]:

... clarifies that the Ombudsman may make preliminary inquiries to determine whether the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over particular conduct and for the purposes of any other function of the Ombudsman under the Ombudsman Act 1974 or another Act.

Schedule 1 [7] changed the definition of "Aboriginal program", to which the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs in part 3B of the Ombudsman Act applies, to a general definition that includes but is not limited to the Opportunity, Choice, Health, Responsibility, Empowerment [OCHRE] program. Schedule 1 [12] also made provision for the repeal of a provision inserted by the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 on 1 October 2023 that is imposing unnecessary administrative burden on the Ombudsman's office. Schedule 1 [15] also made provision for an express statutory duty for a public authority to cooperate and, if asked, assist the Ombudsman's in the exercise of the Ombudsman's functions, including its complaints, investigative and oversight functions.

Schedule 1 [16] made provision for an express statutory power for the Ombudsman to provide a range of education and other training services and charge reasonable fees for those services. Schedule 1 also made other minor miscellaneous amendments to existing provisions of the Ombudsman Act. In the first print of the bill, schedule 2 proposed amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 to make minor changes of a statute law revision nature arising as a consequence of earlier amendments to the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 and consequential amendments that arise as a result of the amendments proposed to be made by the bill to the Ombudsman Act.

Schedule 3 to the bill repealed the Ombudsman Regulation 2016 because the definition of "Aboriginal programs" will now be in the Ombudsman Act rather than the regulation, and the regulation does not deal with any other issues. As members are aware, part 3B of the Ombudsman Act 1974 provides the Ombudsman with monitoring and assessment powers for Aboriginal programs, prescribed as the OCHRE program. The Ombudsman requested that the definition of "Aboriginal programs" be changed to a more general definition that includes but is not limited to OCHRE. The first print of the bill proposed an amendment to define "Aboriginal program" as:

... a Government program that is primarily directed to the health, or cultural, economic, educational or other wellbeing, of Aboriginal persons or communities.

It included OCHRE as an example of an Aboriginal program. The first print of the bill also proposed a consequential amendment providing that the Ombudsman "may" monitor and assess Aboriginal programs, instead of the words "is to". The amendment was intended to emphasise the Ombudsman's discretionary exercise of part 3B powers, consistent with the role of the Ombudsman's office as an independent integrity agency, and in the context of the proposed very broad definition of "Aboriginal programs". In the other place, contributions to the debate often emphasised the importance of the OCHRE program and raised concerns about the proposed changed from "is to" to "may."

Instead of OCHRE being referred to as an example of an Aboriginal program, the first amendment included OCHRE in a paragraph of the definition, followed by the more general definition. The second amendment agreed

to in the other place changed the Government's proposed drafting so that the Ombudsman "is to monitor and assess the OCHRE program and may monitor and assess other Aboriginal programs". While the Government does not consider the amendments to be necessary, it is prepared to accept them. Democracy is all about give and take. The third agreed amendment omitted the Government's proposed amendment to remove section 31Z from the Ombudsman Act. After the bill was passed in the Legislative Council, the Ombudsman kindly provided briefings to members of the Opposition and crossbench on why his office requested that section 31Z be omitted.

While considering the Ombudsman had sound reasons for requesting the repeal of section 31Z, the Government accepts the decision of the Parliament to retain that provision. The Government amendment gives effect to the Legislative Council amendment by removing some consequential provisions regarding section 31Z that were not removed in the amendments made by the Council. Schedule 1 [11] and [12] to the second print of the bill will need to be removed because they omit parts of the Ombudsman Act that refer to section 31Z, and these parts should stay in if section 31Z is retained.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues for taking the time to make a contribution to debate on this bill today. The Government respects the will of the Parliament in this matter. It is all part of practising good governance that we work together to ensure that New South Wales has a strong, democratic government that considers the thoughts, beliefs and decisions of all members within these Houses of Parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:50):** I speak in debate on the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill comes about as the result of a request by the Ombudsman to amend legislation that governs both the functions of the NSW Ombudsman and the Ombudsman's office, which the Government has acted on. By way of background, the Ombudsman's office is an independent integrity agency that oversees the New South Wales public sector and investigates complaints regarding most government agencies, local councils and community service providers. Before coming into this place I was an elected councillor at Liverpool City Council.

**Mr Mark Coure:** How's that going?

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I got out of there as soon as the iceberg hit. I was elected in 2016, as was Mayor Wendy Waller. One of her election commitments was to appoint an ombudsman at Liverpool City Council. That person did a fantastic job of restoring trust and integrity at the council during their five years there. Sadly, that position has been removed by the current administration. Noting the comments of the member for Oatley, with the local ombudsman gone, Liverpool City Council has been in the news for what all members can agree are the wrong reasons. That is why an ombudsman at any level of government is important. It provides people with the ability to raise things with the ombudsman, which sits independent of government, to ensure the public sector acts with integrity at all times.

Regarding the original print of the bill, schedule 1 proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Act 1974, including provisions for the Ombudsman to make preliminary inquiries to determine whether the Ombudsman has jurisdiction over particular conduct, and for the purposes of any function under that Act or another. That is quite important. At times a complaint will be made to the Ombudsman about a specific person or agency and, due to the make-up of that agency, there might be a grey area as to whether that person or agency comes under the scope of the Ombudsman. Clearing that up is quite an important change. There is also a change to the definition of "Aboriginal program", to which the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs in part 3 of the Act applies. That has been changed to a general definition that includes, but is not limited to, the fancily named OCHRE, which is the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment program. It is a great name; kudos to whoever came up with it. I will pay that.

The bill also seeks to repeal a provision inserted by the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022. I note that this week is Public Interest Disclosure Week. While we are on the topic of public integrity and trust, I encourage all public servants to enjoy this week and make sure they understand their responsibilities and provisions under the Public Interest Disclosures Act and do their bit to ensure we have a public service and a government that lives and breathes integrity every single day of the week. Happy Public Interest Disclosure Week to everybody celebrating.

The bill repeals a provision inserted by the Public Interest Disclosures Act on 1 October 2023 that is imposing unnecessary administrative burden on the Ombudsman's office. It is fantastic to be part of a Labor government that is cutting red tape. The bill also makes provision in schedule 1 [15] for an express statutory duty for a public authority to cooperate and, if asked, assist the Ombudsman in the exercise of the Ombudsman's functions, including its complaints, investigative and oversight functions.

The bill provides an express statutory power for the Ombudsman to provide a range of education and other training services and charge reasonable fees for those services, as well as making other minor miscellaneous

amendments to existing provisions of the Ombudsman Act. The bill is a bit of a clean-up. Schedule 2 to the bill proposes amendments to the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 to make minor changes of a statute law revision nature arising as a consequence of earlier amendments by the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 and consequential amendments that arise as a result of the amendments proposed to be made by the bill to the Ombudsman Act.

Schedule 3 to the bill repeals the Ombudsman Regulation 2016 because the definition of "Aboriginal programs" will now be in the Ombudsman Act rather than the regulation and the regulation does not deal with any other issues. Once again, the Government is getting some regulations off the books and cutting red tape, which is what the Minns Labor Government is all about. As members are aware, part 3B of the Ombudsman Act provides the Ombudsman with monitoring and assessment powers regarding Aboriginal programs, prescribed as the OCHRE program. The Ombudsman requested that the definition of "Aboriginal programs" be changed to a general definition that is not limited to just that program.

The first print of the bill proposed a consequential amendment providing that the Ombudsman "may" monitor and assess Aboriginal programs, instead of the words "is to". The amendment was intended to emphasise the Ombudsman's discretionary exercise of part 3B powers, consistent with the role of the Ombudsman's office as an independent integrity agency. In the other place, contributions to the debate were made emphasising the importance of the OCHRE program and raising concerns about the proposed change from "is to" to "may". Instead of OCHRE being referred to as an example of an Aboriginal program, the first amendment included OCHRE in its own paragraph of the definition followed by the more general definition.

The second amendment in the other place changed the Government's proposed drafting so that the Ombudsman "is to monitor and assess the OCHRE program" and "may monitor and assess other Aboriginal programs". While the Government does not consider the amendments to be necessary, it is prepared to accept them in the spirit of democracy. The third amendment was to omit the Government's proposed amendment to remove section 31Z from the Ombudsman Act. After the bill was passed in the Legislative Council, the Ombudsman kindly provided briefings to members of the Opposition and crossbench, including the member for Wahroonga, the Hon. Susan Carter, the member for Balmain and Ms Cate Faehrmann.

While considering that the Ombudsman has sound reasons for requesting the repeal of section 31Z, the Government accepts the decision of the Parliament to retain that provision. The Government amendment gives effect to the Legislative Council amendment, removing some consequential provisions regarding section 31Z that were not removed in the amendments made by the other place. Schedule 1 [11] and [12] to the second print of the bill will need to be removed because they omit parts of the Ombudsman Act that refer to section 31Z, and these parts should stay in if section 31Z is being retained. Again, it is a bit of a clean-up, with more red tape gone. This Government is about cleaning things up.

The Government accepts the will of the Parliament in making changes to the bill as originally proposed. For those who heard my community recognition statement yesterday in which I acknowledged the passing of Mr Democracy Manifest, Jack Karlson, the Government accepting the changes is most certainly democracy manifest. It is a great example of democracy in action: a bill is put up, it is amended in the other place, it comes back to this House, and the Government accepts it. It is fantastic to see that process working, and this is a fantastic bill. The Ombudsman's office is a fantastic agency that ensures we have the utmost integrity in the New South Wales Government.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:00):** In reply: I thank all members who made a contribution to debate on the Ombudsman and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024—the members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Lismore, Campbelltown, Parramatta and Leppington. At the outset, I foreshadowed that the Government would move an amendment to the bill during consideration in detail. As members are aware, the bill proposes amendments to the Ombudsman Act 1974 and the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 to implement a number of amendments proposed by the Ombudsman's office.

A number of members raised issues in the debate, which I briefly address. I thank those members who dealt with the issues around the Aboriginal programs amendments. I make very clear the Government in the other place did not propose to take away the Ombudsman's oversight of the OCHRE program. The Government initially proposed an amendment that provided that the Ombudsman may monitor and assess Aboriginal programs, which was defined to include OCHRE. That was amended by the other place so that the bill now provides that the Ombudsman is to monitor and assess the OCHRE program and may monitor and assess other Aboriginal programs. The Government accepts the amendment and notes that the Ombudsman does not propose any material change to the manner in which the office monitors Aboriginal programs.



Speakers also made comments in relation to amendments to section 31Z. As already mentioned in the second reading speech, the bill originally proposed to repeal that section of the Act. In the other place an amendment was agreed that removed that proposal from the bill. As has already been noted in this debate, after the Legislative Council debate the Ombudsman kindly provided a briefing to the Opposition and crossbench during which he gave detail and further information about why his office was requesting this amendment. The Government accepts that there is not enough support in the Parliament for this proposal. The Government thanks the Ombudsman and his staff for their time and commitment to advocating on this issue and for their hard work in overseeing a government sector. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Jo Haylen.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:03):** I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-071A:

No. 1 **Disclosure of information**

Page 4, Schedule 1 [11] and [12], lines 13–16. Omit all words on the lines.

The first print of bill introduced to the other place proposed an amendment to omit section 31Z of the Ombudsman Act 1974. An amendment to the bill was agreed in the other place that removed that reference from the bill, however the amendments agreed to in the other place did not omit two amendments that were consequential to the amendment to omit section 31Z from the Ombudsman Act. Schedule 1 [11] and [12] to the second print of the bill, if made, would have omitted references to section 31Z from section 34 of the Ombudsman Act, which is clearly inappropriate if section 31Z is not being repealed. The amendment just moved will omit schedule 1 [11] and [12] and implement the intent of the amendment agreed to in the other place; in other words, this amendment will tidy up the consequence of that amendment. I commend it to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-071A be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended agreed to.**

#### **Third Reading**

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Motions*

#### **STATE APOLOGY FOR THE CRIMINALISATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that this House take note of the State Apology for the Criminalisation of Homosexuality.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:04):** A very wise former Premier once said to me that one of the most important things we will ever do is to right the wrongs of awful decisions that were made in this place. That is one of the things we are doing here today. At the outset I acknowledge Cheyne Howard from my office who wrote part of this speech for me. She is one of very many openly queer staff members that I have. I think this is one of the things where we can really recognise how much our world has changed. I thank Cheyne for her contribution to today's speech.

On 6 June 2024, the fortieth anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in New South Wales, the State Government issued a formal apology to those convicted under the discriminatory laws that criminalised

homosexual acts. Decriminalisation marked a significant step in the journey of law reform for gay and lesbian people. The New South Wales Government acknowledges the challenging history that LGBTQIA+ communities have faced in New South Wales. It recognises the trauma that LGBTQIA+ people have endured and live with based on past experiences that saw them persecuted for their sexuality. We have made progress, but there is still much more to do to ensure equal rights for everyone in New South Wales. The apology marks a step forward for LGBTQIA+ rights in New South Wales. However, there are people who are not here to see or hear the apology. We honour their legacy and commit to ensuring that New South Wales is a place where the LGBTQIA+ community can thrive.

Criminalising homosexuality had devastating effects on the gay community. It fostered a climate of fear and stigma, forcing many to live in secrecy and isolation. That legal discrimination contributed to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, due to the constant threat of arrest and social rejection. It hindered access to necessary support services and medical care, exacerbating health disparities. Criminalisation also perpetuated prejudice and violence, marginalising the community and denying them fundamental human rights. It entrenched a culture of intolerance and injustice, severely impacting the lives and wellbeing of countless individuals.

Criminalisation caused people to go to jail just for being themselves and for being with someone they loved. As they were deemed criminals, they could not participate in society in the same way as everyone else. It was harder to get a job or get a home loan to buy your own home or to travel overseas. To treat someone as a criminal for being with someone they love and for being themselves is wrong. It is simple. Criminalisation was an added burden on top of what the LGBTQIA+ community already had to deal with: rejection, discrimination, abuse, murder and prejudice. Because of criminalisation, people either had to hide who they were, suppressing themselves and their identity, or come out and face discrimination and possible criminal charges.

No-one should be discriminated against, and especially criminally charged, for simply being who they are. Criminalising homosexuality led to the incarceration of many individuals, often for simply expressing their love. That not only disrupted lives but also subjected them to further abuse and discrimination within the prison system. The fear of imprisonment forced many into hiding, leading to psychological distress and isolation. The unjust imprisonments tore families apart, and damaged careers and reputations. The trauma of incarceration and the criminal record that followed hindered individuals' ability to find employment and housing, perpetuating a cycle of marginalisation and poverty. Overall, the threat and reality of jail time inflicted deep, lasting harm on the gay community.

The Stonewall Riots on 28 June 1969 in New York was the beginning of an international LGBTQIA+ rights movement. Following the Stonewall Riots, Sydney became a hub of activism and the centre of the LGBTQIA+ rights movement in Australia. In 1978, six years before decriminalisation, the first Mardi Gras was held in New South Wales. On Saturday 24 June 1978 at about 10.00 p.m., a group of gay activists, now known as the 78ers, met at Taylor Square on Oxford Street after an organising meeting during the day. Allies and supporters joined them on this march to show solidarity.

The protesters had planned a peaceful march down Oxford Street, with a permit from the NSW Police Force, in solidarity with the Stonewall Riots. At 11.00 p.m., they marched down Oxford Street towards Hyde Park, singing and dancing, and chanting, "Out of the bars and into the streets." They wore capes, ruffles, dresses and make-up, just like the Mardi Gras celebration of today. They chose to march at night, as many queer people were reluctant to participate in a daytime demonstration, due to fear of visibility and being outed. They had a small truck with banners and a sound system. They were not violent. They enjoyed themselves and, peacefully, asked others to join them.

The police then met these protesters with violence. They forced the protesters down a different route, where they had blocked off the exits. They confiscated the protestors' truck and began arresting protesters. People were punched, kicked, dragged along the ground and violently thrown into paddy wagons. Fifty-three protesters were arrested. Many of the protesters who were taken to Darlinghurst Police Station were subsequently bashed in their cells. The following Monday, *The Sydney Morning Herald* published the names, addresses and occupations of the protesters who were arrested. The impacts were devastating. Many lost their jobs, were kicked out of their homes or had their rental tenancies terminated, and some committed suicide. *The Sydney Morning Herald* did not apologise to the 78ers until 2016.

The actions of the NSW Police Force and the treatment of the 78ers sparked rolling protests across the country that led to most of the charges being dropped and began a strong movement for LGBTQIA+ equality in New South Wales and across Australia. The protests began the now annual tradition of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, which has grown into a safe, fabulous and welcoming celebration of LGBTQIA+ people and their culture. However, as there is still so much to do, Mardi Gras remains a party with a purpose. The rights of LGBTQIA+ were hard fought for and were advanced by the selfless sacrifice of the 78ers and their supporters.

The 78ers put themselves in danger, risked abuse, termination of employment or housing, and even death in the pursuit of equal rights for all. To them I say thank you.

I take a moment to acknowledge the important work of the previous member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith, and thank him for his service. Bruce was the first openly gay member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. He worked to expunge the criminal records of gay men convicted under historical laws. A step forward in righting the wrongs of the past, expunging the criminal records of those convicted for being homosexual was a critical step in restoring justice and dignity to those individuals. These convictions were based on outdated laws that have since been recognised as unjust and discriminatory.

By expunging these records, we acknowledged the wrongful nature of these convictions and helped to remove the stigma attached to them. While very little can be done to correct the wrongs of past governments, it is a small step towards allowing individuals to rebuild their lives. This act of expungement was not only a matter of legal correction but also a powerful symbol of our collective willingness to right the wrongs of the past and ensure a fairer, more inclusive future for all. As I said in my inaugural speech, while Bruce and I probably do not agree on a lot, we agree on that. I thank him for his service.

The world is changing, and I have a lot of hope for the future. The generation coming behind us is more inclusive and loving than any of us could have imagined. In 2017, I was walking my niece and goddaughter to school. My family is quite a political family, and we were discussing the same-sex marriage plebiscite. My then 12-year-old niece turned to me and said, "Why can't gay people get married? That's not fair." As an adult, I had no idea how to respond and explain those unjust laws. My only response was to say, "That's right. You're right." The plebiscite itself was a hugely traumatising experience for many. While I know that there is so much more to be done, I also know that there is a tidal wave of change coming. I look forward to the future generations of progressive, open, inclusive young people standing in this place and making better laws for the future.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:15):** Today we continue to acknowledge a deeply significant moment in our history: the fortieth anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in New South Wales. Together we are here to reflect on our past, recognise the enduring pain caused by unjust laws and commit to a future that is better: a future grounded in the equality and respect that should have always existed. I wholeheartedly commend the Government for its formal apology to those convicted under the discriminatory laws that criminalised homosexual acts. That apology comes as we remember the passage of landmark legislation introduced 40 years ago in this very Chamber.

I acknowledge the undeniable trauma that people of diverse sexualities have endured for simply being who they are. Those laws inflicted profound harm, tearing apart families and ruining lives. The truth is that New South Wales was an environment where hate and violence could flourish. The northern beaches community is no stranger to that pain, with a grim history of hate crimes and murders of LGBTQIA+ people casting a devastating shadow over our beautiful part of the world. My own family is also not a stranger to the horror of hate crimes. I have spoken in this place about my uncle, who insists I call him Aunty Glenn. In 1984, the very same year we are acknowledging the anniversary of, Glenn was sent to intensive care after a horrific, targeted gay bashing. He was beaten within an inch of his life. He was put into a coma. He was just 23. That was also how he had to come out to his family: explaining to his mum and dad that the traumatic thing happened because he was gay.

He was lucky to find love and acceptance in our family. Many people were not as lucky, and those people lost everything. People could lose not only their families, their jobs and their reputation, but also their freedom. They could be criminally prosecuted, putting a black stain against their name that could well have lasted forever without those vital legislative and cultural changes. We know it was wrong. For every life that was impacted, ruined or even cut short, it was wrong. It was wrong and it can never, ever happen again. I asked Aunty Glenn for his input ahead of delivering this speech. He said, "Not being able to tell your family, friends and workmates of your sexual preference was hard. The HIV/AIDS epidemic made it even harder for acceptance. Thankfully, I missed that bullet, though there were many that didn't and didn't deserve to have their lives cut short."

Yet, amidst that history, we have seen the emergence of incredible local groups that work to create a safer, more supportive community. Fusion Pride Northern Beaches, GLAM+, Girls on Fire, Lifesavers with Pride and MoWaNa are instrumental in fostering connection and the visibility of queer and gender-diverse people in our community. I thank those groups, alongside Northern Beaches Council, for creating spaces where queer people and their families can feel a sense of belonging and pride. Their efforts have provided crucial support and are actively educating and enlightening our community.

Through these efforts, the northern beaches is reclaiming the pride that so many have longed for. This apology should not only be a symbolic gesture but also a solemn promise that New South Wales will strive to right the wrongs of the past, dismantle the systems that breed discrimination, and build a future where every person can live with dignity and freedom. New South Wales is the last State to issue this apology. I completely

share the Premier's hope that this apology, while not able to remedy history, will bring some closure to those unfairly targeted by these laws. This apology cannot just exist as words; actions will propel us to a better future.

We see hard-fought LGBTQIA+ rights and freedoms being reversed overseas, and that is terrifying. It is so important that the promise New South Wales makes today is unbreakable. It is with a heart full of hope and a spirit proudly in support of our rainbow community that I commend the Government for its much-needed apology. Finally, I thank my senior electorate officer, Sean Moran, for his help in drafting this speech, sharing his experiences, and his awesome and sometimes dark sense of humour, as well as his endless compassion—love you, Sean.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:20):** First, I am so pleased that the member for Sydney is in the chair during this debate. It is my honour and privilege to work alongside the member as he works on the reforms that this State needs. I acknowledge also the significance of contributing to debate following the beautiful speeches offered by the member for Coogee and the member for Wakehurst. I make a brief contribution also to this take-note debate. I join my colleagues in apologising to all those people convicted under laws that criminalised homosexual acts. On 6 June 2024 I was deeply moved to be in this place whilst Premier Chris Minns formally apologised on behalf of the New South Wales Government. As a very proud member of this place, it served and will continue to serve as a poignant reminder that the Parliament's role in enacting laws and progressing the policies of the government of the day cannot and should not be taken lightly.

It gives me pause to think about the actions members are taking today and how those actions will be viewed in 40 years. I acknowledge those in the LGBTQIA+ community who are not here to witness the apology—those who may have died not knowing that the New South Wales Government took long-overdue steps to address laws that criminalised the simple act of living their lives and loving someone who was considered "different". I acknowledge the enduring advocacy of those brave men and women who stood up against injustice and fought for so many years to see these laws undone. This was at times a matter of life and death, and that cannot and should never be forgotten. To many in the LGBTQIA+ community and their loved ones, the laws of 40 years ago have an enduring impact on their lives and livelihoods today.

Like all members in this place, I want New South Wales to be a safe and inclusive place. It is absolutely incumbent on all of us to do everything in our power to make that a reality. There are groups that continue to face discrimination today, and we cannot shy away from that reality. The New South Wales Government is establishing an LGBTQI+ Advisory Council to provide a mechanism for ongoing community consultation and contribute to the development of the first New South Wales Government LGBTQI+ inclusion strategy. That council will be an important source of advice to the New South Wales Government on initiatives designed to promote equality and inclusion for LGBTQI+ communities. Ensuring that there are places to amplify and hear the voices of diverse communities is vitally important to how we make laws and policies. I am proud to be a member of a government that takes that seriously.

The apology spoke to actions of the past and serves as a commitment that we will never go back to that place again. Finally, I acknowledge those Blue Mountains constituents who were sitting just behind the Premier to witness the Government's apology on that day, John Greenway and Terry Goulden—who you met, Mr Speaker—and all of those from my LGBTQI+ and Pink Mountains community who could not be here, but to whom I say: We see you, we love you, and we respect you. We are sorry. Now, onwards.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:24):** I acknowledge the genuine, sincere and moving apologies from the member for Coogee, the member for Wakehurst and, of course, the member for Blue Mountains. I know that those three members speak on behalf of all members who feel the way that we do. I put on record that my second cousin Chris Tully was part of the 78ers when they first started. We all have a story to tell. We have all been touched by this issue in some way. It is important that we not only make this apology today but that we remember every day, in this Chamber and in our electorates, that we are very sure and careful of our language so we educate others within the communities that we serve.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! Debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later day. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1.30 p.m.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **BEGA GROUP**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (13:30):** I congratulate the Bega Group on its 125th anniversary. The Bega Co-operative Creamery Company was established by local farmers in 1899, with the original factory opening the following year. The group has grown to export to 40 countries, and its products are available in most supermarkets in Australia. Apart from the famous and delicious Bega cheeses, the group now includes Vegemite, Bega peanut butter, Dairy Farmers, Dare, Farmers Union Greek-style yoghurt and ice cream, Pura, Daily Juice,

Zooper Doopers and many more products. The Bega Group employs approximately 3,800 people and generates revenue of over \$3 billion per annum. The group's remarkable success is a testament to the enduring support of generations of Australians. Appropriately, on 15 July, executive chairman Barry Irvin toasted everyone at the Bega Cheese Heritage Centre with free toasties. I recommend that members celebrate with their own this weekend.

#### **SYDNEY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (13:31):** Every 19 minutes an Australian will suffer a stroke, and more than 445,087 Australians are living with the effects of a stroke. This week is National Stroke Week, which encourages us to be aware of the signs of a stroke. Checking for the signs includes looking at someone's face and seeing whether their mouth has drooped, checking their arms and seeing whether they can lift them both, and listening to their speech and hearing whether it is slurred. Call 000 immediately if you believe someone is suffering a stroke. I was happy to hear that the San hospital in Wahroonga has been recognised for its high standard of stroke care. It joins a list of only 19 hospitals in Australia that have received official Stroke Unit certification from the Australian Stroke Coalition. In order to receive this certification, hospitals must consistently meet a set of national criteria to deliver the best possible stroke care to patients on a single dedicated ward. I congratulate the staff at the San on its many decades of great service to our community.

#### **SYRIAC CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (13:32):** The Syriac Catholic Church was established in Sydney by the late Monsignor Michael Berbari in 1985, starting with fewer than 50 families. The first church, Our Lady of Mercy Syriac Catholic Church, was opened in Concord in 1994. Recently the church marked a significant milestone in laying the foundation stone for its second church, the Holy Family at Kemps Creek, for families in the Fairfield and Liverpool communities. Under the leadership of Father Lenard Ina, the church has supported newly arrived refugee families and preserved cultural heritage through Syriac language classes. I commend the dedication of His Beatitude Mor Ignatius Youssef III Younan, the late Monsignor Michael Berbari, Father Lenard Ina, Father Majid Al Hanna, Mr Raghdan Bashir, Mrs Farah Baraz and all the parishioners. I look forward to seeing this church become a cornerstone of the local area.

#### **GLENREAGH TIMBER FESTIVAL**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (13:33):** I acknowledge the outstanding success of the Glenreagh Timber Festival. The festival was an outstanding event, with record crowds celebrating the region's rich history and deep connection to the timber industry. The event was held at the beautiful Glenreagh Recreation Ground. The woodchop and chainsaw events were crowd favourites, with competitors demonstrating their remarkable skill and outstanding strength. It was a thrill to watch. Not to be outdone, the steam engine enthusiasts were a highlight and brought their marvellous machines from across the Northern Rivers and the Northern Tablelands. It was an awesome festival. Eleven community groups were involved, with over 100 volunteers. That is about 10 percent of the population of Glenreagh. I congratulate them all on an outstanding festival.

#### **SOUTH WEST MOUNTIES MAGIC**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (13:34):** I give a massive wrap to South West Mounties Magic, whose opens team have made the grand final of the Netball NSW Premier League in their inaugural year. Finishing fourth in the regular season, the Magic played in the elimination semifinal last Wednesday night, running away with a convincing 19-goal win over Eastwood Ryde. They backed that up on Saturday night in the preliminary final, defeating the Manly Warringah Sapphires in a nailbiting encounter that finished 55 goals to 54. This Sunday they take on North Shore United in the big one at Netball Central, and both the member for Liverpool and I will be in attendance. On behalf of Leppington and all of south-west Sydney, we are right behind you and wish the team all the best in the big grand final. A huge congratulations to the players, staff and the teams at Liverpool City Netball Association and Mounties Care on achieving so much in such a short period of time. Regardless of the result, this is a phenomenal effort in the team's first year. Go the Magic!

#### **TRIBUTE TO RICHIE LYTHAM, OAM**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (13:35):** Vale to Collaroy Plateau resident Richie Lytham, OAM, who passed away on 7 May aged 78, leaving three children and four grandchildren. Richie joined Collaroy Surf Life Saving Club in 1983 and was on the club's committee for nine seasons. For Surf Life Saving NSW, Richie served as deputy president, as a surf sports adviser and as chair of the Life Members Review Committee. He was an accredited official for 25 years. He was also the popular co-founder of Dad's Army, a wonderful group who do so many thankless tasks for New South Wales surf sport. Richie's other impressive achievements include receiving life memberships of the Sydney Northern Beaches Branch in 2000, of Surf Life Saving NSW in 2004, of the Collaroy Surf Life Saving Club in 2008 and of Surf Life Saving Australia in 2010. He also received the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 and was Warringah Council Citizen of the Year in 2002. He received a Medal of the Order

of Australia in 2012. Richie loved that surf lifesaving brought people together from all walks of life, made everyone feel equal and that everyone was part of a team. Vale, Richie.

#### **COALCLIFF SURF LIFESAVING CLUB**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (13:36):** Although this winter seems particularly chilly, it will not be long before summer rolls around in all its glory. Come December, our beaches will fill up with families once again, and our surf lifesavers will start their patrols. However, as much as we all look forward to those beautiful beach days over summer, we also know that they can be fraught with danger—especially for those in our community who have never learned how to swim. We are so lucky to have surf lifesavers who patrol our beaches to protect us. For those going to Coalcliff for their leisure, they may notice some new faces within the Coalcliff Surf Lifesaving Club squad this summer. The first squad of students from Ashcroft High School recently graduated and received their patrol uniforms. I congratulate Riley Cooley, Bella Reimann, Mohammed Skaf, Hayley Woolfe, Sienna Smith and Koby Baines on being the first graduating squad of surf lifesavers from Ashcroft High. On behalf of Liverpool, we are so proud of you.

#### **KRIS HUDSWELL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (13:38):** I congratulate and thank Mrs Kris Hudswell for 51 years and counting of exemplary service to students in Western Sydney, with 22 of those years as a principal. Mrs Kris Hudswell currently serves as the principal of Blackwell Public School in the suburb of St Clair in my electorate. The respect and admiration that students, parents, staff and the wider community have for Principal Hudswell is second to none. This is a result and testament to her unwavering dedication and commitment to her students learning and development. Principal Hudswell is an asset to our region and beyond, and society is better off for her service. Many of her students progress to accomplish great things after their schooling life. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek electorate, I thank and commend Principal Hudswell for her service and commitment to our students. I wish her the very best as she continues her important work of serving and raising up the next generation.

#### **PADSTOW HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (13:39):** I congratulate Padstow Heights Public School on its seventieth anniversary. The school marked that remarkable milestone with a nostalgic "Day in the Life of 1954" event, which gave students a unique glimpse into the past. The staff's dedication was evident after they sourced original furniture, recreated a classic classroom and incorporated period-appropriate lessons. Vintage games, including quoits, and a traditional milk delivery helped bring the 1950s to life. The celebrations will continue with an open afternoon birthday party on 22 August. The party will feature food trucks, face painting, hair braiding, school tours, music and a memorabilia showcase in the school hall. I thank the teachers and P&C for putting on those wonderful events for the whole school community, including former students, to enjoy. Once again I congratulate the school and look forward to many more years of success and cherished memories. I look forward also to attending the birthday party.

#### **HELEN JOHNS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:40):** I congratulate Helen Johns, who recently retired from the NSW Police Force after 36 years of service, including 21 years served in Mudgee. In April 1988 Helen joined the Police Force as a general support officer stationed at the north-west region office. After learning her trade in and around the Eastwood and Ashfield areas and a secondment to the royal commission, she moved into the intelligence unit. Helen made significant impacts on crime in the unit through her dedication and passion to making a difference. She quickly became a highly regarded and respected specialist senior intelligence analyst and played a major part in homicides, serious property crime and major drug investigations. During her time at the Mudgee local area command, Helen consistently provided analytical support and strategic direction to her fellow officers. She reliably provided briefings for local police, which helped community safety, and supported serious and complex investigations with her expertise. I congratulate Helen on an amazing career and thank her for her dedicated service to the NSW Police Force. I hope she enjoys her well-deserved retirement.

#### **FIONA ROGERS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:41):** I congratulate Fiona Rogers, a Ringrose Public School student learning support officer, on receiving the Secretary's Award for Excellent Service at the Public Education Awards on 5 August 2024. Fiona is an invaluable asset to the Ringrose Public School support unit and wider school community. With an unwavering commitment to provide high-calibre educational experiences, Fiona is helping our students reach their full potential. Fiona applies a proactive approach, often working overtime to ensure every student has a seamless learning experience. Whether through innovative learning or personalised attention, Fiona ensures every student feels valued. She does not just teach; she motivates and engages students,

fostering an environment where learning flourishes. Recently, it was great to welcome Premier Minns and Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education Prue Car to Ringrose Public School to recognise such a dedicated educator and present Fiona with a Prospect leadership in education award. I again congratulate Fiona and thank her, Principal Tony Loughhead and all the hardworking teachers and staff for supporting our students.

#### **BERRY PUBLIC SCHOOL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:42):** Today I recognise the young public speakers of Berry Public School. There was plenty to be said at this year's public speaking competition at Berry Public School, and I congratulate the winners: Maggie Ball in year 3, Billie Gibson in year 4, Lila Bramley in year 5 and Felix Cofelt in year 6. I commend runners-up Lucy Quodling in year 5 and Ivy Whittaker in year 6. The judges were extremely impressed with the level of competition. Notably, Billie Gibson has now won first prize two years in a row, in year 3 and year 4. As is tradition, Billie will now deliver her speech to the Berry Rotary Club. I congratulate Billie on her achievement. No doubt those talented minds will go on to give some very important speeches in the future. I thank the Berry Public School staff, teachers and parents, and the Berry Rotary Club for supporting those young and talented people.

#### **MOUNT KEMBLA MINING ACCIDENT COMMEMORATION**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (13:43):** I believe 31 July 1902 is a day in Australian history that everyone should remember. At 2.03 p.m. that day the Mount Kembla Mine exploded, causing the largest loss of life in an industrial accident in Australian history. As a result of the explosion, 96 men and boys lost their lives—the youngest, just 14 years old. Each year, Mount Kembla residents, relatives of the victims, miners from the Dendrobium Mine and representatives of the miners' union and South32, which operates the current mine, gather in Windy Gully Cemetery to commemorate the disaster. This year's was one of the larger gatherings, with nearly 200 people attending. As someone who was born and raised in Mount Kembla, I know firsthand how Australia's largest industrial accident impacted the village. As part of the ceremony, 96 candles are lit to commemorate the 96 lives lost as a result of the terrible mining disaster. I recognise the event and thank its organisers. I thank also poet, playwright and long-time village resident Wendy Richardson, who gave voice to the victims and their families in her play *Windy Gully* so that we never forget the disaster and that workplace safety should never be compromised.

#### **MARIAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE ATHLETICS CARNIVAL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (13:44):** We are well underway with the Paris Olympics, with records broken in many sports. The Olympics inspire our next generation of athletes. Within the Castle Hill electorate our community is fortunate to have students who strive to reach their potential and, in so doing, break records. Records were broken at the recent Marian Catholic College Athletics Carnival, held on 1 July 2024. I recognise the following superstar athletes who shattered some of the college athletics records: Beau Adams, 13-year-old boys' 800 metres and 1,500 metres; Benjamin Scaife, 13-year-old boys' high jump; Isaac Portelli, 12-year-old boys' discus—he also broke the javelin after the carnival was completed; and Jessica White, 16-year-old girls' javelin. I also recognise the MacKillop junior boys relay team: Maxmillian Nvene, Bailey Leihn, James Loughhead and Isaac Portelli, who broke the school's junior boys 12- to 14-year-olds relay record. I congratulate all students of Marian Catholic College at Kenthurst, in my electorate, who competed at the recent carnival. They all strived to reach their potential. Well done, boys and girls.

#### **PAKISTAN MANGO AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (13:45):** On 21 July 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the Pakistan Mango and Cultural Festival, organised by the Consulate General of Pakistan, the High Commission for Pakistan and the Pakistani community. Mangoes are the national fruit of Pakistan and are prized for their intense flavour and rich sweetness. Mangoes from Pakistan are undoubtedly some of the most remarkable mangoes in the world. More than just a celebration of pride for the national fruit, the Pakistan Mango and Cultural Festival was an expression of Pakistan's vibrant and unique culture through the plethora of activities, including musical performances, exhibitions of artistic creations and numerous stalls serving traditional Pakistani cuisine. The festival brought together the tight-knit community of Pakistanis and individuals from a diverse range of cultures to celebrate Pakistani culture. Many seized this opportunity to connect with friends, family and strangers or indulge in the robust customs and traditions. I thank my local friend Dr Ali Safraz and the Pakistani community for extending the invitation to this wonderful event.

#### **PETER VENERIS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:46):** Congratulations, thank you and good luck to one of the great servants of local government in New South Wales, Lockhart Shire Council General Manager Peter Veneris. Beginning his career in 1978 as a clerk at Albury City Council, Peter worked his way up through the ranks,

becoming a director and then General Manager at Hume Shire Council before taking on the CEO role at the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation, where he oversaw the transfer of land with conservation values to State and local governments to ensure that it remained in public ownership. Following a directorship at Muswellbrook Shire Council, Peter returned to the south as general manager at Lockhart in 2017, leading the delivery of major projects such as The Rock Regional Observatory and new all-abilities swimming pool complexes at Lockhart and The Rock. Peter is about to enjoy a well-earned retirement with some travel but says local government may not have heard the last of him. I thank Peter for all he has done to nourish and grow our regional communities, and I wish him the best of luck for whatever retirement may bring. I thank him and his wife, Leanne, for their contribution to the Lockhart community.

#### **LISMORE BASE HOSPITAL AUXILIARY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:47):** I congratulate and applaud the Lismore Base Hospital Auxiliary for its fantastic fundraising efforts. This year gone it has raised \$71,000 for equipment, which has already been purchased, and \$54,000 for beds currently ordered. Recently the Lismore Base Hospital Auxiliary had its annual general meeting. I express my appreciation to the outgoing executive for its wonderful work and selfless commitment to our community's health needs and congratulate the incoming executive. I wish it well over the coming year. I note there was very little change in the executive. I congratulate former Lismore City Council Mayor Jenny Dowell on continuing to be a very active patron. The president is Judy Larrescy. The vice-presidents are I. Wallis and L. Paff. The treasurer is Carol Lander. The assistant treasurer is Wendy Painter. The secretary is Rhonda Powell. The assistant secretary is Julie Lewis. The publicity officer is Rhonda Powell. The gift shop contributors are Priscilla Beardow and Bev Savins. And the raffle fundraising coordinator is Colleen Lipman.

#### **LAURA JONES**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (13:48):** Today I congratulate artist Laura Jones of Kurrajong, who received the 2024 Archibald Prize. Laura created a portrait depicting novelist and environmental activist Tim Winton, whom she met when undertaking an artist residency. Winton inspired Laura through their discussions of political engagement and environmental issues. Her portrait was one of 57 finalists and was chosen as the winning piece by the trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Her portrait was included in the Archibald Prize exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and will be included in the travelling regional tour. I dare say that it will continue to speak to onlookers as Laura intended, highlighting Tim's advocacy for the environment. I applaud Laura's achievement of being the twelfth woman to win the Archibald Prize in its over 100-year history. I congratulate Laura on being a creative voice for the Hawkesbury.

#### **FERNLEIGH AWABAKAL SHARED TRACK**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (13:49):** I have some good news to share with the House. I am very proud to announce that one of Lake Macquarie's most spectacular cultural landmarks, the Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track, will finally get the recognition it deserves. The 27 kilometres of uninterrupted track has been four years in the making, and due to an \$8.9 million investment from this Government, it is now open. It is the longest active transport route in the Hunter region, running from Murrays Beach all the way to Adamstown. I had the pleasure of visiting the new track with the Premier recently, and I am so glad that runners, cyclists and walkers are now able to enjoy the fantastic community amenity. I encourage all to get up to Swansea with the family and take a spin, have a jog, or even put on some skates, on the track. It is a fantastic and wonderful amenity for the community.

#### **HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (13:50):** I congratulate the winners of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Local Business Awards. The businesses are embraced by the residents of Davidson. The Bakery/Cake Business of the Year is Bobbin Head Bakery in North Turramurra. The Fitness Service of the Year is Wellness in Motion in Lindfield. The Florist of the Year is Wahroonga Flower Shop. The Antiques, Arts, Crafts and Gifts of the Year is Kanak Kiran. The Pharmacy of the Year is McDonalds Pharmacy in St Ives. The New Business of the Year is KX Pilates in Turramurra. The Fast Food/Takeaway of the Year is the Pymble Grind. The Hotel/Bottle Shop/Bar of the Year is Kiplings Garage in Turramurra. The Pet Care of the Year is the Village Vet in Gordon, Killara and Pymble. We are so proud of all of the work those businesses do in our local community. Small businesses are the backbone of our community. They create local jobs and economic growth. I encourage everyone to back in our local small businesses. I congratulate the winners once again.



*Private Members' Statements***MV NOONGAH**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (13:51):** For 55 years, the final resting place of the MV *Noongah* has not been known, but with the assistance of a Maritime Union of Australia [MUA] crew aboard the RV *Investigator*, the wreck's location has been discovered by the CSIRO. The MV *Noongah* sank in August 1969 while sailing from Newcastle to Townsville carrying a cargo of steel, after it was struck by a storm and heavy seas. The sinking is one of the worst post-war maritime disasters in Australia.

When the MV *Noongah* went down, 21 of the 26 crew members lost their lives, and sadly only one of the victims' bodies was recovered. The survivors and families have waited 55 years for answers on what happened to the MV *Noongah*. In 1969 one of the five surviving crew, able seafarer Bill Cockley, told *The Seamen's Journal* of the crew's struggle to survive, and later reflected on his experience with the *Maritime Workers Journal* on the fiftieth anniversary of the tragedy in 2019. At 3.55 a.m. on the day of the sinking, the ship's captain radioed for help after losing control in the heavy swell and the 110-kilometre-per-hour gale-force winds. Then, at 4.47 a.m., the ship was listing badly and the call went out to abandon ship.

"I had hardly completed tying my life jacket when the ship gave a shudder and then, almost instantaneously, disappeared," Bill said. "I went down with the ship. For what distance, I do not know, but it seemed an eternity." Crew member Jay Lingard was yelling, "She's gone!" Bill, along with his crewmates Russell Henderson and Jay Lingard, spent 12 hours in the water before they spotted the Adelaide steam bulk carrier *Meringa* and were hauled aboard. Two other survivors had already been rescued by the *Meringa* and met them aboard.

The *Noongah* has been located at a depth of 170 metres, sitting upright on the sea floor off Smoky Cape. The CSIRO ship that discovered the MV *Noongah*, the RV *Investigator*, is part of the Marine National Facility. It is crewed by MUA members who perform strategically important work operating the *Investigator's* precision equipment, machinery and systems during scientific voyages throughout the open ocean around Australia's coastline. Not only was the *Investigator* critical to locating the *Noongah*, but it was also vital in discovering the *Blythe Star* in April last year. The story of the *Noongah* shows the dangers our seafarers face every day—and I thank them for the vital work they do—but it was also a tragedy that struck the people of Newcastle in lasting and indelible ways.

Remarkably, two of my former staff members in the Swansea electorate office, Elle Lingard and Matt Murray, both had great-uncles among the crew of the *Noongah*. Matt is now a seafarer himself aboard the MV *Goliath*, keeping the seafaring tradition alive in his family, along with his brother Luke Murray, a Newcastle tugboat crewman. I pay tribute to all victims, survivors and rescuers of the *Noongah* crew, as well as their families, who were touched by this avoidable tragedy. I also thank the efforts of the Maritime Union of Australia Newcastle branch's secretary, Glen Williams, and deputy branch secretary, Denis Outram, in facilitating contact with the surviving crew members and their families to break the news of the *Noongah's* discovery.

**NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ORANA TEAM**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:55):** As we know, the NSW Rural Fire Service is the world's largest volunteer fire service. It provides a critical service to our communities and provides fire and emergency services to approximately 95 per cent of New South Wales. I acknowledge some local members of the NSW RFS Orana team, who were recently recognised for their outstanding service, commitment and dedication to the Rural Fire Service. There were several significant awards presented, including the National Medal, the Long Service Award and plaques of appreciation. Danny Lummis and Wayne Morley received national medals and clasps. The national medals and clasps are presented to members of the service in recognition of 15 years of diligent service, with the addition of a clasp for every 10 years of additional service. The medal recognises those members who go above and beyond what is expected of active members in their brigade.

With 22 years of service, Danny is a member of the Minore and Dubbo brigades. He joined the Collie brigade as a junior member in 2002 and became an operational member in 2004. In 2007 he joined the Dubbo HQ brigade and quickly rose through the ranks, becoming a deputy captain in 2008, senior deputy captain in 2010, and he was then elected as captain in 2012, a position he held until 2018. He was then elected as a group captain for the Dubbo southern group area, and he continues in that role today.

Wayne Morley became a member of the RFS Walmer brigade in 1957 at the age of 14—one of those remarkable stories. In those days the only firefighting equipment available to Wayne was a 44-gallon drum of water and some wet hessian bags—pretty amazing. As a young firefighter, Wayne realised there was a need for firefighting training, and he worked through the training requirements to become a group leader in the Orana team. Wayne has always been a mentor to new brigade members and continues to protect life and property during

incidents when the pagers are activated for his own brigade area and neighbouring brigades. Wayne was presented with a National Medal along with first, second, third and fourth clasps. He also received the Long Service Medal fifth clasp for 67 years of service. It is an extraordinary length of service for one person to provide to his community, and it is an absolute pleasure, and an honour, to be able to recognise that service here today. I say well done to Wayne. He has done an outstanding job.

Long service medals and clasps were also presented to members of the service in recognition of 10 years of service with the addition of a clasp for every 10 years of additional service. Fourteen members were awarded long service medals: Ingo-Reiner Steppat, Melissa Smede, Graeme Allen, Douglas Bayley, Rowie Bayley, Maurice Street and Jodie Bruce all received 10-year active service long service medals. Further notable recognitions were Kerry Walters with a Long Service Medal and first clasp for 20 years of active service, David Walters with a Long Service Medal and second clasp for 30 years of active service, Rowan Bayley with a Long Service Medal second clasp for 30 years of active service, and Angus Young was presented with a Long Service Medal with first, second and third clasps for 45 years of service.

Scott Tourle was recognised for an incredible 50 years of active service with long service medal third and fourth clasps, and his wife, Liz, was also recognised for 50 years of active service with long service medal third and fourth clasps. A century of combined service for the Tourles, and I reckon it is time to raise the bat for that. Well done. Rodney Althofer also received recognition with a long service medal fourth clasp for 58 years of service. Ross Carolan was awarded a plaque of appreciation in recognition of his dedicated service and commitment to the Orana Team district as a volunteer of the RFS for 59 years and as a representative of the Orana Bush Fire Management Committee for the past 11 years. Carole Bayley, Lindsay Hough and Eric Shanks, all retiring from their group officer roles, were presented with plaques of appreciation in recognition of their service. I commend and sincerely thank each and every one of those selfless individuals who are so committed to the protection of their community and the environment. Well done on the amazing presentations received. Congratulations.

#### COUNCILLOR GREG WATSON

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (14:00):** I congratulate Councillor Greg Watson from Shoalhaven City Council on his retirement from local government after 50 years of continuous service. Councillor Watson was first elected to Shoalhaven Shire Council, as it was then known, in September 1974. Three years later, at the next local government elections, Councillor Watson was elected as the shire president. What was outstanding was that Greg was voted in with more than 70 per cent of the vote in ward 2, taking his whole ticket into council with him, something that I am not sure anyone has achieved since. Many are envious of that and, I am certain, would like to repeat it.

In July 1979 the then Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler, proclaimed the Shoalhaven a city, and Greg Watson's title changed from shire president to mayor, a position that Greg held until 1983. Councillor Watson remained on council as a councillor for ward 2 until 1999, when he was again elected as mayor, a position Greg held until 2008 when, once again, he remained a councillor. Councillor Watson has seen many changes to the council through his lifetime. Fifty years ago, when Greg first ran for council, the majority of our small coastal towns and villages had gravel roads and no town water or sewerage. I asked Greg what achievements he was most proud of. There were many. However, sealing 175 kilometres of gravel roads to bitumen in 2½ years would have to top the list. The cost of the program was \$3.5 million, which in today's terms would equate to well over \$80 million. The project commenced in 1978 and was finished in 1980. It was achieved by using in-house employees, which is truly commendable. It was done in-house, on time and within budget, something I am sure the residents of the Shoalhaven would like to see today.

When Councillor Watson was elected to council, only the towns of Berry, Nowra and Ulladulla had town water. While Nowra has had a wastewater treatment plant since 1937, other towns and villages across the Shoalhaven were not connected to a treatment plant. With the help of the New South Wales Government—namely Jack Ferguson—Greg Watson was able to get funds to have water and sewerage connected to most towns and villages throughout the local government area. The Shoalhaven now has 13 waste treatment plants, with the majority of those delivered during Greg Watson's two terms as mayor. Another of Greg's achievements that endures today is the Flinders Industrial Estate at South Nowra. Greg was instrumental in developing that land and, with the help of Neville Wran, in getting 15 manufacturing businesses to move from Sydney to Nowra. Neville Wran travelled to Nowra to help celebrate that achievement, which saw the creation of many jobs for the region.

Councillor Watson has seen and been a part of many events over his lifetime. During my time on Shoalhaven council, Greg was a source of knowledge and was extremely generous in sharing the history of past events. In the same year that Greg was elected to council, the Shoalhaven experienced one of the worst floods in its history. My good friend and Federal colleague Fiona Phillips tells the story of how Greg Watson rescued her

from that flood at Terara, and literally saved her life. I think this really sums up Greg Watson. He was and is a man of the people of the Shoalhaven.

It is not easy being in public life, especially for your family. Families are often impacted by what goes on in our communities, and it is quite often the wives, children and other family members who feel the hurt for their loved ones. I extend my gratitude of thanks to Greg's wife, Robyn, and their children for sharing Greg with the community over the past 50 years. On behalf of the residents of the Shoalhaven, I congratulate Councillor Greg Watson on this outstanding achievement of serving his community for 50 years. I thank Greg for his years of service to the Shoalhaven. I know Greg is watching. I wish him and his family all the very best in his retirement.

### **OATLEY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:05):** The St George Community is home to some of the finest organisations in New South Wales, all of which are run and staffed by dedicated and compassionate individuals. From local churches to senior citizen centres, they all contribute to making our local area a great place to live, work and raise a family. I have worked closely with many of these organisations and witnessed firsthand how they go above and beyond to support the community by providing essential services, support and, most importantly, a sense of purpose. However, there is always more work to be done. In order to support the fantastic work that takes place in our local area, much-needed upgrades must be funded to ensure our community has access to the best facilities, equipment and services.

Thanks to the Community Building Partnership grant program, I am pleased to say that just under \$300,000 of grant funding has been allocated to 15 projects in my local community. I had the pleasure of calling each and every grant recipient to let them know the good news—truly one of the best parts of the job. A number of community groups received some incredibly important funding, allowing them to undertake significant upgrades to their facilities. Among these groups are the Chinese Australian Services Society, or CASS, in Peakhurst, which received \$20,000 to operate a healthy ageing and wellbeing hub; the St George's Singers group, which received just over \$9,000 to purchase new wireless and audiovisual equipment at Peakhurst South; and the Resourceful Australian Indian Network, or RAIN, in Penshurst, which received \$20,000 to upgrade its community centre as well.

Also among these community organisations are senior citizens centres, with funding going towards quality-of-life enhancements for the ageing population within our local area. Those centres include IRT Peakhurst, which received \$28,000 for the installation of new automatic doors for their much-used residents centre, along with 3Bridges Oatley senior citizens centre, which received \$14,000 to keep our local seniors cool, thanks to the installation of a new air conditioning unit and electrical upgrades. From young to old, these grants will truly make a difference to people from all walks of life.

Despite Labor's \$220 million worth of cuts to New South Wales public schools, we must ensure that the youngest members of our community do not miss out. We took matters into our own hands, with grant funding going towards important upgrades at local schools and early learning centres. They include Penshurst West Public School, which received over \$56,000 to provide upgrades to the school playground; Aspect South East Sydney School in Peakhurst, which received just over \$36,000 for brand new upgrades to its playground, which will provide sensory play equipment designed for students with autism; Goodstart Early Learning Centre in Narwee, which received \$5,000 to replace and upgrade its outdoor shade sails; and Riverwood Public School, which received just under \$19,000 for the installation of a new shade sail, which will greatly enhance the outdoor play area.

Participation in sport is so important, and grassroots sport is the lifeblood of our local community. That is why it is fantastic that we were able to provide funding to Football Canterbury, which received just under \$6,000 to purchase a fully monitored and accessible defibrillator at Bland Oval in Riverwood. We also gave Connells Point Sailing Club \$14,000 for new safety boat resources, which will allow for far more participation and keep members of the club safe when they are out on the water. Finally, we know that religious organisations and groups do so much for our community. From community outreach to caring for the needy and vulnerable, the much-needed funding will support those organisations in their goals moving forward.

I am proud to announce that Crosslight Anglican Church in Mortdale was provided with \$16,500 for the purchase and installation of new camera, audiovisual and video equipment. The Greek Orthodox Parish of Kogarah also received \$22,000 for the replacement of damaged doors and the installation of a new disabled access ramp, along with irrigation and landscaping work. During a time when local community organisations need our support the most, it is fantastic to see that the Community Building Partnership grants have continued and are still providing vital support for local organisations. I congratulate all the community groups once again.

## NATIONAL STROKE WEEK

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (14:10):** I speak on Stroke Foundation Australia's National Stroke Week, which is held from 5 to 11 August. Every year around 19,000 New South Wales residents have a stroke, which is more than 50 people per day. There are hundreds of thousands of people living with the after-effects of stroke. In 2021 stroke was the underlying cause in 5 per cent of all deaths. The likelihood of stroke events is 40 per cent higher in males than in females, and it increases with age. The rate among people aged 85 and over is almost six times the rate among those aged between 65 and 74. The rate of death from stroke is 60 per cent higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. More than one-third of people hospitalised for stroke in New South Wales are from regional, rural or remote areas. Therefore, with the third oldest demographic in New South Wales and a proportionally high Aboriginal population, those statistics have particular relevance for the Bega electorate.

The message of National Stroke Week is "Know the signs and you could save a life". National Stroke Week 2024 encourages the community to know the FAST—face, arms, speech and time—signs of stroke so that they can save a life in the event of a loved one experiencing a stroke. It is an easy way to remember the most common signs of stroke. Using the FAST test involves asking these simple questions. Face—check their face. Has their mouth drooped? Arms—can they lift both arms? Speech—is their speech slurred? Do they understand you? And time is critical. If you see any of those signs, call 000 straightaway. A stroke is always a medical emergency. Keep looking at your mum, dad, loved ones and mates—it could save their lives.

What is a stroke? A stroke happens when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted. When brain cells do not get enough oxygen or nutrients, they die. The area of brain damage is called a cerebral infarct. That leads to a variety of neurological losses of function that can manifest in the FAST components: facial muscular drooping, loss of power in the arms or legs, and loss of speech or comprehension of speech. An ischaemic stroke occurs when the artery is blocked by a clot formed within the blood vessel, known as thrombosis, or when a clot, which is called an embolus, has travelled to the blood vessel. A brain bleed or haemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel ruptures directly into the brain tissue, called an intracerebral haemorrhage, or when an abnormal dilation of an artery, called an aneurysm, ruptures into the space surrounding the brain that contains fluid. That is called a subarachnoid haemorrhage. The proportions of all strokes that are due to ischaemia, intracerebral haemorrhage and subarachnoid haemorrhage are 87 per cent, 10 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively.

More than 80 per cent of strokes can be prevented. Managing one's stroke risk and living a healthy lifestyle can help prevent a stroke. Firstly, people should make time for a health check with their primary health carer. They should identify and control high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and the abnormality of heart rhythm, called atrial fibrillation. They should stay active, eat a well-balanced diet, quit smoking and avoid excessive alcohol intake. With prompt treatment, some people who suffer a stroke can recover with no or few side effects. People across regional and rural New South Wales can quickly receive a virtual stroke diagnosis and treatment through the NSW Telestroke Service, which connects 23 rural and regional hospitals across New South Wales with a virtual network of specialist stroke doctors managed by the Prince of Wales Hospital. That includes South East Regional Hospital in Bega and the current Moruya District Hospital.

It exemplifies the need to establish a single new Eurobodalla regional hospital where definitive services are available, including immediate pathology and CT and MRI imaging, as well as specialist physician capacity. Since the service was first piloted in the Mid North Coast Local Health District, it has made a life-changing difference to more than 5,100 stroke patients across rural and regional New South Wales. Following initial therapy, patients are assessed for secondary prevention as required. Our valued doctors, nurses and allied health workers provide rehabilitation services and manage complications. Further survivorship issues involve community participation and long-term care. This serious medical condition is preventable and has early intervention potential. Remember: FAST.

## SURVIVOR'S R US

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (14:15):** Imagine living off the disability support pension. Now imagine using that meagre income not to pay for your own basic needs but to help pay the astronomical rent on a commercial building that houses a life-saving charity. That is the situation that Maria Martin, founder of Survivor's R Us, has found herself in. A domestic violence survivor herself, Maria has dedicated her life to helping people in the most desperate of situations. Her self-funded charity looks after men, women and children leaving domestic violence, as well as those who are homeless, unemployed or under financial duress, and people who have given up all hope and are on the verge of committing suicide. She and her team of 110 volunteers work to bring those people back from the brink.

Since Survivor's R Us was established in 2016, the charity has helped in excess of 100,000 people through its free counselling and support services, food pantry, cafe, free hot meals, laundry and shower services, support

centre, op shop and weekly outreach barbeques. It has also helped people to find emergency accommodation and homes. It is a truly noble and irreplaceable grassroots charity. I am extremely saddened to announce that unless Survivor's R Us receives a desperately needed lifeline of its own, the life-saving service will close its doors when its lease expires in December 2025.

Survivor's R Us already pays more than \$300,000 every year to rent a warehouse in Cardiff. Last month it received notice that the landlord would be increasing the rent by an additional \$36,000 per annum, effective immediately. Moreover, from January next year the rent would go up again, and that was flagged to be another \$36,000 per annum. Apparently, the initial \$36,000 increase by the landlord was justified because council rates have gone up. Maria has been told that the next rent increase is due to the consumer price index. Put simply, that financial burden is too much for the charity to bear. It currently pays for its rent through fundraising events, public donations, food bank sales, the op shop and training courses held in its warehouse. When it falls short, Maria and other volunteers dip into their pensions to help cover the cost. They receive no government funding. They have also raised and spent between \$350,000 and \$400,000 on fitting out the warehouse.

Survivor's R Us is one of the biggest charities in Newcastle and the Hunter, and it helps people from all walks of life. Recently, its clients have even included doctors and lawyers who cannot afford to buy food because of crippling mortgages and the cost of living. Some who present have not eaten for days. The charity is currently serving meals to over 100 people a day, five days a week. It is also regularly approached by housing department staff asking for free furniture, clothing and food for its clients. The charity is regularly asked for help by funded charities with paid staff, while none of the 110 weekly volunteers at Survivor's R Us pull a wage. So far this year those volunteers have helped 446 domestic violence victims and 107 homeless people. They have handed out 7,232 hot and cold food bags, 2,110 OzHarvest bags, 617 dignity bags, 731 food hampers, 305 fruit and vegetable bags, 392 meat products and 314 manchester items. They have also cooked 2,935 hot breakfasts, provided more than 160 hours of free counselling and offered other support to 786 clients.

If Survivor's R Us closes, where will those people go? The Government is well aware of the challenges our communities are facing and, yes, they are doing good work in areas, but we are collectively leaving the job of helping those who are doing it tough and living in crisis to all-too-few volunteers. We need to do more. We need to support the supporters and make sure that they have enough funding to keep going. We should not have volunteers dipping into their own pockets to keep charities going. We should not have a situation where someone like Maria is looking to mortgage her own house to keep the doors open. The cost to the community will be higher in the long run if we cannot support cost-effective grassroots organisations like Survivor's R Us. I implore the Government to do all it can to assist not only Survivors R Us but all charities, organisations and not-for-profit groups that are working hard to help people in the most desperate of need.

### NURSES AND MIDWIVES

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (14:20):** Working in the healthcare sector is challenging at the best of times, but since the world was brought to a standstill by a global pandemic, not only have those challenges increased exponentially, so too has the public appreciation for and awareness of the work of nurses and midwives. I pay tribute to the Liverpool nurses and midwives who I recently met regarding their campaign for a wage increase. They are a remarkable bunch. They work under circumstances that are at times immeasurably demanding, unpredictable and downright tough. They are extraordinarily dedicated, resilient and knowledgeable. They work long hours, face people at their best and worst, are exposed to physical and emotional risks, and provide comfort, kindness and care to patients every day. They are the backbone of our healthcare system. They witness some of life's greatest joys and, in contrast, experience some of its greatest suffering. They are a rock in times of trauma and pain. They are a shining light in some of the darkest hours.

I thank them for leading the way in taking care of us through some incredibly difficult times for our community. I also thank the Nurses and Midwives' Association. I thank our Liverpool nurses and midwives on behalf of a community that truly appreciates who they are and what they do. However, I acknowledge that there are significant challenges for not only the nurses who are currently working on the front line of our healthcare system but also our healthcare system in general, in making sure that we have a pipeline of nurses and midwives and that we support them accordingly. One challenge lies in securing nurses and midwives in both recruitment and retention. We have long known that Queensland and Victoria are our main competitors on that front, thanks to a wage cap that has degraded the wages and conditions of our nurses and midwives in New South Wales for over a decade. The cumulative impact of the wage cap on our healthcare workforce has led to outcomes that our nurses and midwives cannot sustain.

When I spoke with the nurses and midwives from Liverpool Hospital, I heard awful stories. I heard from a second-year registered nurse and single mum who was struggling on the current pay rate and thought she might become homeless. There are many stories of nurses who cannot pay bills going without essential items, with some not eating at work, and senior members looking at leaving the profession altogether to work in real estate because

it pays better. Without a doubt, as Minister Ryan Park said in question time earlier this week, the biggest challenge that our health system and hospitals face right now is not a case of needing more equipment or more facilities. It relates to the men and women who deliver the health services that the communities of all members in this place rely upon.

For 20 years now, under the leadership of Brett Holmes, Shaye Candish and Michael Whaites, the Nurses and Midwives' Association has campaigned on a single issue: ratios. They campaigned to oppositions trying to get into government. They campaigned to governments trying to retain government. After 20 years of campaigning, that was achieved under the Minns Labor Government. We are very proud of that reform. I am particularly proud that Liverpool Hospital, which currently has the busiest emergency department in the country, was one of the first hospitals that reform was rolled out to.

Additionally, the Minns Government is 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 healthcare workers. That is important because the State needs a pipeline of healthcare workers to staff our hospitals as the demand for services increase. We are rolling out reforms like boosting supply of accommodation for key workers, which links closely with properly staffing our hospitals and again relates to the difficulties our current healthcare workforce has. I know that the Nurses and Midwives' Association is currently negotiating with the Government about the wage claims. By meeting with nurses and midwives in Liverpool, I know that the situation is unsustainable. I wish them well in their activism and in their campaign for a liveable wage. I thank Deborah Chant, the vice-president of the Liverpool branch of the association, for bringing these issues to my attention and for her branch's campaign.

#### TRAVIS BAZZANA

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:25):** I am delighted to share with the House the great success of one of my community's young talents, Travis Bazzana, who recently was the only Australian drafted in the first round of Major League Baseball [MLB] in America. Amazingly, he was selected as the number one pick overall. Competing against college and high school students and players from across the world, Travis was selected number one. He was also the first second-baseman to be selected as the number one pick overall. At only 21 years of age, Travis was picked by the Cleveland Guardians and will play with them in the upcoming baseball season. This is an incredible and wonderful achievement. A representative of the Guardians said that, after reviewing the statistics in the lead-up to the draft, they were compelled to select Travis.

Travis is a great homegrown talent. He began playing T-ball for the Ryde Hawkes, before going on to play as part of the Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball and Softball Club. He spent hours in the batting cages at the Golden Jubilee oval in Wahroonga, mastering the sport and building up the skills he needed to succeed around the world. Not only is he a fantastic baseball player; he also was a talented cricketer in his youth, captaining Turramurra High School to its first State championship in cricket. His former teammates at the Stealers recall the immense amount of time he spent practising his baseball skills, saying they knew he would go far. At the age of 18 Travis moved to America, where he dominated the Corvallis Knights in the West Coast League in the summer of 2021. Travis thrived in the program, becoming the all-time leader in home runs, stolen bases, runs scored, doubles, hits and walks, and he also held the single season record for homers, runs scored and total bases.

Travis then played college baseball at the highly ranked Oregon State University. In his last season with the Oregon State University Ducks, Travis was ranked in the top 10 division one college players in the three most important statistical categories for batting. This means he excelled in his hitting average, home runs and slugging percentage. Even during his college breaks Travis would come home to the Golden Jubilee oval in Wahroonga and spend every night practising in the batting cages. The Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball and Softball Club hosted at the Golden Jubilee clubhouse a live-streamed party of Travis's draft. His former teammates and coaches were there to watch this history-making moment.

Undoubtedly, Travis has inspired the next generation of players in Australia. Many young Stealers were watching Travis's big moment, too, with many Australian players, no doubt, looking to be the next Travis Bazzana. Travis's success is a huge testament to his personal dedication to developing his skills and also to the outstanding player development of the Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball and Softball Club. I thank club president Shaun Joffee, volunteers, coaches and parents for their dedication to raising the next generation of softball and baseball superstars. The club was established in 1977 and received the inaugural Baseball Australia Club of the Year award in 2006. It now has over 500 members.

I am proud that the Ku-ring-gai Stealers Baseball and Softball Club has received a range of government grants since I have been the local member. These have included a substantial grant for flooring in the batting cages, portable benches, seating, shading and even a differential regulator. It is critical that governments across Australia continue to invest in our grassroots sports programs and in our youngest athletes. We know the benefits

that exercise has on our physical and mental health, and it is important that we continue to do everything we can to encourage the next generation of our community.

I once again congratulate Travis and thank him for his hard work and dedication that has led to this outstanding achievement. We wish him all the best in the coming MLB season and look forward to seeing him smash more records and succeeding at the highest level of his sport in the world. It is absolutely incredible. I do not think Australians really understand how passionate Americans are about baseball or how incredibly difficult it is to not only be selected in a Major League Baseball team but to also be number one in the draft. It is an incredible achievement, and Travis will become undoubtedly one of the highest paid athletes that Australia has ever produced. It is so exciting for Travis, and we all wish him the very best.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION WEEK**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:30):** Former Justice of the High Court of Australia, the Hon. Michael Kirby—Strathfield North Public School. Biomedical engineer and inventor of the mind-controlled wheelchair, Dr Jordan Nguyen—Baulkham Hills North Public School. Human rights lawyer and Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt, AO—Kirrawee High School. Cricket legend Don Bradman—Bowral High School. These remarkable individuals achieved incredible feats for Australia, and they have a key thing in common: They all attended a public school in New South Wales. Along with boasting an impressive alumni list, our New South Wales public schools are a pillar of our community.

This week is Public Education Week, and I could not be prouder to stand in Parliament today to celebrate our 2,200 public schools. In New South Wales, we have the best public schools and the best publicly funded teachers in the country. This Public Education Week we celebrate and recognise the importance of continuing the Government's support for public schools, in collaboration with its colleagues in the Federal Government. I recently had an opportunity to meet with teachers from the Fairfield Teachers Association, which is based in the electorate of Prospect. They are a group of hardworking and experienced teachers, and I was glad to hear their perspectives. I thank Terry Moriarty, Mandy Wells and Andrew Lambkin for their advocacy and commitment to education in our community. I also thank the Blacktown Teachers Association and the Parramatta Teachers Association for the great advocacy that they provide for our schools.

Investing in public education drives better student outcomes, which is crucial to sustaining the long-term success of our State. The Government has made impressive strides to better support public schools in the electorate of Prospect. By giving our deserving teachers the largest pay increase in three decades, we have supported our teachers with fairer compensation and contributed to a 20 per cent reduction in teacher shortages. We have also handed down a budget that prioritises much-needed upgrades and maintenance at local public schools. We are improving conditions for teachers and staff with projects like bathroom upgrades, new classrooms and covered shade areas for play. We are on the right track, but we must keep working to ensure our teachers are better resourced.

Schools in the electorate of Prospect are still battling with teacher vacancies. Students are learning in minimal supervision classes, and many teachers and principals are foregoing vital out-of-class time to ensure students are supervised. In south-west Sydney, the recent Australian Education Union State of our Schools Survey showed that 50 per cent of principals regularly cover classes, only 4 per cent of teachers felt they had adequate resourcing and only 16 per cent of teachers were committed to staying in the profession long term, or even for the next five years.

We must continue investing in our public schools to improve teaching conditions and facilities. As my colleague the member for Camden said yesterday, "A good teacher can teach under a tree with one pencil." She is right—a good teacher can and will, because they are committed to their students. But, like the member for Camden said, we need to support our teachers so they do not have to sit under a tree with one pencil. By providing better resourcing and upgraded amenities, we support our teachers to provide better educational outcomes for our students. We must work in step with our schools to help teachers cater to diverse learning needs and to provide a holistic and enjoyable experience for students.

In conclusion, I congratulate the deserving students and educators who received awards and accolades at the 2024 Public Education Awards this week. They are all outstanding leaders in our education community. I thank them for their dedication and work to change the lives of our students. I heartily thank the teachers, principals, student learning support officers, admin staff, volunteers, P&C members, parents and students who make the public schools in Prospect so renowned for excellence. Lastly, I urge everyone to keep our dedicated educators in the forefront of their minds this Public Education Week and every week as we continue to work to restore standards for education across New South Wales.

## ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (14:35):** This afternoon I inform the Parliament about Essential Energy's poor decision on power poles for its network, which will affect regional New South Wales and jobs in the electorate of Clarence. Recently Essential Energy took a backward step and informed the community that it is moving away from hardwood timber power poles in favour of fiberglass resin composite poles. Recently I met with industry leaders at Coffs Harbour Hardwoods in Glenreagh in my electorate and was informed that if Essential Energy's change continues, half of the industry's workforce of 100 will be made redundant and left without jobs. Many people in the electorate of Clarence are employed by the poles industry. I will stand up for them in Parliament.

Composite fiberglass poles are held together with resin. There are three types of resin. The first is polyester resin, which is derived from petrochemicals. Polyester resins are common in fiberglass composites due to their cost-effectiveness and ease of use. The second type of resin is epoxy resin, which is also derived from petrochemicals. It is stronger but more expensive. The third type of resin is vinyl ester resin, a hybrid between polyester and epoxy resins. It is low cost but more toxic. The glass fibres in fiberglass are not hydrocarbons or petrochemicals, but the resins used to bind the fibres typically are. Replacing the totally natural product of hardwood timber poles with heavy-chemical poles is not right for the environment, and it is not right for jobs in my electorate.

While I acknowledge these composite poles are fire-resistant, they are not fireproof. When petrochemical products burn, the smoke and gas are toxic, let alone the water run-off from the burning poles. That is not in the best interest of the environment. I am not sure if Essential Energy or the Government understand that we are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. Not only does the environment lose as a result of this short-sighted decision, but so does the pocket of everyone in regional and rural New South Wales. Active Kids vouchers have been cut. The Back to School Vouchers have been cut. The dining vouchers have been cut. The First Lap vouchers have been cut. The regional seniors travel card voucher has been cut. Now the Government is sitting idly by while more money is ripped out of regional New South Wales.

Essential Energy believes the change will cost only \$2 per customer per year. Essential Energy can put a bit of a spin on it and say that is nothing—everyone can afford it. But there are 890,000 customers in the Essential Energy network. That is \$1.768 million per year and \$17.8 million over the next 10 years that people need to cough up. The people of regional New South Wales cannot afford it. The poles will create more CO<sub>2</sub> and there is only one company in New South Wales that can make them, as well as one in Queensland. They produce up to five times more greenhouse gases than a treated timber pole. Essential Energy must come clean with regard to the recyclability of these poles, as I do not believe they can actually be recycled. I find it difficult to accept that this is a good outcome for the environment and the people who ultimately have to cough up the bill.

I urge the Minns Labor Government to instruct Essential Energy to review this decision as a matter of urgency. Essential Energy informed me that there was widespread community consultation. I cannot find one person who was consulted with regards to this decision. Were they consulted that there was more CO<sub>2</sub>—that this is a chemical-heavy power pole compared with what we have in the hardwood timber poles? This issue is not going to go away. I urge Essential Energy not to remain silent. I urge the Government to instruct Essential Energy to review this decision. I thank the House.

## LIVING LAB NORTHERN RIVERS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:40):** Yesterday I hosted a hugely successful event in this place called the Living Lab Northern Rivers Breakfast Briefing. I thank the many Ministers, shadow Ministers, advisers, leaders and other members who attended. We are very busy in this place and there are many events, so it was wonderful to see such a large group of people there. A whole range of people from different agencies and universities were in attendance, as well as the head of the Insurance Council of Australia, Andrew Hall; Daniel Hunter from Business NSW; and the NSW Reconstruction Authority board chair Stephen Murray and CEO Mal Lanyon.

For the benefit of members, Living Lab was created in the Northern Rivers but could be used anywhere in Australia and, indeed, globally in responding to large-scale weather disasters. Living Lab is about looking forward. As many members know personally and professionally, when you have gone through a big disaster and are trying to find your way through it and out of it, you stay immersed in the daily trauma and detail. There is a lot to do, and it takes a long time to rebuild and for communities to heal. Living Lab brings expertise and lived experience through to Southern Cross University, my local regional university, and also the University of Technology Sydney [UTS], as well as the New South Wales Government. We set up this tripartite arrangement—a relationship, as I call it—to say, "What can we do? How can we do things better? How can we help communities heal, rebuild, reimagine and reshape themselves after these disasters?"



People involved included Professor Tyrone Carlin, Vice-Chancellor and President of Southern Cross University, and Professor Andrew Parfitt, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Technology. As I said, it is a partnership with the NSW Reconstruction Authority, so the CEO, Mal Lanyon, was there. They have been able to work in our community to help people replan CBDs and work on riverbank restoration. At the launch of Living Lab in Lismore, I said that we do not have to go out and see the world as they are bringing the world to us—and that is what they have done.

The co-directors are Professor Elizabeth Mossop from UTS and Dan Etheridge from Southern Cross University, both of whom have lived and worked in New Orleans, Louisiana, and were there when the city suffered Hurricane Katrina. Apart from working and living there, they have a lot of experience now in disasters, particularly in flood disasters. The Living Lab is helping our community across the Northern Rivers reimagine and reshape ourselves, based on research, evidence and expertise.

In my long experience of governments, they are not always the best at community consultation. That is not a big skill set. Through the Living Lab, governments are able to do that engagement with the Reconstruction Authority, one of the three arms in the relationship. They are able to engage, and they do it really well. As they said yesterday, they meet in local bowling clubs with the community and engage them on the way forward. So many people were excited after that. People have come to me and asked, "Can we come and see them? Can they come out to us?" They envisaged all sorts of possibilities in the way that the Living Lab could assist in their communities. Given the repeated disasters we have had all over New South Wales and Australia, I recommend the Living Lab to assist.

### SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (14:45):** France, which just weeks ago was reeling from divisive elections, has come together for the Olympics, reminding us again of the incredible power of sport to inspire and unite us. The games have also highlighted the importance of funding women's sport—look at Ilona Maher from the United States, who is single-handedly reviving rugby. That brings me to a rapidly growing sport in my electorate of Parramatta: cricket. It is not just Parramatta that loves cricket. Thanks to the success of the Australian women's team and immigration bringing many passionate cricketers to Australia from South Asia, there was a 36 per cent increase in women's cricket registrations in New South Wales from 2022 to 2023. That is fantastic because a little-known fact is that cricket will be played at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. While I cannot boast to have ever hit a six, I can play my part in our young players being ready for Los Angeles.

Old Kings Oval is the jewel in the crown of Parramatta Park, home to the Parramatta District Cricket Club and recently named Ground of the Year at this year's Premier Cricket Awards. The ground is an example of something else we are going to be talking about much more, with increasing temperatures and rainfall due to climate change, and that something is called green infrastructure. With increased rain events closing local sports fields due to poor design and limited maintenance budgets, plus increased heat starting to have an impact on sports, it is vital that we address those issues through smarter urban design and nature-based infrastructure that acts as spongy carbon sinks while also being able to filter and absorb rainwater. We desperately need to rethink the design of sports fields and invest in natural grass sporting fields that are properly designed and maintained, using advances in soil science and the right turf cultivars that are installed with slit drainage.

Slit drainage has only been installed in about 16 per cent of playing fields in the City of Parramatta, so it is not surprising that so many grounds across the local government area have been closed in recent rain events. The problem will only get worse and is incredibly frustrating for parents and children alike. Well-constructed natural turf fields can drain rapidly and handle more than 50 hours per week of use, and while this requires a maintenance budget, the benefits are significant in more ways than one. They are multipurpose—they can be used for soccer in winter and cricket in summer—while helping cool urban temperatures and enhance ecological systems in and around our cities.

Let us do the maths. For \$3 million, a council could invest either in one synthetic field construction, benefiting about 400 football players; three to five best practice natural turf fields, benefiting about 1,500 to 2,500 football and cricket players; or 30 slit drainage system installations, which would be effective on fields that already have a wear-tolerant turf cultivar, benefiting up to 7,000 football and cricket players. Furthermore, well-designed turf fields allow for passive recreation and dog walking, and we all love our dogs. Even synthetic fields with organic infill are hot, producing temperatures that are typically higher than bitumen roads in full sun. Surface temperatures above 80 degrees Celsius have been recorded on synthetic fields with an organic infill, and Parramatta has 44 days per year, on average, above 30 degrees Celsius. The Parramatta District Cricket Association has already capped the number of cricket registrations due to a lack of cricket fields, and converting cricket ovals to synthetic will exacerbate the problem.

The shortfall in cricket fields is becoming acute. In addition to growth at long-established clubs, there has been rapid growth in community cricket clubs offering social cricket and competition cricket in Parramatta. But, sadly, clubs such as Harris Park Cricket Club and Parramatta Cheetahs Cricket Club struggle to find a cricket field. As more are earmarked or considered for synthetics across the Parramatta and Cumberland local government areas, it is an unacceptable situation. University of Technology Sydney researchers Cilliers and Takin state:

Nature-based infrastructure costs around 50% less than equivalent built infrastructure while delivering the same—or better—outcomes. As well as the lower initial costs, nature-based infrastructure tends to be cheaper to maintain and more resilient to climate change.

It is time to get moving on this. We have young cricket players who are the future of cricket in this nation, and we are always proud of those in the green and gold. It is only with sustainable green infrastructure that we can support cricket into the future in Parramatta and across Western Sydney and New South Wales.

### CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:50):** Young adults leaving State care face significant challenges that make them vulnerable to homelessness and future disadvantage. The issue impacts Sydney electorate constituents leaving care and the many services in my electorate supporting them. Over 15,000 children and young people are living in out-of-home care in New South Wales. Some are living in kinship, pre-adoptive, guardian and foster arrangements, but there are simply not enough of those options, leaving many in hotels, motels, serviced apartments and group homes.

In 2022 New South Wales lifted the cut-off for support for young people in home care from 18 to 21. At the time 50 per cent of young people leaving State care became homeless. The change is giving care leavers a better chance to prepare for independence and better reflects the growing trend of parents providing support to their children in their 20s. However, there is still a significant mismatch in support for children who grow up in State care compared to children who grow up with parents or close family. The disparity is leaving care leavers significantly disadvantaged and prone to lifelong poverty. The housing affordability crisis is seeing young people live at home well into their twenties and thirties to prevent hardship caused by the huge rents in the private rental market and to help them save for a home. Care leavers do not have those options and are very much left to fend for themselves when State care ends.

Care leavers also do not have the non-financial support that other young adults get from parents when they leave home. Many have no-one to ask for advice about basic living matters like how to keep a home clean, what to do if something breaks, how to prepare and keep food, or what to wear to a job interview. Many feel isolated and lonely. Care leavers receive a one-off Commonwealth payment when they leave State care of up to \$1,500 to cover new expenses like bonds, furniture and course fees. They will usually have a plan for leaving care, established together with a caseworker, guided by principles in the Care Leavers' Charter of Rights. The plan covers how a care leaver can achieve their goals and can include access to financial support, accommodation, education and training, health care and legal matters. But any plan will be limited by the available entitlements and opportunities, which are constrained. The one-off Commonwealth payment is not enough to cover the average bond, let alone any other expenses.

The New South Wales Government is the parent to children and young people in State care and, like other parents, it should provide continued support into adulthood to ensure lasting positive effects on a care leaver's wellbeing, including in health, education and employment. Some States provide care leavers with a third-party mentor or coach, who gives ongoing support during and beyond the transition out of care. New South Wales could consider a similar program, with the best person to take on the role identified through the care leaver's plan for leaving State care.

Young people over 18 in State care who want to leave before they are 21 should be permitted to leave, with their financial entitlements continuing until they are 21. Care leavers should be eligible for priority social housing, something the Victorian Government is doing. Safe, secure housing would provide an early intervention against homelessness in a cohort overrepresented in homelessness figures and ensure care leavers can focus on their health, welfare, education and employment. New South Wales should also provide care leavers with free tertiary education, which is something California recently legislated for. Education can increase life opportunities and provide pathways out of poverty and disadvantage.

The Government is one of the State's largest employers and has the capacity to help care leavers obtain good, stable jobs that help with future career opportunities. The right employment can prevent poverty, help care leavers connect with new people and establish useful skills. The Government can establish policies to increase employment of care leavers in the public service—for example, through quotas or by agencies working closely with caseworkers when positions arise.

Care leavers have had their lives disrupted through no fault of their own, and adulthood can provide an opportunity for them to get their lives back on track. But they need support to do that, and that support must come from their legal parents—the New South Wales Government—which must continue into adulthood, as it does for most young people. We should not pull the parental rug from beneath care leavers on their twenty-first birthday and expect them to swim. We need to set them up for success. I call on the Government to work with Home Stretch to establish a plan to ensure care leavers receive the support they need to live their best lives well into adulthood and transition out of care.

### OP FOR CHANGE

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:55):** I am delighted to raise a fantastic local initiative in my community. Op for Change is a registered charity and an independent op shop that has been trading since July 2022. Its mission has been to actively support the circular economy by providing a preloved donation and shopping outlet, to collaborate with likeminded organisations and to donate 100 per cent of its profits back to the community. In February 2024 Op for Change expanded into a neighbouring retail space on Pittwater Road, Manly, which allowed it to showcase a curated selection of designer donations in a boutique environment, challenging the public perception of what many people think an op shop, or shopping second-hand, may look like.

Since its inception, Op for Change has donated over \$50,000 to local charities, rehomed over 14,000 items from thousands of preloved items donated by local residents, held charity events, workshops and a clothing swap day, and provided a recycling support hub for the community. Led by Mel, Op for Change is a predominantly women-led and managed fully volunteer organisation, which provides opportunities for adult work experience skills and training, for school students doing the Duke of Ed program and for disability support organisations such as The Support Society. Opposition for Change has created a space that is not only sustainable and environmentally conscious but also welcoming and social. Its story and its achievements have been featured on Channel 9, including interviews with representatives from LocalKind, MoWaNa, Avalon Youth Hub and Whirl Recycling. Its achievements are vast and impressive.

Op for Change has donated more than \$50,000 to charities, including LocalKind, the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, MoWaNa, Avalon Youth Hub, Women and Children First, the Cancer Council, and the list goes on. It has also collaborated with LocalKind to host an art show fundraising evening and participated in the Shop for Good initiative. For the past couple of years Op for Change has been located in and working from premises that are going to be redeveloped, so it is turning its mind to the next chapter and what it will look like.

Op for Change is hoping to collaborate with the community and other supporters and philanthropists to help it find a new home—hopefully in Brookvale—which will allow it to turbocharge the work that it has been doing for local groups and people in need throughout the northern beaches. It is hoping to create a community and creative hub, a real social enterprise, perhaps partnering with the Darcy Street Project to bring a cafe onsite, and also to spearhead a new Wear for Good-Work Wardrobe, which will provide a business-wear and styling service for women to access for free and by appointment through local services, such as the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter and LocalKind, in order to prepare for job interviews and ongoing work. That service is not provided on the northern beaches.

Unfortunately, issues around domestic violence do not discriminate by postcode, and it is hoped that, by community members and others taking up the baton and supporting Op for Change, it will be able to provide that service on the northern beaches for women who need it. When it is ready, Op for Change will be sending a call-out seeking philanthropic donations and support from members of the community and organisations. Hopefully we can all come together to help support it to have a new, better and purpose-built premises in Brookvale now that it will not have one on Pittwater Road in Manly. Op for Change has demonstrated the value that it delivers to the community. Mel does a fantastic job, and we look forward to supporting her in the future.

### TAFE NSW

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (14:59):** As many Government members understand full well, TAFE is an important educational institution and should be the iron backbone of skills and training in our great State. TAFE has long provided the necessary workforce that New South Wales needs to keep up with industry demands and provided pathways of secure work for our citizens. These facts, like so many others, are overlooked by members opposite. The legacy of underfunding left behind by Liberal State and national governments has resulted in a shortfall of \$196 million, threatening the sustainability of TAFE. Under the Liberals and The Nationals, vocational education and training enrolments also saw a deep decline. It was inadequately funded and poorly structured. This led to many courses being discontinued, which then led to further gaps in essential training programs.

Further, this financial strain and reduced student numbers led to closures of several TAFE institutions. Providers were bogged down by administrative inefficiencies and increased operational costs, turning it into a bureaucratic nightmare. What is more concerning is that students from disadvantaged areas and rural New South Wales were hit hardest, with graduates struggling to find jobs in industries in which they studied. A primary cause of issues in the TAFE sector has been the Smart and Skilled program. Smart and Skilled was developed with little consultation and with industry representatives, educators and students left out of the conversation. As with so many other things, when those opposite touch something, it is deeply damaged and we on this side of the House are left to pick up the pieces—housing, education, health care, tolls, fair wages and TAFE.

The good news is that this Government is committed to fixing TAFE after 12 long years of neglect. We are revitalising TAFE and vocational education in New South Wales, and this is backed by a significant \$1.2 billion investment that aims to meet the needs of both students and the workforce in the twenty-first century. This investment is designed to address the critical skill shortages in our State and to make vocational education accessible. It is part of our broader strategy to rebuild TAFE and enhance the vocational education and training sector, with TAFE as the centrepiece. At the forefront of our investment in TAFE, we are making many courses fee-free in over 18 industry sectors, with particular focus on areas where skilled workers are urgently needed, among them aged care, child care, construction and technology. We are working hand in hand with the Federal Government to deliver this initiative, and it has already seen major success with 182,000 people enrolling in these courses in 2023 alone, surpassing initial targets.

We are also heavily investing in upgrading TAFE facilities and building new campuses, including specific projects such as the TAFE Asset Renewal Program, with a total estimated cost of \$319 million, and the Coffs Harbour Optimisation project. Critical to these capital works are significant investments to support TAFE NSW's digital transformation. This includes funding for projects like the digital access foundation, which aims to provide reliable internet wi-fi connectivity and digital devices to support student learning and business operations across TAFE campuses. To better equip our workforce, our students need to be learning in state-of-the-art environments, and we are making sure that that is a reality. This Government has also provided additional funding for training packages, which allocates funds to support the development and delivery of training packages at TAFE NSW. This ensures that our training programs remain current and responsive to industry needs.

We are also increasing permanency for casual teachers by converting 500 casual teachers to permanent positions within TAFE NSW. This provides more stability for our educators and enhances the quality of their students' education. On top of all this, we are investing \$252.2 million to employ an additional 1,300 apprentices and trainees in the local government sector across the State. An important part of the Government's drive to reinvigorate TAFE is conducting a comprehensive review of the vocational education system and committing to keeping TAFE campuses in public hands. That is a key step in restoring confidence in TAFE and one that puts our students first and, by extension, our workforce. That is just the tip of the iceberg of what the Government is doing to revitalise the incredibly important TAFE sector. We are making education accessible, improving infrastructure, supporting apprenticeships and enhancing digital learning to equip our workforce with the skills needed to build a stronger and more resilient New South Wales.

#### HOMELESSNESS WEEK

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:04):** As members know, this week is Homelessness Week. Over the past five days, event after event has highlighted the dire situation on our streets and called for urgent intervention to ensure that experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and non-recurring. But what those with policy expertise and lived experience have been saying all week is nothing new. We have known for years that we are in a homelessness crisis. We know that, alongside renters being priced out of an overheated rental market and first home buyers being leapfrogged by investors, thousands of people right now are being denied the most basic human right to a safe, accessible, affordable and secure place to live. Yet it is this lattermost group of people who are often overlooked in conversations about fixing our housing market. It seems they are put in the too-hard basket, except for the one week of the year we deem Homelessness Week. Clearly, that approach does not work.

The most recent New South Wales homelessness street count showed that homelessness increased by 26 per cent—or 415 people—between February 2023 and February 2024. In the same period, the number of people sleeping rough in the inner west local government area, part of which is in the electorate of Newtown, rose by 245 per cent. Across the State, people are living in tents in parks, couch surfing in already overcrowded share houses, and being turned away from temporary accommodation because there is a dire shortage of beds. We know that this crisis is not affecting people equally. The risk of homelessness is compounded with other forms of structural disadvantage like age, race, disability and gender. Older women are the fastest growing group of people experiencing homelessness in New South Wales. Last week the Legislative Assembly inquiry into ending no-grounds evictions heard from the Older Women's Network and the Council on the Ageing about how the

experiences of older women are often invisible in mainstream discussions about housing insecurity and homelessness.

I note that when announcing rental reforms last week, both the Premier and the Minister for Housing gave shout-outs to the young people in New South Wales who would benefit from those reforms. Again, that erases the fact that older women are the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness in this State. Women fleeing domestic violence are sleeping in tents and cars because shelters are chronically under-funded. More than half of all people seeking asylum in New South Wales are at risk of homelessness. Shamefully, members of the LGBTQIA+ community are twice as likely as the rest of the population to experience homelessness. People with a disability—those with mobility impairment issues—have been front and centre this week outside the Parliament as they called for the Government to deliver on silver standard building code commitments.

We cannot keep inviting people with lived experience of homelessness to share their stories of hardship and trauma during Homelessness Week so that we can all take photos, only to wring our hands and do absolutely nothing to resolve the crisis. We must radically overhaul the broken temporary accommodation system, which is failing people every day. Last year we welcomed the announcement of the Minister for Housing to abolish the 28-night cap on accessing temporary accommodation. But it does not matter whether someone can get unlimited access to a bed in temporary accommodation if those beds do not actually exist. Last week, it was revealed that the average waiting time on calls to Link2Home—the Government's one-stop shop for crisis and temporary accommodation—have increased five-fold over the past 12 months. People facing imminent homelessness have to wait nearly 40 minutes to speak to an operator, only to be told in many cases that no beds are available.

In the wake of the State budget, Homelessness NSW welcomed the funding for the sector but noted that it was not enough to meet the crisis situation. We know that there are key drivers of homelessness, including structural issues around the cost of living, the broken system of child protection, and domestic and family violence. The New South Wales Labor Government must step up and fund those elements that the sector has been calling for. We must ensure that low-cost accommodation options like boarding houses exist and that communities are looked after to ensure they get the housing they need. I urge the Government to not demolish the public housing in Waterloo in the middle of Homelessness Week.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICE WORKPLACE PRESENCE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:09):** In my inaugural speech I remarked that my election to this place was not a road to Damascus journey. However, I did experience a journey of that nature when it came to working from home during COVID. For many people I knew, recalcitrance to work from home loomed large. Work was not work unless it was done from an office. The home was too distracting. You could not be productive. That was my fixed mindset. It took an edict from then Premier Gladys Berejiklian and the threat of fines and arrest for many to finally accept that ways of working needed to adapt. I was not an essential frontline worker, so the exemptions that had been made appropriately at that time did not apply to me. It took one week and a new chair to turn my mindset around.

By embracing work from home, I became an infinitely better employee. Upon my election as Mayor of Ryde, I went so far as to formalise flexible working arrangements for councillors and staff in a way that had never been done before. While governments typically lag behind business, we were setting the standard. People left the private sector in pursuit of public service careers at Ryde. One colleague was able to nurse their newborn while dialling into council meetings. Hence, I am troubled by the new Premier's attempts to force everyone back to the old CBD office. No doubt there is merit in fostering in-office collaboration. However, a blanket return to office mandate overlooks the complexities of modern work and lifestyles. It not only disregards the positive effects of remote work but also harps back to the bad old days when government was process rather than outcomes oriented.

One of the most profound consequences of this edict is its impact on women and young parents. Remote work has been a critical tool in advancing parental participation in the workforce. Working from home offers a level of flexibility that particularly enables women to pursue careers without having to compromise on other responsibilities. Mandating a return to the office without acknowledging these dynamics risks undoing much progress. It forces a choice between career and caregiving duties, potentially leading to higher attrition rates, particularly among female employees. This would not only be a setback for gender equality but also for the diversity and inclusivity of the public sector workforce.

The edict will also disrupt the local economies of suburban areas. During the pandemic, many cafes, shops and restaurants in my electorate saw an increase in patronage from residents who were working from home. This shift contributed to the revitalisation of local economies and precincts, with workers spending money closer to home and reducing the need for long commutes to the city. A forced return to the office would likely reverse this trend, concentrating economic activity back in the city at the expense of suburban businesses. The vibrancy and sustainability of local economies depends on a balance of patronage from both residents and workers. By

compelling workers to abandon local communities during the work week, the Government risks creating economic deserts in the very suburbs where people live, undermining the social fabric and economic resilience of these areas.

The practical implications of a mass return to the office also cannot be ignored. Public transport infrastructure in New South Wales has not significantly expanded to accommodate a sudden influx of commuters. Pre-pandemic, many public transport systems were already over capacity. Forcing thousands of workers back into the daily commute would exacerbate these issues, leading to overcrowded trains, buses and ferries. It also means more cars on Sydney's heavily congested roads. This results in longer commute times, higher emissions and increased stress levels for workers, all of which negatively impact productivity and wellbeing.

What of productivity? Many workers are more productive when working from home, and those who are not more productive will not miraculously become so because of where they work. Office environments can stoke collaboration and ideas but, similarly, they can offer distraction. I would rather empower employers and employees with choice to make the best decisions for themselves. The Premier's directive seems to rely on outdated assumptions that productivity is inherently tied to physical presence in the office. The reality is that modern workplaces are evolving, with technology enabling new ways of working that can be just as effective if not more effective than traditional office settings.

A forward-thinking government should be embracing those changes, not resisting them. There is a place for in-office work, but this Government's blanket return-to-office edict represents a vision of a past New South Wales. Instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all solution, the Government should be exploring a more flexible approach, with tweaks if needed. If there are issues with the status quo, absolutely, address them innovatively. But I can almost guarantee that yesterday's answer will not be the solution to tomorrow's problem.

#### ANTI-PROTEST LAWS

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (15:14):** I speak on an issue that has attracted significant interest in my electorate of Balmain: the right to protest. The right to protest is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of our democracy. In my electorate in Balmain, much of what my community and I love about where we live has been hard-won by activists and protestors who came before us. In the case of Glebe, much of that suburb was slated for destruction back in the 1970s when the government of the day sought to build a major expressway cutting through Ultimo and Glebe. Local community groups, including the Glebe Society, worked alongside the likes of Jack Munday and the Builders Labourers' Federation through green bans and other forms of peaceful protest to protect Glebe. Their actions helped stop the loss of a significant amount of housing in Glebe while at the same time protecting green space and local heritage. In other pockets of my electorate, local activism also helped protect much-loved inner west icons, including Callan Park, Ballast Point Park, Clontarf Cottage and more.

It is hard to picture our suburbs without these beautiful places that we all know and love, but the reality is, without people willing to protest and take a stand, sometimes taking to the streets to peacefully disrupt business as usual, we would have lost so much, from much-needed public housing to precious green space. It is in part because of that history that the issue of protest rights continues to resonate so strongly with my community. To this day members of my community continue to stand up for what is right. Recent protests and grassroots advocacy have worked to save public housing at Franklyn Street from demolition. In a housing crisis, preventing the demolition of homes, particularly public housing, is absolutely vital.

Meanwhile I know we have many passionate local climate activists who are willing to take a peaceful stand against fossil fuel corporations to demand real action on climate change. That includes advocates like the Knitting Nannas, a band of climate warriors consistently pushing back against multinational fossil fuel corporations that are destroying the climate and our planet and against governments who refuse to hold those climate vandals to account. I have met with local residents who are members of the Knitting Nannas, and they are always looking for opportunities to use peaceful but impactful protest to help drive climate action both at the local and State level.

As members would be aware, the Government has recently consulted on the anti-protest laws that were introduced by the former Government and which they supported from opposition. That issue has garnered significant interest among my constituents, with close to 500 taking the time to lodge submissions in support of a full repeal of those undemocratic laws. I have asked the responsible Ministers whether submissions made to that review will be made public. I look forward to their response. Residents have contacted me expressing their dismay that those laws were introduced in the first place, and they want to see them overturned. Late last year the Supreme Court found the anti-protest laws to be partially unconstitutional. It is disappointing that they have not yet been repealed in full and I, along with hundreds of residents in my electorate, want to see action on that issue as soon as possible.

The Human Rights Law Centre lodged a detailed submission during the recent consultation, which I support, outlining that the laws were not necessary to achieve their objective and, further, that it was an unreasonable infringement on the freedom of political communication. Furthermore, jail time for protesting is a disproportionate outcome and not one that I support. No person should be punished by a term of imprisonment for engaging in an act of peaceful protest or non-violent civil disobedience. If people do engage in harmful or violent acts, there are other laws that can be drawn upon to deal with that. But I do not want to see passionate, peaceful protestors like our local Knitting Nannas faced with jail time for simply doing what is right and using their time to peacefully demand action to protect our living planet for future generations.

I mentioned the Human Rights Law Centre, and it is worth mentioning it again because it is one of the most dedicated groups of lawyers working to protect our rights to protest. In its recent report *Protest in Peril: Our Shrinking Democracy*, it highlighted that New South Wales has more anti-protest laws on the books than anywhere else in Australia, and the introduction of new anti-protest laws in this State has been increasing at an alarming rate. I thank the team at Human Rights Law Centre for all its important work to engage with members of Parliament. We have much for which to thank protesters, from those who took to the streets during the very first Mardi Gras, despite the very real and horrific violence they faced from the police, for the rights of LGBTQIA+ people to live safely and without discrimination; to those like the young School Strike 4 Climate activists, standing up and taking action to protect our living planet, now and for generations to come; and those who stand up for peace against flagrant disregard for international human rights.

Ultimately, we must ensure a healthy and mature democracy that engages with, respects and facilitates political expression outside of the ballot box and where people are not criminalised and imprisoned for expressing themselves in peaceful and non-violent ways. I urge the Government to listen to the community and to repeal the undemocratic anti-protest laws as soon as possible.

#### **SARATOGA FIRE AND RESCUE NSW**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:19):** It is a privilege to acknowledge the exceptional work our local Fire and Rescue stations do to protect and support our community. In particular, I highlight the incredible efforts of the Saratoga Fire and Rescue, station 450. The firefighters' dedication to ensuring the safety of our homes and families is truly commendable. Saratoga Fire and Rescue has set the remarkable goal of ensuring that every house in the three villages of Yattalunga, Saratoga and Davistown here on the Central Coast has a working smoke alarm. That fantastic initiative is a testament to their commitment to our safety and wellbeing. They understand that a working smoke alarm can mean the difference between life and tragedy, and they are doing everything in their power to make sure that our community is protected.

To achieve that goal, Saratoga Fire and Rescue has recently been conducting fire safety visits on Saturdays. Firefighters have been going door to door, reaching out to specific streets and areas, offering free home fire safety visits. Those visits are comprehensive and invaluable. The team tests and replaces smoke alarms and batteries, ensures that residents have a fire escape plan and provides fire safety tips unique to each home. That personalised approach is what makes their work so effective and appreciated. I recently had the great pleasure of joining the team at station 450 for their first Saturday fire safety visit. It was a day filled with energy, purpose and community spirit. We visited homes throughout our local community, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Nearly 70 smoke alarms and 30 batteries were installed or replaced on that day alone.

It was heartening to see the smiles and relief on the faces of our community members as we helped them take an important step towards safety. The effort was a resounding success, and it was a proud moment for all involved to see Yattalunga becoming fire safe. It was great to catch up again with John Angeleri of Yattalunga and his beautiful golden labrador guide dog, Renny. John is one of many elderly residents who have reached out to me to express their appreciation and gratitude for the fireys' home visit. At 80 years young, John is vision impaired and really appreciated our fireys making sure he was safe in his home. I was grateful to put the batteries in his smoke detector, and Renny is the most beautiful labrador.

The initiative is not just about installing smoke alarms and batteries; it is also about fostering a culture of safety and awareness in our community. The fantastic open days are a wonderful opportunity for everyone to visit our local stations. By educating us all on the importance of fire safety and preparedness, the dedicated team at Saratoga Fire and Rescue reminds us that safety begins at home and that simple actions like testing a smoke alarm or having an escape plan can save lives. A stark reminder to be extra vigilant was the recent fatal house fire on St Huberts Island on the Central Coast. Two people escaped the home after being alerted to the fire by a working smoke alarm; however, sadly, a third person perished in the blaze. During this cold weather, reminding people to never use outdoor heaters or barbecues inside their homes due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning is another important message.

Residential fires and loss of life have a profound effect on the community and our fireys, who are often confronted with extreme fire activity and dangerous situations. I express my deepest gratitude to all the members of Saratoga Fire and Rescue: Captain Craig Dodds, Deputy Captain Trent Marr, Deputy Captain Sarah Perkins and firefighters Trevor Scott, Steve Collison, Danny Mah, Tom Goldsworthy, Tim Giffin, Beau Woodley, Benjamin Lamb and Ryan Bush. Their hard work, dedication and unwavering commitment to our community do not go unnoticed. They are the unsung heroes who stand ready to protect us in times of need, and we are incredibly fortunate to have them watching over us. Their efforts not only prevent tragedies but also bring peace of mind to all of us living on the Central Coast.

Looking ahead, I am excited to continue participating in the Saturday fire safety blitz days. They are a wonderful opportunity to engage with our community, promote fire safety and awareness, and support the incredible work of our local firefighters. I encourage everyone to take advantage of these visits, to learn from the experts and to ensure that your home is as safe as it can be.

In closing, I reiterate how proud we are of Saratoga Fire and Rescue Station 450. Its initiative, dedication and care for our community sets a shining example for us all. Thank you for your tireless efforts and for making our community a safer place to live. It has made me feel so welcome as a part of these visits, which I greatly enjoy. Let us continue to work together, support each other and ensure that every home is equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to prevent fires and to protect our loved ones, especially during the winter period. It is great to be able to pop down to the station. I shout them a cup of coffee at our local coffee shop and then we head out for the day. It is really nice to see the positive engagement that Saratoga Fire and Rescue Station 450 has with our community on the Central Coast.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (15:24):** I congratulate Simply Subaru on winning Outstanding Automotive Services at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Offering minor and major services for any make or model of vehicle, the team at Simply Subaru is driven by a desire to bring ethics back into mechanics. From getting to work, to getting the kids to weekend sport, we rely on our cars to get us to all of life's important moments. Having a trusted mechanic is so important. I congratulate the director, Charlie Mashalany, and the whole team on this amazing achievement.

I congratulate Pet Resorts Australia Ingleside on winning Outstanding Pet Care at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Anyone with a pet knows how important they are to them and their family, and it can often be a nerve-wracking exercise to entrust your pets to someone when you might be away or not available. At Pet Resorts Ingleside, owners have peace of mind that their pet will be happy, healthy and have fun. Pets are offered plenty of outdoor space, fresh air and exceptional service. I congratulate the coordinator, Olivia Clemesha, and the whole team on this amazing achievement.

I congratulate Cordony Hair Narrabeen on winning Outstanding Hairdresser at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Established in 1928, Cordony Hair is the longest running family-owned hairdressing business in Australia. Founded by brothers—John, Louis and Maurice—the salon is now owned by John's granddaughters, Lara and Claudine. Under Lara and Claudine, Cordony has maintained its welcoming atmosphere where stylists and clients feel like one big extended family. I congratulate Lara, Claudine, Glenda, Lou Lou, Amy, Alana, Natasha, Justin and the whole team on this amazing achievement.

I congratulate Good Citizens on winning the Sustainable Business Award at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Founded by Jocelyne Simpson and Nik Robinson, this Avalon-based company creates 100 per cent recycled eyewear that is both eco-friendly and stylish. The idea for Good Citizens was born in 2018, when the Robinson kids—Harry and Archie—wanted to see something done about all the plastic waste piling up in the world. The family came together with a plan to "untrash the planet" by making products that last out of 100 per cent recycled materials that do not exploit people or the planet. After 752 days and 2,503 attempts, they developed a method to transform single-use bottles into sustainable sunglasses and glasses frames. Today Good Citizens glasses are proudly made in Australia. Their gorgeous designs pay homage to our beautiful Sydney beaches, including Palm Beach and Newport. I thank Good Citizens for helping take care of our planet.

I congratulate Bindook Cottage in Terrey Hills on being a finalist in the Outstanding Early Childhood Centre category at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. I congratulate the educator, Ella Totino, on winning the 2024 Youth of the Year Award. Established in 2001, Bindook Cottage is a family-owned and operated long day care service that offers a home away from home environment. Educators at Bindook Cottage are passionate about early childhood education and preparing children for school. I congratulate the owner, Rita Totino, the director, Cassandra Green, and Jess Mawhinney, Jessica Watkins, Ella Totino, Natalina Caruso and Rebecca Hunter on this amazing achievement.



I congratulate the Gym Factory in Warriewood on winning the Best Fitness Service award at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. For more than a decade, the family-owned Gym Factory has been a place where individuals can work towards becoming their healthiest, happiest selves. Led by Mike and Josh since 2022, the Gym Factory offers a vibrant space with enthusiastic health and fitness professionals who are dedicated to guiding individuals of all fitness levels. I congratulate Mike, Lee, Josh, Ash and the whole team on this amazing achievement.

I congratulate Fox Wardrobes and Cabinetry in Warriewood on the Best Home Renovations and Improvement category award at the 2024 Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Fox Wardrobes and Cabinetry is a thriving local business that specialises in sustainable and stylish storage solutions. The Fox team is dedicated to ensuring that their designs enhance their clients' daily lives by decluttering and organising their homes and that families have functional and beautiful spaces for what they value most. I congratulate the whole team on this amazing achievement, including Chris, Vic, Tom, Simon, Phil, Monique, Mitchell, Matty, Mark, Marcelino, Leah, Jenny, Jamie, James, Jai, Luca, Esera, Diego, Dan, Chris and Alison.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Clerks, staff, Chamber attendants and Hansard. It has been a long week. It has not necessarily been arduous, but it does take its toll. I thank everyone.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 15:31 until  
Tuesday 13 August 2024 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**CHIEF INSPECTOR RICK JOHNSON**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate retired Chief Inspector Rick Johnson on 40 years of service to our State in the NSW Police Force. Fittingly Chief Inspector Johnson's service was recognised with a farewell and march out at Sutherland Police Station on 19 June. After joining the Force in 1984 his service included time at several Sydney commands and in general duties, highway patrol, the anti-theft squad and training. His last 15 years have seen him working in his home Sutherland Shire community. In its last transmission to Chief Inspector Johnson, Police radio VKG congratulated him on a well-earned retirement: "On behalf of the whole NSW Police we want to thank you for your 40 years of service, sacrifice and unwavering dedication, professionalism, and commitment to upholding the law, which has left an indelible mark on your team and the community. When patrolling the streets of Bankstown, Flemington, or the Sutherland Shire, conducting investigations or providing support to those in need, you've carried out your duties with professionalism and integrity." The Sutherland Shire community can be thankful for the faithful service of Rick Johnson and I join his colleagues in wishing him a well-earned retirement.

**VALE ALEXANDER LEX MACPHERSON**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Vale Alexander 'Lex' Macpherson, who passed away on 25 June aged 83. Lex was a stalwart and much-loved member of the Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club and in almost 70 years as a member he was a dedicated contributor in the areas of lifesaving, competition, coaching and administration. In 2001 Lex was awarded life membership of the club in recognition of his many fine achievement and service. He committed significant time to the club in a range of volunteer roles including four years on the management committee and years on patrol which saw him win numerous 100% attendance awards and lead as patrol captain for seven years. Lex represented the Cronulla club at national championships and helped boost the clubs fundraising with his dedication to running the Sunday bar, greeting everyone with his special smile. His long-time friend, club Patron Emeritus Barry Ezzy OAM, said Lex will always be remembered for his wonderfully friendly personality, his love of a few beers, a joke with his mates and for his love of Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club. I extend my sympathy to Lex's family and friends, particularly wife Ruth and sons Robert, Jonathan and Jeremy.

**VALE JAMES BRUCE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Vale James Bruce of Cronulla 1947-2024. Better known as Jim or Jimmy, he's been described as "nothing less than a legend of Arts Theatre Cronulla". He was a foundation member aged 17 when it was formed in 1963. He staged managed the first production and designed the lighting for its latest, his dedicated work only interrupted by national service in Vietnam. Jimmy lit nearly all of Arts Theatre Cronulla's productions and designed some of the theatre's most wonderful stage sets. His expertise and artistry in lighting and set design is said to have made productions a "scenic delight" for the audience. He directed 10 productions for the theatre, stage managed dozens of others and served on the theatre's management committee for many years. Jimmy was Sutherland Shire Senior Citizen of the Year in 2011 in recognition of his contribution

to arts in the Shire. Arts Theatre Cronulla said of James on his passing "Theatre was his life and the Arts Theatre was his home. Jimmy's passing leaves a huge hole in the hearts of his many friends." I extend my condolences to his brothers Allen and Ian, his sister Moya, and his many friends.

#### **FRED GRAF**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge a stalwart of the Orange district and the founder of one of the city's most recognisable brands, Mr Fred Graf. West Orange Motors [WOM] is one of the Central West's major businesses with its growth over the years reflecting Orange's development into a prosperous rural city. Now 95, Mr Graf established this business in the 1960s, leasing what he described as a tin shed service station on Forbes Road, known as Fred Graf's West Orange Garage. He then began selling repossessed cars, going on to purchase the premises. Mr Graf overcame many headwinds but secured Prince as the first new car brand to be sold, followed by Toyota and then Mercedes-Benz. More major brands have joined WOM along with a range of commercial vehicles. It is also a major service centre and employer. A highlight of Mr Graf's career was being named Mercedes Dealer of the Year in 1970. That decade the business also changed its name to West Orange Motors. Through his foresight and commitment, Mr Graf established an Orange institution and I acknowledge his amazing contribution to the city.

#### **ROBYN KENNY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to salute sporting stalwart Robyn Kenny for her dedication to Forbes' sports community. A founding member of the Forbes Netball Association in 1974, Robyn has logged a half-century of commitment to players in her town where she is a familiar and friendly face as a coach and administrator. During her involvement, Robyn has attended countless coaching courses, always with the intent of improving the skills of Forbes' players and fellow coaches. She is also involved in the development of umpires, a critical area of any sport. Sport of any code is often the lifeblood of rural communities and Robyn can gain a great deal of satisfaction from the improvement of Forbes' players, umpires and facilities. Aside from netball, she has been involved in the Forbes Town Band and other community groups, leading to her earning a Queens Baton bearer honour for the Brisbane Commonwealth Games. Like all sports, netball helps kids gain confidence, stay active and make friends in a safe and inclusive environment. I've known Robyn for some time through her tireless advocacy for the improvement of netball and its facilities and I commend her for her outstanding work.

#### **JAYCE BENNETT**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I rise to acknowledge Jayce Bennett, a young boy from Orange who has significantly impacted his community through his dedication to helping the homeless and struggling individuals in our region despite his own chronic health conditions. Jayce's compassion and commitment have shown that age is no barrier to making a difference. Jayce's initiative began when he noticed the challenges faced by those less fortunate in Orange. He started collecting essential items, including blankets, food and toiletries, to distribute to those in need. His efforts have brought comfort and hope to many, showcasing his incredible empathy and leadership. Through his actions, Jayce has provided immediate relief to those facing hardships and inspired others in the community to support his cause. His dedication and kindness are a testament to the positive impact one individual can have on the lives of many. Jayce Bennett's philanthropic spirit and determination to help those in need are commendable. He serves as a role model for all, reminding us of the power of kindness and the importance of community support. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Jayce and encourage everyone to recognise and support his incredible work.

#### **PLANET LIGHTING**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Athletes entering the stadium or traversing the Paris Olympic Village are illuminated by innovative, environmentally friendly lighting solutions provided by a small but remarkable Australian company. Based in Bellingen, Planet Lighting has made a significant impact on this year's Paris Olympics by supplying 1,800-LED pucks, or lighting fixtures, for the event. 800 have been installed within the Olympic Village, while another 800 light a ramp connecting the village to the main stadium. These lights are not just functional but symbolic, representing the 800 medals to be awarded during the Games. Each fixture features a QR code that, once the Olympics conclude, will link fans to the biographies of the medal winners. These puck lights play a crucial role in mitigating light pollution, enhancing the environmental sustainability of the event. It is truly remarkable that a small company from a tight-knit town of 13,000 people can have such a profound impact on a global stage like the Olympics. This achievement underscores how creativity and local expertise can gain international recognition. Congratulations, Planet Lighting on this extraordinary accomplishment. I wish you continued success and applaud your impressive contribution to the Paris Olympics.

### OLYMPIC REPRESENTATION FOR TEAM SPIRIT

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Australian-made and crafted in Kempsey's state-of-the-art manufacturing hub, Team Spirit Sports have celebrated an extraordinary achievement at the Paris Olympics 2024. The Nauru Olympic Committee has proudly showcased the exceptional craftsmanship of this local Kempsey business by featuring their apparel prominently. Supplying high-quality, locally crafted uniforms for the Nauru Olympic team, Team Spirit Sports has not only highlighted Kempsey's manufacturing excellence but also demonstrated that top-tier sportswear can indeed originate from regional Australia. This success story stands as a testament to how dedication, innovation, and community spirit can culminate in remarkable accomplishments on the global stage. As the Nauru athletes proudly wear their Team Spirit Sports apparel at the Paris Olympics, the entire Kempsey region can share in a moment of collective pride. Their local business has made a significant impact on one of the world's most prestigious sporting events, proving that excellence knows no geographic bounds. This achievement not only enhances the reputation of Kempsey's manufacturing sector but also inspires others to believe in the power of regional talent and commitment. I commend Team Spirit for their dedication to supporting sports teams both locally and globally.

### IRB CHAMPS HIT SOUTH WEST ROCKS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I am pleased to stand today to announce South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club will proudly host the next two Surf Life Saving Australia IRB Championships in 2025 and 2026. SWRSLSC is no stranger to hosting major carnivals, previously hosting the Australian IRB Championships in 2006 and 2007, along with numerous SLSNSW IRB State Championships and Country Championships. This opportunity is not only a testament to our club's capability but also a significant boost for our local community. Hosting these prestigious championships will bring national attention to South West Rocks, showcasing our beautiful coastline and fostering tourism. It will also provide economic benefits, as visitors and participants support local businesses and accommodations. Moreover, it reinforces our commitment to promoting beach safety and surf lifesaving skills across Australia. South West rocks is excited to welcome participants, spectators, and supporters to the town for these thrilling events. I applaud the efforts and accomplishments of the South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club and wish all competitors and participants the best of luck with great memories made in our regional town.

### FORSTER FORTNIGHTLY

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Forster Fortnightly, a local community newspaper run by Mary, Ian and Geordie Yule on their 100th edition. Since their inaugural edition was published on August 20, 2020, Forster Fortnightly has grown to become an important community asset. The newspaper brings our communities together by providing local news, sharing stories, photos and letters, while also supporting local organisations and businesses through advertising. Many local writers have contributed to Forster Fortnightly's success with regular features on local legends, wildlife, book reviews, and historical reports. The 100th edition had a pull out-out feature showing the front covers of all 100 editions. I congratulate the Yule Family for creating the region's most widely circulated newspaper and for reaching this special milestone.

### HOLY NAME PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Holy Name Primary School in Forster for their NAIDOC celebrations under this years theme: "Keep the Fire Burning, Blak, Loud and Proud". The whole school gathered on Worimi Land for a special assembly featuring Des Donnelly, who played the didgeridoo and conducted a smoking ceremony for cleansing and renewal. During the flag-raising ceremony – I had the privilege of raising the Australian Flag, Aunty Michelle Donnelly raised the Torres Strait Islander Flag and Lara Went raised the Aboriginal Flag. The school students participated in the celebration with a welcome to country, prayers and an explanation of the meaning behind each flag. It's lovely to hear that a yarning circle project is underway for the school. I thank Lara, Des, teachers and students for such a wonderful celebration of the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### NADIA ZARB

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Nadia Zarb from Nadia's Art Gallery & Gifts in Taree. Each week, Nadia's Art Gallery features a new local artist, offering them a designated space to showcase and exhibit their work at no cost, with 100% of sales going directly to the artist. The initiative is open to visual artists of different mediums, such as painters, sketch artists, photographers, and multimedia artists. The exhibition space also provides artists with the opportunity for commissioned works. Nadia has also converted previously unused rooms within her building into a "pop-up" space available for short-term rentals for art exhibitions, retail businesses, and anyone needing a dynamic space in which to exhibit their creations and

wares. I thank Nadia for supporting artists in the Myall Lakes area, allowing them to display their work and increase their profile.

#### **GANMAIN BAKERY BEST IN RIVERINA**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Since 2017, Ganmain Bakery has been named the best Bakery in the Riverina. Owners Anna and Ben Murphy weren't going to pass up the opportunity to reclaim this award for 2024, and they did. The award is part of the Triple M Riverina MIA Best Awards and spotlights the best of the Riverina in 12 different categories. Whether it's a delicious world-famous pie, jam-filled donut, or spongy lamington, the Ganmain Bakery does not disappoint. Anna and Ben Murphy took ownership of the Bakery in November 2015 and haven't looked back since. They have three children together, with their eldest son following in his father's footsteps and becoming a qualified baker. With a range of over 21 gourmet pies, during the peak footy season, the Bakery can sell more than 15,000 pies a week, traveling up to a 400km radius. I congratulate all at the Ganmain Bakery on this award.

#### **COWRA WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I joined Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT CEO Mick Garnett, Deputy Mayor, Paul Smith, Hub Coach Samuel Haeat, and Hub Leader Stewart Mead in officially opening the Wheelchair Basketball Cowra Hub on Monday, 22 July 2024. The hub will open every Monday from 4pm at Cowra High School. The launch of the Cowra Hub, a significant milestone, was made possible by the support of the former Coalition Government's Regional NSW Government Grant. Under this program, the hub has not only been able to launch wheelchair basketball in Cowra but also purchase 14 brand new Sports wheelchairs which will be stored at the school. The new hub is free to participate in and open to people of all abilities and experience levels. It offers people living with disabilities the chance to participate in sports, create friendships, and improve their overall physical and mental well-being. I wish to thank everyone involved in bringing this incredible sport to Cowra.

#### **AN ASSET TO TEMORA**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Rob Fisher's journey in community development began at a remarkably young age of 17. Fuelled by an unwavering passion, his vision was clear-to shape the future of his beloved hometown, Temora. Rob's time with the Temora Shire council spans over two decades, marked by significant growth and impact. What started as a traineeship in Civil Construction has now evolved into his esteemed role as the Engineering Asset Manager. Rob's leadership and dedication have left a lasting impact on the community through his successful project implementations. His first major project, the Aviation Museum runway, was a game-changer. In an era with only three public runways in NSW, Rob's 2000-meter masterpiece significantly contributed to the Aviation Museum's growth and success. Adding another feather to his cap was the construction for the reconfiguration of Temora's Sewerage Treatment Plant. This essential community infrastructure has been one of Temora Shire Council's greatest achievements in ensuring community infrastructure for the future. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rob for his unwavering passion for our community's growth, his steadfast commitment to his role, and his invaluable contributions to our community's development.

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - CARLOS AMADOR**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Carlos Amador a joyous 80th birthday! Carlos's wife, Leticia, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Wishing You the most joyful 80th birthday ever! May our good Lord continue to bless you with a healthy life with your loved ones in the years to come... Have a wonderful and glorious day!." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Carlos'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 Carlos!

#### **BIRTHDAY - MING DENG**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Ming Deng a happy 40th birthday and note the following message for Hansard: "Happy Birthday Ming! Wishing you a day filled with love, laughter, and all the happiness you deserve. May this year bring you countless blessings and unforgettable moments. Here's to celebrating you and the wonderful person you are. Cheers to another amazing year ahead!." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday in a community like Ryde, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Ming's day that little bit extra special. As you reflect on your birthday, I hope the memories are filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that you will take on your journey in the future. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Ming!

### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - JOSH CRADDOCK**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Josh Craddock a joyous 24th birthday! His wife, Jem, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Wishing you a very happy birthday you big dork. This is the first birthday I get to celebrate with you as your wife and I can't wait to celebrate many more now that you are legally stuck with me for the foreseeable future. Love you always." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Josh'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 Josh!

### **MITTAGONG LIONS SENIOR RUGBY LEAGUE LONG LUNCH**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—On 2 August, I was absolutely delighted to attend the Mittagong Lions Senior Rugby League Sportsman's Long Lunch for 2024 at the Mittagong RSL Club. The event featured appearances by guest speakers Jeff Fenech and Johnny Lewis, along with Malcom Johnston, Brett Kenny, and Mark Coyne. These football, boxing and jockey legends were enlightening and inspirational speakers who shared plenty of remarkable stories. The lunch raised much needed funds for the club. The Club has a long history, originally starting as a rugby union club in the late 19th century. Since it became a rugby league club just prior to World War 1, the Club has won seven premierships – the latest in 1991 – and has continued to be a source of local pride. This local pride was evident at this lunch, as it was a sold-out event. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the guest speakers as well as the Old Boys of this fantastic and hardworking club. I want to thank the Mittagong Lions committee for putting together a well-attended and supportive lunch. This year is the year of the Mittagong Lions, and the Wollondilly electorate proudly bleeds green and gold!

### **OXLEY COLLEGE CENTRE FOR ETHICS LEIGH SALES EVENT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—On Thursday 1 August, I was privileged to attend the latest installation of the 2024 Speaker Series for the Oxley College Centre for Ethics. This installation was presented by one of Australia's most loved and respected journalists, the one and only Leigh Sales AM. Leigh talked about life lessons learned from 30 years at the media frontline, from ordinary people in extraordinary situations to the world-famous celebrities that she has met. Leigh also provided reflections on resilience, self-doubt, and transformation. Leigh is as brilliant in person as she is on the television screen or on the Chat 10, Looks 3 podcast with her partner in crime Annabel Crabb. The highlight of the event for me was, when asked which politicians are the best to interview, Leigh said independents are the best to interview because we have no party line and can be unpredictable. Leigh also took the time to have a meet and greet afterwards, during which many books were signed, including my copy of her latest book, Storytellers. Leigh is a credit to her profession, and I very much enjoyed the opportunity to hear her insights from a most distinguished career.

### **WARRADALE MEN'S SHED AND WARRAGAMBA PUBLIC SCHOOL INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—On Wednesday 31 July, the first of eight sessions of an intergenerational program between the Warradale Men's Shed and Warragamba Public School was held. An initiative of Wollondilly Library, the program aims to improve the wellbeing of participants through social interaction and memory-sharing while building on lasting connections. In addition, the students get to have a hands-on approach to woodworking, and, at the end of the program, the students get to take home a finished item that they helped to build themselves, under the supervision of teachers and Men's Shed members. This program, which will span over a couple of months, is a brilliant initiative because it enables students to connect with older generations and to develop empathy and communication skills, which benefits students' mental health. For the Warradale Men's Shed members, the program provides a sense of purpose, and it enhances members' dignity. The findings from this program will be used to help develop future intergenerational programs in our community, and I wish all participants every success. I hope the Men's Shed members enjoy inspiring the younger generation and I hope the students learn some valuable skills.

### **NARRABRI TOY LIBRARY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Narrabri Toy Library recently celebrated their 40-year anniversary of the Library launch. The Toy library offers a range of toys to lend to the community and delivers toys to more remote town, such as Gwabegar, Pilliga, and Wee Waa once a week. The library is used by hundreds of children, schools, pre-schools, and playgroups. I would like to congratulate the Narrabri Toy Library for reaching 40 years of operation. The library has come a long way in 40 years, and this isn't without the hard work of the volunteers and funding that has supported it all the way. Thank you for offering a fantastic service to the community.

**EDWARD BENNETT**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Last year Narrabri local, 14-Year-old Edward Bennett played soccer in Inverell to participate at the Rale Rasic Joeys Mini World Cup. After a successful day Edward was selected for the Joeys Mini All Stars under 14s team to tour Germany alongside 15 other keen soccer players. The tour will include games against quality opposition as well as training sessions. The team will also visit sports schools, Olympic centres, stadiums, and the German Football Museum. Edward is the only soccer player to represent Narrabri in this once in a lifetime tour. Edward has been playing soccer since he was 5 years old and was soon selected in the Northern Inland Academy team, which he has represented in every year since. Congratulations Edward on achieving this at just 14 years old. I trust you will have a fantastic experience.

**BRING IT ON! YOUTH FESTIVAL 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—The Bring it On! Youth Festival is an annual event hosted at the Fairfield Showground that celebrates the talents and achievements of our young people especially in our local area. On the 21st of April 2024 I attended this event and witnessed a myriad of wonderful music, dance, and other talented performances. There were also a range of rides, food stalls, games, and more. I acknowledge there were quite a number of our Local, State and Federal representatives in attendance to support the event and to support our youths especially in our local area. This event definitely brings out the best in our local area of Fairfield City as the community celebrates our wonderful cultural diversity and talents of emerging performers located in Western Sydney, including from my electorate of Cabramatta. I would like to personally thank the organising committee at Fairfield City Council and the volunteers for another successful Bring It On! Youth Festival and I look forward to attending more of these events in future years.

**ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM [ARVN], ANNUAL CELEBRATION DINNER**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—It was a great pleasure to join my local community in celebrating the Army of the Republic of Vietnam Day on the 14th of June 2024. Established in 1955, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam [ARVN] played a crucial role as the main military force of South Vietnam, dedicated to defending the nation throughout the Vietnam War. ARVN Day is traditionally held on the 19th of June each year. On this day, ARVN veterans, their families, descendants, and many members of the Vietnamese refugee community gather to honour and pay tribute to the former officers and allies who made significant sacrifices in defence of their nation, freedom, and democracy. The event provides a meaningful opportunity for the ARVN and the broader Vietnamese refugee community to reflect, honour, and celebrate their heritage and culture. There were a series of vibrant commemorative ceremonies and cultural performances that showcased their rich traditions. I extend my heartfelt thanks to President Mr Bach Huy Phan and Vice President Mr Xuan Lam of the ARVN-NSW for their kind invitation and commend their efforts in preserving their heritage and culture.

**BRUCE LEE'S 51ST ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL EVENT**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On Saturday 13 July 2024, I attended Bruce Lee's 51st Anniversary Memorial Event in Kogarah, a moving tribute to the legendary martial artist and cultural icon. The event was a testament to Bruce Lee's enduring legacy and his impact on martial arts and popular culture. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Master Sam Luo and the World Dragon Fans Club Australia for their kind invitation to this memorable occasion. Their dedication to honouring Bruce Lee's memory and contributions was evident throughout the event. It was also a pleasure to catch up with my friend Reverend Alfred Yau, Bruce Lee's nephew. He offered personal insights into Bruce Lee's life and his profound influence on those who knew him. The memorial event provided a wonderful opportunity to reflect on Bruce Lee's achievements and the timeless values he espoused, such as perseverance, discipline, and the pursuit of excellence. It was an honour to be part of such a significant event and to reconnect with friends who are dedicated to preserving and celebrating Bruce Lee's extraordinary contributions.

**MOREISH FOODS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I recognise Moreish Foods in my electorate of Manly who this year have won a Northern Beaches Local Business Award for Outstanding Fast Food and Takeaway. Moreish has been a staple in the Balgowlah and Manly area for many years, and continues to provide a huge range of quality food products, all made fresh on the premises for customers to either dine in or take home. From savouries, meats, sides, curries, casseroles, soups, baked goods and much more, Moreish is the epitome of what a small business can achieve, and their constant and loyal patronage is a testament to this. We are lucky to have such dedicated and quality food providers in our area, and I congratulate the team at Moreish Foods on receiving yet another much deserved Local Business Award.

**GENEVIEVE JENY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I celebrate the appointment of Genevieve Jeny as the District Governor for the Lions Club of Sydney and Norfolk Island. It is very pleasing to see Genevieve's appointment as our District Governor for the coming Lions Year of 2024-25. From personal experience, I know that Genevieve will represent the Lions as the District Governor with her standard diligence and commitment that she has shown in her work locally for Manly Lions. Genevieve and her husband Nigel have been a driving force for Manly Lions over many years and have both held Executive positions. Since elected as the Member for Manly I have witnessed their unwavering commitment and tireless work for the charities and programs that Manly Lions have undertaken. Congratulations Genevieve – I wish you every success in your tenure as District Governor.

**MANLY UNITED FC GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE U16 VILLARREAL YELLOW CUP CHAMPIONS  
2024**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to extend a big congratulations to Manly United FC's Girls Youth League under-16's team who last month travelled to Spain to compete in the Villarreal Yellow Cup Summer 2024. A grassroots football tournament organised by La Liga Football Club Villarreal FC, the Villarreal Yellow Cup Summer attracts clubs from all over Europe and the world during the school holidays. Junior football academies from some of Europe's biggest clubs are involved, and the tournament is a great opportunity for junior teams to test themselves against the world's very best. I am pleased to inform the House that Manly United FC's Girls Youth League under-16s team not only finished top of their group and dominated their semi-final 4-0, but were crowned champions of the Cup after winning on penalties at Villarreal's main stadium, El Madrigal. Special mention must be made to goalkeeper Georgia Brown, who scored and then saved consecutive penalties to secure the Cup for Manly in dramatic fashion. Congratulations on a remarkable achievement, and well done to all the parents, staff and coaches involved in facilitating such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

**JACK MCDONOUGH AWARDED LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF KYOGLE RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I WAS thrilled to read in The IndyNR.com that the Kyogle RSL Sub-Branch had bestowed Life Membership on Raymond 'Jack' McDonough OAM. Kyogle RSL Sub-Branch President Bill Edward presented Jack with a framed certificate in a ceremony covered by The Indy's Editor Susanna Freymark. Jack McDonough proudly served in the infantry for 36 years, including a long stint as paymaster at 41st Battalion in East Lismore. He never served overseas. He has given so much back to the veteran community and is also a military history buff, particularly regarding his beloved 41st Battalion. Bill Edward told The Indy that the rare honour of lifetime membership was to recognise Jack's work for the Sub-Branch. "He's our main man for the Sub-Branch," Bill said. "He does everything." Jack is very likeable. "Go anywhere and someone will know him." When Jack received his OAM in 2016, he modestly responded: "I was flabbergasted. You don't expect this kind of thing. You don't do it for acclaim, you do it for your community." I join with The Indy in congratulating Jack McDonough and I sincerely thank him for all he does for Kyogle and district community.

**MURWILLUMBAH'S MOUNT ST PATRICK COLLEGE HONOURS LONG-SERVING STAFF**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—MOUNT St Patrick College, Murwilllumbah, recently honoured current teaching and administrative staff members who have devoted more than 30 years to shaping the lives of generations of students. The college, founded by the Presentation Sisters and opened in 1926, embodies the spirit of Presentation Sisters founder Nano Nagle, who dedicated her life to education and serving the community. This special dinner celebration was held at the Murwilllumbah Services Club on Friday, June 21, with each honouree receiving an original painting of Presentation House (once the Sisters' convent) by local artist Heidi Ledwell. I congratulate the night's distinguished guests of honour, including Carolyn Davies (Administration, began in 1988); Chris Core (HSIE, began in 1989); Katherine Swift (English, began in 1990); Narelle Sherrah (Science, began in 1992); Cherie Murnane (Administration, began in 1992); Majella MacPhail (English, began in 1993); Stephanie Carroll-Bennett (Hospitality, began in 1993); Jenny Power (Ancillary, began in 1994) and Mary-Anne McShane (Music, began in 1994). There is nothing more important than the health and education of young people and St Pats continues to do an outstanding job of nurturing both. It is a school with strong traditions of learning and faith.

**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE WOODLAWN STUDENT WINS JAPAN SCHOLARSHIP**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I WARMLY congratulate St John's College Woodlawn student Matilda Price on being named by NSW Premier, The Honourable Chris Minns MP, as one of 20 students statewide to be awarded a NSW Government scholarship to travel to Japan this September. To be selected from more than 180 students from 152 government and non-government schools who applied for the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship is an outstanding achievement. Matilda's success at this level must be cause for celebration among

the entire St John's College, Woodlawn community. An exceptional student of history, Matilda has received St John's College Woodlawn's highest award, The Principal's Award, every year since Year 7. She is currently in Year 11 and studying Modern History. A Principal's Award is presented to students in recognition of their sophisticated use of language, their ability to be in the top five of every subject they study and their extensive knowledge. I hope Matilda's upcoming historical study tour of Japan is enlightening and memorable. She and her fellow scholars will visit several significant sites in Japan, including a former Australian POW Camp in Naoetsu, the Yokohama War Cemetery and the Hiroshima Peace Park and Memorial.

#### **MICHELLE MANNEX**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge Michelle Mannex, a local real estate professional in the Shellharbour electorate. She has recently participated in the annual St Vinnies CEO Sleepout. She has bravely spoken out about her experiences confronting the risks homelessness as a Domestic Violence survivor. This is Michelle's fourth CEO Sleepout and the funds raised by the event go towards supporting new and existing programs aimed at breaking the cycle for the more than 120,000 Australians who face homelessness each night, 250 of which reside in the Shellharbour electorate. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate and thank Michelle for her activism.

#### **GEORGIA COOPER**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Georgia Cooper, teacher at Lake Illawarra High School, for coaching the NSW Secondary Boys Hockey Team. The NSW Secondary Boys Hockey Team won Gold at the NSW CHS Championships which were held in June 2024. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Georgia and wish her well in all her future coaching endeavours.

#### **OAK FLATS LIONS CLUB**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement the Oak Flats Lions Club for their extensive fundraising and commitment to our community. The Oak Flats Lions Club raised \$26,556.80 in the 2023/24 financial year. These donations benefited 25 different organisations within our community, which is a remarkable effort. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate The Oaks Flats Lions Club for their dedication to our community.

#### **WAGGA WOMEN'S SHED**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to the women of the Wagga Women's Shed who this year are celebrating their seventh year of friendship, support and creativity. Since its inception, the shed has become a home-away-from-home for many local women, who meet regularly for chats, craft, day trips to outlying towns and other activities in and out of the shed. For some of the members, who have lost husbands, the shed provides support from like-minded women and valuable companionship. Regular guest speakers provide information, advice and entertainment on subjects as diverse as fire safety, health and financial advice and tips on avoiding scams. In its seven years of operation, the shed has forged real and lasting friendships, with many of the women getting together outside of meeting hours. The shed welcomes members of all ages, with the youngest being 22-year-old Emily Baldwin and Cherry McClure the oldest at 94. The shed's success is a great tribute to the members and the executive, president Lynn Rattenbury, secretary Bev Rankin and treasurer Pat Douglass. Well done to all, and I wish you many more years of friendship within the shed and beyond.

#### **INVERELL GIRL GUIDES**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Inverell Girl Guides for celebrating their 100 year anniversary, marking this significant milestone with a dinner for past and present members. I congratulate all involved with the Inverell Girl Guides over the years, for contributing to the Girl Guides mission, to empower girls and young women to discover their potential as leaders of the world. Special thanks to the current volunteers: District Manager Beth Hamilton; Leaders Dot Hamilton and Mellisa Goodworth, along with the parent group members: President Maxwell Hamilton; Vice President Robert Sydenham, Secretary Beverly Goodwin and Brendin Bell. I commend the Inverell community for the enduring support to the many fundraising activities conducted by the Inverell Girl Guides over the years. Thank you to past and present members for your hard work and countless hours given, ensuring the longevity of this group in Inverell. Organisations such as this in regional towns cannot function without the ongoing support and commitment their volunteers give.

#### **GUYRA POLOCROSSE**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Guyra Polocrosse members on their success at the National Championships held at Chinchilla Queensland recently, with eight members representing NSW across many divisions. I congratulate each of the members including, Matt, Abbott



and Carlie Grills, Emily Wamsley, Bridget McKemey, Abby and Zac Finlayson and Hayden Benson. Each player proudly donned the blue shirts for NSW and over the course of the weekend all were part of a team that reached the finals. Individual awards given included: Abby Finlayson on winning Best Australian Stock Horse in the under 21 Women's division, Best No 1 and Best Female Intermediate player; Zac Finlayson receiving Best No 1 and Best Horse and Rider under 21 mixed; along with Matt Grills being named Man of the Match and Best No 1 award in the Masters division. I commend all involved in this very successful championship, with special thanks to Guyra Polocrosse for their enduring support to members. Players are to be commended for their commitment to training, hard work and skill, and for their contribution to the sport of Polocrosse regionally and nationally.

#### **GLEN INNES ARTS COUNCIL CELEBRATES 80 YEARS**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Glen Innes Arts Council for celebrating their 80 year anniversary and for being the oldest continually running Arts Council in Australia. This event will be celebrated with a Masquerade Ball at the Glen Innes Services Club later in August of this year. I congratulate the Glen Innes Arts Council not only for this significant milestone, but also on the success of the associated Chapel Theatre, which was opened in 1984, bringing many years of entertainment to all, through theatre productions, films, choirs, concerts and open mic nights. I commend all those involved, including current patrons Denis Haselwood, Yvonne Hill and Margaret Kiehne, along with critical members: President Nigel Brown; Secretary Philip Hine; Treasurer/Public Officer Jenny Body; Vice –President Cinema Owen Windred; Theatre Coordinator Kim Belcher; Publicity Officer Sari James and committee member Mark Davidson. Special thanks to past members and the many volunteers who support the Arts Council and the Chapel Theatre - organisations such as this in regional towns cannot function without the ongoing support and commitment their volunteers give.

#### **AUSTRALIAN KOREAN ASSOCIATION – NEXT GEN FORUM 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 20 July 2024, I attended the annual Australian Korean Association Next Gen Forum 2024 at the Korean Community Centre in Croydon Park. I recognise and congratulate the Australian Korean Association for their ongoing commitment and initiative in bringing together the next generation of our Australian-Korean community. On the day, there were signs in which they call themselves "Kozzies", which is short for "Korean-Aussies". I have every confidence that in attendance were future councillors and members of parliament – even a future mayor, premier or prime minister. I proudly spoke about my passion that anyone and everyone can exercise leadership, as well as outlining the three levels of government in Australia. I recognise Esther Oh, President of the Korean Society of Sydney; Yong-jun Choi, the newly appointed Korean Consul in Sydney; and Lee Ki Chul, President of the Overseas Korean Association. Thank you for their ongoing support and encouragement of our next generation of our vibrant Australian-Korean community. I look forward to attending again in the coming years.

#### **NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 11 July 2024, I visited the North Shore Synagogue in Lindfield to announce their successful grant application of \$30,000 to build a retaining wall and level land for ball courts and other active outdoor activities. This will be a game changer for the children and families who use this green space. This grant was awarded by the NSW Government's 2023 Community Building Partnership program. The North Shore Synagogue plays a vital role in bringing together our local community. I always enjoy visiting the synagogue, whether it be attending Shabbat on a Friday evening, or the planting of a tree for peace in February 2024. I recognise Rabbi Paul Lewin, who marks 20 years of service this year; together with the Board of Management led by Mironne Golan (president), Ken Wolfsohn and Stanley Dyne (vice presidents), Peter Vickers (treasurer) and board members Peter Gorfinkel, Robert Samuel, Tanya Bortz, Jeremy Levy and Dan Elias. I am proud to represent the people of the Davidson electorate, and in particular, our vibrant Jewish community.

#### **LOCALKIND NORTHERN BEACHES**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Friday 2 August 2024, I visited LocalKind Northern Beaches at their headquarters in Manly, meeting with Chief Executive Officer, Craig Stevens. I recognise Craig's local leadership, that includes 15 years of experience in the mental health and community services sector. LocalKind, formerly Community Northern Beaches, has served our local community's most vulnerable since 1977. I recognise their work in offering vital drop-in support, addressing homelessness, domestic violence, and refugee settlement challenges through inclusive and trauma-informed assistance. They undertake early intervention programs that help empower families, youth, and children, fostering resilience and future well-being. Upon entering LocalKind, I was heartened by the smiles of people in their waiting room, and the wonderful compassion shared by staff in offering food and drinks. LocalKind is a welcoming and inclusive place. I recognise the board of LocalKind led by Chair Chris Lake, Deputy Chair Sally Cornelius, Treasurer Sook Smith, Secretary Caroline Pearce, and directors Clive Bailey, Bill Barnes, Peter Wood, Phyl Jelinek and Tammy Anthonisz. Thank you for your service.

I look forward to supporting LocalKind well into the future. I thank them for helping support our community's most vulnerable, to help them reach their full potential.

#### **NEW BOOK EXPLORING FAITH AND RURAL LIFE – DAVID SLOANE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate David Sloane of Corowa for his remarkable effort in publishing his new book, 'A Journey Under Grace: Finding Faith in Rural Australia 1939 to 1971 and Beyond'. This significant work reflects Mr Sloane's dedication and passion and his efforts in sharing the spiritual wisdom he has discovered, in all the ups and downs of life. Mr Sloane's book provides a compelling narrative of his upbringing on Savernake Station during the 1940's and 1950's, capturing the rural lifestyle of the time. It traces his life journey from the land as a farmer to becoming a minister, conservationist, and eventually a writer. His memoir, enriched with beautiful photographs, recounts David's outward journey through life, intertwined with his internal efforts of searching for God's purpose for his life. The book launch was a successful event held at St John's Church Hall in Corowa, attracting over 60 attendees, including family from all over Australia. Well done Mr Sloane for your five-year effort writing and publishing this incredible book.

#### **MACY CLARK – WATER POLO**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Macy Clark, an inspiring 18-year-old, who was recently named a finalist in the 2024 NSW Community Sports Awards. The Year 12 Albury High School student was nominated as Young Coach of the Year for the sport of Water Polo. Her nomination, endorsed by NSW Water Polo, recognised her dedication in striving to teach and nurture young athletes. Macy has been playing water polo with the Albury Pool Pirates for the past 8 years and coaching at the club for the past 3 years. Her contributions have also led her to her recent appointment as a coach for the Water Polo Victoria Academy Program, which now operates in Albury. Congratulations Macy for supporting and developing local water polo athletes who are on the elite pathway. Your outstanding efforts in helping others around you grow in such a fun and action-packed water sport has not gone unnoticed!

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO MIKEALA PICKERING FROM THE AMAZING ALBURYCITY EVENTS TEAM!**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Mikeala Pickering from Albury who received the Trainee of the Year finalist award at the recent Regional Riverina NSW Vocational Training Awards. Mikeala has emerged as a standout member of the AlburyCity Events team, since commencing the Trainee Events Officer role in July 2021, demonstrating significant growth not only in her professional capabilities, but also in her confidence and personal skills. Some of the key events Mikeala has supported in her training include: Gardenesque: Albury's major garden and flower show; Albury Carols by Candlelight; and Riverside Vibes: An annual live music and cultural festival on the banks of the Murray River. Mikeala's achievement as a finalist is a reflection both on her as a person and employee. Well done Mikeala!

#### **AFRICA FILM FEST AUSTRALIA**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to participate in the inaugural Africa Film Fest Australia, a three-day festival celebrating the richness and diversity of African cinema. From 19 to 21 July, Riverside Theatres in Parramatta hosted the vibrant event, featuring both international and local contemporary films, with three Australian premieres. The opening night screening involved the Australian premiere of the compelling South African documentary "Rise: Siya Kolisi Story." I was delighted to watch "Colette & Justin," in which Alain Kassanda travels through time and his personal family history. Throughout he brings the history of postcolonial Congo to life. He lets his grandparents look back on their lives, from their youth and first meeting to a complex political period. The festival wraps up on 21 July with the award-winning queer film "All the Colours Are Between Black and White," the poignant "Girl," and the historical epic "The Last Queen." I thank Riverside Theatres, Screen NSW, City of Parramatta, Multicultural NSW, and WeirAnderson Films for their support of the festival, the filmmakers for bringing their films to Western Sydney, African Australians for sharing their stories with us and the organisers for their kind invitation to attend.

#### **THE KOUTETSU**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—The Koutetsu is one of Newcastle's best bars with a unique cocktail list, wonderful staff, and a great vibe. That greatness was acknowledged at the inaugural Newcastle Bar Awards, where they swept the floor, picking up three of the eleven awards. Expert mixologist George Prokop was named Bartender of the Year, an award that goes to a bartender who goes above and beyond in their craft, bringing creativity, expertise, and passion to every cocktail they make. I would like to extend my congratulations to another bartender at The Koutetsu, Chris Wilson, who was a finalist in this category. With two bartenders named as finalists for the Bartender of the Year, it only makes sense that The Koutetsu took home Cocktail Bar of the Year. As soon as you step through the door, you enter the grungy world of The Koutetsu with a unique cocktail range

to match. To top it all off, The Koutetsu was also recognised for the Best Non-Alcoholic Menu, truly cementing that they've got something for everyone. Congratulations to the whole team at The Koutetsu and keep the drinks coming!

#### **THE PRINCE OF MEREWETHER**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—The Prince of Merewether is without a doubt one of the best venues in Newcastle. Their growing list of accolades proves just that, the latest being two awards at the Newcastle Bar Awards – Hotel/Pub of the Year and Best Hotel/Pub Cocktail Menu. A lot goes into a good pub, it has to offer a tasty pub feed, a nice juicy beer, and most importantly, be a pillar to the community. With so many fantastic pubs and hotels in Newcastle, it's next to impossible to pick just one. But The Prince continues to stand out among the rest, having not just mastered the necessities of a good pub, but going above and beyond with live music opportunities, collaborations with other local businesses, and of course, an outstanding cocktail menu. Congratulations to everyone at The Prince, both awards were very well-deserved and I can't wait to see what's next.

#### **FOGHORN BREWERY**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Newcastle has a lot of brewpubs to our name but at the inaugural Newcastle Bar Awards, the Brewpub of the Year could go to no other than FogHorn Brewery. Brewpub of the Year goes to a brewery that is making waves in the craft beer industry. Having first opened its doors in 2015, FogHorn is Newcastle's first brewpub and has paved the way for all the others that have followed. It also helps that they've got a great range of delicious craft beers. FogHorn is a truly Newcastle venue. Set up in a historic warehouse on King Street, FogHorn embraces Newcastle's industrial culture and heritage. I'm very proud to have them in my electorate and congratulations on the fantastic achievement.

#### **RILEY BOND**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate 14-year-old Riley Bond from Dubbo who was selected to represent NSW Country at the 2024 Football National Youth Championships held in Wollongong in July. In addition to his selection in the National Youth Championships, Riley was chosen to be part of the Dubbo Open College Under 19s team, the Western NSW Open CHS Under 19s team and was named Western NSW Player of the Tournament just to name a few of his achievements so far! His talent is beyond his years, which is evident in his achievements. As a Year 9 student at Dubbo College, Riley must balance his schooling with his significant sporting commitments, a challenging feat considering he travels around 1000 kms per week for training and games! He is a member of the Western NSW Football Club in the Association Youth League [AYL] competition. Congratulations on your achievements so far Riley, your passion, dedication, and hard work is commendable. I look forward to seeing where your football journey continues to take you!

#### **ELLA PENMAN**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Ella Penman of Dubbo who was awarded the 2024 WRAS Athlete of the Year at the 2024 Western Region Academy of Sport Presentation Night. It has been an outstanding year for Ella. Ella won three medals at the Australian All Schools Athletics Championships, and she won gold as a member of the U18W NSW 4x400m relay team and won two individual silver medals in the U18W 400m x 800m. At the U20s National Athletic Championships, she ran national qualifying times in the 4x400m relay and individual 400m race winning silver in the relay. Ella's success has now seen her earn a place in the U20 World Athletics Championships as a member of the 4x400m Australian Relay team. These are incredible achievements, especially at such a young age. With her dedication, talent, and determination, I have no doubt that Ella will continue to excel and make her mark on the world stage. Congratulations Ella!

#### **ZAC HARDING**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Zac Harding of Narromine who was awarded the 2024 Para Sports Athlete of the Year and the WRAS Athlete of the Year Runner Up at the 2024 Western Region Academy of Sport Presentation Night. Zac is an outstanding young man. A para-athlete in athletics, defying all the odds. His 2023/24 athletics season was incredible and cumulated with his selection for the Australian Para Athletics team which competed at the Oceania Championships. Zac's selection in the Australian Team came through outstanding performances at the U17M Australian Athletics Championships which included gold in the U17M Ambulant javelin and bronze in the U17M Ambulant discus. He also excelled at the NSW Junior Athletics Championships winning six medals, including gold in the javelin, silver in the 200m, discus and long jump plus bronze medals in the 100m and 400m in the U17M ambulant category. Zac also broke all Australian records for his classification in the 100, 200 and 400m, discus, javelin, long jump and shot put

across the season. Congratulations Zac, you are an incredible athlete and inspiration to us all. Keep up the great work!

#### **KAYLA RAE HAYWOOD**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend and congratulate musical artist Kayla Rae Haywood, formerly known as Ivy Adara, on the release of her new song 'Crying In My Camaro'. Kayla grew up in Glenmore Park and has had an extraordinary career thus far that has included co-writing with the likes of Jennifer Lopez and Jessica Mauboy to making a cameo on 'Home and Away' with her hit 'Currency'. She has also performed in front of more than 50,000 people at Coachella, alongside DJ Gryffin. Kayla's Spotify platform has over 80,000 monthly listeners and 90 million streams, with her music reaching international audiences. Kayla has had amazing success thus far and she is continually on the rise, with 'Crying In My Camaro' a song that will continue her progress on the international stage. I congratulate Kayla on her amazing achievements thus far and wish her continued success on the global stage.

#### **MR STEPHEN AND MRS SHONA HACKETT**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate Wallacia locals Mr Stephen and Mrs Shona Hackett on the 50th anniversary of their wedding. They married on the 24th of August 1974 in St Stephen's Church, Penrith. I'm sure their 50 years as husband and wife have provided countless cherished memories, with many more to come. I wish Mr Stephen and Mrs Shona Hackett the very best as they celebrate this wonderful milestone.

#### **RED NOSE DAY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I recognise Red Nose Day held today, the 9th of August 2024. Red Nose Day is a fantastic initiative that raises the awareness of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome [SIDS]. Funds raised on Red Nose Day over the past 36 years have resulted in a wonderful 80 per cent reduction in sudden infant deaths. It is heartwarming to know that 12,069 babies have been saved and that number is increasing. With thanks to the contributions by supporters of this initiative, every dollar raised on Red Nose Day directly funds a 24/7 support service for grief-stricken families, towards education programs for new parents to help keep their babies safe and funds investment into research to further determine the causes of SIDS. To the organisers and to those who participate and support the day, a big thank you for making such a difference.

#### **HOMELESSNESS CONNECT DAY 2024**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It is with great pleasure that I congratulate everyone involved in the success of the recent Homelessness Connect Day event held in Wyong as part of Homelessness Week. This event, focused on health and wellbeing, was a powerful example of community spirit in action. The day provided a wonderful opportunity to connect those in need with vital services, all in one place. With over 30 stalls offering essential information, advice, and referrals, attendees were able to access mental health support, wellbeing services, food, clothing, and even haircuts. The free BBQ was a huge hit, serving over 300 sausage sandwiches, and Link 2 Home and Homes NSW worked tirelessly, helping people with housing applications and temporary accommodation. Notably, two individuals who were sleeping rough onsite were successfully placed in temporary accommodation. This event's success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the event committee and partners. I would like to congratulate Juliette Kratochvil, Ellen Bridge, Patrick Harris, Penny Newson, Kristy Chidgey, Blake Richards, Richard Norton, Krist Winter, and Jade Brown. Well done on creating an event that has had such a significant and positive impact on our community.

#### **LIONS CLUB OF TERRIGAL-WAMBERAL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It is with immense pride that I acknowledge and congratulate the Lions Club of Terrigal-Wamberal for the remarkable impact they have made over the past financial year. Their dedication to serving our community has resulted in contributions of over \$50,000 to a wide range of causes, touching the lives of many both locally and globally. Some of the highlights of their generosity include over \$15,000 towards Free Trade Day, providing critical home repairs for those in need, and more than \$16,000 donated to local causes like Coast Shelter, Terrigal Men's Shed, and Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club. They've also contributed over \$5,000 to support local children through We Care Connect and sponsoring disadvantaged school kids. Their contributions extend beyond our community, with almost \$8,000 donated to Lions Australia and Lions Clubs International charities, supporting initiatives like childhood cancer research and disaster relief. And let's not forget the countless hours spent serving up hundreds—if not thousands—of snags at community BBQs during events like ANZAC Day and the Daffodil Dip. A heartfelt thank you to the volunteer members of the Lions Club of Terrigal-Wamberal. Your commitment and generosity truly embody the spirit of community service.

### NSW SES – GOSFORD UNIT

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It is my great honour to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of our SES volunteers and to recognize the exceptional individuals from the Gosford Unit in who have been awarded the National Emergency Medal. The National Emergency Medal is a prestigious honour bestowed upon those who have rendered sustained or significant service during nationally significant emergencies in Australia. Today, we celebrate the ten dedicated members of the NSW SES – Gosford Unit who have been honoured for their remarkable service during the 2019-20 bushfires. During one of the worst fire seasons on record, the NSW SES provided invaluable support to the NSW Rural Fire Service, deploying members both locally and throughout the state to assist communities in dire need. Their unwavering dedication and selflessness have made a profound impact on the lives of many. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the award recipients: Maximilian Labecki, Philip Whitmore, Peter Evans, Gavin Germain, Ian Blain, Phillip Sheils, Rocco Diloreto, Stephen Cawley, Keith Turkington, and Lucy Mitchell. Your commitment to serving the community in times of crisis is truly inspiring. Thank you for your exceptional service and for embodying the spirit of the SES.

### BEEF AT THE BARRIERS CHARITY EVENT

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would again like to acknowledge Mitch and Sophie Donovan and the team at Donovan Livestock and Property on their annual 'Beef at the Barriers' charity event held at the South Grafton Cup race day recently. I was lucky enough to be alongside over 500 other racegoers enjoying the beautiful weather and the Donovan marquee trackside. Local chef Erin Brown and the team at Vines at 139 catered the event, again providing some mouth-watering cuisine on the day. Lots of winners and some amazing prizes in the big charity auction raised around \$32,000. The raffles raised over \$7,000. Both provided much entertainment. For the past six years the event has been held on South Grafton Cup race day at the Clarence River Jockey Club, with proceeds going to children's charity, Little Windmills. Little Windmills works with rural and remote families in their darkest hours providing support to families who have children who are seriously sick, injured or have special needs by subsidising things like medical costs, travel, accommodation and providing essential equipment and services. A very worthy charity to support. Congratulations and well done on another amazing and successful event.

### WOODBURN RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the following members of Woodburn Rural Fire Brigade who have received their Long Service Medals recently at a presentation evening held in Casino. Mr Mark Hansen was awarded a 20-year Long Service Medal and 1st Clasp for his 20 years with Woodburn Brigade. Mr Scott Birch was awarded a 30-year clasp for his service. Mr Birch joined the Woodburn Bush Fire Brigade in 1992 and has been an active and valuable volunteer ever since. Mr Ross Hansen was awarded a 30-year clasp for his service. Mr Hansen was elected to the positions of Senior Deputy Captain and Captain over the years, a worthy and well-deserved recipient of this 30-year Long Service Medal Clasp. Mr Rick Teudt was awarded a 40-year clasp for his years of service. Over his years volunteering Mr Teudt has had many roles including Deputy Captain, Captain, President and Group Captain. A very worthy recipient of the award. All amazing achievements. I would like to thank these and all local brigade members for their service and dedication to the local community. Well done and congratulations.

### CASINO RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SERVICE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the following members of Casino Rural Fire Brigade who have received their long service medals recently at a presentation evening held in Casino. Mr Shaun Vidler was awarded his 20-year long service medal for 23 years of service to the RFS, which included seven years as Casino Captain as well as many years for Ellangowan, including time as Captain. Miss Jackie Munro was awarded her 10-year long service medal for 14 years of service to the Casino Brigade, which includes many hours for the Community Education team and Communications Brigade. Mr Michael Munro was awarded his 10-year long service medal for 18 years of service to Casino Rural Fire Service. I would like to thank these local brigade members for their service and dedication to the local community.

### LENNOX HEAD CULTURAL CENTRE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise Lennox Head Cultural Centre for winning the Gold Award for Event Venue of the Year at the North Coast Tourism Awards. This recognition highlights the Centre's valuable contribution to the local community and the broader Ballina Shire. The Lennox Head Cultural Centre has played a significant role in enhancing the visitor economy by hosting a variety of events and attracting important conferences. Its impact extends beyond event management, contributing to cultural enrichment and community engagement in Lennox Head. I am pleased to use the centre at every opportunity. This award reflects the Centre's ongoing efforts to provide a high-quality venue that supports both local and regional growth. We

commend the Centre for its dedication and success in fostering a positive environment for visitors and residents alike. Congratulations to the team from Lennox Head Cultural Centre on this achievement. Your work is an important part of the region's cultural and economic development.

#### **ALANAH WARD AND BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL VISITOR SERVICES**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise Alanah Ward for her recent achievement securing Silver at the North Coast Tourism Awards in the Young Tourism Business Leader category. Alanah, who is the Team Leader of Visitor Services at Ballina Shire Council, has demonstrated commendable leadership and dedication in the field of tourism. Through her innovative approach and commitment, Alanah has contributed positively to delivering an award-winning Information Centre for Ballina, which as an entity, also won Gold at the same award ceremony for Excellence in Tourism Services and Silver for Excellence in Innovation. Both Alanah and the Visitor Service team's recognition at the North Coast Tourism Awards reflect their hard work in promoting all of the incredible scenic and visitor experiences on offer in Ballina Shire and beyond. We extend our congratulations to Alanah Ward and the broader team at Ballina Shire Council's Visitor Services for this well-deserved honour and look forward to the continued contributions to our local tourism sector.

#### **NORTH SHORE SCHOOLS EXPO, CHATSWOOD**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The community of Willoughby prides itself on the quality of its local schools and it was very fitting for Chatswood to host the North Shore Schools Expo on the first weekend of August. Held at the Concourse in central Chatswood, the Expo showcased a variety of private schools to give prospective students and their parents a better understanding of the individual strengths and differences between the participating schools. Exhibitors included boarding schools, faith-based and secular schools, single sex and co-ed establishments. At the expo, families were able to discuss their child's specific educational needs with principals and teaching staff from many of Australia's top schools. When it comes to parents considering the right school for their child, there is no substitute for personal contact, and parents were able to do that with a myriad of schools under one roof. The Expo has been running for over twenty years and provides an excellent opportunity for families to make considered choices about their children's education.

#### **BACK TO BEARS DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Our community has a long and proud tradition of Australian Rules Football [AFL]. Gore Hill Oval in St Leonards is the home of the North Shore Bombers, an AFL club that competes in the Premier Division of the Sydney AFL competition. With a history dating back to 1903, the North Shore Bombers are one of Sydney AFL's most successful clubs, winning 13 senior premierships in its history. On 3 August, I attended with my son the Bombers' 'Back to Bears Day' at Gore Hill Oval to celebrate the club's rich history. Some of the historical highlights included the Bombers' 2004 Premier Division Premiership, the 2004 Reserves Premiership, and the 1904 Premiership. The day was filled with festivities, including the club President's Lunch, men's and women's matches against Sydney Uni, live music, entertainment, and children's activities. It was a fantastic afternoon celebrating the historic achievements of the North Shore Bombers, and I wish them continued success in the future.

#### **DONATE LIFE WEEK**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On behalf of the community of Willoughby, I was pleased to promote the important cause of organ donation highlighted recently during Donate Life Week. Taking place from 28 July to 4 August 2024, Donate Life Week encourages more Australians to get behind organ and tissue donation. Some 4 out of 5 Australians support organ donation but only one third are registered as donors on the Australian Organ Donor Register. Every person over the age of 16 can register to donate their organs and tissues. Organ and tissue donation can save and transform the lives of people who, in many cases, are seriously ill or dying. Beneficiaries of organ donation include patients with kidney disease, heart failure, lung disease, liver disease and type 1 diabetes, as well as people who need bone tissue, skin grafts, or even the restoration of eyesight. In many circumstances, organ donation can save a person's life. I would urge more of those people in our community who support organ donation to register as donors. It's a decision that can save a life.

#### **WILLIAM CAREY VOLLEYBALL TEAM**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I stand to congratulate William Carey Christian School Girls Volleyball Team in my electorate, who were victorious as the Christian Schools Sports Association State Volleyball Champions. This achievement is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and persistence. The girls competed fiercely in the open girls division rounds, demonstrating remarkable skill and teamwork. They faced tough competition, but their determination and resilience saw them through to victory. The team put in countless hours of practice, unwavering commitment, and a strong sense of unity. Each team member played a crucial role in their success, showcasing the qualities of a true champion – hard work, dedication, and the spirit of never giving

up. As the winners of this prestigious event, they were celebrated not only for their outstanding performance but also for their exemplary sportsmanship. Congratulations once again to the William Carey Christian School Girls Volleyball Team for their well-deserved victory. Your achievement has made our community proud.

#### **PINK AND BLUE GALA DAY**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I wish to commend Eschol Park FC on organising an extremely successful Pink and Blue Gala Day on 29 June, which I had the pleasure of attending. The atmosphere was energetic, with various fundraising activities including raffles, auctions, and the sale of special merchandise, all aimed at supporting cancer research and raising awareness for breast and prostate cancer. The support from the community was overwhelming, and I am thrilled to congratulate the club for raising an impressive \$27,000 for Cancer Council NSW. Families and children enjoyed a range of food stalls, entertainment, and activities that brought the community together. Informative booths and guest speakers provided valuable insights into cancer prevention, early detection, and available support services. The day was a perfect blend of fun, sports, and meaningful contributions to crucial health causes. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the fundraising efforts and taking the time to support such a great cause.

#### **DENHAM COURT PUBLIC SCHOOL BAND - BAND TOGETHER FESTIVAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I stand to commend Denham Court Public School Concert Band who participated in the inaugural Band Together Festival at Parramatta Riverside Theatre on 2 July. The Band Together Festival in Parramatta is a two-day music event organised by the Band Together Foundation and School Bands Australia and is designed to celebrate young musical talent and foster community spirit by featuring school bands from across greater Sydney. The dedication and practice put in by the Denham Court Concert Band is truly commendable. Their participation showcases not only their musical talent but also the incredible support and effort from their teachers and parents. I am incredibly proud of these young musicians for their hard work and enthusiasm. Music education is vital for our children's growth and creative development. We need more support for music programs in South-West Sydney. The Denham Court PS Concert Band shows what's possible with dedication and practice. Congratulations to them all!

#### **RICHMOND RIVER POLLUTION AND SOLUTIONS WORKSHOP**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the remarkable efforts by all that attended the Richmond River Pollution and Solutions Workshop and clean-up initiative on 13th of July. Our community came together to clean the Richmond River and achieved an impressive result—collecting over 1,890 pieces of trash, weighing a total of 174 kilograms. This effort revealed the extent of pollution affecting our local waterways, with plastic packaging, fishing debris, and cigarette butts being the most common types of waste. The workshop not only facilitated a critical clean-up but also offered enlightening presentations on the environmental impacts facing our river. Attendees learned about the vulnerability of species such as resident dolphins, fish, and oysters, and the serious threat posed by chemical pollutants. Let me extend my heartfelt thanks to Professor Kirsten Benkendorff from Southern Cross University, Richmond River Keepers, OzFish Unlimited, Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue, and the Dolphin Research Australia team for sharing your work and helping to shed light on the issues and solutions. To all those that attended the clean-up, thank you! Your collective efforts not only fostered positive environmental change but also enhanced our community's well-being.

#### **AVALON BEACH SLSC – LONG SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Avalon Beach Surf Life Saving Club on a successful 2023-24 season. Thank you to the 900 members who work hard to foster a thriving club and keep our community safe. Particularly, I acknowledge, thank and congratulate all long service award recipients. Thank you, Stephen Davey for a momentous 60 years of service to surf lifesaving. To Jason Brown and Colin Campbell for 40 years of service. To Rob Dieters, Damian Geyle, Tim Hoxson and Nicholas Wood for 30 years of service. To Ian Dalglish for 25 years of service, and to Jenny Brennan, Peter Brennan and Leo Pinheiro for 20 years of service. Thank you for the countless hours you have given up making Avalon Beach such a wonderful place. Your service is so appreciated. I am pleased that acknowledgement of all award recipients is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **NEWPORT SLSC – CLUB AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Newport Surf Life Saving Club on a successful 2023-24 season. Thank you to this year's Club Award recipients, who have been acknowledged for going above and beyond in their service of Newport SLSC and our community. Congratulations to Club Member of the Year, David Rees. David is a long service member of Newport SLSC, who dedicates countless hours in areas outside of core patrolling, including organising Branch carnivals and coordinating the transportation of Newport's surf sport equipment. Congratulations to Sam Jacobsen who received the Nipper Chairman's Award. Sam is a dedicated

young leader at Newport, making significant contributions as a Nipper Captain and member. Congratulations to Rookie of the Year, Isabella Fleming. Isabella is great asset on patrol, communicating well with other patrol members and the public. Congratulations to Stewart Dean, who received the Best New Member Award. Stewart is helpful, positive, conscientious, and reliable, also assisting outside of his patrol hours. Congratulations to Menzies' Educator of the Year, Brendan Capell, who is a dedicated patroller and bronze trainer. Brendan especially leads board rescue training on wet session days, ensuring new members confident in their skills.

#### **NARRABEEN BEACH SLSC – LONG SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Narrabeen Beach Surf Life Saving Club on a successful 2023-24 season. Thank you to the 186 active, life and associate members who work hard to foster a thriving club and keep our community safe. Particularly, I acknowledge, thank and congratulate the long serving members who reached significant milestones this past season. Thank you to Greg Gillespie for your 25 years of patrol service. Thank you to Fiona Russell for 20 years of patrol service. Thank you to Jill Brook, Kevin Lee, Simon Lewis and Jodie Murphy for 15 years of patrol service, and thank you to Isabella Cowap, Jacob Hall, Alexander Hall, Sally Langford and Alexander Singh for 10 years of patrol service. Thank you for the countless hours you have given up making Narrabeen Beach such a wonderful place. Your service is so appreciated. I am pleased that acknowledgement of all volunteers is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **ST GERTRUDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, SMITHFIELD**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Monday 5th August, I was pleased to meet with students and teachers from St Gertrude's Catholic Primary School, Smithfield, and present them with a Prospect Electorate Community Building Partnership grant. St Gertrude's has been a centre of learning since 1952, when it was established by the Sisters of St Joseph. Today, approximately 600 students and 60 teachers attend the school from Kindergarten to Year 6, with students enrolled reflecting over forty cultures and with over 90 percent coming from diverse non-English speaking backgrounds. This is a wonderful testament to our local Prospect Electorate as a vibrant and harmonious place to live and learn. I was delighted to present St Gertrude's with a Community Building Partnership grant of \$30,000, for the installation of a shade cloth over their junior playground. Once installed, this cover will provide vital protection from the sun, especially important for young children who are eager to keep active at school during the summer months. My thanks and congratulations go to Linda Katsibras, Principal, and all the students, parents and teachers at St Gertrude's for their continued dedication to learning in our local Prospect Electorate community.

#### **UNITING GRANTHAM HEIGHTS EARLY LEARNING SEVEN HILLS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was great to visit Uniting Grantham Heights Early Learning Centre Seven Hills on 1st August 2024, to present a Prospect Electorate Community Building Partnership Grant. Uniting Grantham Heights Early Learning Centre is a not-for-profit organisation striving to provide quality care and education to every child. Through captivating first learning experiences, the Centre gives children a head-start to reach their full potential. The Centre's many unique programs celebrate individuality and diversity within our community. Their "Bush Kindy Program" invites children to explore outdoors and respectfully engage with First Nations perspectives. The Centre's Community Pantry and Diversity Feast foster a culture of belonging, supporting children and families to access essentials whilst building connection through sharing. These diverse programs emphasise the Centre's commitment to championing compassionate individuals and curious lifelong learners. I was delighted to present the Centre with a \$39,457 Community Building Partnership Grant to fund the refurbishment of the foyer flooring and painting. This refurbishment will help the Centre's physical space reflect the bright and welcoming social space it provides our local children. Thank you to Director, Kamila Mahfouz, and the Uniting Grantham Heights team for the wholistic support you offer our community.

#### **GREYSTANES DEVILS JRLFC**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Saturday 21st July, I was delighted to meet with players, volunteers and supporters at the 45th Anniversary celebrations and their "Try Time Gala" at the Greystanes Devils JRLFC, Darling Street Park, Greystanes. The Greystanes Devils are a community-based rugby league club that has been providing community sport in the Greystanes area since 1979. The Club consistently provides a strong sporting ethos for our community and a way for young people from across our local Prospect Electorate to have fun and stay active, while building lasting friendships along the way. Throughout their history, the Club has won team accolades, produced numerous NRL players and has also been crowned the Parramatta Junior Club and NSWRL Grassroots Club of the Year. It was great to join our Greystanes Devils family for their 45th anniversary celebrations, which included a World's Greatest Shave fundraiser after the last game of the Try Time Gala day, for a Committee Member currently battling cancer. My congratulations go out to Craig McLaren, President, Guy



Coleman, Secretary, Nick Peel, Treasurer, and all the players, parents, coaching staff and volunteers of the Greystanes Devils for their dedication to the game and their tremendous community spirit.

#### **DEREK MITCHELL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Derek Mitchell on his 40 years of service to the Kiwanis Club of East Maitland. Derek joined the club in 1984, and quickly took on the role of treasurer and has since served as secretary seven times and president three times. His dedication has been instrumental in shifting the club's focus from hands-on projects to fundraising for children's charities, including organising trivia nights, Bunnings barbecues, and monthly Maitland market collections. Derek's leadership and unwavering commitment were recognised with a life membership in 1997 and a Legion of Honor in 2014. His passion for service is shared by his son Ben and daughter-in-law Fiona, both of whom are active members of the Kiwanis Club. The club, which once was exclusively for men, now proudly includes members of all ages and genders, reflecting the inclusive spirit Derek has championed. We are grateful for Derek's decades of service and the impact he has made on the Kiwanis Club of East Maitland and our community. His legacy is one of dedication, service, and an enduring commitment to making a difference.

#### **LOCHINVAR RURAL FIRE BRIGADE 60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—It was my pleasure to recently attend the celebration of the Lochinvar Fire Brigade's 60th Anniversary. The Lochinvar Brigade, which took in the members of the Bishops Brigade in a merger in 2012 is a highly regarded and integral part of the Hunter Valley community. Like all rural brigades, volunteers stand together assisting and protecting their communities against fires, floods, hazard reduction burns, motor vehicle accidents and any other disaster that can befall an Australian community. From humble beginnings in 1964, the membership is now more than 60 individuals. The brigade goes about their work quietly and professionally, taking time away from your own work and families to do so. The brigade not only assist their own community, but when called upon, in neighbouring communities such as Kempsey, Grafton, Maitland, Cessnock and Port Stephens. Thanks again to the Lochinvar Rural Fire Brigade for their support of the Lochinvar community over the last 60 years, it is greatly appreciated.

#### **TOP BLOKES FOUNDATION GROSSMANN HIGH GRADUATION**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the Top Blokes Foundation and all of the graduates at the ceremony I attended last month. It was heartwarming to see the Top Blokes program in action in the high schools of Maitland. The most recent graduation was for Year 9 students who had completed the program at Maitland Grossmann High School. The participants told me how much they enjoyed the program. The Top Blokes Foundation is a non-profit organisation working to improve the mental health and social well-being of young men 10-24 years old through group mentoring programs. The programs are delivered by qualified youth workers in schools and organisations. The idea is to provide a safe place for boys and young men to explore complex topics like peer pressure, sexual health and masculinity. Top Blokes and Maitland Grossmann High School recognise the graduates for their qualities and values as individuals. Every workshop tells a story and every young man Top Blokes support demonstrates openness, vulnerability and care for one another. This is a really worthwhile program and I congratulate the graduates and mentors on this occasion.

#### **THE HILLS AND KU-RING-GAI LOCAL AREA COMMAND, POLICE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I acknowledge outstanding police officers recognised at the recent Ku-ring-gai & The Hills Police Command Awards Ceremony. The Awards Ceremony provides the opportunity to recognise the commitment, dedication and diligence of present and past police officers who have served the community. The host Officer for the Awards Ceremony was Superintendent Matthew Scott, Commander of the Ku-Ring-Gai Police Command. The Awards Ceremony was attended by Assistant Commissioner Leanne McCusker APM, Superintendent Naomi Moore from The Hills Local Area Command, Alister Henskins SC MP, Matthew Kean MP, and myself as well as other Members of Parliament. I specifically acknowledge Award Recipients from The Hills Local Area Command. I acknowledge Plain Clothes Constable Victoria Firth; Chief Inspector Matthew Harris; Sergeant Michael Roach, Senior Constable Ethan West; Detective Senior Constable Heidi Sieders, Detective Sergeant Julia Brown, Sergeant Morena Connell, Retired Constable John Wylie, Senior Constable Gemma Walker, Chief Inspector Phillip Brooks, Senior Constable Arron Paton, Constable Julian Mansoor, Constable Hamish McKenzie, Constable Darcy Waymouth, Constable Megan Dunn, Constable Ryan Worlock. I also acknowledge Stefanie Tachdjian and Haezl Cruz who received Police Area Commander Commendation. Congratulations to everyone who received Awards and Commendations.

**JULIA PARISI**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to recognise Julia Parisi who is a talented young artist making waves in our local art scene. With a fresh perspective and creative vision, Julia's work is a testament to her skill and dedication. Her unique style blends traditional techniques with modern flair. Julia's passion for art is evident in every piece she creates, from vibrant paintings to intricate drawings, as well as jewellery which I am personally a big fan of. Through her art, Julia is inspiring other young artists. She is a young woman who has started her own business and is also dedicating her time to teaching young artists at Russell Lea Public School. Julia's contributions to the local art community are invaluable, bringing a new level of excitement and energy to the scene. As a budding artist, Julia Parisi is one to watch and her future is very bright. I want to wish Julia Parisi all the very best. We look forward to seeing her continued growth and success, and the incredible art she will undoubtedly create. Julia's art is a gift to our community, and we are grateful for her talent.

**SAM CAMINITI**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to acknowledge Five Dock small business owner Sam Caminiti who recently retired after many decades of service to our community. The story of the Caminiti family is a great Italian migrant success story. Bruno Caminiti migrated from Sicily to Australia in the 1960's and opened his first family-owned butchery in the same decade. He opened his second store in the 1970's in Five Dock on Great North Road. It became a local institution for half-a-century, providing high quality and traditionally prepared meats. Their secret was delivering quality and traditional products to the local community and indeed the many Italians in the area. A taste of home. Bruno's son Sam Caminiti followed in the footsteps of his late father and continued to run the family business. Earlier this year, Sam announced that he would be handing over the reins. I would like to recognise Sam, his wife Emilia and the entire Caminiti family for their hard work and dedication. Congratulations Sam on wonderful and successful career, your story is truly an inspiration to so many and I wish you all the best in the future.

**ST MERKORIOUS CHARITY**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to recognise the work of St Merkorious Charity, supporting the welfare of disadvantaged people, children and families across metropolitan Sydney. It's mission is to relieve hunger and poverty by providing access to healthy food, clothing and services. The Charity is inspired by the compassion, kindness, and generosity embodied by Saint Merkorious. It provides assistance to those in need, regardless of their background or faith. With a focus on food insecurity, wellbeing and social welfare initiatives, aiming to empower individuals and communities to break the cycle of poverty and reach their full potential. Through various programs and partnerships, St Merkorious Charity has made a positive impact on the lives of many. With a strong commitment to social justice and community service, the St Merkorious Charity continues to inspire and make a difference, upholding the values of love, care, and compassion. I wish to recognise President and founder Paula Nicolas, and her husband Daniel Nicolas, Vice President Dorian Sarkissian, Treasurer Patrick Chow, Secretary Wally Mehanna, Office Manager Amira Fanous, members of the Operations Committee, Advisory Members, and staff for their dedication to the community. I wish them all the very best.

**NASSER MURAD – CEO FOR A DAY**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I was pleased to be joined by Condell Park High School student, Nasser Murad this week as he participated in the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce's CEO For A Day initiative. Nasser is an aspiring future leader looking to make a difference in his community and broaden his business understanding. CEO For A Day connects local, aspiring Year 10 to 12 students with a Senior Executive in their community in a field that they're interested in. The program gives students the opportunity to walk in the shoes of a local leader. It is fitting that Nasser joined me this week during Public Education Week, as he exemplifies the excellence of public school students in my electorate of East Hills. Nasser, I hope you enjoyed your life in the day of an MP and gained valuable skills to help you on your journey. I wish you the very best of luck with your future studies. I am sure with your hard work, dedication and talent you will become the future leader you aspire to be.

**MANDAEAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATION – BRIKHA H.S NASORAIA**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—It is not every day that a member of our community attains the pinnacle of leadership within the Mandaean faith! I had the great privilege of joining the Liverpool Mandaean community in celebrating a significant and spiritually enriching occasion—the ordination of His Beatitude, Brikha H.S. Nasoraia to the esteemed rank of Reshema. The role of the Reshema is pivotal, serving as a beacon of spiritual guidance, and a revered source of inspiration for the entire Mandaean community. His Beatitude's ordination reflects a deep reservoir of faith and understanding, instilling pride among all attendees. As a custodian of religious knowledge and wisdom, his dedication to nurturing and leading the community, will be

instrumental in strengthening their spiritual journey and connection. My sincere congratulations to His Beatitude, his family, and the Mandaean community on this momentous occasion. The significance of this event underscores the vital role that religious leaders play in fostering our cohesive and spiritually enriched community. I want to express my gratitude to the Mandaean community for allowing me to share in this celebration. May Reshema Nasoraia's leadership continue to inspire and guide the Mandaean community with unwavering strength and grace.

#### COMMEMORATION OF THE ASSYRIAN MARTYRS DAY

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Recently, I joined members of the Assyrian, Armenian and Greek communities for the Commemoration of Assyrian Martyrs Day in Fairfield, which is marked annually. On the 7th of August each year, a Memorial Day is held for the tragic events of 1933 in Simmel, Iraq. This solemn occasion, organised by the Assyrian National Council of Australia [ANC], invites us all to reflect on the resilience of the Assyrian people and their steadfast commitment to preserving their rich cultural heritage despite ongoing challenges in Iraq and Syria. The ANC's mission, rooted in the Assyrian nation's historic quest for national and territorial rights, is to build institutions that ensure democratic representation and protect Assyrian freedoms for future generations, fostering lasting prosperity and well-being. Under the guidance of Miss Breteil Tigris David, President of the Young Assyrians, I am filled with find hope that the resilience and dedication to justice will transcend generations. Thank you to the ANC for hosting this meaningful event, allowing us to honour the memory of the Assyrian Martyrs. This day serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of reflecting on the collective history and enduring strength of the Assyrian community.

#### NETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the Sutherland Shire Netball Association's 2024 New South Wales Netball State Championship winning teams. Sutherland Shire Netball Association's Under 14 and Under 15 representative teams have both been crowned state champions for the second year in a row. Throughout the championships, the Under 15 team impressively lost only two games and scored 390 goals over three days, eclipsing the 258 goals scored against them. As for the Under 14 team, they won 17 of their 19 games and led on goal percentage at the end of the tournament by nearly 20 per cent. I recognise Under 14 players Katalina 'Otai, Heidi Chapple, Stella MacNamara, Maggie Maree, Lexus Ogle, Ella Proudfoot, Ella Stig, Ella Van Der Meer, Zara Ward, Ella Webster as well as Coach Jordan Bedingfield and Manager Emma Paterson. I also acknowledge Under 15 players Evalina Carniero, Lexi Economou, Elizabeth Halpin, Zara Kardum, Mikayla Martin, Tiffany Mayberry, Mikayla Nigiannis, Emme Pierce, Jaylah Sullivan, Tamara Svorcan, Roma Taylor, along with Coach Michelle Allen and Manager Hayley Smith. I commend our netball superstars from the Sutherland Shire Netball Association on this incredible achievement and hope to see a future Diamond among their ranks.

#### TINDRAH OF SWEDEN

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Rita Price from Tindrah of Sweden on winning the Most Outstanding Jewellery Store category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Tindrah of Sweden was founded almost a decade ago by Rita Price, a fourth-generation jeweller, who trained for over a decade under the mentorship of her father who was a master jeweller, before starting the business. Based in Menai, Tindrah of Sweden specialises in customised bespoke jewellery and high-quality repairs. This includes an emphasis on reusing existing materials owned by clients, sustainable production processes and sourcing of ethical, conflict-free materials, be it fine gold or gemstones from Australian Certified Suppliers. The word 'Tindrah' means sparkle in Swedish, which Rita says captures the essence of her work. Her pieces are inspired by the cold crisp winter of Sweden, as well as Australia's nature and endless beaches, perfectly matched it each owner. Small businesses like Tindrah of Sweden are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services, and jobs. I again congratulate Rita Price from Tindrah of Sweden on her success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### MAVERICKS CHICKEN CARINGBAH

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at Mavericks Chicken Caringbah on winning the Most Outstanding Fast Food/Takeaway category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Mavericks Chicken Caringbah, is a proudly family-run business that opened just 12 months ago. Since its opening Mavericks has made huge waves locally as a pitstop for delicious food and community connections, with one percent of every sale made at the store going to the Mavericks Foundation. The Mavericks Foundation reinvests these funds back into the Sutherland Shire by supporting community groups and other local initiatives. I acknowledge the team behind Mavericks Chicken Caringbah. I recognise Sally and Frank Tagg, Sefano Dadduzio, Sudip Dubas Pandit, Carlos Justo, Hakan Haksal, Paddy Tagg, Katie Herman, Geraldine Grisales, Isobel Burton and Luis Nguyen for their efforts. Small businesses like Mavericks Chicken Caringbah are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services, and jobs. I again congratulate the team

at Mavericks Chicken Caringbah on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **LYNNE STRONG – 2024 COMMUNITY PERSON OF THE YEAR**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Lynne Strong, former Kiama Electorate Woman of the Year, for her contributions in education and services to young people. This week in conjunction with Education Week in the Hunter at the NSW Government Sustainability Awards, Lynne was honoured with the prestigious Community Person of the Year Award. This award recognises and underscores her extraordinary contributions to the community, young people, and work with the education sector. Lynne's work in delivering programs for schools makes a real impact on young people, keeping them engaged and aware of the importance of education and diverse perspectives. Lynne provides young people with the confidence and skills to succeed in life. Lynne rightly points out that at a time when schools are in crises, with teachers overwhelmed and many students disengaged or experiencing mental health and well-being challenges, it is important to give them hope. And that's exactly what Lynne achieves with her programs. Lynne is most deserving of this outstanding award. I acknowledge Principal Shane Roberts of Belltrees Public School who nominated Lynne. This achievement is a testament to her exceptional dedication and hard work.

#### **KIERAN WOOLLEY- OLYMPIAN SKATEBOARDER**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Olympian Athlete Kieran Woolley born in Kiama and from Minnamurra NSW. Four-time scholarship holder by the Australian Institute of Sport, finalist for the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Sport Performance Awards [ASPA] Male Athlete of the Year, SLAM Skateboard New Gen Skater of the Year, four-time Lonestar Athlete of the Year by the Illawarra Academy of Sport in Australia, Tobin Family Award for most outstanding Illawarra Academy of Sport athlete, Olympian in Tokyo and now in Paris 2024. So many achievements by the age of 20 years, Kieran no doubt will continue to excel in a sport that thrills spectators. Amongst other tricks, Keiran has been known to ollie off a roof into a tree! Kieran began skateboarding at age 10 and was also a competitive surfer. I take this opportunity to also acknowledge his father, Mark, and his advocacy in improving the Boongaree Skate Park in Berry. "I am a never-ending ball of energy that is always up for a challenge," says Kieran, and the Parliament acknowledges Kieran for his achievements and representing Australia and the Kiama electorate as a 2024 Olympian.

#### **KIAMA – SHELLHARBOUR ZONTA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama – Shellharbour Zonta Group who recently celebrated its first Annual General Meeting in what can only be described as a cracking start for the new group. I acknowledge well-known community activist and club founder Rita Sullivan and the Kiama and Shellharbour Zonta members who have created a remarkable and powerful group in such a short time. The chapter is part of a leading 100-year-old international organisation that makes the world a better place by empowering women and girls, connecting more than 26,000 women and men across 62 countries. It is a first for the region. Zonta International envisions a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men. In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence. I also acknowledge Shellharbour and Kiama residents, Meredith Bryce and Donna Maria. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at the Kiama Leagues Club.

#### **LANE COVE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker I would like to acknowledge Marea de Angelis for her outstanding service in the local community. I had the pleasure of nominating Marea for the NSW Women of the Year Awards where she was named Lane Cove Local Woman of the Year. As well as being a teacher and family educator at Villa Maria for more than 15 years, Marea is a volunteer with St Vincent de Paul and heavily involved in outreach programs within Holy Name of Mary Parish. She founded the "Forget me not" program which connects lonely elderly members of the community with young families for support. Marea reflects the self-less and community-minded spirit of the wider Lane Cove Electorate. I am proud to see Marea de Angelis receive recognition for all her work that makes our community a better place.

#### **LANE COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Lane Cove Public School and its incredibly active P&C. Thanks to the Community Building Partnership Grant program, the school will receive \$20,000 for new shade cover sails that will increase utility for outdoor learning areas. I want to thank the Lane Cove Public School P&C for their successful application which will benefit both the school and local community.

### FEAST DAY OF SAINT IGNATIUS

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker July 31 is the Feast Day of Saint Ignatius. Saint Ignatius devoted his life to serving God and those around him. Every year students at Saint Ignatius' College Riverview follow his example and demonstrate the ethos of being 'Men for Others'. This year, the whole school participated in distinctive projects that included preparing food hampers or hosting aged-care residents. I am very pleased to see the Legacy of Saint Ignatius honoured by the young men of the College and commend their commitment to serving the community.

### RETURN AND EARN SILVERWATER

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—A new Return and Earn Depot at Silverwater is open for business. It was a pleasure to cut the ribbon with Clean Vibes Managing Director Andrew Macarthur, KARI Foundation COO Jake Wilson, Deputy Mayor of City of Parramatta Council Cr Patricia Prociv, and other local community organizations. The return and earn is located at 196 Silverwater Road, a prime location for locals to access this fantastic addition to our community. Our community is already enthusiastic about recycling, with more than 100 million bottles and cans having been through local Return and Earn points since the scheme began. There are over 6 Return and Earn depots in my electorate, making it easier than ever for locals to cash in their eligible bottles and cans. This site is particularly impressive, as it is the first large style depot in the area. Recycling is such a key part of an environmental consciousness that we have developed as a state, and I am pleased to see that the people of Parramatta can benefit from yet another local Return and Earn that helps them contribute to saving the planet, put dollars in their pockets and all in close proximity to home.

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