

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 14 August 2024**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given]*

## *Bills*

### **BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2024**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (10:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. The bill addresses issues identified by NSW Fair Trading and the Building Commission NSW during the routine and ongoing departmental review of legislation within my portfolio. The bill will introduce amendments to 24 Acts and four regulations. These changes are designed to improve the clarity and accuracy of the laws and reduce regulatory burdens. The bill will also introduce amendments to legislation administered by the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government. These amendments will update our data provisions and replace them with digital-ready provisions. Through this bill the Minns Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to delivering laws that are not only responsive to change but also clear, accurate and reliable.

I now turn to the specific amendments in the bill. Schedule 1 contains minor amendments that will clarify existing provisions within these laws, as well as update or remove those that are outdated or no longer required. Schedule 1.1 to the bill amends section 77 of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 to remove referral to section 65, which relates to the distribution of assets following the winding up of an association. This amendment will allow for a more efficient process for dealing with the distribution of assets by associations that have been involuntarily cancelled. Schedule 1.2 to the bill amends section 8 of the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999 to clarify that a person is not entitled to a progress payment for work that they are contracted to do unless they are suitably insured and authorised to undertake that work.

This amendment plugs a loophole in existing legislation and will ensure that the right to receive a progress payment for building work is limited to lawful building work. This will add an additional disincentive to people carrying out unlawful work as they will not be paid, in addition to the powers of Building Commission NSW to take action against them. To ensure the consistent and appropriate application of the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002, schedules 1.3 and 1.5 to the bill amend the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003 to remove unnecessary exemptions and align the laws with other Fair Trading NSW licence regimes. Schedule 1.4 to the bill amends the Community Land Management Act 2021 to replace several incorrect references to common property with references to association property. These amendments ensure that the appropriate terms are used in the Act.

Schedule 1.6 to the bill amends the Fair Trading Act 1987 to clarify that the five-year period referenced in relation to a commercial agent licence relates to the cancellation of the relevant licence, not the suspension of that authorisation. This amendment ensures that the intent of the provision is accurately articulated and is consistent with other provisions within that Act. Schedule 1.6 also amends section 58 of the Fair Trading Act for the purposes of the order that supports the New South Wales Government's FuelCheck app. Currently the FuelCheck app only provides the location of electric vehicle [EV] charging stations. This amendment will allow FuelCheck to be expanded to capture fuller details, including charging costs. With the number of EVs being sold increasing more than 120 per cent between 2022 and 2023, this will make the FuelCheck app even more useful for consumers.

Schedule 1 to the bill also includes a number of administrative amendments to the Home Building Act 1989. Schedule 1.8 will amend sections 33E, 33F and 33G of the Home Building Act by updating the unit of competency within the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package for the installation and testing of

medical gas pipeline systems. References to "Certificate IV in Gas Fitting" will also be removed from these sections, as this is not a valid qualification in New South Wales. These amendments will ensure that the requisite certifications are accurate and up to date.

The bill makes two amendments to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013, the first of which is an amendment to section 5 (5). Section 5 (5) currently exempts a person who sells a trailer for the conveyance of a second-hand boat from requiring a motor dealer licence. This exemption, however, does not apply for the purpose of conveying a new boat. To reduce the regulatory burden on people selling boat and trailer packages, schedule 1.9 to the bill removes the reference to "second-hand" to clarify that the exemption to hold a motor dealer licence applies to persons involved in the conveyance of both second-hand and new boats.

The second amendment to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act is to section 150 (b), which currently outlines the powers of authorised officers to ascertain whether there has been compliance with, or a contravention of, part 4.5 of the Road Transport Act 2013. Schedule 1.9 to the bill amends this section to clarify that this power also extends to part 4.5A of that Act. This corrects the unintended consequences of the splitting of part 4.5 into two parts—one which deals with light vehicles and one which deals with heavy vehicles—which was not reflected in the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act and resulted in authorised officers losing their power to investigate written-off heavy vehicles. This amendment rectifies this to ensure that authorised officers have the authorisations to investigate both written-off light and written-off heavy vehicles.

Schedule 1.10 to the bill updates sections 28 and 29A of the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996 to allow a person pawning goods to use an electronic signature to sign a record of the agreement with the pawnbroker, or an extension of an agreement, if the record is kept electronically. The bill makes two amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 regarding the appointment of and functions exercised by the chairperson and the deputy of the chairperson of the Rental Bond Board. Schedule 1.11 to the bill amends section 178 of the Act to appoint the Fair Trading Commissioner as the chairperson of the Rental Bond Board. If no person is employed as the Fair Trading Commissioner, the role of chairperson will be assumed by the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service. Schedule 1.11 to the bill also amends schedule 1 to the Act to allow the deputy of the chairperson to exercise the same functions as the chairperson if and when the need arises. This is a simple and practical improvement to the operation of the board.

The bill also amends the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019, which supports the Act, by removing references to a repealed section of the Act to ensure the legislation remains accurate and up to date. Schedule 1.13 will amend section 197 of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 to remove the current exemption that allows office copies of court orders that support registration of a plan to be lodged by hand. The intention is that where a plan is lodged electronically, all documents lodged in support of the plan should also be lodged electronically. I highlight that this will have no negative impact for lodging parties as it simply reflects current practice.

Another important change in the bill is an amendment to section 186 (3) of the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, which requires a landlord to provide a tenant with updated by-laws or strata management statement if the by-laws or the strata management statement change. Schedule 1.14 to the bill reinstates this as an offence provision to correct a drafting error that inadvertently removed the offence and to enable the provision to operate as intended. Schedule 1.14 to the bill also amends section 191 of the Strata Schemes Management Act to clarify that building work for which a building bond is required includes parts of a building that are not within the strata scheme but which the strata scheme is required to service, maintain or repair. The need for this change stems from increasing numbers of mixed-use buildings, which comprise multiple forms of building use, including apartments, shops and/or offices, in one structure.

Under the strata building bonds scheme, to construct the building the developer may be required to lodge a bond worth 2 per cent of the contract price with the Building Commission NSW. This bond can be used by the strata scheme to pay for defects identified in the first two years post-occupation. While this is straightforward for standalone apartment buildings, it becomes more complex where buildings are mixed use. For example, if there is a common car park for use by an office block and the apartments above and there was a structure defect requiring repair, the strata scheme would be required to contribute to the costs of this repair. This would be because the car park is not only used by the strata scheme but also essential to the structural integrity of the apartment components of the building.

Some developers are seeking to push a narrow adoption of the requirement to minimise the amount of bond by arguing these parts of the building are not captured by the bond scheme. To minimise the chance of this interpretation being challenged in court, this measure will clarify the operation of the provision and ensure that strata schemes enjoy the intended protection provided for by the Act. In addition, a number of outdated references to penalty notice offences listed in schedule 5 to the Strata Schemes Management Regulation will be updated. This will preserve the integrity of compliance and enforcement measures and ensure that the regulation is consistent with the Act.

Schedule 1.17 amends the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998 to remove the requirement to have held a licence or drivers certificate for a continuous period of at least three years immediately before a licence or drivers certificate for a term of three or five years can be granted. This will mean that new applicants can apply for a one-, three- or five-year licence. The purpose of this amendment is to provide consistency to licence durations across all the legislation being administered by Fair Trading and to ensure that customers in the tow truck industry are not disadvantaged. Schedule 1 to the bill also makes amendments to two Acts within the portfolio of the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government. Schedules 1.7 and 1.16 amend the Government Telecommunications Act 2018 and the Surveying and Spatial Information Act 2002 to remove the requirement for notices of meetings to be given to members of the Telco Authority Advisory Board and the Board of Surveying and Spatial Information of NSW, personally or by post. These amendments provide more flexibility and technology neutrality while maintaining the requirement for reasonable notice to be given to board members.

I now address schedule 2 to the bill, which deals with amendments relating to the dissolution of the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation. Schedule 2.2 amends the Home Building Act 1989 to dissolve the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation and the Building Insurers' Guarantee Fund, which was administered by the corporation. The corporation and the fund were established in 2001 to administer claims by home owners affected by the collapse of HIH/FAI Insurance. The last remaining claims on the Building Insurers' Guarantee Fund were finalised in December 2020. No new claims can be made under the fund. Once the corporation is dissolved, the assets, rights and liabilities of the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation will be transferred to the NSW Self Insurance Corporation. Any balance standing to the credit of the Building Insurers' Guarantee Fund will be transferred to the NSW Self Insurance Corporation. Schedules 2.1 and 2.3 to 2.5 make consequential amendments to the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018, the Home Building Regulation 2014, the Insurance Protection Tax Act 2001 and the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 to remove references to the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation, its claims administration functions and the Building Insurers' Guarantee Fund.

I now turn to the final schedule to the bill, schedule 3. The schedule contains a number of amendments relating to changes in administrative arrangements. Schedule 3 to the bill will amend the Biofuels Act 2007 and a whole swathe of building legislation to reflect recent changes in the machinery of government. In each statute, the definition of "Secretary" will be changed from the Commissioner for Fair Trading to the secretary of the department. For the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011, the definition of "plumbing regulator" will also be changed from the Commissioner for Fair Trading to the secretary of the department. The definition of "Department" in each statute has been updated to remove the need to amend the definition if the department changes or is renamed in the future.

The amendments reflect machinery of government changes, including the transfer of building regulatory responsibilities. The powers now sit with the Building Commission NSW. The bill before the House proposes amendments that will clarify, update and improve the operation of many laws. They will ensure the accuracy and improved functionality of our laws and enable the implementation of other small yet significant initiatives. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (10:30):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. The Liberals and The Nationals support the bill. The Coalition has always been a leader in advocating for the modernisation and streamlining of legislative frameworks to ensure they remain relevant and efficient. The Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024 aims to amend various pieces of legislation administered by the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, and the Minister for Building.

The amendments focus on minor corrections, updates due to machinery of government changes and the dissolution of certain outdated entities. For instance, the bill clarifies that a person aggrieved by the distribution of an association's property under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 can apply to the Supreme Court for an order regarding the property's disposal. It corrects terminology by changing "common property" to "association property" in the Community Land Management Act 2021, and removes redundant provisions related to licensing application procedures under the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003.

The Home Building Act 1989 is updated to reference the qualifications required for tradespersons, while the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999 is amended to restrict entitlement to progress payments if the construction contract does not comply with specific provisions. Furthermore, the bill aligns application procedures for authorities under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 with the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002, deeming applications refused if not determined within 28 days. It extends the FuelCheck scheme under the Fair Trading Act 1987 to include public electric vehicle charging

stations, even if they are not staffed, and updates the method for calculating the standard retail price of electricity under the scheme.

Other amendments include updating the method of giving notice of meetings for the Government Telecommunications Authority Advisory Board under the Government Telecommunications Act 2018 and clarifying that a person selling a trailer for a new boat is not considered a motor dealer under the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013. The bill also enables the use of electronic signatures for pawnbrokers' records and agreements under the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996, and changes the membership of the Rental Bond Board, making the Commissioner for Fair Trading the chairperson instead of the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019.

Additionally, the bill updates methods for giving notice of meetings for the Board of Surveying and Spatial Information under the Surveying and Spatial Information Act 2002 and allows tow truck operator licences and driver certificates to be granted for three or five years for all applicants under the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998. The bill also addresses various administrative updates, reflecting machinery of government changes across various Acts, including the Biofuels Act 2007 and the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017, ensuring the Acts refer to the correct departments and officials following organisational changes. I thank all those involved in the consultation and in bringing the bill forward, including the Minister and his team, and those in Fair Trading. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (10:34):** I contribute to the debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024, which I support. The bill will implement reforms across several portfolios, including Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Building, and Customer Service and Digital Government. The amendments in the bill are predominately minor and non-contentious, largely because they are a result of routine and ongoing examination of legislation. The more significant elements of the bill are informed by stakeholder feedback and will be subject to ongoing consultation as they are implemented. The proposed amendments will broadly improve, update and clarify the law, and reduce regulatory burden in certain industries.

The bill is a testament to the Government's dedication to ensuring that legislation remains up to date and accurate, ensuring that it continues operating effectively and as intended. It will improve accuracy by removing unnecessary and outdated terms across several pieces of legislation. I point to one example: the Home Building Act 1989 as it currently stands references a "Certificate IV in Gas Fitting", a qualification that is not valid in New South Wales. The bill will update the Act with the current unit of competency. In addition, the bill will also amend the definitions of "Department", "Secretary" and "plumbing regulator" to clarify the legal status of the newly established Building Commission NSW.

Clarity is also central to the bill, which contains several amendments aimed at ensuring legislation is clear and operating as intended. For instance, the Strata Scheme Management Act 2015 will be amended to reinstate an offence provision to correct an error made by the Strata Legislation Amendment Act 2023, with respect to a landlord or agent's noncompliance with the obligation to provide a tenant with updated by-laws when the by-laws change. As I have previously noted in the House, strata reform is an area of interest for the Government. Over the past decade, our strata system has not kept pace with changes in the housing mix within our community. I am reminded almost monthly by residents in Liverpool of issues relating to strata and compliance, and issues that arise when clear communication is not embedded in legislation and regulation.

The bill will also amend the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999 to clarify that a person is not entitled to a progress payment for work they are contracted to do unless they are authorised to undertake that work and insured in compliance with obligations under the Home Building Act 1989. Over the past couple of decades, practices such as phoenix contracting have increased, and many members of the community have been left in great distress as a result. The bill will go some way towards providing an additional layer of protection and ensuring that those undertaking the work are qualified to do so, and that the quality of work they do is improved.

The bill will also amend the Fair Trading Act 1987 to clarify that the five-year period referenced in relation to a commercial agent licence relates to the cancellation of the relevant licence and not the suspension of that licence. Broadly, those reforms will lead to laws operating as intended and will enable Fair Trading to implement decisions effectively. A lot of the Acts that the bill amends are quite old, with many of them originating in the 1980s. As a millennial, I can confidently say that the world has changed quite a bit since those laws were put in place. That is why the bill has a focus on modernising laws to ensure they continue to function effectively in our current environment.

One of the ways in which our world has fundamentally changed is the rapid increase in the uptake of electric vehicles. The bill will amend the Fair Trading Act 1987 to ensure that the scheme for the publication of fuel prices at service stations, known as FuelCheck, extends to public electric vehicle charging stations, even if those stations are not staffed. The bill also makes another amendment to the Fair Trading Act that provides that the standard retail price for electricity for the FuelCheck scheme is the price calculated in accordance with arrangements approved by the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service instead of the price per kilowatt hour, which does not currently capture electric vehicle pricing models.

Recently I met with representatives from JOLT, who are currently working on implementing several new charging stations across the Liverpool local government area. It is clear that this infrastructure is coming and coming quickly. Western Sydney has the highest uptake of electric vehicles. The Government must ensure that legislation and regulation is keeping pace with the changing behaviours and choices of people within our community, ensuring there is clarity and structure in the systems that they can respond to. The bill will ensure that the Act will continue to apply to this changing landscape. The bill will amend the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996 to enable a person pawning goods to use an electronic signature to sign a record of the agreement with the pawnbroker, or an extension of an agreement, if the record is kept electronically. These changes allow legislation to remain relevant in our modern world.

The bill is also focused on reducing regulatory burden on customers across the motor dealer, repair and tow truck industries. It does this by amending the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 to remove the reference to "second-hand" to clarify that the exemption to hold a motor dealers licence applies to persons involved in the conveyance of both second-hand and new boats, thereby reducing regulatory burden currently imposed on dealers of new boats. The Act will also be amended to reinstate powers to authorised officers to investigate written-off heavy vehicles following an oversight that resulted in authorised officers losing those powers. Additionally, the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998 will be amended to allow all new tow truck operator licence or tow truck driver certificate applicants to be granted a certificate for either three or five years rather than only one year. This will provide consistency across Fair Trading and ensure that this industry is not disadvantaged.

The bill is largely non-controversial, proposing minor amendments across several pieces of legislation. However, the sum of several minor amendments in the bill does a significant job in ensuring that our State's legislation remains up to date, relevant and clear in what is, in many ways, an entirely different context to when these Acts were first assented to. While this may not be the most glamorous part of being in government, it is in many ways a most necessary exercise. The bill demonstrates the Government's continued dedication to improving the operation of legislation in New South Wales to support and protect consumers. I commend the Minister and his staff, as well as those of the department, for striving for a government that responds efficiently and effectively to the needs of our community, which is most important. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (10:42):** I contribute to debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024 on behalf of the people's republic of Pittwater and outline the understanding that my community has of the bill's impact on the administration of legislation and, more broadly various matters that will affect them day to day. Before going through some of the specifics of the bill, I will observe that New South Wales is somewhat of a *Titanic*—a ship of some significance. This legislation is merely moving deck chairs around. I will go through the changes and then come back to those initial observations.

Some of the changes include amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. They are largely definitional changes, but they allow aggrieved persons to apply to the Supreme Court regarding the disposal of property. The Community Land Management Act 2021 will be amended to correct some minor terminology. The Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003 will remove some redundant provisions regarding licensing applications and procedures. The Home Building Act will be updated to update references to qualifications regarding various tradespersons. The Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act will be updated to restrict the entitlement to progress payment if the construction contract does not comply with various provisions. That can be a significant matter for those in that industry.

The Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 will be amended to align application procedures for authorities under that Act so that it aligns with the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002. The Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003 will be amended in another respect. The Fair Trading Act will be amended in relation to FuelCheck, as my friend from the Liverpool electorate mentioned. The Government Telecommunications Act will be amended in some administrative respects. The Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 will also be amended to clarify that a person selling a trailer or a new boat is not considered a motor dealer. That will have regulatory impacts and benefits on those individuals.

The Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996—which I did not know was an Act until I saw the bill—will also be amended so that electronic signatures can be used. The Residential Tenancies Act and related regulations will change the membership of the Rental Bond Board so that the Commissioner for Fair Trading is

the chairperson instead of the secretary of the department. I have concern about that. The Opposition supports the amendments that the bill makes but I will observe that this simply cannot be another "jobs for the boys" appointment by the Government. I trust that it will undertake proper processes when appointing people to that board.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Sure. We watched the Barilaro thing; we know what to do.

**Mr RORY AMON:** I will get to you, member for Auburn, don't you worry. The Surveying and Spatial Information Act 2002 will also be amended to update methods for the giving of notices of meetings. That is in accordance with updated practices. There are various other amendments to other Acts, but I observe that last year this House passed 56 pieces of legislation in this Government's first year in office. The previous Government passed 73 pieces of legislation in its first year in office. I also observe that 73 is greater than 56, notwithstanding what the Leader of the House stated in Parliament yesterday. This Parliament spends a lot of time talking about things, which is like moving deck chairs on the *Titanic*. A *Titanic*, as we are as a State, has significant potential, but moving deck chairs around a vessel or an organisation, or a community the size of New South Wales, does not change or benefit anyone's life in a material way.

The bill will benefit some individuals, but there is no substantive improvement to people's lives from day to day. This Government is a government without any vision. This is an administrative bill. This Parliament spends a lot of time on administration, on counting paperclips and on moving files around an office, but it spends very little time on real reform and in changing the State for the better. This State has huge potential. This State has a magnificent group of people. At the moment we are simply like the *Titanic*, just drifting at sea, moving deck chairs around, rather than having a vision on how to transform this State. This Government should have a vision, but it does not.

Labor spent 12 years in opposition. It came to government with only two things—no policies. The first was to remove the public sector wages cap, which means that wages are out of control. As a percentage of government expenditure, a percentage of taxpayer money that comes in is going up from some 36 per cent to over 45 per cent over the forward estimates. That means that we are spending less money on infrastructure that will stand the test of time and more money on the Government's union mates. While I support the bill, I am observing that this Government is not doing anything about reforming or changing this State. It is cancelling or delaying projects; it is not announcing new projects. There is no vision for the future. While I support the bill, I will continue to observe that the Government has no vision. It needs a vision because we want a government and State that succeeds. We want people to be better off tomorrow than they are today.

We will support the Government in its endeavours, but at the moment it seems that it does not have any. It is more intent on spending time on bills like this one and the ones we debated yesterday, which are important, but members do not need to spend a whole day debating Anzac trading hours. That is an administrative thing. It should be done with the stroke of a pen and waved through the Parliament. Yet we are debating this legislation because the Government has nothing else for us to do. It drags 93 representatives into the Chamber sitting day after sitting day with no agenda and no legislation whatsoever and has turned this Parliament into nothing more than a Toastmasters club and a Toastmasters course.

**Ms Donna Davis:** I don't think you would pass, mate.

**Mr RORY AMON:** If that was the case, the member for Parramatta certainly would not be coming first, nor would the member for Blacktown or the member for Heathcote. The Government's content and vision is bereft of anything.

**Ms Maryanne Stuart:** The member for Blacktown is not even in the Chamber.

**Mr RORY AMON:** The member for Auburn is okay. I do not mind her. She is a fantastic member in her local community.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** That's going on my campaign flyer.

**Mr RORY AMON:** Absolutely. I support the bill, but I make the point that the Government does not have an adequate vision for the State. This House is simply turning into an administrative Chamber, not a Chamber to revolutionise New South Wales. The Government should think long and hard about what it proposes to do to make the State better for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:50):** Let us bring some relevance to this debate. I support the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024, which represents a critical step in ensuring that our legislative framework remains clear, accurate and adaptable to the evolving needs of our State. Through the diligent work of NSW Fair Trading, the Building Commission NSW and various government departments, the bill seeks to introduce necessary amendments to 24 Acts and four regulations. The changes are

not merely administrative but are designed to enhance the effectiveness, clarity and functionality of our laws, ultimately reducing regulatory burdens on the people of New South Wales. The bill reflects the Minns Government's ongoing commitment to legislative reform that is not only responsive to change but also forward-looking, particularly in our increasingly digital world.

Schedule 1 makes minor amendments. These are not insignificant changes; they are refinements that enhance the precision and relevance of the laws we administer. Schedule 1.1 amends the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 to simplify the process for dealing with the distribution of assets for associations that have been involuntarily cancelled. By removing the referral to section 65, this amendment allows for a more efficient and straightforward process, reducing unnecessary delays and complications. Schedule 1.2 introduces a significant clarification in the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999. It ensures that a person is not entitled to a progress payment for construction work unless they are suitably insured and authorised to undertake that work. This amendment closes a loophole in the existing legislation and serves as an additional deterrent against unlawful building practices. It underscores the importance of compliance and the Government's commitment to maintaining high standards in the construction industry.

Schedules 1.3 and 1.5 address inconsistencies in the application of the Licensing and Registration (Uniform Procedures) Act 2002, particularly in the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991, and the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003. The amendments align these laws with other NSW Fair Trading licence regimes, ensuring consistency and fairness across different sectors. Schedule 1.4 corrects terminology in the Community Land Management Act 2021. The replacement of incorrect references to common property with association property ensures that the Act accurately reflects the intended legal distinctions and provides clearer guidance for stakeholders.

Schedule 1.6 relates to the Fair Trading Act 1987. This schedule clarifies the period referenced concerning commercial agent licences, ensuring the legislation's intent is accurately reflected. Additionally, this amendment expands the capabilities of the Government's FuelCheck app, a vital tool for consumers as the adoption of electric vehicles accelerates. The inclusion of charging costs in the app will provide users with more comprehensive information, supporting informed decision-making as we transition to a more sustainable future. Schedule 1.8 to the bill addresses the Home Building Act 1989, updating references to qualifications required for tradesperson and supervisor certificates. These amendments ensure that the certifications align with current industry standards, particularly in specialised areas such as medical gas pipeline systems. That is crucial for maintaining the integrity and safety of our building industry.

Schedule 1.9 to the bill makes pragmatic adjustments to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013. By removing the distinction between new and second-hand boats in the exemption for motor dealer licences, this amendment reduces the regulatory burden on businesses and simplifies compliance requirements. Schedule 1.10 introduces the use of electronic signatures in the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996. This is a welcome modernisation, reflecting the growing importance of digital processes in everyday transactions. It not only aligns with current business practices but also provides greater flexibility for both consumers and businesses. Schedule 1.11 amends the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to streamline the governance of the Rental Bond Board. The Fair Trading Commissioner is now the designated chairperson of the board, and provisions are made for the deputy to exercise the chairperson's functions when necessary. That change simplifies the administration of the board and ensures continuity in its operations.

Schedule 1.13 includes a practical update to the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015, requiring electronic lodgement of court orders supporting plan registration. This amendment aligns the Act with modern practices, reducing the need for manual processes and enhancing efficiency. A critical amendment in schedule 1.14 addresses the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. It clarifies the scope of the building bond scheme, ensuring that all relevant parts of a building, including those not within the strata scheme but essential to its function, are covered. That change is particularly important given the increasing prevalence of mixed-use developments where shared facilities often complicate responsibilities and liabilities. Schedule 1.17 brings consistency to the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998 by standardising licence durations. This amendment ensures that all applicants, regardless of experience, have the opportunity to apply for licences of varying durations, promoting fairness and reducing unnecessary barriers to entry.

Schedule 2 details the dissolution of the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation and the Building Insurers' Guarantee Fund. This is a necessary step following the finalisation of claims related to the collapse of HIH and FAI insurance companies. With no new claims since 2018, the dissolution allows for the transfer of remaining assets to the NSW Self Insurance Corporation, simplifying the administration and closure of this chapter in our State's insurance history.

Schedule 3 makes important updates to various Acts to reflect recent machinery of government changes. These amendments ensure that the legislative framework accurately reflects the current structure of government, preventing future confusion and ensuring smooth administrative processes. The Better Regulation Legislation

Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024 is a testament to the Government's commitment to maintaining a legislative framework that is both modern and effective. By addressing inconsistencies, closing loopholes and updating outdated provisions, the bill ensures that our laws remain relevant and capable of serving the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to a number of special guests who have joined us today. First, I acknowledge the Consul-General of Peru in Sydney, Jose Ortiz. We are pleased to have you here, Consul-General. I look forward to seeing you around soon. I also welcome some school leaders from Charlton Christian College, who are from Lake Macquarie. It is lovely to have them here.

I also warmly welcome guests of the member for Blacktown, including Peter Laszlo Nagy, who is the Consul and the Head of Post of the Consulate of Hungary. I had the pleasure of meeting you earlier, and I look forward to seeing you again after question time. I welcome to the Chamber students and teachers from the Precious Blood Ladies' College in the Cooper gallery, guests of the member for Lane Cove, who are visiting from Hong Kong. It is also good to see the member for Lane Cove in the Chamber.

I also welcome guests of the member for Rockdale: Sasha Gale, Agata Rynkiewicz, Kieran Gleeson, Helen Nim and Stace Fishwick. I acknowledge the guest of the member for North Shore, Natalia Scheidegger. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Wollondilly in the Cooper gallery: Shayley McCracken, and students from the Wollondilly Anglican College, who are participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program at the Parliament. I welcome the guest of the member for Leppington, Kingsley Teng. I acknowledge the guest of the member for Liverpool, Orshina Korko. Welcome to you all. I extend a special welcome to everybody who did not get a mention.

#### *Members*

#### **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF EPPING**

#### **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF HORNSBY**

#### **Issue of Writ**

**The SPEAKER (11:04):** Further to yesterday's announcement regarding the resignation of the member for Epping and the declaration of the seat to be vacant, I inform the House that, consequent to advice received from the Electoral Commission and consultation with relevant stakeholders, I wrote to the acting Electoral Commissioner, Dr Matt Phillips, advising him of my intention to issue the writs on 27 September 2024 for by-elections to be held on Saturday 19 October 2024 in the electorates of Hornsby and Epping.

#### *Question Time*

#### **NAPLAN RESULTS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:05):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Given the increase in the number of students in the lowest NAPLAN band under the Minister's watch, why is the Minister telling parents today that these results are "promising"?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:06):** I will gladly answer the question from the member for Dubbo on this important issue and take members through the NAPLAN results released today. It is great to finally see that members opposite are taking an interest in education. They had 12 years to properly fund education in this State, but we will ignore that.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** After a couple of majorly difficult years and a decade of under-investment by members opposite when they were in government, as well as their mates in Canberra when they were in government—

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Ask the teachers about that.



**Ms PRUE CAR:** The member for Vacluse can talk to teachers any day.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Coffs Harbour that he is on one call to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** After a decade of under-investment, the Government has now begun the work of turning the tanker around that we inherited from members opposite.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We have promising NAPLAN results—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Dubbo. The member for Canterbury will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The question was fairly specific: Why is the Minister telling parents that today's NAPLAN results are "promising"?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has not yet been directly relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I will give an explicit answer. We are telling parents and the people of New South Wales that it is promising that New South Wales is first, or equal first, in most subject test areas in most years.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Our concern as a government is that we need to do better in the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly in years 3 and 5 reading. Let me tell members opposite what the Government is doing that they refused to do.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We are rolling out phonics education to teach kids how to read. We have rolled out a new curriculum that is about explicit teaching.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We have rolled it out in public preschools to get to kids as they begin their education before their transition. We are recruiting teachers after members opposite left us with 3,000 vacancies. We are doing everything possible to turn this ship around after we were left with the most under-invested public education system in the country. We are turning it around, bit by bit.

### WELCOME EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:09):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Government's initiatives to encourage essential workers into the regions?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:09):** I thank the member for South Coast for her question. It is a really good question. I refer the member and members in the Chamber today to the New South Wales Government's Welcome Experience, which is a pilot program being rolled out for essential workers in New South Wales to encourage them to go to regional New South Wales. It helps workers in health, aged care, early childhood, disability support and emergency services. It says, "If you're thinking about relocating, sometimes it might be intimidating to move to a new community, particularly if you have children. This is a program that gets you connected. It gives you access to logistical support, housing, child care and education options, and also makes connections for things that you might not necessarily think about from a big government department—things like social, sporting and cultural groups."

The program is working. So far it has helped 511 essential workers relocate and settle into their new communities: 224 from the health workforce, 84 educators and 35 from the NSW Police Force, who are desperately needed in regional New South Wales. I refer members to the case of Amy Loomes, who moved to Walgett with her family in 2023. The Welcome Experience helped the family settle into the local community and assisted Amy's husband, Casey, to secure a local carpentry job. Sean and Emily Kay of Muswellbrook are another example. Paramedic Sean and secondary teacher Emily—oftentimes you find essential workers and public servants marry each other; if we can get two for one, that is fantastic—moved to Muswellbrook with their dog, Ghost. The Welcome Experience helped them secure a rental property. With rental vacancy rates at record lows, little things like that—logistical help—can make a major difference.

As a result of the successful pilot program, the Government believes the trial is working and I can announce that we are lifting and enlarging the Welcome Experience from eight local government areas to 52 local government areas across regional New South Wales. It is just one of many initiatives the New South Wales

Government is rolling out in regional communities. I note there was a good question the other day from the member for Ballina about fire ants. She is interested in biosecurity and primary industries and our agricultural sector. The Government is investing \$945 million to protect against biosecurity threats in regional New South Wales. It was an important question. Yesterday National Party members got the run of questions because Speako was off. They asked two questions about the Sydney Metro, one question about a policy we have reversed and one question about why they had to work on Fridays. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will be heard in silence.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** You wait your whole life if you are a National Party leader to get the run of questions, and you ask two on the metro and why we have to work on Fridays. But when it comes to biosecurity threats, the threats in regional New South Wales have been serious for a long period of time.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Coffs Harbour that he is on one call to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I refer members to an article from the *Wellington Times* in 2014 entitled, "Radio personality with an itchy problem". It says:

It was a biting problem that got out of hand for local ABC radio personality Dugald Saunders—who was recently infected with a bout of fleas.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Port Macquarie rises on a point of order.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with the question about the welcome pack. It is absolutely irrelevant.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is giving a significantly elaborate answer, but he was directly relevant earlier.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** He said:

At first I didn't notice, and then suddenly they were very itchy, like mosquito bites gone viral. Unfortunately, Mr Saunders blamed the family cat for the outbreak. It continued:  
He didn't think fleas were a human problem - it was just something the pets got, but following a ... bout of rain ... the cat brought them inside.

Guess who is upset about that attack on cats? There is another Lib-Nats split.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Tamworth rises on a point of order.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with the question. It is a personal attack on members on this side of the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time. I just ruled on that exact point of order. The Premier will continue his answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** You cannot knock cats and expect to get on with the modern Liberal Party. Scratch the surface and the National Party are nowhere on regional issues and the New South Wales Government is itching to get to the bush.

### NAPLAN TARGETS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:14):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Pears cost \$4 per kilogram. Ben buys 4.1 kilograms—sorry, Mr Speaker, wrong question. I will be clearer.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, particularly those on the Government front bench, will come to order. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. Members will come to order so we can hear the question from the member for Hawkesbury. The member for Londonderry will come to order. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. All members will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will ask her question in silence. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Today's NAPLAN results show that more students are failing to meet national standards under her Government. Will the Minister explain to families why she has scrapped school-based NAPLAN targets?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:16):** I will gladly answer the question and I look forward to answering the next one. I am going to answer the question very explicitly. We have not scrapped NAPLAN targets. Let me give those opposite an education on this matter. The way that NAPLAN is reported across the country has recently changed. The bands have changed to different descriptions. So what we are doing from next year—once we gather two years of data—is we will have system-level targets that are related to the data collected from this year's and last year's NAPLAN.

Like jurisdictions across the country, we need two years of that NAPLAN data because you cannot compare apples with oranges. You cannot compare them with pears either. You cannot compare this year's results with the bands from two years ago because they are measured differently. If those opposite did the homework that they were prescribed, they would see that that has changed across the country. NAPLAN is a Commonwealth requirement. That is how it has been reported to New South Wales parents, Queensland parents, Victorian parents and parents in the Northern Territory. But I can tell members what we are doing in public education. We have invested record funding into public education. We are turning around the disaster that those opposite left us. There is a reason I go to schools and teachers say that the shadow Minister was the worst education Minister in New South Wales history.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will be heard in silence.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was: Will the Minister explain to families why she has scrapped school-based NAPLAN targets? It is not about what she thinks she has done and delivered.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I clearly answered the question. We need two years of new NAPLAN data on the new measurements in order to create the targets for schools and system-level targets. I am looking at the member for Hawkesbury and answering the question explicitly because she asked the question again. We really do have significant literacy problems in New South Wales. We really do have significant comprehension problems in New South Wales. The Government is rolling out a new curriculum, rolling out and mandating explicit teaching, getting more teachers in classrooms, paying teachers more and turning around the disaster that the Opposition left us. Next year the Government will have new targets based on the NAPLAN data that is collected over two years.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Kellyville to order for the first time. Opposition frontbench members, especially those who are on calls to order, will cease interjecting. I remind the member for Dubbo that he is on two calls to order—although he was quite good during the last answer. Members who behave in a disorderly manner will be removed from the Chamber.

#### PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (11:20):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to improve education outcomes in New South Wales public schools?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:20):** I thank the member for Strathfield for this important question. I believe his mother was a long-serving teacher. It seems to be NAPLAN day in the New South Wales Parliament. Of course, NAPLAN is required of us by the Commonwealth Government. It provides a snapshot in time for those students who sit the NAPLAN test across the country. I have been very honest this morning, so I am not sure why the Opposition is searching for a gotcha moment. I have been very transparent with the people of New South Wales. These NAPLAN results show the enormous educational challenges in New South Wales. Of course, I say to those hardworking teachers in our public schools—and this is really important because members of the Government believe in supporting them—that today's results are about what we need to do as a system to support those teachers to lift every child in their care.

Those teachers go to work every day and they try to get every child to be better tomorrow than they were yesterday. That is what the Government aims to achieve. That is what gets Government members out of bed every morning. Of course, the results overall—I will be very clear about this for the benefit of everyone listening,

including those opposite—are that students are doing well. We must acknowledge the incredible work of our expert practitioners in the classrooms who have made that happen. Some 81 per cent of year 3 students had strong or exceeding results in writing, 70 per cent of years 5 and 7 students had strong or exceeding results in numeracy, and New South Wales ranked first or equal first in most subjects and year levels. But there are areas that need our urgent attention.

Opposition members must listen to what I am saying because I am agreeing with them: There are areas that need our urgent attention. There are gaps that must be closed. There are gaps in outcomes between higher and lower socioeconomic status students and students from the city and the bush. Labor acknowledges that. That is why we came to government. The Opposition was in government for 12 years and this is its legacy! This is what the Opposition left us. To quote Kamala Harris, these results did not fall out of a coconut tree. This happened in context. Opposition members left us with this mess. This is their legacy to this generation of kids. The Government is focused on lifting outcomes. Government members are rolling out the curriculum and mandating explicit teaching because the evidence shows that that is how kids learn.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Opposition members never had the insight to mandate explicit teaching even though every single education expert said that that is the way kids learn. [*Extension of time*]

I am surprised that Opposition members groaned at the granting of an extension of time because they seem to be very interested in education. I am happy to keep talking about this most important job that we have. The Government is rolling through every single possible reform in order to give our kids a better chance. This year we have started with 20 per cent fewer teacher vacancies. Let us remind ourselves that the record number of teacher vacancies under the former Government was 3,200. Would any fair-minded person think that that—which we know resulted in 10,000 merged and cancelled classes every day—does not have an impact on learning and outcomes? Of course it does! Those kids missed out on the magic of a teacher in the classroom. Those kids missed out and that is what Opposition members did.

This Government is turning it around. We have almost halved those vacancies. Opposition members have no right to ask questions about public schools. The absolute disaster that they created in public schools has left the Government with a recovery job that is like turning around a tanker. To ensure that we invest in these reforms at scale, we need the Commonwealth Government to join us on our project.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Tamworth to order for the second time.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Government members have lifted public school funding by \$481 million. We need the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Government to join us on our project to roll out small group tutoring and early intervention, and to get our kids on the starting line in a fairer way. Opposition members know of the legacy they left the Government with. Government members wake up every day feeling very proud to turn that ship around for our children.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time. On behalf of the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, I welcome Tony Bear from the Police Association of New South Wales and thank him for his work.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (11:26):** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. There are concerns in my community and regional New South Wales that the Biodiversity Conservation Act has been a brake on housing development, while at the same time doing little to protect the environment. What assurances will the Minister give that the Government's proposed changes to the Act will allow for the more effective delivery of new homes across New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:26):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. In July I was invited to and warmly welcomed at a round table on housing issues in his electorate. I acknowledge the member's support for the Government's planning and housing reforms, which are aimed at getting people into more homes. The member for Wagga Wagga is a builder for his community, not a blocker—unlike Opposition members. I thank and acknowledge business and community leaders for the frankness with which we discussed those housing pressures, especially Deputy Mayor Amelia Parkins. I wish her every success in the upcoming local government elections. Wagga Wagga and surrounds are experiencing significant investments in a range of projects, and the labour force associated with those projects is naturally putting pressure on the housing market in the region.

I advise the House that Government members agree with the member for Wagga Wagga and share his concern that the current Biodiversity Offsets Scheme is not working. The Government is reforming the

Biodiversity Offsets Scheme to improve environmental protections, deliver certainty for housing and infrastructure projects, and reduce the regulatory burden for low-risk development. That will fulfil a key election commitment of the Government to fix the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. The former Government introduced a complex, opaque and uncertain system that proponents and communities have no confidence in. We aim to bring transparency, clarity and certainty for all users, and to make sure the scheme is doing what it is intended to do.

As part of the Government's reforms, proponents will be required to focus on avoiding environmental harm early on. This will ensure that impacts and risks are known to proponents at the very beginning of any development rather than a couple of years down the track, and it will also avoid unexpected costs and delays on projects. The reforms will not impact on and are consistent with the delivery of the Government's housing targets. For regional New South Wales that target was set at 55,000 homes over the coming five years. The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme does not apply to infill development with no biodiversity value, such as areas around the Transport Oriented Development Program, and substantial greenfield residential developments like the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

The growth centres for north-west and south-west Sydney will not be impacted as they have already met their biodiversity assessment requirements. Other regional housing developments that have undergone or are undergoing biodiversity certification are also unaffected by this reform. Importantly, these changes are not happening overnight. There will be transitional arrangements so that applications moving through the planning system are not impacted. Industries and the community will be consulted as the Government moves through the reform process. The Government's reforms will also provide flexibility for regional development. [*Extension of time*]

We will allow the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme to be switched off for local development in exceptional circumstances, such as following natural disasters. We will review the application and regulatory burden of the scheme for small-scale local development that will support regional housing and biodiversity outcomes. The Government will consult across government agencies, with the community and with stakeholders on the development of the associated regulations. While the Government's reforms are strengthening biodiversity outcomes, some flexibility is still necessary to support key government priorities for housing, renewable energy and critical infrastructure. The reforms will provide a foundation for ongoing support for transparent, rigorous offsetting and a well-functioning biodiversity credit market. So I can assure the member for Wagga Wagga the Government's reforms are aimed at cleaning up the chaos and confusion left behind by those opposite on the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and delivering the housing we need across the State.

#### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:30):** My question is addressed to the great deliverer, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to deliver more homes across the State sooner?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:31):** I thank the member for Blacktown for the question and for giving the Deputy Premier a bit of a break from the questions today. It will give the member for Hawkesbury time to work out which question she will ask next, if she can work that out herself. Speed and quality are two of the key elements needed to address the housing crisis in New South Wales and make more homes available and affordable. That is why the Government has moved quickly to introduce planning reforms to support more building development, committed to the biggest social housing build in the history of New South Wales, undertaken a comprehensive audit of government land to identify surplus land for housing, and introduced fundamental reforms to the rental system to end no-grounds evictions. The Government is also strengthening the Building Commission NSW to ensure oversight of construction quality.

In efforts to build better homes and better communities, the Government has also embarked on an international design competition to develop a new pattern book of designs for low-rise and mid-rise apartment buildings of up to six storeys. Of course, this is not the first design competition embarked on in New South Wales. In 1956 the great Labor Premier Joseph Cahill announced a design competition for another house, with which Sydney has become synonymous, the Opera House. Despite some criticism at the time, the international designs submitted produced a great outcome for Sydney: a house that everyone loves.

It is not the first time a pattern book has been used in New South Wales, either. The first one dates back to Mrs Macquarie, and at one stage they used to be so common that you could take designs for your home out of the pages of Women's Weekly. In fact, when buying a block of land and a basic design for a house, many first home buyers across New South Wales today are doing something not all that different from buying from a pattern book of designs. In fact, the unique and much-loved design of these homes often means that they are now part of heritage conservation areas, the areas the Opposition is so desperate to protect at all costs.

While the Opera House design competition attracted 230 entries, the pattern book design competition has almost as many: 212 entries. Some 171 expressions of interest were submitted by professional architects and 41 from architecture students who are involved in this competition; 176 were homegrown entries and 36 were from international entrants. The entries will help to design the future of housing in New South Wales. It has sparked strong interest from designers and architects the world over. Our jury of renowned designers and architects, led by the Government Architect NSW, is now undertaking the challenging but exciting task of creating a shortlist of entrants for different categories. The Government is walking the talk on this one too, with sites already committed from Homes NSW, Landcom and Sydney Olympic Park, where final designs will be built, allowing people to see the designs for themselves. *[Extension of time]*

The pattern book will also be matched by an accelerated approval pathway so that these well-designed homes are built more quickly. Speaking of patterns, members opposite are stuck in their old pattern of blocking housing. As members know, they are attached to the idea of blocking housing. I noticed something when I did the strangest thing and looked at the upper House's business paper today. It is a bit scant up there. But finally the Opposition has brought its anti-housing Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Disallowance of Transport Oriented Development SEPP) Bill 2024 to debate, though only for an hour. Opposition members do not really want to discuss it. They want to hide from it and not point out that this bill would be the triumph of nimbyism over housing outcomes in New South Wales.

Members will notice that again it happened while the Leader of the Opposition is away. What does that say? While the cat is away, The Nationals will play. Is this the start of some sort of leadership bid fermenting and bubbling away? The nimbys are rising to the top in their anti-housing quest, making sure that Sydney is a place with no grandchildren, where people cannot afford homes, where businesses cannot keep workers they need, where people in the care economy have to travel hours across town to get to and from work. That is the Sydney they really want.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Members opposite are yelling out support of it. "Yes," they are saying, "Bring that sort of Sydney on." They hate young people getting an opportunity for housing. They hate well-designed housing. They hate that we on this side have a pattern book and people from around the world are more interested in being part of the housing future of Sydney and New South Wales than members opposite are. People in the United Kingdom, the United States and around the world are more interested in homes in Sydney and New South Wales than members opposite. It says everything about them and everything about us, that we are getting on with building more homes.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:36):** Mr Speaker, you may have an inkling of what this question is about. My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Given that one in three students in New South Wales has failed to meet the basic benchmarks in this year's NAPLAN, how does the Minister justify ripping more than \$150 million out of schools' budgets this year, when students clearly need more support?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:36):** I am disappointed that it was not the original question, but I say in answer to the member for Albury's important question that I do not know how many times I can say this in a different way. We on this side have put record funding into public schools.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Macquarie will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Let me repeat that: We have put record funding into public schools. We have increased the funding to public schools by \$481 million. We have put more funding into public schools than the Coalition ever did in government. We have lifted the Schooling Resource Standard to 75 per cent, three years earlier than those opposite had committed to.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** What is that \$481 million going to? That money is going to many things, to ensure we turn around their legacy of underfunding the public education system. That money is going to ensuring that we get teachers into the classrooms, not just recruiting them but also stopping them from leaving, putting them in vacancies, even seriously doing the difficult work with executive teachers and giving them more teaching. We are looking at absolutely everything to put teachers in the classroom. We are investing in small-group tutoring. We are investing in public preschools.

The important thing to say about that with early literacy is that the transition to kindergarten is vital for those foundational literacy and numeracy results. We are building the schools where they are needed, where those

opposite consistently refused to do so. The member for Hawkesbury continues to say she has no idea why they did not build a school at Box Hill. I do not know why they do not understand the equation.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The extra \$481 million is an addition. It is not a subtraction. We have put more money into public schools because we believe in them.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We have started the year with 20 per cent fewer vacancies. We see from today that our results are stable. In fact, in most test areas and year levels we are ranked first or equal first. I have acknowledged very clearly in the House and this morning to the media on every radio station that we have gaps to close. We are closing them. We are closing the gaps between the city and the bush. The Auditor-General said the previous Government was a disgrace; it did nothing for country schools. We are turning that around. Please ask me every day about education because the Opposition's record is absolutely woeful.

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

### NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:40):** I also give our hardworking Deputy Premier a break and address my question to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the Minns Labor Government to strip back red tape to rebuild nightlife and vibrancy across the State?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (11:40):** I thank the member for Liverpool for her question. I will save the House—unlike the shadow Minister, I will not sing for members. I note the member's strong support for creating a more vibrant south-west Sydney. This Government has a major vision for Sydney and New South Wales: to make New South Wales number one again when it comes to having a vibrant, diverse and inclusive night-time economy with commonsense regulations that support communities and businesses, not hinder them.

When we came to office in March 2023 a legacy of lockouts and lockdowns had cost our State dearly. Red tape was stifling a vibrant night-time economy. Prior to March 2023 we had lost over half of our licensed music venues in New South Wales. We had also lost creative workers. While other capital cities reported significant growth in the number of working artists, musicians, writers and performers between 2011 and 2021, in New South Wales we went backwards. We lost the easy ability for people to walk between restaurants, bars and shows in their area to get a bite to eat late at night or hear local performers or catch up with friends over a drink or even a coffee.

This is why in November 2023 we announced a package of reforms aiming to restore the vibrancy of New South Wales and grow our night-time economy in sensible ways, while reducing red tape. As part of the first stage of those reforms we changed the planning and liquor laws to save the music and cultural venues we have and to make it easier to build more. As a result of these reforms, live performance venues now have two hours of additional trading and an 80 per cent reduction in their liquor licence fee. We have also changed the laws around sound and moved to a more simplified and streamlined sound regime for licensed venues overseen by Liquor and Gaming NSW. Now a single neighbour moving next door to a venue cannot run a campaign of complaints to multiple regulators and have the venue shut down.

We have changed the rules around outdoor and street activation so that music, culture and entertainment can extend outdoors more easily and more often. It makes sense that we can celebrate and socialise outdoors as much as possible in a responsible way. Since we switched over to the new regime on 1 July we have had a positive response from communities and venues. Plus, as a result of our reforms, we have more than doubled the number of live music or performance venues registered. [*Extension of time*]

The Hon. John Graham, MLC, and I visited the Rising Sun Workshop in Newtown. The Rising Sun Workshop is a wonderful example of an innovative hospitality venue that incorporates a do-it-yourself motorbike workshop downstairs and a cafe, restaurant and bar upstairs. These are the sorts of places that build both communities and vibrancy. Rising Sun Workshop director Nick Smith told us these changes have proved a great boost for his venue, particularly for instigating live music opportunities. That is why we are releasing the beginning of the next stage of the Government's vibrancy reforms. Today we have announced that for venues with simple outdoor dining on footpaths and sidewalks a blanket condition on their licences forcing people to be seated while drinking will be removed for new applications. This means that in future the simple approval pathway under the Liquor Act for outdoor dining will no longer stipulate that a patron must be sitting down to consume alcohol.

This is part of our crusade to strip back red tape that is stifling our local venues and help restore nightlife and vibrancy across the State. This is about commonsense regulations, bringing vibrancy back to our streets, suburbs and towns in a safe, inclusive way. As we travel around we talk to different venues. They are appreciating that finally they have a government back on their side, a government that wants to do things for them and not stop them. We are getting on with the job and we will continue to deliver on our commitments for a more sensible, vibrant, diverse night-time economy for the people of New South Wales, and we will make New South Wales once again the place to come to.

### **BELUBULA RIVER WATER CONTAMINATION**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:45):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given reports of the detection of foam containing PFAS, with one landowner saying, "This stuff is coming down the size of bathtubs and I've never, ever seen that before", will he assure communities along the Belubula and those below the confluence of the Belubula and Lachlan rivers that their water is safe to drink?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:46):** In all honesty, I need to get to the circumstances of those admissions. I am not sure what landowners the member for Cootamundra is speaking about or where the locations are, and I do not want to speak without understanding the circumstances as per the testing regime in those particular areas. Perhaps I could collect that information from the member after question time. PFAS is an issue that we have been dealing with across New South Wales. The Minister for Disability Inclusion will tell you that is the situation in Port Stephens. The fire retardant used at the air base in the Hunter has been an issue for a long time. I do not pretend it is an easy chemical to pick up. In some cases, it has been described as a forever chemical. We have a strong, robust, independent regulator in place that independently assesses water quality across New South Wales. I think the public can have confidence in that system.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** But, Chris, we know about this. How come you don't know about it?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Hang on a second, I come up here in good faith and say can you provide me with the information. If you are not prepared to do that and you want to play politics with it, that is what we expect from the National Party. But if you want to give me the information, I am happy to look into it.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier has concluded his answer. I was about to have the member for Tamworth removed from the Chamber. The Premier has saved him. I will not put up with such behaviour.

### **GOODSAM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:47):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the Minns Labor Government to make lifesaving automated external defibrillators more accessible across the State?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:47):** I thank the hardworking member for Shellharbour, who is part of the Illawarra team. She has been a terrific advocate not just for the new hospital that is starting to take shape but also for the first ever trauma recovery centre that is in place to help women escaping domestic violence. We have an important announcement today. Many members may have heard about GoodSAM. GoodSAM is an opportunity for people across the community who do not have medical experience but are willing to give CPR at a time of need, particularly when someone is experiencing cardiac arrest.

All that happens is when a 000 call is made, if someone has registered as a GoodSAM and the person experiencing a heart attack or cardiac arrest is nearby, the phone will ping and there will be an opportunity for that person to attend as quickly as possible to start CPR. Why is that important? It is because with cardiac arrest for every minute that a person does not get treated their chance of survival drops by around 7 per cent to 10 per cent. The faster we get someone to perform CPR, the better. We already have around 7,300 volunteers across New South Wales who are on the GoodSAM volunteer program. I thank each of those people for their support.

This morning I met with Steve. Steve had a cardiac arrest in south-west Sydney recently. After the 000 call was made, a ping went off to a local, who happened to be a doctor, registered with GoodSAM. That doctor went to Steve's residence, where his son had already spent 15 minutes doing CPR. He immediately gave him a break and continued CPR. He was alerted that there was an automated external defibrillator [AED] at a nearby school and he told the son to go and get the defibrillator. He put that on Steve and, within three cycles, Steve was brought back to life.



Thirty people have been saved through the GoodSAM program. Twelve of those have been saved by linking them with an AED. Our announcement today makes it even easier because the 4,000-odd AEDs that we have, with a combined registry across New South Wales about where they are located, will now be linked to a GoodSAM volunteer. So if a person in south-western Sydney—let us say in Campbelltown—gets a ping on their phone and they go to that person—[*Extension of time*]

They will be able to see immediately, in real time, where the closest AED is, and will be able to send someone—as was the case with Steve—to go and get that AED while the GoodSAM volunteer continues to do CPR. I cannot stress enough the importance of this. I encourage every member not only to join up but also to encourage others in their community. They might be surf lifesavers, teachers, nurses or people willing to do CPR and help out. You do not have to be an expert in first aid to get on GoodSAM. In fact, quite the opposite. When that 000 call is made, a hardworking call-taker and paramedic will guide you through the process. The likelihood of survival is significant the quicker someone experiencing cardiac arrest can get the treatment they need and deserve.

Before members leave this evening, let us make sure that we all log on and register as a GoodSAM. Hopefully it never happens, but if people do get a ping and are in a position to respond, as was the case with Steve, it can literally save a life. Steve is here today because of his son and because of the GoodSAM responder. We are now linking the technology, the AEDs and where they are located, with the GoodSAM volunteers to make sure that we give people the best chance of survival. Over 9,000 people in New South Wales suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. It is significant. It is often catastrophic. We are trying to make sure that we can give those people the best chance of survival. I thank the 7,300-odd volunteers who have registered and I encourage everyone here to get their communities involved.

#### CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (11:52):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Previously in this Parliament she opposed stronger industrial relations laws to empower the Minister to appoint administrators to unions because it "could have triggered the dismissal of the leadership of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union". Is the Minister only supporting this action because the public is now aware of the CFMEU's corruption?

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I will have members removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject. The member for Goulburn will come to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:54):** In terms of the first part of the question, I am not quite sure, but the Government is taking very strong action. We have indicated the action that we are taking. I hope that those opposite support our bill. It is coming up for debate after question time and I am looking forward to hearing from those opposite. At this stage I have not heard whether they support the bill. This is a very strong bill about putting forward an administrator to the CFMEU Construction and General Division.

We have taken very important action: We have suspended the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division's affiliation with the Labor Party to stop any donations or affiliation fees. We have asked the Fair Work Ombudsman to review enterprise bargaining agreements in New South Wales to which the CFMEU is party, referring all allegations of inappropriate behaviour on New South Wales construction sites to the construction compliance unit within the industrial relations branch of the Premier's department. We have introduced strong legislation with respect to appointing an administrator and are working very strongly with the Federal Government. I urge the member for Miranda to pick up the phone to her friends in the Federal Parliament and tell them to pass the Federal legislation and stop playing games. If they pass the legislation, we will have an administrator in asap.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The question was very specifically around whether the Minister is only supporting this action because the public is now aware of the CFMEU's corruption whereas on *Hansard* the Minister previously supported an opposite position.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. It is impossible for the Minister to answer the question in the way the member would like. The Minister has been directly relevant to the question. She may continue her answer.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I hope that the legislation we put forward will be supported. I expect those opposite to support it and to pick up the phone after question time and tell the Federal Opposition to support the legislation that Labor is putting up in Canberra and in New South Wales. If the Opposition supports our legislation, there will be an administrator by the end of the week.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I call the member for Heathcote. The member for Tamworth will come to order while the member asks her question.

### DISABILITY SERVICES

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (11:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Disability Inclusion. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's commitment to meaningful change following the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability?

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (11:57):** I thank the member for Heathcote for her great question and I acknowledge her longstanding support for people with disability and their families in her community. The New South Wales Government is seizing the opportunity, following the disability royal commission, to create meaningful change. We are reshaping the disability service system, increasing inclusion across our communities, to ultimately improve outcomes for people with disability. Two weeks ago we released our Government's initial response to the disability royal commission.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was widening and incredibly complex. Our initial response was shaped by ongoing discussions with people with disability, their families, communities and the disability sector. As Minister, I have listened to their views through various forums, submissions and targeted consultations. We have worked across 16 government agencies to develop the New South Wales response, as well as coordinating with other States and Territories. In our initial response, 95 out of 130 recommendations that are relevant to New South Wales were accepted in full, in principle or in part. We continue to work in partnership with the disability community to develop and refine our final approach to each recommendation.

The New South Wales response also included our first implementation plan, which sets out a path to reform, including recognising the rights and autonomy of people with disability; taking targeted action towards better outcomes for First Nations people; addressing barriers to inclusion and access; and building a strong ecosystem of disability supports and services that are safe and inclusive. I know there remains a lot of anticipation and expectation in the disability community about reform options and the outcomes that they can expect. As Minister for Disability Inclusion, I take my responsibility in this area very seriously.

Looking forward, I am confident knowing that Labor in New South Wales has a strong legacy of building better disability services. It was the previous Labor Government that delivered the Stronger Together reforms, which created a safer, more supported and more inclusive New South Wales for people with disability. It was a Federal Labor government that started the world-leading NDIS, which has changed lives across the nation. It is a legacy that Labor is proud of. But what is the legacy of those opposite? In their 12 years in government they decimated the sections of the public service focused on delivering disability programs, making it impossible to deliver on their own disability inclusion commitments. They privatised the entire disability service sector and treated its workers with utter contempt. *[Extension of time]*

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Those opposite also attempted to defund the entire disability advocacy sector. All members in this place will remember well the fight we had to have even to keep disability advocacy services in this State.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Those opposite then hastily evicted people from large residential centres, forcing some into unsafe living situations without adequate support for their complex disabilities—which, according to the Ombudsman, resulted in premature deaths. Minister after Minister for disability services cycled through the role with little care. Who can ever forget the former Minister who said in budget estimates that for someone with no responsibilities, he was very busy?

The disability community knows that only Labor governments build better disability services in this State—and that is exactly what the Minns Labor Government is doing. Right now we are working with all other States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government to design an ecosystem of supports for people with disability outside the NDIS. We believe co-funded, co-designed and co-commissioned foundational supports could reshape the disability landscape over time and ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the NDIS. This is important work that our Government must get right for people with disability in this State.

As a first step, we have invested more than \$7 million in this year's budget to rebuild the capacity in our departments to coordinate this complex, whole-of-government response across multiple streams of disability

reform. We are bringing back the capacity that those opposite stripped away. As a government, we are unashamedly protecting and promoting the interests of people with disability in New South Wales. Our Government knows we cannot design a disability support ecosystem alone, which is why we are committed to partnering with the disability community to implement our ambitious disability reform agenda. We are working hard across all government agencies because we want to honour the voices of those who shared their stories with the disability royal commission.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Murray. As she makes her way to the table, I note that she is deputy chair of the Parliamentary Friends of CWA. I recognise members of the Country Women's Association who are with us in the gallery today. I thank them for having me at their event this morning. It was lovely to meet them, including my friend from Lake Macquarie.

#### WATER ENTITLEMENTS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:03):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Premier. Across rural New South Wales millions of dollars are laundered through the anonymous buying and selling of water licences. At the same time, unknown foreign entities are buying Australian water without anyone knowing who they are. Will the Premier please support my water register bill in order to fix this mess?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:04):** I thank the member for Murray for her question, her passion and her interest in water issues, particularly in the southern water system, which is in her electorate. I agree with her that there are gaps in the register when it comes to foreign ownership provisions when dealing with water entitlements. It is opaque—and has been for many years. As a result of that, Australian farmers, regulators and those in government who are in charge of ensuring fair markets—and a key aspect of fair markets is a clear understanding of who owns what—have been concerned about it. The Australian Government has established a register of foreign ownership of water entitlements through the Australian Taxation Office, which is a start, but my officials and the Minister for Water have said it does not go far enough. There are significant gaps in the register that mean the need for equal information amongst market participants—which is a key part of having fair markets and ensuring that we do not have market failure—might not be being met.

We have looked at the bill from the member for Murray, and we support it in substance. However, we may have amendments in terms of its practicalities and implementation of the legislation. I understand the Minister for Water is in discussions with the member about that particular water bill. Obviously we need to have discussions with stakeholders in the water industry; it is a big marketplace. Regional economies rely on a safe, accurate and transparent water marketplace, which we have not had for a long time. I know there are real concerns in both the northern and the southern irrigation systems. We may not get to an agreement, but every member of the New South Wales Government acknowledges that the member for Murray is a tough and strong advocate on behalf of the bush—unlike the National Party. It is true, is it not? Nationals members ask about metros and other Sydney-based questions.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Working on Fridays.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** They ask about working on Fridays. When you get a question from the member for Murray it is about regional issues—"What's going on in the bush? What's going on with primary industries? What's going on with agriculture?" The member for Ballina jumps up and says, "I want answers about fire ants." Then we get a question from Dugald about metros and what is happening in Sydney. Perhaps he spends most of his time in the city. I have been listening to Moffee's show on Triple M Coffs Harbour. The member for Murray might want to give me an extension of time because she might be interested in this. She might not be.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I believe there was some coercion by the Premier. I am not sure whether the member for Murray intended to seek an extension.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Mr Speaker, I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** I am sure you do. An additional two minutes is granted. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** On 11 July on Triple M Coffs Harbour—I just happened to be listening to it on the stream; I love Moffee's show—there was an interview with the member for Coffs Harbour.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** It's every week.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I will have to tune in every week. With material like what I am about to read to the House, I do not want to miss it. Moffee goes, "Look, what's going on there? There's been a lot in the news in the last couple of weeks about Wes Fang and the whole thing with Mark Speakman. What's the go?"

**Government members:** There's Wes!

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I note the Hon. Wes Fang is in the Speaker's gallery. I thought he was a myth! You will be interested in this one, Wes.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I ask our friend from the other place to sit down and keep quiet.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Moffee went on:

I mean, Nats obviously being the party for the bush or for regional New South Wales, but is the Liberal leader—I mean, a bloke in Sydney is able to hire and fire the Nats shadow ministry? Is that how it works?

The member for Coffs Harbour replied:

Look, I suppose, in a technical sense, probably yes.

## BUILDING INDUSTRY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:08):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Building. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to improve standards in the building sector, giving renewed confidence to home buyers across the State?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:09):** I thank the member for Prospect for his question and his interest in the very important subject of housing. The Government has made no secret of making housing its number one priority to ensure that people in our community can have accessible, affordable and high-quality housing. That is why we have acted to double down on quality standards across all kinds of housing. As the House knows, last year we created the Building Commission NSW, a single one-stop shop for building quality in New South Wales. We ended the patchwork of regulation that covered housing and gave the Building Commission broader powers over all residential housing in our communities. We changed the law to make it harder for directors to engage in phoenixing activity, which all members know drives down confidence for consumers.

Those changes are already having a significant impact. In the previous financial year, the Building Commission issued more than 440 orders requiring builders to fix poor work on standalone homes; it issued almost 80 orders on apartment buildings; it issued more than 600 infringement notices; and it audited or inspected over 2,000 building sites in the State. Using sophisticated intelligence and data matching, the Building Commission is weeding out the bad players in this sector, who have been giving all the good players a very bad name. For the first time, under this Government the Building Commission is doing that across both class 1 and class 2 builders. We are committed to changing behaviour and lifting the standard for quality building in our State.

While those opposite did not provide the Building Commissioner David Chandler with the broad powers he has today, they did appoint him in the first place. When we came to government, we had a clear set of priorities and we worked closely with David to get them done. We set him on the path and he delivered on each priority. We wanted to set up the Building Commission NSW; we did it in record time. There are now dedicated public servants, over 400 of them, enforcing standards and policing the sector. We wanted to find a resolution to Mascot Towers; that is now done, with no small effort from the commissioner.

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

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Thanks to his work, the owners of Mascot Towers units have been— [*Extension of time*]

As I mentioned, we wanted to find a resolution to Mascot Towers, an issue that had been brewing for so many years, and that has now been done, with no small effort from David and his team. Thanks to that work, the owners of Mascot Towers units have been able to move on after three Premiers and four Ministers for over half a decade. We wanted to give people in New South Wales confidence about building in New South Wales and we are well on that path. I pay tribute to David's dedication and passion for the industry. He is, as he has told *The Sydney Morning Herald*, a very challenging bureaucrat but a tireless public servant. I am enormously proud to say that in my tenure as Minister, David has only resigned once, and it really is to spend more time with his family.

We know it will not be easy to replace Mr Chandler, but that is why we have built a mature sector-wide regulator to carry on his work. It is a testament to the commissioner's work that people across the State want to know how we will ever replace him. The truth is that he is one of a kind. I will be making an announcement about the new Building Commissioner in the coming weeks, but people should not expect a new David Chandler. The new Building Commissioner will not be a one-person regulator. The Building Commissioner will lead a mature

professional regulator made up of hundreds of dedicated staff. This is now a regulator that uses sophisticated data matching and intelligence to target bad players, and it is a regulator that has a presence in regions around the State, including in the Illawarra.

I am proud of the work the Government has done to get to this point, and I hope the commissioner is too. I am looking forward to the next stage of this work. We are now working through the statute books to develop and deliver a single building Act that simplifies and centralises the licensing, enforcement and regulation of the sector. The future of the State is bright. On behalf of the Government and everyone in this House who wants to build better homes, I thank the outgoing commissioner for his great work.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION**

#### **Inquiry**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission has resolved to conduct the 2024 review of annual and other reports of oversighted agencies, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

#### *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: COMMITTEES**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion regarding the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Committees*

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST**

#### **Establishment and Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:15):** I move:

That:

- (1) In accordance with section 60 of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022, a joint select committee, to be known as the Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, be established.
- (2) The joint select committee is to review the Act to determine whether —
  - (a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid; and
  - (b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (3) The review is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after the period of two years from the commencement of this Act.
- (4) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of two years.
- (5) The committee is to consist of eight members, as follows:
  - (a) five Legislative Assembly members; and
  - (b) three Legislative Council members.
- (6) The chair and deputy chair of the committee be elected at the first meeting.
- (7) Mr Alex Greenwich, Dr David Saliba, Mrs Sally Quinell, Ms Donna Davis and Mr Mark Hodges be appointed to serve on such committee as members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (8) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales, and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) The committee will have leave to sit during the sitting or any adjournment of the House.
- (10) At any meeting of the committee four members shall constitute a quorum, but the committee must meet as a joint committee at all times.
- (11) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting that it appoint three of its members to serve on the committee.

The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022 came into effect on 1 July 2022. The parklands estate includes the lands within Centennial Parklands, Callan Park, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill Estate. As the Government continues to implement its housing agenda, it is timely that a review of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act takes place to make sure the objects of the Act continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales. The Government is focused on delivering more diverse and well-located housing for young people, particularly young families. Getting more people into homes through increased density needs to be supported with more quality open space.

Delivering public infrastructure such as public parks is increasingly important for the biodiversity of Sydney, the protection of natural and cultural heritage, and access to open space. The review of the Act will make sure that the parklands estate responds to the diverse needs of the community across metropolitan Sydney. The Government is committed to the improvement of the parklands and will make sure the parklands continue to deliver world-class amenity for current and future generations.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:20):** I speak on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. I am proud that the Minns Labor Government will assist the people of New South Wales by simplifying some of the language in legislation. It has listened to stakeholders and is taking action. Issues had been identified by NSW Fair Trading and the Building Commission NSW during routine departmental review of legislation. Before question time the member for Pittwater was grappling with the reason for the bill coming before the Parliament. I say for his benefit that the bill will introduce amendments to 24 Acts and four regulations to improve the clarity and accuracy of the laws and reduce the regulatory burdens that the previous Government left us with. The proposed amendments in the bill aim to improve accuracy by removing unnecessary, outdated and redundant references; limit misinterpretations by clarifying the intent of legislation; and modernise provisions to create more future-fit laws that support customers by reducing regulatory burden.

The legislation is administered by the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. I thank the Minister for the action that he, his team and departmental staff have taken to work on the bill, which demonstrates the Minns Labor Government's continued commitment to deliver laws that are not only responsive to change but also clear, accurate and reliable. For example, the amendment to section 58 of the Fair Trading Act supports the Government's FuelCheck app. Currently, the FuelCheck app only provides the location of electric vehicle charging stations, but the amendment will allow FuelCheck to be expanded to capture fuller details, including the charging costs at EV stations. With sales of EVs increasing by more than 120 per cent between 2022 and 2023, this amendment will make the FuelCheck app more useful for even more consumers.

Updates will be made to the Home Building Act to ensure that the requisite certifications are accurate and up to date regarding the competency within the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package for the installation and testing of medical gas pipeline systems, which is crucial. Additionally, the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998 will be amended to allow all new tow truck operator licence or tow truck drivers certificate applicants to be granted a drivers certificate for three or five years, rather than only one year. This will provide consistency to licence duration across Fair Trading and ensure that the industry is not disadvantaged. These reforms will reduce unnecessary red tape and improve the operation of laws across multiple industries. The bill before the House proposes amendments that will clarify, update and improve the operation of many of these laws. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:24):** I speak in support of the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. I commend the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading for bringing the bill before the House. The bill makes necessary amendments to further enhance the regulation of the building and construction industry in New South Wales and ensures the continued success of the Government's building reform agenda. In my electorate of Parramatta where the majority of housing growth is taking the form of apartments, many elements of the bill are of great significance to current and future home owners. The significant reforms under the Minns Government's construction industry transformation strategy and the work championed by the NSW Building Commissioner continue to progress. Tangible signs of change are already visible, with returning consumer confidence in the industry.

It is essential that the homes built in New South Wales are designed, constructed and maintained according to rigorous safety, environmental and structural standards. It is crucial that we maintain the highest standards of compliance and effective enforcement to ensure safety, quality and integrity of our built environment. For many people, building or buying a home is the single biggest investment of their lives. The impact on people when things go wrong can take a devastating financial and mental toll. Sadly, in my electorate, far too many buildings have been investigated and found to have construction faults. All members would remember the awful situation of the Opal Tower in Sydney Olympic Park. I note the role that the member for Auburn played as the State member for that area at the time. She worked with the community and with the former Government to find solutions. Devastating situations like that of the Opal Tower have led us to where we are today.

A building regulatory framework must have robust measures to ensure consumers and occupiers of homes are delivered defect-free and compliant buildings. This includes a licensing framework that ensures only those people who are competent and have the relevant experience can carry out home building work. The bill includes a number of small but important amendments to ensure the building licensing framework operates effectively. The bill updates references to certain qualifications required for tradesperson certificates and supervisor certificates for mechanical services and medical gas work, medical gasfitting work and medical gas technical work.

Many members will remember the important changes to laws that were made in this place to introduce a new licensing framework to ensure public safety where medical gases are used. This includes private and public hospitals, dental surgeries and aged-care facilities—places where the safety of patients is vital. Unlike other licensing schemes, the qualification requirements are embedded in the legislation. This presents challenges when the reference training package is updated because updates to the units of competency in the training package may cause references to the relevant units in the Act to become incorrect or outdated.

Earlier today the member for Pittwater mentioned in his contribution to debate that the bill was important, but he felt that we were just treading water and that there were elements of this bill that were just, in his words, "moving deck chairs on the *Titanic*". In light of what people in our communities are experiencing, we are more than merely moving deck chairs on the *Titanic* with the important changes to qualifications that this bill implements. The bill ensures that we have quality controls and that we have the right people doing the right jobs. We are ensuring that there is confidence in the industries that this bill relates to.

The bill will remedy that exact situation with updates made to the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package, which change the title of the reference unit of competency. It will ensure that the Act aligns with the updated training requirements in the training package and support new qualified entrants to the industry at a time when the Government is delivering on a comprehensive suite of housing, infrastructure and health reforms. The bill also removes a redundant reference to a certificate IV in gas fitting, which is not a current valid qualification in New South Wales and does not appear ever to have existed. Removing that reference will avoid confusion about applicable pathways to a licence.

The Home Building Act includes important protections to safeguard home owners when engaging builders to build or renovate their homes. I have seen friends' lives turned upside down and grown men in tears due to the lack of protections in the current system. They have invested their hard-earned money into their home only to find that pieces of the wall and verandahs are falling away due to waterproofing issues. People are facing unbelievable issues in new constructions. The bill ensures that only licensed builders who hold a contractor licence are able to contract with home owners for residential building work. The contractor licence has stronger eligibility requirements than other licence types to ensure that consumers are protected from practitioners at risk of bankruptcy.

Another key protection is the requirement for home building compensation cover for a home owner as a last resort if their builder cannot complete building work or fix defects because they have become insolvent, died, disappeared or had their licence suspended, in certain circumstances. A recent court outcome in relation to the rights of contractors to receive progress payments under security of payment legislation threatens to undermine the operation of those important protections in the Home Building Act at the expense of consumers. In *Sunshine East Pty Ltd v CBEM Holdings Pty Ltd*, the Supreme Court held that a progress claim for residential work under contract is payable even if a contractor is unlicensed and uninsured under the Home Building Act.

While no-one can dispute the importance of contractors being paid fairly and promptly for work they have undertaken, it would be irrational to permit a contractor to benefit from unlawfully undertaking work while unlicensed or uninsured. The bill makes a sensible amendment to section 8 of the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999 to ensure that the important consumer safeguards under the Home Building Act are not compromised. The amendment will clarify the provision to ensure that the right to receive a progress payment for building work is limited to lawful building work. It provides a disincentive to builders carrying out

unlawful work, which is in addition to the powers of Building Commission NSW to commence action against them.

Many members will recall that late last year reforms passed in this place to provide the regulator with the necessary powers to effectively oversee the construction of residential homes in New South Wales. No home owner in New South Wales should move into a brand-new house that has serious defects. The reforms enhanced the essential tools the Building Commission NSW uses to prevent that from occurring by providing comprehensive and wideranging investigation powers with respect to low-rise residences. Inspectors are now able to enter a house under construction, request documents or information, and examine and test building work. In addition, the reforms provide the commission with important powers that enable it to address serious defects through rectification orders that compel developers to fix defects and stop building work where continuing could lead to significant harm to the public or occupiers, including future occupiers, of the building. Those powers are needed to proactively prevent and respond to building defects to restore confidence in the New South Wales construction sector and improve customer confidence in the quality of the buildings in every electorate across New South Wales. The issue is not isolated to one particular area or region of the State. Unfortunately, every electorate faces it. We are ensuring that we find solutions.

By investigating and issuing rectification orders before an occupation certificate is issued, the commission can not only keep first home owners safe but also prevent the burden of dealing with defects being passed on to future owners who may not have all the details of the builders and tradespeople responsible for the defective work. Despite the success of those reforms already being evident, an amendment has been proposed to ensure that there is clarity over the operation of any appeals to a rectification or stop work order. [*Extension of time*]

When the reforms were passed last year, the Government included important protections in the Act to ensure the amendments were procedurally fair. Those protections recognised the impact rectification orders can have on industry and ensured that the use of regulatory powers is subject to ongoing oversight. Parties are given an opportunity to be heard or remedy any wrong before an order is made. In addition, the amendments allow for parties to appeal against the orders, preserving the parties' rights to natural justice and making sure the provisions are balanced. Following the use of those powers over the past six months, it is proposed to enhance the procedural fairness provisions by clarifying how orders will be challenged in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The bill makes the required changes to ensure the legislation appropriately reflects the framing of the NCAT's jurisdiction.

I express my strong support for one final reform. While not introducing any new changes, it is a really important amendment which ensures that our building laws operate as they intended, ultimately benefiting consumers. We know that purchasers of apartments in apartment buildings, which are known as class 2 buildings under the National Construction Code, are in a particularly vulnerable position when handling defects because they often have no involvement in, or control over, the construction of their future homes. They leave it in the hands of design practitioners and builders. Defects within class 2 buildings are often difficult to detect at the time of purchase and are expensive to rectify. Currently, the Strata Schemes Management Act establishes a strata building bond and inspections scheme. That scheme requires developers of new apartment buildings four storeys or higher to lodge a bond of 2 per cent of the contract price of the development prior to the issue of the occupation certificate. The bond is then retained to be available to cover the costs of any rectification works required to address defects identified during the building inspection process.

Since the commencement of the strata building bond and inspections scheme, developments of mixed-use buildings have become an increasingly prevalent housing type. "Mixed-use buildings" refer to buildings that comprise multiple forms of building use, such as apartments over shops or a combined office and residential building. That is very common in your electorate, Temporary Speaker Greenwich, and it is becoming more common in mine. The operation of the scheme is straightforward for standalone apartment buildings, but for mixed-use buildings the Act currently provides that the quantum of the bond is determined by the contract price of the building work for the parts of the building that will be covered by the strata scheme, being strata schemes registered under the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015.

The provision is intended to ensure that work on non-residential components is not included in the calculation of the bond, but it was not intended to prevent the bond from applying to work that is otherwise linked to the strata scheme and for which residents would be liable to pay for service, maintenance or repair. For example, if there is a structural defect in a common car park used by occupiers of an office block and of the apartments above it, the strata scheme would be required to contribute to the costs of repair because it is not only used by the strata scheme but also essential to the structural integrity of the apartment components of the building. Despite that, attempts have been made to push a narrow interpretation of the legislation to minimise the amount of bond a developer lodges by arguing that those parts of the building are not captured by the scheme. The bill includes important changes to put beyond any doubt the intended scope of the scheme and ensure that the strata scheme



enjoys the intended protection provided for by the Act. Many residents in my electorate will be pleased by that. I have been campaigning and advocating for that for a long time.

The bill is critical in supporting the fantastic work that the Building Commission NSW is undertaking to regain consumer confidence in the building industry. It reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to overhauling the building and construction industry by creating a clear line of accountability, improved transparency and better quality of work without compromising consumer interests. This is a sensible, appropriate and necessary bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:38):** I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. The bill does not make overly controversial or complicated changes, but it is a good indication that our Ministers are progressively reviewing and modernising legislation to make it fit for purpose. The bill makes a number of changes. I acknowledge all the Ministers who have proactively and progressively pursued this piece of legislation and brought it before the House. I particularly acknowledge Minister Chanthivong, who, as Minister, has a strong interest in matters of this nature and ensuring that legislation is fit for the future and fit for purpose.

As a parliament, and by extension as a government, we must make sure that legislation in this place is consistent with the needs of industry and that it responds to matters that arise throughout the course of the practices of that industry. More specifically, the amendments in the bill are minor and non-contentious. They are the result of routine and ongoing departmental examination of the legislation. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the ministerial and departmental staff who put a lot of work into the bill. The bill also contains some more significant elements that will be subject to ongoing consultation as part of implementation. As a government, consultation with stakeholders and industry is important, because it means any changes that are brought before the House are consistent with their needs and their expectations.

The proposed amendments aim to improve accuracy by removing unnecessary, outdated and redundant references. Ultimately, they will limit misinterpretation by clarifying the intent of the legislation, modernise provisions and create more future-fit laws, and support customers by reducing regulatory burden. I get a lot of feedback from my electorate about how that burden bogs people down from getting on with their day-to-day lives. I am a massive advocate and a huge supporter of having less burden placed on people and removing red tape. I believe a more fluid process provides better outcomes for industry and that it will make it more efficient and appropriate for consumers and stakeholders engaged in the industry.

When it comes to improving accuracy of legislation, the Government is dedicated to ensuring legislation remains up to date and accurate—for example, by amending the Home Building Act 1989 to remove references to "certificate IV" in gas fitting, which is not a valid qualification in New South Wales anymore, and updating the legislation with the current unit of competency. The bill seeks to tidy up a lot of pieces of legislation to make sure that they remain fit for purpose. A lot of work has gone into the bill. They are not particularly controversial changes, and they are important changes. I again thank the Minister, his team and everyone involved for their efforts in bringing the bill before the House today. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:42):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Mount Druitt, Heathcote, Parramatta, Campbelltown, Willoughby and Pittwater for their contributions to the debate on the Better Regulation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. I will address a number of points made during the debate. The member for Pittwater described the bill as "moving the deckchairs on the *Titanic*". In fact, it is quite the opposite. That comment demonstrates a misunderstanding of these measures, and it is overtly simplistic to dismiss these amendments out of hand. It does help to actually read and understand something before speaking about it.

The changes in the bill will deliver practical benefits and greater legal certainty for the consumers and traders of New South Wales. The member for Pittwater also described the changes to the Rental Bond Board as "jobs for the boys". The changes to the Rental Bond Board are purely for the sake of operational efficiency and flexibility. They will not provide any advantage or material benefit to any current board members or, indeed, to any potential future board members. That just shows the level of misunderstanding from the member for Pittwater. Although the bill before the House makes a range of minor and primarily administrative amendments to various Acts and regulations, it remains a critical piece of legislation. Miscellaneous provision bills are introduced annually as a means for the Government to make legislative change for non-controversial matters. One cannot understate the importance of such bills, as they are an essential tool that allows for the machinery of government to operate as intended.

Schedule 1 to the bill seeks to amend and clarify existing provisions across many laws, as well as update and remove those that are outdated or no longer required. This included two Acts within the portfolio of the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government to remove references to outdated practices. Schedule 2 to the bill deals with amendments relating to the dissolution of the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation and any consequential amendments relating to the now outdated reference of the Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation. Finally, schedule 3 to the bill contains amendments relating to administrative arrangements to reflect recent changes in the machinery of government.

The bill before the House demonstrates this Government's continued commitment to routine and ongoing examination of legislation to ensure that laws are updated, modernised and reduce regulatory burdens. I am confident that the citizens of New South Wales will benefit from the amendments that the bill intends to carry out. I take this opportunity to thank our dedicated departmental officers Jenna Dries, Abby Tozer, Katie Harbon, Diana Holy, Katerina Pavlidis and Warren McAllister for their efforts in bringing the bill to the House. I also thank staff members in my own office—Alicia Sylvester, Ivy Tseng, Laura Gregory and Khamena Zaya—for all their hard work on the bill. 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.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **STRATA MANAGING AGENTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:46):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Strata Managing Agents Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill amends the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 to strengthen the disclosure obligations of strata managing agents, increase transparency for strata owners, and bolster NSW Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement powers. Complementary changes are also proposed to ensure that the Community Land Management Act 2021 remains consistent with the Strata Schemes Management Act.

The Government is acutely aware of the importance of strata living for the people of New South Wales. There are more than 85,000 strata schemes in our State. More than 1.2 million people already live in strata communities in New South Wales. That number is set to grow under the Government's comprehensive plan to build more quality and affordable homes across New South Wales. If the State is to realise the Government's ambitious housing supply targets, the public must have confidence in strata living. Owners' corporations make key decisions on how to upkeep and manage their strata scheme's buildings and common property, often appointing a strata manager to help them run the scheme. Critical to the success of this relationship is owners' corporations having confidence that they can trust their agent is acting in their best interest.

In recent times, troubling instances of strata managing agents taking advantage of strata owners have been highlighted. These include owners' corporations being charged excessive fees when securing strata insurance for their buildings; agents being swayed to buy products from certain companies over others because they get a benefit, such as a commission; and agents using the services of related entities to obtain financial benefits without the knowledge of the owners' corporation. The Government has wasted no time in tightening controls to respond to owners' and the community's concerns. It is taking immediate action to stamp out bad behaviour in the strata sector. The reforms in the bill are the next step in the Government's work to modernise strata and community land laws, address gaps in accountability across the sector, and strengthen enforcement against those who breach their obligations.

Why is this so important? The housing shortage in New South Wales has reached critical levels. To solve it, we need people to have confidence to invest and live in higher density housing that relies on strata schemes. The bill will benefit residents living in strata and community land schemes by imposing stronger and more frequent disclosure requirements on agents; banning agents from receiving a commission for insurance products that an owners corporation secures independently; increasing the maximum penalties and penalty infringement notice amounts for agents' disclosure obligations; and strengthening NSW Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement powers, including introducing a broader enforceable undertaking power.

I now turn to the specific provisions of the bill. There are already some disclosure requirements in the Strata Schemes Management Act and limits on the types of benefits an agent can receive, but the disclosure obligations are piecemeal and very limited. The bill increases transparency for owners' corporations so they have all of the relevant information they need in real time to make informed decisions about the management of their schemes. The bill amends section 57 of the Strata Schemes Management Act to make it clear that the owners' corporation's approval of a commission or training service is to be by a resolution at a general meeting. That is required if the commission or training service is not in line with the agency agreement. I emphasise that that is already the law, but the bill now makes it crystal clear.

Further, the bill will require an agent to provide important information to the owners' corporation at the relevant meeting to ensure that it can make an informed decision. That information includes details about the commission or training service; details about the specific nature of the relationship between the agent and the person providing the commission or training service, such as if they are related companies; details about why the contract is in the best interest of the owners' corporation; and a statement about why the agent believes that they are not violating their obligations under section 11 of schedule 1 to the Property and Stock Agents Regulation 2022. That obligation is that agents are not to accept an appointment to act, or continue to act, for a client if the agent's interests conflict with their client's interests. The new requirement will make agents actively consider their obligations and if they are acting properly. It will also give owners' corporations valuable information that they need to decide if they agree with the agent, or if a different course of action would be better for them.

The bill will amend section 60 of the Strata Schemes Management Act to require agents to disclose more relevant information to the owners' corporation more frequently. In certain circumstances, the strata managing agent will have to give written notice to the owners' corporation about what may be perceived as a conflict of interest before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services. Those circumstances are if an allowable commission or training service is provided under the contract, or if the contract is with a person connected to the agent. Section 7 of the Strata Schemes Management Act sets out when people are "connected" with each other for the purposes of the Act. That includes parent companies and their related entities.

The bill also amends the Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2022 to expand who are connected persons. For example, an agent who is a trustee will be considered connected to the trust's beneficiaries. That will ensure that all relationships that could preference the agent towards another party, such as a certain supplier, must be disclosed. The written notice will have to contain the details I have already described in relation to the amendments to section 57. The reforms mean that owners' corporations will have more up-to-date disclosures about an agent, including where the agent is proposing to use a subsidiary company to maintain the strata scheme's common property. The bill will also require agents to give written notices to the owners' corporation as soon as possible after they find out that they are connected to a supplier of goods or services for the strata scheme, or the original owner of the strata scheme; or have acquired a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the strata scheme, such as if they have bought a lot or lots in the scheme.

Additionally, agents will have to consolidate and report all of that information at the annual general meeting. The proposed new sections 60 (1) (c) and (d) of the Strata Schemes Management Act would require agents to report at the meeting details about their connections with suppliers and the original owner. That includes identifying connections that were formed during the past 12 months. The bill is about empowering owners and increasing openness and transparency in the industry. It is how we will clear the mistrust that can hinder constructive relationships between consumers and their agents.

The provisions I have just outlined relate to how an existing strata manager must engage with the owners' corporation. The bill also amends section 71 of the Strata Schemes Management Act, which applies before the appointment of the strata manager. The bill will require agents to provide more relevant information before they are appointed as the agent of a strata scheme. That includes the suppliers connected with the agent that the agent routinely uses for other strata schemes they manage—for example, a cleaning business that is owned by the agent's relative, or an insurance company that is a subsidiary of the strata managing agency, as well as if the agent has given advice about strata plans or community plans to the original owner, which is the developer, in the past two years. Those changes will mean that owners' corporations are better informed when selecting the agent to

manage their strata schemes—a decision that holds significant implications for owners' corporations and the financial health of residents.

The bill also implements more comprehensive disclosure requirements for insurance quotes that agents source for owners' corporations. Section 166 of the Strata Schemes Management Act requires strata managing agents to give the owners' corporation a minimum of three insurance quotes. Otherwise, the agent must give written reasons as to why that has not been done. The bill requires those quotes to include more specific information, including a breakdown of charges such as the base premium amount, which is not to include any commission amount; the commission amount; and any broker fee amount. Quotes will also need to show who the commission and broker fee is ultimately being paid to, as well as a statement on whether the agent is connected to the person providing the quote.

Requiring that information to be disclosed will allow owners' corporations to easily identify commissions that an agent may earn. It will support owners' corporations to properly consider if they should purchase an insurance policy the agent recommends and if the agent is performing their job for the owners' corporation's benefit. The bill also clarifies that insurance broker fees are considered commissions for the purposes of the Act. That will ensure that those fees are disclosed under the new disclosure obligations. I note that those important changes to the Strata Schemes Management Act in the bill will be applied to the Community Land Management Act to ensure that the two similar regulatory regimes remain consistent. Residents of community land schemes will also greatly benefit from more transparency and agent accountability.

Another important reform of the bill is to restrict when agents are allowed to get commissions. The Government knows that many consumers are frustrated with the strata management system, with industry practices relating to commissions contributing to that. The issue is complex, but the Government is committed to working with industry to eliminate practices that do not meet consumer expectations while ensuring that industry continues to thrive so that it can provide the key services to consumers that underpin good strata management. The bill will ban terms in strata managing agency agreements that allow an insurance commission to be paid to the agent where the owners' corporation obtained the insurance quote and arranged to buy the insurance itself. That change will also be made to community land management laws.

In light of the crucial changes we are making in the bill, we are also taking steps to ensure that the penalty framework is fit for purpose and that the regulator has the tools it needs to effectively enforce the laws. The bill introduces significantly higher maximum penalties and penalty infringement notice amounts for key agent obligations. The current penalty amounts in the strata laws have remained static for many years and have fallen far below market value. That makes it easier for an agent to think that doing the wrong thing and being hit with a low penalty is just a part of the cost of doing business and making profit, especially when the commissions they receive are far higher than the penalty amount. That is just not on.

The bill makes the maximum penalty for breaches of the disclosure obligations in the Strata Schemes Management Act and the Community Land Management Act 500 penalty units for a corporation, and 100 penalty units in any other case. The penalty infringement notice, or PIN, amounts are also doubling to \$2,200 for corporations and \$1,100 for individuals. It means Fair Trading can issue an on-the-spot fine for breaches and a person who is given a PIN can pay the amount specified in the notice as an alternative to court proceedings. The penalties will serve as a powerful deterrent against agent misconduct. It sends the message that we will not tolerate agents looking to take advantage of consumers and hide their actions.

Further, the bill increases the maximum penalty for agents not complying with the rules of conduct under section 37 of the Property and Stock Agents Act. These rules of conduct include that agents are to act honestly, fairly and in their clients' best interests. To show how seriously we take agents not doing the right thing by consumers, the maximum penalty for corporations for noncompliance with these obligations will be 1,000 penalty units. Higher penalties will be complemented by stronger enforcement powers for NSW Fair Trading to ensure it can take appropriate action to investigate and respond to noncompliance. This includes broadening the enforceable undertaking power in the Property and Stock Agents Act. This will give NSW Fair Trading more flexibility and ensure it can use the power to stop noncompliance where it is the most effective response.

The bill makes important and urgent changes to strata, community land and property agent laws. It looks to restore public confidence in the integrity of strata governance and the fundamental role that strata managing agents play. I thank the many key stakeholders for their valuable input on the bill. Stakeholder input ensures the bill works effectively and achieves the intended goals. I thank the Strata Community Association, the Owners Corporation Network, the Real Estate Institute of NSW, the Law Society of NSW, the Australian College of Strata Lawyers, the National Insurance Brokers Association, the Australian Consumers Insurance Lobby, Australian Apartment Advocacy, Cathy Sherry, John Trowbridge, Steadfast Group, Marrickville Legal Centre, Financial Counselling Australia and the Financial Rights Legal Centre.

The bill is another step forward in the Government's delivery of real, positive change for residents who live in strata schemes and community land schemes. There is more to come as we continue to implement the reforms of the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Management Act and investigate other reforms. The Government is determined to continue improving the lives of those living in strata and community land schemes by making the governance systems fairer and more transparent. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**

#### **Reports**

**Debate resumed from 9 August 2024.**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:01):** I welcome the opportunity to make a very brief contribution to debate on the report of the Committee on Law and Safety entitled *E-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales*. I thank the chair and the committee for this report. It is important work. The sale of illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes is certainly an issue in my community. In early July officers from Strike Force Cecum conducted a two-day operation across Albury, Lavington and Howlong. Last night I gave a private member's statement on the matter, but today I highlight three recommendations made by the committee. The first is that the New South Wales Government consider introducing a positive licensing scheme for tobacco retailers. We should certainly explore that.

The second recommendation is to review New South Wales tobacco legislation to ensure alignment with new Federal legislation. As I come from a cross-border region, consistency across jurisdictions is an important element. The third recommendation is that the Ministry of Health commence the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 as a matter of priority to support more robust enforcement. We have something there; we just need to employ it. I thank the chair and members of the committee.

**Report noted.**

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Reports**

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

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:02):** As Chair: I contribute to debate on the report of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund*, which was tabled on 7 August 2024. In 2020 a combined \$350 million in public money was allocated to the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund to support regional job creation, investment and industry activation. The committee inquired into the effectiveness of those funds. We wanted to know how effective the funds were in supporting regional businesses and industries and creating high-quality employment opportunities.

We found that, while the funds were successful in stimulating regional industries, lessons could be learnt to make their design and administration more effective in the future. Over the course of the inquiry, the committee heard from business owners who shared their valuable insight and views on the funds. We heard that the setting of milestone payment systems and deadlines, along with job number targets, could have been more considerate of business and industry needs. Business owners explained the importance of allowing departmental staff to make reasonable adjustments in the grants administration process to better meet the needs of individual applicants. They also talked about the frustration of navigating a lot of red tape and unclear guidelines.

Having considered the evidence, the committee developed recommendations that aim to improve how the Government designs and delivers future grant programs for regional businesses. In particular, we recommended that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development recognise that traditional funding frameworks may not suit small businesses. There is a need to consider other options that are better suited to the needs of those businesses. We also recommended that the department build more flexibility in program guidelines and cut red tape. There is also a need to improve communication with grant applicants and recipients as part of future grants administration.

The committee also looked at the allocation and effectiveness of the funds. We found that there is a concentration of grant funding and applications in existing regional hubs such as Wagga Wagga and metro satellite areas such as the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie. Those locations are important regional centres, but a more

equal geographical distribution of the funds could have had a greater impact on increasing regional employment. Other important aspects of the inquiry were the need for a proper evaluation of the effectiveness of the funds and the need to consider the impact on businesses when the funds ended. The committee received evidence that both funds played an important role in economic growth in regional communities. Businesses were able to hire more staff, invest in capabilities and grow their reach.

However, there was a lack of evaluation of grant outcomes and their impact on the regional economy. A thorough Government follow-up could identify where benefits flowed and if any gaps existed. In light of those findings, we recommended that the department evaluate the job creation data and long-term benefits of the Regional Job Creation Fund. The collection of that data from businesses could allow for better targeting of funding in the future. It is also important to note that the end of both funds in 2023 was costly to grant applicants and a lost opportunity for regional economies. Businesses had invested heavily in drafting grant applications and made operational decisions based on the continuation of the funds. Many applicants were small businesses who were less equipped to handle the cessation of the funds.

Considering the impact on businesses, we recommended that the department develop a transition plan to help businesses navigate the discontinuance of grant programs in the future and explore alternative funding opportunities. We hope that such a plan would ensure that the benefit of any discontinued fund could continue in other forms. A key theme throughout the inquiry was the importance of government support in ensuring successful grants delivery. Examples include departmental staff with local knowledge, the speedy processing of development applications by local councils and an effective business concierge service. As a result, we recommended improvements to government support in grant programs, including investment in departmental staff in regional areas and more funding to local councils so they can process development applications more effectively.

Finally, we heard considerable evidence about wider barriers impacting economic growth in regional New South Wales, including labour shortages, complex planning systems and logistics, and infrastructure issues. They are structural impediments for economic growth in the regions, and the committee recommended that the New South Wales Government take a comprehensive approach to address those issues. In closing, I thank my committee colleagues, some of whom are in the Chamber, for taking a collegiate approach and making valuable contributions to the inquiry. I thank also the committee secretariat staff for their support and dedication. Parliamentary committee inquiries do not happen without them.

Most of all, I thank everyone who made a submission or appeared as a witness at one of our public hearings. I thank also the businesses who generously hosted site visits and shared their experiences with the committee. The inquiry has given members a much deeper understanding of the issues and challenges faced by regional businesses and communities in New South Wales. We hope that the committee's report and its recommendations will help ensure future grant programs deliver increased jobs and prosperity across regional New South Wales. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:08):** I contribute to debate on the report of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund*. As deputy chair of the committee, it was great to work with the chair—the member for Barwon—and all committee members. I echo the sentiments that the chair of the committee reported to the House. I thank the secretariat team for their wonderful work. I thank everyone who spent time and effort providing valuable submissions to the inquiry. I thank those who appeared to give evidence at the inquiry and those who were kind enough to show us around their workplaces and discuss the nature of their business and how the programs impacted them. I thank committee members for their collegial nature and insightful discussions, regardless of our political colours. We ignored all that and really looked at the purpose and importance of the program. The chair, the member for Barwon, pointed out in his foreword to the report:

In 2020, a combined \$350 million in public money was allocated to the Regional Investment Activation Fund (RIAF) and Regional Job Creation Fund (RJCF) to support regional job creation, investment and industry activation.

It is not rocket science to say that, if we offer money to a business, it will take it. This program provided valuable support to businesses, and it did make a difference. But a challenge to the program was the immense amount of paperwork. Many businesses had to employ people or take employees away from their duties to fill out the paperwork required and get the information the bureaucracy needed. We understand that there are probity issues and that the integrity of the program must be maintained, but we may need to look at how some businesspeople get involved in the process to think through how the grant application process looks so that we do not put undue financial pressure on them.

Timing of grant requirements, such as council approvals, particularly when it is outside the control of businesses, made it difficult for some businesses to complete the grant applications on time. We found that participation from small businesses, due to the capital, time and resources required for this grant, was beyond the

capacity of many of them. As the member for Barwon just talked about, it would have been greater if it was spread out across regional areas, particularly small regional towns. If we really want decentralisation, we need to seek out businesses in particular areas where they would not normally have the time or even the understanding of the workings of Parliament and grants. Many people may not even have realised that this grant program was available.

I briefly highlight recommendation 15 because sister city relationships are often underestimated and people look at the negatives. We did not look closely at it, but at least on a superficial basis the collaboration between councils was found to add value. The relationship between Blacktown City Council and Liverpool Plains Shire Council is a case in point. Before, during and after my time as Mayor of Blacktown, there was work on that relationship through staff exchanges and taking the youth out to Liverpool Plains on the XPT, which is always great fun, and between businesses, charities and our Lions clubs. The City of Blacktown, which has 400,000 people, put money together for the Liverpool Plains, a shire of 5,000 people, when it went through a drought, and it made a difference. Once again I thank the chair for his friendship and stewardship of the committee. I thank the members representing the electorates of Albury, Liverpool, Riverstone, Heathcote and Clarence. We worked well together. I also thank the staff.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:12):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on the report of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund*. Following on from the comments of the member for Blacktown, I reiterate that it was a privilege to be part of this committee. I thank my fellow committee members and the chair. It certainly was run in a collegiate manner. I thank the committee staff, who do wonderful and important work for us parliamentarians. In the spirit of collegiality, I dwell on one of the businesses we visited during AgQuip: Grainline, in Wagga Wagga, which builds augers. It had, as of the end of December, 79 full-time employees through support from this program, from an original target of 42. The business has been able to enter into Western Australia, something that it would not have been able to do otherwise. The report states:

Without the support from RJCF, it is likely that the scale and scope of Grainline's projects would be much smaller.

I vividly remember visiting the business. I loved seeing an auger with a whopping-big "made in Australia" sticker on its side. It is pretty special to know that this fund has helped in that regard. The chair's foreword reads:

... RJCF was effective in delivering job creation and delivering long-term benefits...

That is important because, at the end of the day, in this place we seek to and we should aspire to enable job growth, particularly in the regions. I call out a few recommendations that caught my attention. Recommendation 12 was about the Business Concierge, which ought to continue. Both sides of politics recognise the importance of that wraparound support, assisting businesses to reach their potential. Recommendation 13 is also of interest to me as shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education:

That the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development consider working with TAFE to help relevant grant recipients leverage Jobs Connect ...

That might reflect the comments of the member for Blacktown about more collaboration between councils but also, from the point of view of the New South Wales Government, between agencies and departments. How can we make sure that we are working with the planning department, TAFE NSW and Skills NSW? That is an important question. I return to the chair's comments about recommendation 9, around transition plans to help businesses navigate the discontinuance of grant programs. Paragraph 4.22 of recommendation 9 states:

Evidence to this inquiry indicates that the discontinuance of RIAF and RJCF Round 3 had negative impacts on businesses.

I get that governments change. Both sides of the House have discontinued various programs at times. But we need to be quite clear that this did have an impact, particularly on those businesses that were mid-submission. That needs to be called out. We need to be better at that. We need to give those already in the pipeline an opportunity to be heard because it has cost them money and time. It impacts on their ability as businesses. It reflects on us in Parliament as well. We need to do better in that area, and both sides of the House should take note of that important aspect of this inquiry.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (13:16):** I speak on the report of the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund*. I acknowledge the secretariat staff for their hard work, as well as the chair, the member for Barwon, and the other committee members. It was a pleasure to work with them all. The Government's \$110 million Regional Investment Activation Fund was designed to provide co-investment for projects to activate new industries and drive productivity in regional New South Wales. The \$240 million Regional Job Creation Fund aimed to support regional investment and job creation by providing co-funding to regional projects.

Following the Government's expenditure review in April 2023, both funds were ceased. In April 2024 the Government announced that from 1 July 2024 the Department of Regional NSW would be renamed the

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Therefore, whilst the body of the report refers to the Department of Regional NSW, the recommendations are directed to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The inquiry received 39 submissions from businesses, local councils, joint organisations, member associations, government agencies and members of the public. The inquiry highlighted where improvements in the design and administration of those two funds could have helped to make them more effective.

The committee visited Wagga Wagga, Beaumont and Junee, and we visited companies that had received the funds and those whose applications had been rejected. We heard from businesses, councils and members of the public. We also heard from 20 individual witnesses during public hearings held in Sydney and Wagga Wagga. Lessons were learnt so that future programs can be better targeted. For example, inflexible program guidelines, exclusion criteria, poor communication and red tape impacted the effectiveness of the programs. Whilst previous committee members have spoken about the fact that a lot of time was put into those submissions and that there may have been some job creation, there were also a lot of people who spent a lot of time on submissions that did not work out for them and they were bitterly disappointed. They did not understand why they could not get funding. That was disappointing.

Most applications to Regional Job Creation Fund rounds one and two were from existing regional growth hubs, such as Wagga Wagga and coastal areas such as Central Coast and Lake Macquarie. The committee noted that the job creation benefits were measured based on estimated data, not actual data, which was disappointing. To better understand the impact on job creation and retention, the committee recommended the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development going forward collect both estimated and actual data of job creation and retention. The inquiry has highlighted where improvements in the design and administration of those two funds could have helped make them more effective. Again, I thank the parliamentary secretariat staff for their assistance with organising the regional visits, accommodation, transport and witnesses. I thank all those who made submissions and attended the inquiry. For those watching, the report can be now found on the New South Wales Parliament website.

**Report noted.**

## MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE

### Reports

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

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:22):** As Chair: I am pleased to present the report of the committee entitled *Ethical Clothing Extended Responsibilities Scheme 2005 (NSW)*. This inquiry marked a significant milestone for the Modern Slavery Committee as it was the first inquiry to scrutinise existing legislation specifically for its ongoing effectiveness in relation to modern slavery. We found that outworkers in the textile, clothing and footwear industry are at a significant risk of workplace exploitation and modern slavery. There is a combination of reasons for that, including the complex and often opaque nature of the industry itself, the demographic profile of the workers and the environment in which this work occurs. With this in mind, the committee assessed the scheme's potential to mitigate exploitation and modern slavery in the industry going forward. The committee heard that despite falling into disuse in recent decades the scheme remains a valid legislative instrument. Given its validity and its ability to serve as a tool in the broader efforts to combat exploitation, we have recommended that the New South Wales Government revive the scheme.

At the time of its establishment the scheme was quite novel and leading. It was novel because it captured retailers who were at the top of a complex supply chain. That is a situation where traditional safeguards around employer-employee relations do not really operate because the work is contracted out down the chain. It is a fissured supply chain. It means that workers may rely on traditional industrial relations awards to protect them—and there are those instruments—but in those circumstances where contractors are subcontracting and subcontracting again, they often do not work. This scheme lays the responsibility at the top with the retailer, who cannot therefore say they are not a manufacturer and it does not apply to them. It does apply to retailers. In that sense it is a very powerful scheme. It also introduced a voluntary code of practice, *Ethical Clothing Australia's Code of Practice, incorporating Homeworkers*. We heard evidence that the systems set up around that voluntary code and the relationships between the firms participating and the unions to ensure that outworkers were protected was extremely effective.

Given that time has passed since the scheme's introduction, it is understandable that amendments will be necessary. The committee heard that various amendments are needed to accurately reflect current industrial awards, address the referral of the powers to the Commonwealth under the industrial schemes and align the scheme with Australia's commitment to various international standards and guidelines that work to identify and manage forced labour and slavery risks. Those amendments should be considered by the New South Wales Government.



In particular, I highlight that we need to consider the view of retailers. We heard from a range of stakeholders, and despite attempts to elicit submissions and appearances from retailers, they did not provide that input. In recommending the reintroduction of the scheme we emphasise the importance of engaging with retailers. They are a very important part of the scheme.

The committee has made other recommendations to support the ongoing operation of the scheme. They include the establishment of a supply chain database; the consideration of funding and resourcing for stakeholders relevant to the operation of the scheme; establishment of culturally and linguistically sensitive programs for outworkers to improve the understanding of workplace rights; and an assessment of the scheme's potential to be expanded into other industries with similar risks of modern slavery. The evidence that the committee heard is that the model of the scheme when adopted in 2005 was novel, it involved a combination of regulation but also incentives to participate in a voluntary code. It constructed a strong model where industry was working with the unions. We think that has enormous potential for other industries. In addition to reviving the scheme, the committee has asked the Government to consider whether this model might be used to assist the Government, the committee and our taskforce to mitigate the risks around modern slavery in other industries.

On behalf of the committee I thank everyone who contributed to the inquiry. We had a number of expert witnesses who clearly were involved in the original design of the scheme and who were very erudite and detailed in their submissions. We heard from the unions as well. It is clear that the work they do with people in this industry is very important—and it is not work that is easy to do. Engaging with outworkers, who are often from particular ethnic communities and enthralled to the people who contract them, and asking them to have confidence in the law and the regulatory process is complex work. I was very impressed with the work of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union, textile, clothing and footwear division, in their work with stakeholders. I thank the secretariat for their work. I thank Dr Sarah Kaine, who brought the issue to the attention of the committee. I acknowledge the work of my committee members, in particular the deputy chair, and member for Newtown, and Dr Kaine for her expertise. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

### Reports

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

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:27):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House as Chair of the Legislation Review Committee. The committee tabled *Legislation Review Digest No. 17/58* yesterday. In the digest, the committee examined eight bills that were introduced during the last sitting week. It also reviewed six regulations and statutory instruments, one of which it commented on. I will draw members' attention to some of the key issues raised in the digest. The committee reported on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024, which seeks to place the New South Wales registered Construction and General Division of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union into administration by amending the Industrial Relations Act 1996. The bill would also create an administration scheme and appoint an administrator to implement the scheme.

In its report, the committee highlighted the inclusion of strict liability offences in the bill. The committee noted that failure to comply with any notice provided by the administrator, without a reasonable excuse, may result in a strict liability offence with a monetary penalty of 100 penalty units or \$11,000. The committee generally comments on strict liability offences as they depart from the common law principle that the mental element of fault should be proven to establish criminal liability. The committee acknowledged that the proposed amendments were intended to address allegations in relation to the CFMEU. The committee also noted that the bill would allow the Minister for Industrial Relations to vary or revoke an administration order by publishing an order in the New South Wales *Government Gazette*.

Further, the committee noted that the bill would provide for a regulation-making power that allows the regulations to directly amend the parent Act for any matters considered necessary or convenient for the administration of the scheme. The committee generally comments on provisions that provide for a wide ministerial power and considers Henry VIII clauses in bills to be an inappropriate delegation of legislative power. The committee considered that the regulation-making power would help maintain consistency with any corresponding Commonwealth framework. For these reasons the committee made no further comment on the bill in respect of the issues set out in the Legislation Review Act.

Turning now to private members' bills, the committee reported on the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to amend the Water Management Act 2000 to create a Water Access Licence Register and establish additional accountability and governance mechanisms for

water access licences. The committee raised concerns about several aspects of the bill—for example, that the bill would commence by proclamation and allow offences to be prescribed by regulations. This may make it difficult for people to fully understand their legal duties and determine the law that applies to them at any given time.

The committee also noted that the bill seeks to delegate a power to prescribe a code of conduct for water licence brokers through regulations and allow the Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water broad scope to publish details of offences, including identifying details of persons that commit the offences. Because of the committee's concern, it referred each of those issues to Parliament for further consideration. Finally, the committee reported on the Liquor Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Regulation 2024. The regulation amends the Liquor Regulation 2018, which is made under the Liquor Act 2007. The regulation would require licensees to preserve the quiet and good order of their neighbourhood and restrict minors from accessing liquor sales areas without a responsible adult. The regulation would also create an absolute liability offence with a monetary penalty for failure to comply with the requirements.

The committee noted that the commencement date of the regulation is tied to the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Act 2023, which will commence by proclamation. The committee acknowledged that absolute liability offences are not uncommon in regulatory frameworks as a means of encouraging compliance. The committee also noted that commencement by proclamation might enable greater flexibility to facilitate vibrancy reforms to the New South Wales night economy. For those reasons, the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on the *Legislation Review Digest No. 17/58*. 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 secretariat for its support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

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

*Bills*

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

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 8 August 2024.**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (14:31):** On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024. On 3 May 2012, then Labor MLC the Hon. Sophie Cotsis spoke on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Industrial Organisations) Bill 2012, opposing its proposal to enable the Minister to appoint an administrator for a State industrial organisation if there was an ongoing investigation into or evidence of gross misconduct by its officers and proper administrative arrangements needed to be put in place. The now Minister for Industrial Relations stated at the time:

... we have grave concerns that this bill overreaches by giving a Minister of the Crown unprecedented power to appoint directly an administrator to an industrial organisation, rather than applying to the Industrial Relations Commission to appoint an administrator. This may have dangerous consequences ...

...

It is clear that the appropriate procedure is for an independent tribunal, the Industrial Relations Commission, to appoint an administrator, rather than merely a government by ministerial order.

Yet today the Minister brings a bill to this House to do precisely the thing she then described as being inappropriate, overreaching and having "dangerous consequences". At that time, Minister Cotsis moved an amendment to the bill that she explicitly justified as needed to protect the leadership of the then Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union from dismissal—the very thing the bill before the House empowers an administrator appointed by the Minister to do. While we welcome the Minister's change of heart, it would be good if she acknowledged that both she and the Labor Party were wrong in 2012 and that, if the 2012 bill had been allowed to pass unamended, some of the alleged gross misconduct and criminal activity by unions like the CFMEU may have been able to be dealt with sooner.

In its application to the Federal Court seeking the appointment of an administrator for the CFMEU, the Fair Work Commission has stated that, since 2003, the CFMEU has been the subject of findings of contraventions of Federal workplace laws on more than 1,500 occasions, plus 1,100 contraventions by its office holders, employees, delegates and members; some 213 court cases have resulted in total penalties ordered against the CFMEU of at least \$24 million, plus at least \$4 million ordered against its office holders, employees, delegates and members; and that there have been a dozen allegations of criminal conduct, including appointing people with criminal associations to office, threats made to construction industry participants, and the soliciting of bribes.

From 2016 until it was abolished in February 2023 by the Albanese Labor Government—at the behest of Labor's largest donor, the CFMEU—the Australian Building and Construction Commission [ABCC] had brought prosecutions resulting in fines imposed on the CFMEU totalling \$15.8 million.

In response to Federal Labor's reckless abolition of the ABCC, on 14 February 2023 the New South Wales Coalition Government announced that it would boost funding to the NSW Construction Compliance Unit by \$1.3 million a year, doubling its staff and resourcing it to engage effectively in proactive monitoring, reporting and compliance activities, including more unannounced site visits to New South Wales Government-funded infrastructure projects. Noting that the existing New South Wales building and construction procurement guidelines were operating in the context of a Federal scheme, with a strong construction watchdog and enforcement agency in the ABCC, the Coalition also commenced an open consultation with industry stakeholders to review those guidelines.

Given her form on running protection for the CFMEU since at least 2012, it was hardly surprising that one of the first acts of the incoming Minister for Industrial Relations after the 25 March 2023 election was to order a halt to the review of the New South Wales building and construction procurement guidelines. In a media statement dated 20 May 2023—now strangely missing from the ministerial media releases website—the Minister for Industrial Relations announced the cancellation of the review on the specious grounds of cost. The Minister dismissed the substantive submissions from industry stakeholders as "underwhelming".

The Minister and her Labor colleagues, from the Premier down, are pretending shock at the discovery that the CFMEU is crooked, its leadership needs to be removed and it needs a root-and-branch overhaul. There are still financial members of the CFMEU with a voice in the Labor caucus; caucus members who received personal donations from the CFMEU for their election campaigns; and caucus members who were preselected with CFMEU votes. The root-and-branch clean-out needs to start at home. The Opposition will be supporting this bill to give the Minister the power to appoint an administrator, notwithstanding her former characterisation of such a ministerial power as dangerous and overreaching.

I turn to the foreshadowed Government amendments to this bill. I place on record that the Opposition understands these amendments are designed to align the administrative scheme to be established under this bill more closely with the scheme to be established under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Administration) Bill 2024, which is currently before the Federal Parliament. The Opposition will be supporting those amendments. I advise that the Opposition will be moving amendments in the other place to strengthen the bill so that it responds more adequately to the completely intolerable criminal enterprise that is the CFMEU.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:39):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024. The bill represents decisive action by the New South Wales Government to uphold the integrity of our industrial relations system and address pressing issues within the Construction and General Division of the CFMEU NSW. The majority of the CFMEU rank-and-file members and their organisers are good people, and this legislative change is not a reflection on them or the good work they do in representing their members. The Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024 is designed to address the dysfunction and misconduct within the New South Wales branch of the CFMEU Construction and General Division. As the explanatory note to the bill highlights, the primary objective is to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to provide for the administration of this specific division of the union. That includes the establishment of an administration scheme and the appointment of an administrator.

The bill is explicit in its scope and application. It is aimed solely at the New South Wales registered CFMEU Construction and General Division and does not extend to any other union. That step is crucial to maintaining the integrity of the industrial relations framework as it ensures that the bill's provisions are not misapplied or misinterpreted to affect other organisations. The intent and purpose of the scheme are consistent and complementary with the proposed Federal scheme, reflecting a coordinated effort between the State and Federal governments. The bill gives the Minister significant powers to establish an administration scheme for the CFMEU Construction and General Division and to appoint an administrator. The administration scheme is not just a formality; it is a robust framework that grants the administrator extensive powers.

Those powers include the ability to manage the union's operations, control its assets and funds, and, if necessary, take disciplinary action against members or office holders. That could mean expulsion or disqualification from holding office for up to five years, demonstrating the seriousness with which the Government views the need for accountability within the union. Furthermore, the bill grants the Minister the authority to vary the terms of the administration scheme or the appointment of the administrator, providing the flexibility needed to respond to any developments during the administration period. The Minister can also revoke the appointment of the administrator or the administration order, ensuring that the administration is subject to oversight and can be adjusted as necessary.

One of the key functions of the administrator, as outlined in the proposed schedule, is to ensure the effective functioning of the CFMEU Construction and General Division. That includes performing the roles traditionally held by the State executive and the divisional council of the union. Additionally, the administrator has control over all funds, property and assets of the CFMEU and the broader CFMEU NSW. That control extends even to those assets that may have been transferred or moved before the administrator's appointment, ensuring that no resources are shielded from scrutiny. The bill also empowers the administrator to bring legal proceedings in the name of the CFMEU Construction and General Division for the recovery of funds, the imposition of penalties or the awarding of compensation. That is a critical measure to address any financial misconduct or mismanagement that may have occurred within the union.

To support the administrator's work, the bill includes provisions for requesting documents or information necessary to fulfil their duties. Failure to comply with such requests could result in penalties of up to \$11,000, underlining the seriousness of this requirement. Additionally, the bill contains anti-avoidance provisions with similar penalties to prevent any conduct that could hinder the administration of the scheme. The bill further strengthens its impact by ensuring that the administration scheme, the administration order and any actions taken under the scheme take precedence over the union's rules. That means the administration cannot be undermined by internal union regulations, ensuring that the administrator can carry out their duties effectively and without obstruction.

Moreover, the bill provides a safety net for the administrator by including a clause that protects them from any action, liability, claim or demand while exercising their functions under the proposed schedule. That is vital for allowing the administrator to carry out their responsibilities without fear of legal repercussions. The bill also introduces a sunset clause, which ensures that the extraordinary powers granted by the bill will not be indefinite. After five years, or upon the expiration of the administration scheme, the relevant provisions will be repealed. This clause demonstrates the Government's commitment to restoring normalcy within the union once the necessary reforms have been implemented.

The Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024 is a measured but resolute response to the challenges facing the CFMEU Construction and General Division in New South Wales. It is not a decision taken lightly but one that is essential to maintain the integrity of our industrial relations system and ensure that unions operate within the law and in the best interests of their members. The Government remains committed to working alongside the Commonwealth to address the issues and ensure that the CFMEU Construction and General Division can return to its rightful role as a representative body for its members. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (14:45):** On behalf of the people's republic of Pittwater, I contribute to debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024 and indicate that the people's republic of Pittwater supports the bill, subject to some amendments that I understand my colleagues may move at some stage. The bill raises the question: Who owns who? Does the Labor Party own the corrupt and criminal CFMEU or does the CFMEU own the Labor Party? The challenge with the bill, and the circumstances that gave rise to it, was the abolition of the Australian Building and Construction Commission by the Federal Albanese Government, the abolition of oversight and the abolition of an authority that could hold the thugs and criminals to account. That authority was taken away by the Albanese Federal Labor Government, and now we have a situation where corrupt conduct and criminal conduct—or allegations of such—have been brought to light and are going through a process.

This Government, which presumably supports what the Albanese Federal Labor Government did, seeks to rush through legislation to deal with issues that its labour movement caused. I hasten to add that there are some very good unions, and this issue should not be used to bludgeon, belittle or malign their work. It may surprise members on the other side of the House to hear that I am a believer in unions. I think they can do amazing and wonderful work, especially unions like the teachers' union. I have many friends who are schoolteachers, and the first thing I say to them is, "Make sure you join the teachers' union." I say that because the teachers' union will go into bat for their teachers and their members when things go wrong and when things—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Because they are not affiliated with Labor.

**Mr RORY AMON:** I did not know that. I learn something new every day. There are many wonderful unions who do amazing work. I nearly became a member of a union—the Health Services Union—when I worked at my first job. They wanted me to sign up and I was not too sure about it. I thought, "I'm working part time and I don't really want to give away some money when I don't know what I'm getting for it." But some unions do tremendous work, and the corruption and criminality of the CFMEU should not be used to bludgeon those unions. They do good work, and their workers and their members are fundamentally decent people. No doubt the overwhelming majority of CFMEU members are fundamentally decent people as well.

The Labor movement, Federal and State, has allowed a construction union movement to get out of control. We wonder why the cost of living is out of control and why houses cannot be built affordably. It is because unions like the CFMEU drive up costs through their unreasonable demands, unreasonable conduct and shutting down of sites from time to time. Imagine if we had a single entity, such as a single McDonald's, and that McDonald's was so corrupt and so criminal that legislation was needed to be created to deal with that one organisation.

The fact that a parliament is having to pass legislation specific to one organisation is an indictment on that entity's criminality and corruption; it is absurd and unheard of. If a private organisation's conduct was so poor it needed legislation to rein it in, we would be up in arms. While I commend the Government for introducing this bill, its actions do not go far enough. Every element of influence of the CFMEU needs to be eradicated from the Labor Party and the Government. I call on members of the Labor Party who are members of the CFMEU or similar unions to resign their membership, to hand in their papers and to remove themselves from the roll of that entity, which has shown itself to be corrupt and criminal in its conduct and many of its operations.

The Legislation Review Committee raises some issues in relation to the bill in its *Legislation Review Digest No.17/58*. The powers that the bill gives the Government and authorities are significant because of the extent of the corruption and criminality, or allegations thereof, in relation to the CFMEU. The nature of the strict liability offences imposed by new schedule 6 to the Act—clause 9 for relevant persons and clause 7—are quite extraordinary. Strict liability offences typically relate to things like speeding or running a red light. The idea that elements of intention would be removed from offences in the Act and that a new section is required for a strict liability offence in relation to an offence such as trespass shows how little faith the Government has in the goodwill of any CFMEU participant. Trespass is typically an offence that requires an element of intention and an element of the actual act. Removing the intention shows that this Government has little faith that the CFMEU will abide by its legal obligations, which makes the passing of this legislation all the more important.

I urge the Government to consider suggestions of inappropriate delegations of powers during the consideration in detail stage. It is a matter of some importance, as is the Henry VIII clause, something we seem to see over and over again from this Government. Introducing legislation that basically gives almost unfettered power to a Minister is completely unacceptable. In closing, this legislation is a reflection on either the rottenness of the labour movement and the Labor Party or the other way around. What we need to know and get to the bottom of is who owns who? Does the Labor Party own a corrupt CFMEU, or does a corrupt CFMEU own the Labor Party?

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Neither.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Who owns you?

**Mr RORY AMON:** My friends opposite say that we do not need to know the answer to those questions because they do not want us to know the answer. They do not want us to get to the bottom of what is going on. No doubt the administrator that the Government appoints will possibly be a friend of the labour movement, which would be a horrendous outcome. We should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good, which is why I will support this legislation and the reason I ask this Parliament to enact this bill as soon as possible. But the Labor Party needs to grapple with the fundamental integrity issues within its movement, including the CFMEU. Not to cast aspersions on other unions that do good work, but the Labor Party needs to take a good, long, hard look at itself because this should be only the start of clean-up of the labour movement.

This should only be the beginning of the chapter, not the end of the story. If Government members think they can walk away from this issue and the systemic allegations of corruption and criminality within this union, they should be under no illusion that the Opposition will continue to hold them to account. We will make sure that they do not walk away from issues of union misconduct after they have passed this legislation. I commend the bill to the House. The people of Pittwater, through me, commend the bill to the House. I look forward to the bill becoming law as soon as possible and seeing the corruption and criminality cleaned out of the CFMEU once and for all. But let that only be the beginning and not the end.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (14:54):** It is with sadness that I support the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024, introduced by Minister Cotsis, which appoints an administrator to examine the affairs of the CFMEU construction division. To briefly address the concerns of the member for Pittwater about who owns who, the CFMEU—or any union—is an independent body, elected by its members. The Labor Party has its own membership, so we are two independent organisations. I am a proud member and former assistant secretary of the Australian Workers' Union. Allegations of impropriety that have been aired in the media must be investigated. The actions of the Victorian construction branch of the CFMEU and their impact across Australia have resulted in this legislation. We need to examine whether misappropriation or other improprieties have occurred in New South Wales—hence the appointment of an administrator.

From the outset I say that no wrongdoing can be tolerated by any union official. The standard by which representatives of the working class are judged is higher than those on the conservative side of politics. Whether a union official or a Labor member of Parliament or council, the community expectation is that we are helping the impoverished; we are the custodians of trust given by workers. We therefore must not take advantage of people who are struggling to survive in their daily lives. For justice to be done, it must be done in an effective and timely manner. Many of the allegations have been ongoing for years, and the investigations are still ongoing. The member for Pittwater and the member for Miranda, who led in debate for the Opposition, talked about the Australian Building and Construction Commission [ABCC], which was around for many years, including when the allegations were made.

But all the ABCC worried about was whether CFMEU members had stickers on their helmet that said they were a member. When safety meetings were abruptly called the ABCC tried to persecute and prosecute CFMEU officials. Due to the media exposure, all CFMEU representatives have been publicly humiliated and denied natural justice—every hardworking person in the union, even those not identified through the media investigations. Every person who walks around carrying a CFMEU shirt is now, unfortunately, being harshly dealt with by the public. As my colleague the member for Mount Druitt said, many good, working people are CFMEU members. We need to support them.

I highlight that my close friend Rebel Hanlon—a volunteer for the Lions club and other organisations, who puts his heart and soul into the union movement—fights for the betterment of workers. Rebel is involved with numerous charities. Community recognition statements from several MPs have outlined his work. What is lesser known is the work that he does and that many other CFMEU officials undertake in their daily lives. How many of us would go to a site where a worker has been injured, maimed or killed? How many of us would like to sit down with the family of an injured or killed worker like union officials do—sometimes even before the authorities have had the chance to inform those families? Who in this place would like to consult fellow workmates at a worksite where a catastrophic injury or death has occurred and then tell them then it is safe to go back to that workplace?

Our Liberal and Nationals colleagues in this House and the other place should reflect on the importance of unions rather than salivating at the chance to condemn unions and the entire labour movement. Each union official who has done the right thing has families and friends. We cannot discount the harm to those families and their loved ones, because they did the right thing. Wrongdoing is unacceptable and must be investigated and dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

The construction industry is not easy. There are tough operators amongst the employers. In 2023 the construction industry recorded 24 deaths and 16.9 injury incidence claims per 1,000 workers, which is above the workforce average. In 2012 in the construction industry 42 people died. Many years ago, Joel Exner, at 16 years of age and on his second day on the job, without union representation or safety in his workplace, fell from a roof and died. Last year alone 16,000 claims were made in the construction industry, and those are only the incidents that we know about. Many workers are forced by their employers or lead contractors to become self-employed subcontractors. Workers are injured or even killed in the workplace and it takes years for the matter to be properly investigated.

Workplaces are safer when a union is involved. In Australia, 79 per cent of workers with union health and safety representatives said that their workplace complies with work health and safety policies, as opposed to 51 per cent of workers without union involvement in their workplace. International studies demonstrate that in the United States unionised worksites have lost-time claims at a rate of 31 per cent lower than non-unionised worksites in the construction industry. Apart from safety and dealing with tragedies in the workplace, unions and the union movement have done great work for migrant workers in protecting their safety and ensuring that they are paid correctly. Unions have prosecuted employers, which resulted in processing massive backpay claims for both migrant and local workers. The Grattan Institute found that one in six migrant workers were paid below the national minimum wage. Brendan Coates, the Grattan Institute economist, said:

Many don't have such strong English skills, but their visa conditions also reduce their bargaining power ...

It is no wonder we need a strong union on the job. I note that the CFMEU found that about 20 Hungarian workers working on a Western Sydney construction site operated by two multinational corporations were underpaid. In 2013 a SBS story quoted Rebel Hanlon from the CFMEU:

Mr Hanlon says the Hungarian workers were told they'd be getting 30 dollars per hour but he says when they got to Australia they were paid 15 dollars an hour.

He says the 457 visas used to give the Hungarians Australian work rights misrepresented their qualifications.

"These gentleman came in here on visas that said they were actually mechanical engineer technicians. None of these gentleman have that qualification. These gentleman were riggers."

The CFMEU at the time worked closely with the Hungarian embassy and consulate, as well as the local Hungarian community, to provide support for those workers. They were fearful that if they spoke against their employer they would have their visas revoked and be sent back to Hungary. The CFMEU was firebombed circa 2010 and 2014, and both times it was suspected that rogue contractors may have been involved. I do not believe that the culprits were ever caught.

Unions play a vital role. I hope that the administrator understands the complexity of the situation and that he or she is not just trying to sort out the alleged wrongdoing, but also supervising organisers and making difficult decisions about how to deal with rogue employers. While the administrator may find that some have undertaken inappropriate action that must be dealt with as quickly as possible, I encourage the administrator to leave no stone unturned. I also say to the administrator that he or she is responsible for the actions of the officials remaining in the organisation and will have to make difficult decisions. Organisers are dealing with difficult workplaces where injury and workplace death occurs. May wrongdoers be quickly held to account to put each sorry saga behind the union. The union has to get on with its core charter—the health and safety conditions and wages of its members.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:04):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024. I state at the outset that The Greens NSW do not support this legislation in its current form because it provides unfettered power to the industrial relations Minister to appoint an administrator of a union, overriding workers' democracy. In fact, I did not think I would ever find myself in this place, with State and Federal Labor governments, debating legislation that would appoint an administrator with no checks and balances. I make no reflection on whoever might be appointed as the administrator, but they are likely to get \$4,000 a day, plus a private consultancy firm, to run a union. That is where we are at.

It is completely unclear whether members in this Chamber, in Australia's oldest Parliament, are actually debating our own legislation. Are we debating legislation that the people of New South Wales would like us to debate or are we simply getting our riding orders from the Federal Labor Party and Prime Minister Albanese? He once upon a time said that he liked to fight Tories but he is right now in Federal Parliament moving to appoint an administrator to the CFMEU. We are doing that in New South Wales as well, just months from a Federal election that could see the Federal Minister go from Minister Watt from the Labor Party to Minister Michaelia Cash. We in New South Wales will then live with the reality of that.

While we are trying to engage in a massive building and construction agenda to deal with the housing crisis, workers on worksites in New South Wales will be working in less safe conditions while at greater risk of fatalities. That will be a result of the fact that we will have taken away the power of a respected union in New South Wales, a union that has recovered nearly \$24.5 million in wages and entitlements for its members between 2020 and 2024, because the construction industry has been trying to underpay its workers and scam their wages and conditions.

It is a complete disgrace that we are debating this legislation. For those who have not been paying attention, this bill is about to amend the Industrial Relations Act to give the Minister of the day—it is currently Minister Cotsis, who I note is in the Chamber, but it could be, within the scope of the bill and the five-year time frame, Minister Damien Tudehope or indeed Minister Tim James or whoever we would like to pick from this side of the House—the power to appoint an administrator to the New South Wales Construction and General Division of the CFMEU. The administrator will have the power to suspend or remove office holders and expel members, perform the functions of the State Executive of the New South Wales CFMEU Construction and General Division, perform the functions of the divisional council and office holders of bodies of the New South Wales Construction and General Division of the CFMEU, and control the union's assets and funds.

Yes, that is right. The appointed administrator will have the ability to control the union's assets and funds. Those are not the union's assets and funds; those are the workers' assets and funds. Workers have paid into the union for so long to have it collect assets to protect the rights of workers and now this State Labor Government is appointing an administrator with no oversight to be able to spend those assets for their own interests. In our view, the Government has not made a strong case as to why this is necessary, why this is urgent or why this New South Wales legislation will be rushed through before negotiations at the Federal level have been completed. The Minister said that the purpose of this legislation is to align with the Federal legislation. Yet the Federal legislation has not passed. So how are we passing State legislation to align with Federal legislation if the latter has not yet passed the Parliament? Frankly, the bill reads like a union-busting bill that a Howard Government Minister would put forward, not the handiwork of a State Labor Minister for Industrial Relations.

Do not get me wrong, some of the allegations and charges that have been levelled against the CFMEU are clearly extremely serious. But The Greens strongly believe in the rule of law and the principle that accusations of wrongdoing should be heard in a court, accompanied by evidence. That is how we should approach the matter. There are places to hear allegations of corruption. The Independent Commission Against Corruption has long had

oversight of corruption issues in this State. Similarly, issues of corruption as they relate to industrial relations are captured in the Fair Work Act 2009, including receiving bribes from an employer in return for getting work done on building sites. Beyond that, any reports or suggestions of criminal conduct should be dealt with through the Crimes Act. We have one in this State. There is no need, in New South Wales or federally, to pursue this reform.

There are already provisions in the law that permit the Government to apply through the courts for the appointment of an administrator to a union that is suspected of misconduct. In New South Wales, the Industrial Relations Act 1999 permits the Minister to apply to the Industrial Relations Commission to order the reconstitution of a union or branch, including the appointment of an administrator. In addition, if the commission fails to make an order under these rules within 28 days of the application, the Minister may exercise the functions of the commission with respect to the appointment of the administrator. The Minns Government has already commenced proceedings to appoint an administrator through the courts, against which the CFMEU Construction and General Division is defending itself—and that is fair enough. There is already a process in place. We do not require this legislation.

Clearly, the bill is an attempt to circumvent the existing legal process, and the checks and balances that come with it, in order to expedite the appointment of an administrator. That is neither acceptable nor good enough. The CFMEU is not above the law, but neither is this Government. The Minister's extraordinarily brief second reading speech did not even make a case for why this Parliament should proceed with the bill, rather than allowing the Industrial Court to decide. There is already a process in place to determine whether a union should be put into administration, and that process is underway. If that process is not working properly, then the Government should look to amend the law and fix the process, not propose a bandaid solution that targets one union. These are extraordinarily excessive powers. The Greens have serious concerns about the extraordinary discretionary powers the bill gives the Minister, and indeed the administrator. It is remarkable that the Minister is urging members to support the bill before we know the details of how this will play out federally.

Additionally, given the Minister has the ability to hire and fire the administrator, how do we know that the hand-picked administrator will not be changed under a future Minister? Remember that the provisions will apply for five years. That Minister is then in a position to appoint an administrator who has carte blanche powers to disqualify office holders and expel individual union members for up to five years. Again, the Minister's brief second reading speech did not explain why she should be gifted these powers rather than have the matter go through the courts. That remains a mystery to the union, this Parliament and the people of New South Wales. We have no idea. The best we can hope for is to think we are doing this because the Federal Government is doing it.

I now turn to The Greens' concerns—which were also raised by the Legislation Review Committee—about the strict liability offences that the bill creates. On the one hand, the bill gives the administrator the power to remove union employees. On the other hand, it grants the administrator investigative powers to request relevant persons, including sacked former employees, to produce documents or other information as is reasonably required to exercise the administrator's functions. Essentially, the bill allows for a sacked employee to be hauled back in immediately to produce documents and other information. The Greens have serious concerns about this, and we will move amendments to address those concerns. In addition, I foreshadow that we will move amendments to deal with other provisions in the bill. Those amendments, as circulated, will address the fact that the bill gives huge powers to regulations that will not be subject to approval by the Parliament. [*Extension of time*]

The Greens are also concerned about the Henry VIII clause proposed in the bill. The bill inserts a regulation-making power that allows for regulations to directly amend the parent Act for any matters considered necessary or convenient for the administration of the scheme. This provision may, therefore, amount to a Henry VIII clause by allowing the Executive to amend the operation of the parent Act without reference to Parliament. In theory, because the bill was drafted to align with Federal legislation that is yet to be passed, this raises concerns that the bill could allow a future Minister to attempt to use those broad powers to change the scheme in ways that were not intended by the current Government. That is absolutely a concern, which must be examined in more detail.

In addition, The Greens take issue with the singular focus of the bill. For the transaction of corrupt or dodgy practices, bribes or other elements to work, someone needs to have offered the bribe, kickback or some other benefit, and someone needs to have been involved in that exchange and accepted those things. It astounds me that the New South Wales and Federal Labor governments are proposing legislation that does not address the potential dodgy behaviour of those working in the construction industry, despite the fact that the industry is one of the most dangerous places for people to work. I remind members of the \$24.5 million that the CFMEU recovered in wages and entitlements for its members who had been underpaid or not paid appropriately. Yet nothing in the bill permits scrutiny of any the corporate entities that were involved in unsafe practices or the construction side of things. The people who profited from not enforcing safe workplaces are nowhere to be seen in the bill.



Where are the people who are working hard to make sure that workers have safe workplaces and good wages and conditions? They are all over this bill because we are appointing a person to administer them in response to the Premier's claims about serious allegations of corruption. I recall that serious allegations of corruption were levelled at the New South Wales Labor Party, which were upheld by ICAC, and legislation was never passed through this place to appoint an administrator to the New South Wales Labor Party. There have been seriously corrupt and problematic issues in the past. The New South Wales Liberal Party accepted almost \$600,000 in unlawful donations before the 2011 election, but I do not recall any special legislation to put the party into administration. Indeed, even just last year, Sydney Metro's fraud and corruption unit handed the agency the results of an investigation that it carried out into 42 contracts of concern, outlining widespread risks of fraud and corruption within the agency, including deals with private companies that increased their original value by more than 10 times. Did Parliament appoint administrators to those companies? No.

The legislation will appoint an administrator to the New South Wales branch of the CFMEU Construction and General Division. Why? I do not know because the Minister did not outline that in her second reading speech. I do not know why we are here. It seems we are here to pass legislation that aligns with the Federal legislation, which appears to respond to concerns about the actions of the CFMEU in Victoria. Let me clear: There are charges, and The Greens do not condone bribery or corrupt behaviour. However, when there are active charges against individuals on the table, do we appoint an administrator for the entire union and undermine the safety and rights of workers to engage in collective bargaining and organise by having a private boss, consultant or whoever running the union for the next five years?

I do not believe that is what we should do. We should let the legal process play out using existing laws. If the Minister and Premier Minns had the power to do that and the evidence was there, they would take the matter to the Industrial Court and they would win. But they have not done that. Instead, they have come to Parliament to override the process and give full power to the Minister. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:19):** In reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024. I am not going to get into the absolute specifics of the contribution of the member for Miranda. But, if this matter was not so serious and grave, it would be comedic that some Liberal staffer in the Opposition has had to trawl through my lengthy speeches from 2012 or 2013 to find that quote. If the shadow Minister and the Opposition were trying for a gotcha moment, they should have looked at the bill that was introduced by the then O'Farrell Government, what we had said, what the amendments were and the debate in its entirety, as well as my very strong comments with respect to the then Opposition's view on the administration of another union. I used very strong words. As the member for Blacktown outlined, we in the Labor Party take such matters even more seriously because of their nature, which relates to workers' representation and collective movement. I ask that the Opposition look at that in its entirety.

My colleagues the member for Blacktown and the member for Mount Druitt made important contributions about representation with respect to unions, the importance of strong advocacy and the importance of law reform and changes. We have seen those particularly in the changes that the Minns Government has made in industrial relations. With respect to the comments of the member for Newtown, we have made it clear that the Fair Work Commission has put forward an application to the Federal Court and a number of branches were identified. I have outlined why the New South Wales Government is taking very strong action. Those allegations are very serious and grave. They will not be tolerated by the New South Wales Government. That is why we are taking very strong and decisive action. The New South Wales Government has placed that on record over the past month and has made clear the work and the action that we are undertaking.

Under the bill, the Minister for Industrial Relations is to establish a scheme for the administration of a particular union—the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union Construction and General Division—and appoint an administrator. As I said in the second reading speech, the decision to go down that path has absolutely not been taken lightly. We are working in conjunction with the Federal Government. Building workers are entitled to representation from a union that protects their interests and agitates for safe and healthy workplaces in one of the most dangerous industries in the labour market. I know that firsthand, being a very proactive Minister who has worked with the labour movement and with building and construction workers to make sure that we introduced important law reform to make workplaces safer.

Those opposite, who have grandstanded in the Chamber, should look at their own record. I take these matters very seriously. Safety is very important. We are undertaking major reform when it comes to safety. Building and construction workers work in very dangerous environments; they need full protection. We have worrying statistics, particularly when it comes to falls from heights. I worry very much about our young apprentices. I note the important role that safety at work plays and the role that the safety regulator in New South Wales plays. We must ensure that young people are learning early on about safety at work, and are standing up

collectively, as part of a strong union, to advocate strongly for their rights and protections as workers in those industries.

As we know, the Commonwealth applied to the Federal Court to appoint an administrator to oversee numerous State branches of the union, including the New South Wales branch. The Commonwealth bill to appoint an administrator is progressing in the Federal Parliament. The New South Wales Government is acting in lockstep with our Federal colleagues and other jurisdictions. We are not going to stand on the sidelines, so we have made a strong decision and acted very decisively. I wish to make this clear: We support the rights of workers to join a union and of unions to be active representing their members. I make no apologies for that at all. But I also put on record—and I note that this has been made an issue by the member for Miranda—that the building and construction procurement guidelines are currently in force and have been in force since 1 July 2013. They came in under Premier O'Farrell. The guidelines apply to building and construction companies that bid or tender for New South Wales Government infrastructure and are administered contractually by client agencies.

I am not sure what point the Opposition was trying to make, but there are a number of inspectors. They go out and examine those workplace relations management plans. I make it clear that a very strong inspectorate is still in place. The bill is specifically and deliberately aimed at one union and, within that union, one specific division. I make that clear, because of what is being put on record. The bill will not set a precedent for any other union, save to clearly demonstrate that alleged corruption and gross misconduct by union officials or by anyone will not be tolerated. That has been made clear by the Government. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Sophie Cotsis and Ms Jenny Leong.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I seek leave to move Government amendments Nos 1 to 8 on sheet c2024-137E in globo.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:30):** I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-137E:

#### **No. 1 Definition of relevant officer**

Page 3, Schedule 1, proposed clause 1, definition of *office holders*, lines 24 and 25. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (b) the CFMEU, C & G Divisional Council,
- (c) the CFMEU, C & G Divisional Committee of Management.

The amendment amends the definition of "office holders" to better align with CFMEU NSW rules.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:32):** The Opposition accepts the Government amendment.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:32):** The Greens do not have significant concerns with Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-137E, which would change the definition of "officer holders". There are concerns about reports that the Government has had difficulties naming the various branches of the CFMEU, particularly in the way they relate to the registration of the organisation at both a State and Federal level. It is unclear whether the New South Wales Government and its legal team had concerns and made this amendment or whether the concerns came from the Industrial Court. I understand the Minns Labor Government filed an application with the Industrial Court to appoint an administrator to the CFMEU. That is the correct process for the Government to go through under the existing legislation.

But the application was riddled with errors, including the naming of the union on the paperwork. Only New South Wales could be in a situation where the Labor Government seeks to appoint an unelected administrator to a union, only to get the name of that union wrong. That is mirrored in this amendment to the bill, which updates the organisational names that appear to have been written incorrectly. Has the Minister with carriage of the bill and the New South Wales Minns Labor Government proposed this legislation, or have they received orders from Canberra to introduce this cut-and-paste bill to Parliament? I am not sure about any of the other members, but I would prefer if laws were made in the interests of the people of New South Wales.

The amendment corrects the name of the union, in line with the concerns that were raised about the application of the New South Wales Government to the Industrial Court, which required that issues relating to name changes be tidied up. It would be good to receive clarity from the Minister about whether there will be substantial changes as a result of this amendment or whether it is simply a correction to an error in drafting to change the names in the bill. Personally, I think it is an error in drafting but there may be other implications from this amendment that I am not aware of. It would be great to have clarification from the Minister as to whether the amendment creates any additional changes.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:35):** I thank the member for Newtown for her contribution to debate on the amendment. In my second reading speech I foreshadowed a number of amendments to the bill that will align with the Federal Government's proposed bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:35):** To clarify, the amendment before the House seeks to alter lines 24 and 25 on page 3 of schedule 1 to the bill. The amendment states:

Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (b) the CFMEU, C & G Divisional Council,
- (c) the CFMEU, C & G Divisional Committee of Management.

The Government has removed the word "branch" because either they are not called branches anymore or they are called branches at a national level but not at a State level. I am not sure if that will change the scope of the bill or if it was an error in the drafting.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:37):** I move Government amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 2 Administration scheme—declaration that offices of officers holders are vacant**

Page 4, Schedule 1, proposed clause 3(2)(b), lines 7 and 8. Insert "or the CFMEU (NSW)" after "CFMEU, C & G Division".

Government amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-137E clarifies that the offices of CFMEU NSW State Executive office holders can be declared vacant. The primary purpose is to ensure that the bill is consistent with the approach being taken by the Commonwealth Government.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:39):** For the record, I state that the Opposition supports the amendment.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:39):** I want clarity from the Minister in relation to Government amendment No.2 and inserting "or the CFMEU (NSW)". Is the concern that we do not know whether the union is the CFMEU Construction and General Division, so we also need to refer to it as the CFMEU NSW? Or is there an intention to broaden the powers of the administration scheme beyond the CFMEU Construction and General Division to any division of the CFMEU? It would be great to get clarity on whether we are indeed expanding it because it is worth noting—and I take the Minister at her word—that this bill is specific. The Minister said that it is aimed at one union and then said it is aimed at one division of a union. It would be great to know, with the inclusion of the CFMEU Construction and General Division or CFMEU NSW, whether we are indeed broadening the scope beyond the Construction and General Division.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:41):** I hear what the member for Newtown is saying. This is to clarify and to capture that the State Executive is in CFMEU NSW.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:42):** I move Government amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 3 Functions of administrator**

Page 5, Schedule 1, proposed clause 5(1). Insert after line 19—

- (c1) promoting compliance by the CFMEU, C & G Division with the laws, including workplace laws, of the State and the Commonwealth,
- (c2) ensuring officers and employees of the CFMEU, C & G Division have complied, and continue to comply, with the obligations of this Act and, if the officers and employees have not complied, as far as reasonably practicable ensure the officers and employees are held accountable for the non-compliance.

This amendment specifies additional functions for the administrator, including promoting compliance by the C and G Division with the laws, including workplace laws, of the Commonwealth and the State, and ensuring that officers and employees comply and continue to comply with the obligations of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 and, if not, as far as reasonably practicable, ensure that they are held accountable for not having done so.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:43):** In relation to Government amendment No. 3, The Greens want to raise significant concerns because we believe it undermines the collective power of union members. Indeed, people who are interested in collective action to ensure that workplaces are safe will be retroactively punished for those actions. It is concerning to us that we have a situation where the administrator would be ensuring that officers and employees of the union have complied and continue to comply with the obligations of the Act and, if the officers and employees have not complied, as far as reasonably practicable, the administrator would be ensuring that the officers and employees are held accountable for the non-compliance.

The Labor Government might have forgotten, but we certainly have not forgotten, that we had 12 years of a Liberal-Nationals government, and we had many industrial laws that might not have been in the interests of workers. A whole lot of laws attempted to crack down on the ability of unions to engage in industrial action. Over that same period, at a Federal level, many additional laws meant we were in a situation where unions, understandably, in the interests of getting their members good wages and conditions and ensuring safe workplaces, chose on occasion to exercise their muscle as a collective power and as a union to breach unfair laws that seek to put their workers' rights at risk.

In fact, I believe members of the CFMEU currently on construction sites around this State are probably pleased that their union goes to bat for them when they say, "We want to walk off the job now because this site is not safe" and they do not have the right industrial protection in place at that moment to do it. That is a very good thing for them to do because it keeps those people safe. We come in here on Injured Workers Day to remember the loss of workers on construction sites and we say we love it that the CFMEU is so powerful and robust in support of its members. Yet this amendment would mean that, if they have not complied with the laws, including workplace laws, they will be held accountable.

This is where we get to this murky character of what is currently being reported about some of these issues. What is being talked up is that unions might have found themselves in situations where they have been found guilty and paid \$10 million worth of fines. But those fines in so many cases have been paid as a result of them striking, taking collective industrial action that was legitimised by Liberal-Nationals laws that prevented workers from collectively organising. And now we are sending in an administrator, and a private company to back it, to go on a witch-hunt to find those union officers, organisers, delegates and employees who might have acted in noncompliance of those laws.

In addition, this amendment says that the CFMEU C and G Division's administrator must act to ensure that the division complies with the workplace laws of the State and Federal governments. I remind the State Labor Government that there is a Federal election coming up and that Anthony Albanese may not be in charge anymore. We are in here, in this Parliament, approving five years of an administration that would require the administrator to force the CFMEU Construction and General Division to comply with those workplace laws. What if we have workplace laws that will fundamentally put at risk the rights of workers? Are we saying that the administrator appointed by the Minister will make them comply with those laws? Bad laws should be broken. Laws that stop people coordinating and bargaining and striking should not be laws that we say unions need to comply with in a scenario where there might be risks to those workers' safety. Yet here we are, in a situation where that is what this New South Wales Labor Government is doing.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:48):** For completeness, I note that the Opposition supports the Government's amendment.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:49):** I have heard the position of The Greens on the amendment. I will not be lectured to about workplace relations by The Greens. Members should read the application lodged with the Federal Court by the Fair Work Commission. The New South Wales Government does not tolerate corruption or any form of criminality. It has taken very strong action. Once the administrator is appointed, their functions, objects and responsibilities are set out in the bill and very strict procedures apply. We are working with the Federal Government.

As has been stated by the member for Blacktown, there are hardworking delegates on worksites and hardworking construction and building workers in New South Wales. As the daughter of a tradie, I know how hardworking our building and construction workers are. I know the intensity of the work they do and what they go through in terms of their injuries because I have seen it firsthand. Under the former Coalition Government, there were dozens and dozens of deaths on worksites. Since I have been the Minister, yes, there have been deaths. It is devastating when I receive those notifications. As the mother of a 19-year-old, I am devastated by the deaths of young men on construction sites. We need not only a strong government regulator but also a strong union working to make sure that those building workers are represented.

As the member for Blacktown stated clearly, there are very good, hardworking people who have been working for this particular union for years and years, who are dedicated to advocating strongly for workers in the building industry. I represent them in my electorate. I am out in my electorate regularly and I see those workers. I see how hard they work and what they do, how they struggle every day to put bread and butter on the table for their kids. I listen to what they say at my street meetings. I see, I hear and I know. The New South Wales Government will not tolerate any corruption or criminality. We need to have a strong union in place advocating. I work to make sure that we have the strongest safety protections in building and construction. It is important that we appoint an administrator to make sure that we weed out the criminality and ensure that building workers are strongly represented.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:53):** I hear the Minister. I have serious concerns. I am talking about the need to ensure that the administrator is promoting compliance by the CFMEU Construction and General Division with the laws, including workplace laws, of the State and the Commonwealth. I read the amendment to cover laws as well as workplace laws. In a scenario where there is a change of government—because this legislation exists for at least five years and a parliamentary term in New South Wales is only four years—if members on the Opposition benches return to the Government benches in that time and they pass laws that outlaw engagement in demonstrations out the front of the New South Wales Parliament, the administrator of the CFMEU will then need to ensure that no members or officers of the CFMEU are breaching that law. Basically we are saying that the administrator must comply, and ensure that union members and officers comply, with any future laws, whether or not they are in the interests of workers' ability to collectively organise.

That is a very broad change to our Industrial Relations Act and seems to open the door to a crackdown on union power and collective action, which is something that I would not ever have imagined we would be doing, given the change of government in March last year. The Greens have serious concerns about it. I absolutely hear the Minister's concerns about work and safety issues. Back in the day, in about 2004, I proudly joined with the CFMEU members and officers in storming the James Hardie offices—and absolutely breaking the law—to try to highlight the danger that workers were being subjected to as a result of asbestos exposure. I proudly broke the law with them, as we sat between the lifts and the office gates and said to the media that it was time for James Hardie to act and stop killing workers.

I would proudly break the law in that way again. I believe that most people in our society would believe that breaking the law like that in the interests of workers' safety is okay. Therefore, I ask the New South Wales Labor Government if it is suggesting that the administrator should now start cracking down on that action. Maybe they will come after me, because I was one of those people who was involved. I will get to that in a minute. The proposed provisions are so broad that, indeed, any one of us in this place could be named as required to assist and present documents to the administrator.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Noes, 3**

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

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:02):** I move Government amendment No. 4 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 4 Variation and revocation of administration scheme**

Page 6, Schedule 1, proposed clause 6. Insert after line 7—

- (3) In deciding whether to vary or revoke an administration scheme, the Minister must consider whether the variation or revocation of the administration scheme is in the public interest, having regard to—
- (a) the objects of this Act, and
  - (b) any other matters the Minister considers relevant.

The amendment provides that the Minister must consider the public interest, the objects of the Act and any other matters that the Minister considers relevant when varying or revoking an administration scheme.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:03):** The Greens do not support the amendment. It provides that in deciding whether to vary or revoke an administration scheme, the Minister must consider whether the variation or revocation of the administration scheme is in the public interest, having regard to the objects of the Act and any other matters the Minister considers relevant. That is too broad. It is likely that "any other matters the Minister considers relevant" is included to vary or revoke an administration scheme as a coverall because the Federal legislation has not yet been drafted.

I appreciate that we are in a difficult position because we need to draft and pass our legislation before the Federal legislation is passed. We are including "any other matters the Minister considers relevant" to cover the fact that negotiations in the Senate will occur and then there will be reason to vary or revoke the administration scheme, but we do know that administration scheme and how it will be varied because the Federal Government is yet to pass it. I think we are passing legislation to align with the Federal Act, but we do not yet know what the Federal Act will say. If that is not the reason, it would be great if the Minister explained why "any other matters the Minister considers relevant" is included. Otherwise The Greens do not support the amendment because we think it is too broad.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:05):** In response to the member for Newtown, the Federal bill has been introduced and the Minister has given his second reading speech. The amendment is very important. It is consistent with the Federal bill. Issues will arise throughout the life of the administration scheme—that is what has happened in other administrations—and it is important to look at everything on its merits. That is why we have moved the amendment.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:06):** It is true that issues that we are unaware of or cannot predict may arise. If that is the reason for keeping it so broad, I go back to the point I made earlier. We are dealing with legislation that will have effect for five years. The term of the New South Wales Labor Government, without winning the next election, is shorter than five years, so we could be potentially giving Minister Tudehope, or the member for Willoughby, or whoever might be the Minister after the next election, the power to be able to vary or revoke the administration scheme that dictates or suggests what the administration of the CFMEU can do. I wonder whether the New South Wales union movement is happy with the New South Wales Labor Government putting in place a provision that would allow that to occur.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member for Newtown will be heard in silence.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** "Any other matters the Minister considers relevant" may feel okay in the context of a New South Wales Labor industrial relations Minister, but it certainly does not feel okay in relation to a New South Wales Liberal industrial relations Minister.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:07):** The Opposition will support the amendment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 4 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:07):** I move Government amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 5 Civil penalty for failure to assist administrator**

Page 6, Schedule 1, proposed clause 9(2), penalty, line 28. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

Maximum civil penalty—1700 penalty units.

On Monday of this week the Commonwealth Government introduced the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Administration) Bill 2024. The bill before the House creates criminal penalties for failing to provide assistance to the administrator and an anti-avoidance provision that relates to actions that inhibit the administration scheme or the administrator. This is to align with the Commonwealth approach. The Government proposes for these penalties to be civil penalties; to maintain a criminal penalty for the anti-avoidance provision; and to align the penalty amounts in the New South Wales bill to the amounts proposed by the Commonwealth bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:10):** On behalf of The Greens, I express our serious concerns about the civil penalty for failure to assist the administrator contained in Government amendment No. 5. For the benefit of members who might not be across the detail of this legislation, the bill contains a penalty provision that if someone does not provide assistance to the administrator, they are subject to penalties. The original bill, as tabled in this House when the Minister did the second reading speech, had those penalties at 100 penalty units, which is \$11,000. The amendment before the House seeks to increase that \$11,000 penalty for not complying to \$187,000. I do not know what occurred between last week and today, but it appears to be in line with the fact that members of this Parliament are not actually driving this change; we are doing whatever the Feds tell us to do.

The Federal bill had penalties of 1,700 penalty units, or \$187,000, but the original New South Wales bill presented to the House last week had penalties of \$11,000, or 100 penalty units, for failure to assist the administrator. That is a massive jump. I do not understand what occurred between last week and this week to make that change. I ask the Minister to put on record an explanation. We are not talking about a small change here. The other amendments to the bill corrected typos—we called it "the CFMEU NSW" versus the "CFMEU Construction and General Division branch" or "committee of management". This is a jump in penalty from \$11,000 to \$187,000. Members should pay attention to this because every single one of us in this Chamber could be impacted by this change. The bill states:

- (1) For the purpose of exercising the administrator's functions under this schedule, the administrator may, by written notice given to a relevant person, require the relevant person to do either or both of the following—
  - (a) give to the administrator documents in the relevant person's possession, custody, power or control that the administrator reasonably requires to exercise the functions ...

The bill defines a "relevant person" as anyone prescribed by the regulations. Literally any one of us—or anyone else—could be subjected to that provision. The administrator may find every member of the New South Wales Labor Party who received assistance from the CFMEU NSW Construction and General Division in the last State election to be a "relevant person" and someone they should haul in and request assistance from. Under this provision, if that person does not go in and assist them, they are up for \$187,000 of criminal penalties. Members might think, "This is just The Greens scaremongering." I say to members that the law that is being drafted here has got massive, gaping holes in it that nobody is across. The Minister's second reading speech and the explanations for each of these amendments were so brief because members are not actually deciding what is here for New South Wales. We are doing what the Federal Government wants us to do in relation to its ongoing struggles with what is happening with the CFMEU in Victoria.

I make it clear to any members who were not listening before: The Greens absolutely do not support the idea of corruption, bribery or kickbacks in any industry—but that is not what this bill is about. The New South Wales Labor Government has the power to take these matters to the Industrial Court and seek an order to appoint an administrator, but it is not doing that. Instead, it is bringing this legislation to the House because it does not want the oversight of a court. It wants to give full power to the Minister and, as a result, subject people to \$187,000 worth of fines if they do not comply with the appointed administrator.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Noes, 3**

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

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:20):** I move Government amendment No. 6 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 6 Penalties for anti-avoidance conduct**

Page 7, Schedule 1, proposed clause 11(1), penalty, line 6. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

Maximum civil penalty—1,700 penalty units.

Maximum criminal penalty—imprisonment for 2 years or 8,535 penalty units.

The bill currently creates criminal penalties for failing to provide assistance to the administrator and an anti-avoidance provision which relates to actions that inhibit the administration scheme or administrator. To align with the Commonwealth approach, the Government proposes that the penalties be civil penalties, to maintain

criminal penalty for the anti-avoidance provision and to align the penalty amounts in the New South Wales bill to the amounts proposed by the Commonwealth bill. The proposed amendment will also maintain the criminal offence for anti-avoidance actions with an amended penalty of two years imprisonment or 8,535 penalty units.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:21):** The Greens do not support the amendment. It makes a significant jump from 100 penalty units to a maximum civil penalty of 1,700 penalty units and a maximum criminal penalty of imprisonment for two years, or 8,535 penalty units. We believe that problematic conduct needs to be addressed and dealt with severely. The Minister and her office are giving very little justification or explanation as to why any of the changes are being made. It is not all right to simply say that the changes to the bill are being made to align with the Federal bill. I take the Minister's point that the Federal bill has been read a second time, but we know the numbers in the Federal Parliament. To get a bill through the Federal Parliament, the Federal Government needs either The Greens or the Liberal Party and the Coalition. I predict that we will be back debating this legislation at some point in the future because we are making amendments to align with a Federal bill that has not yet passed the Federal Parliament.

The Minister foreshadowed that the Government would move amendments to the bill. Members had assumed that would be as a result of the Federal bill passing and that we would then align our legislation to that, leaving aside the principle of whether we support the bill overall. Now we are aligning our bill to a Federal bill that has not been finalised. I do not know where that road will lead to, but the amendments mean we have basically devolved our powers to the Federal industrial relations Minister. The reason for the amendments is completely unclear, and there is a lack of explanation as to why the penalty has jumped from \$11,000 to \$938,850 in the days since the Minister delivered her second reading speech on the bill.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:23):** In my second reading speech, I said that I would foreshadow amendments to align the bill with the Federal bill. The amendments are what the Federal Government has put up, and we are aligning with the Federal bill. The member for Newtown said that neither I nor my office has provided an explanation that suits her. I take offence to that. My office has been working 24/7 on a whole range of matters. The member can attack and blame me but not my staffers or the public servants. I take offence to her comment.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order—

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** No, I take offence to that. You can attack me all you like all day long but not my office.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member for Newtown rises on a point of order. The Minister will resume her seat.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I ask the Minister to withdraw what she just implied. That was not what I meant and I am happy to clarify. I absolutely did not say that. I ask that the Minister withdraw what she said so I can clarify exactly what I was saying.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I am not going to debate this. I take what the member for Newtown says at face value, as I continue to do with members of other parties and the Opposition in terms of what their real motivations and intentions are. If that was the intention of the member for Newtown, I will take her at face value. The member can criticise me all she likes any day of the week but not my staff or the department. That is what I have said. If that is not what was intended, I accept that. If that was not her intention, I accept that. With respect to the amendment, the Government has made it very clear that it is being consistent. I also made it very clear last week in my second reading speech that I would move amendments, and I foreshadowed that the amendments align the bill with the Federal bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:26):** I clarify the comments I made about the Minister and the Minister's office not explaining the jump in the penalty. To be clear, I was not questioning the Minister. I acknowledge and accept that the Minister foreshadowed that amendments would be moved to align this bill with the Federal bill. I acknowledge the expertise of all the public servants involved in the drafting of the bill and the incredibly difficult work the Minister's team has undertaken to navigate the process. I acknowledge their knowledge and expertise in industrial relations matters.

I was simply saying that I have not had an explanation from the Minister or her office in our conversations as to why the penalty has jumped from \$11,000 to \$938,850. I was not saying that we have not had the discussions, but I do not have an explanation other than we are aligning with the Federal bill. I do not have an explanation as to why the Federal bill has that penalty, or why our penalty was \$11,000 but has now jumped to a significant amount, including with criminal and civil penalties. That is what I am yet to get an explanation for. We are dealing with this amendment. It would be good to have an explanation on record as to why the penalty has increased, beyond just, "We're aligning with the Federal bill."



**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:27):** I accept what the member for Newtown has said. I have made it very clear that the amendments align the bill with the Federal Government's proposed bill. It is really important that there is consistency across Federal and State legislation.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 6 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:28):** I move Government amendment No. 7 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 7 Civil penalty provisions—consequential amendment**

Page 7, Schedule 1, proposed clause 14(2), lines 26–30. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (2) The Commission may make an order requiring the person to take action to comply with the clause or to stop taking action that contravenes the clause.

This is a consequential amendment to facilitate the civil penalties.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:28):** The Greens support the amendment, and we are very encouraged that the commission has some kind of role with, or oversight of, the administration. Sadly, the Industrial Court has been completely sidelined as a result of the bill. The bill recognises that there is a commission and that it is good to oversight. The Greens are supportive of that.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:29):** For the record, I note that the Opposition is again supporting the Government's amendment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 7 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:29):** I move Government amendment No. 8 on sheet c2024-137E:

**No. 8 Civil penalty for failure to assist administrator or anti-avoidance conduct**

Page 8, Schedule 1. Insert after line 14—

**15A Proceedings for contravention of civil penalty provision**

- (1) This section applies to a contravention of clause 9(2) or 11(1) (a *civil penalty provision*).
- (2) The industrial court may, on the application of an authorised official, order a person to pay a monetary penalty if the Court is satisfied the person contravened a civil penalty provision.
- (3) The monetary penalty must not be more than the amount specified at the end of the civil penalty provision following the words "Maximum civil penalty".
- (4) Proceedings for a penalty under this clause may be brought within 6 years after the date on which the contravention is alleged to have occurred.
- (5) The rules of evidence apply to proceedings under this clause.
- (6) The standard of proof that applies to proceedings under this clause is proof on the balance of probabilities.
- (7) Section 357(6) and (7) apply in relation to a contravention of a civil penalty provision and proceedings under this clause in the same way as the subsections apply to a contravention of an industrial instrument and proceedings for a civil penalty for the contravention.
- (8) Criminal proceedings may be commenced against a person for conduct that is substantially the same conduct constituting a contravention of clause 11(1) regardless of whether the industrial court makes an order under this clause.
- (9) However, the industrial court must not make an order under this clause for a contravention of a civil penalty provision if the person the subject of the proceedings has been convicted of an offence constituted by conduct that is substantially the same as the conduct constituting the contravention.
- (10) A person who is involved in a contravention of a civil penalty provision is taken to have contravened the provision.
- (11) In this clause—

*authorised official* means—

- (a) an inspector or other person authorised under this Act to institute proceedings for offences, or
- (b) the administrator.

*industrial court* has the same meaning as in Chapter 7, Part 1.

*involved*, in a contravention of a civil penalty provision, means a person has—

- (a) aided, abetted, counselled or procured the contravention, or
- (b) induced the contravention, whether by threats, promises or otherwise, or
- (c) been in any way, by act or omission, directly or indirectly, knowingly concerned in or party to the contravention, or
- (d) conspired with others to effect the contravention.

This amendment is to facilitate civil penalties for failing to provide assistance to the administrator and anti-avoidance actions under the Industrial Relations Act 1996. Government amendment No. 8 sets out procedural requirements relating to proceedings for contravention of civil penalty provisions. This includes that the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales in Court Session or the Local Court can order a person to pay a monetary penalty for a person who contravened a civil penalty provision, allow civil penalty proceedings to be brought within six years and provide for an inspector, the administrator or another person authorised by the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to bring proceedings.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:30):** As with all of the amendments put today, the Opposition will support the Government's amendments, and we look forward to the end of the argy-bargy over the amendments to the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Government amendment No. 8 on sheet c2024-137E be agreed to.

#### **Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:31):** I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-142B:

#### **No. 1 State to pay expenses of administrator**

Page 6, Schedule 1, proposed clause 7, lines 8–12. Omit all words on the lines.

This amendment will remove the need for the CFMEU to pay for the costs of the administrator. The Greens have serious concerns in relation to the bill as it is currently drafted. Clause 7 says:

#### **Expenses of administrator**

Subject to the administration order, the expenses of, and incidental to, the conduct of the affairs of the CFMEU (NSW) or the CFMEU, C & G Division by an administrator, including the administrator's remuneration as specified in the administration order, are payable by the CFMEU (NSW).

In the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, The Greens have serious concerns for the Construction and General Division members of the CFMEU in New South Wales who pay their union dues. They are the workers on building sites around the country who will be paying for an appointed administrator—who will probably get in the order of \$4,000 a day—plus the cost of the private consultant company that is employed to assist the administrator.

If the Government thinks this situation is serious enough to take action on, there are other ways to deal with it. The Construction and General Division members of the CFMEU should not be paying for the generous salary of an administrator, nor any of the consultants of the private firm that is being recommended to assist the administrator, nor any of the assistant administrators who may be engaged to conduct this process. It is clear that there is no oversight as to how much money the administrator will spend on the administration of the CFMEU over the next five years, which is a long period. The Greens do not believe that workers should be paying for the big pays of bosses to come in and undermine the democracy of their union.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:34):** The Government does not support The Greens amendment. The administrator's remuneration will be specified in the administration order. When making an administration order or varying such an order, the Minister must be satisfied that the administration scheme is in the public interest and have regard to the objects of the Industrial Relations Act. This arrangement is consistent with the former administration schemes for unions, including for the Health Services Union.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:35):** I want to clarify for the Minister because there were multiple conversations happening in the Chamber. The Greens have a real concern that there appears to be no limit on the cost. One concern is the cost of the administrator. How much is the administrator paid today? What will they get

for their contract? The other concern is the cost associated with the administrator's work. If the administrator wants to employ, let's say, 10 senior executives from PwC or KPMG to advise them on their administration activities, instead of the four current paid officials within the CFMEU NSW branch, is there any scope to make sure that money is spent adequately, given that the administrator could simply say they need that capacity to undertake their role as the administrator?

In that process, the people who will pay for those high executive salaries will be the teenage workers that we mentioned before—those working their proverbial off doing construction work in the State. It is not just about the administrator's salary. My understanding is that it is the expenses of and the incidentals to the conduct and affairs of the CFMEU. It is not just the amount the administrator is paid; it is also all of the expenses associated with the actions taken by the administrator. If that is not correct and I am reading it wrong, then I look forward to that being clarified so that we can keep a close eye on it.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:37):** I will clarify with respect to what the member for Newtown just said. Page 4 of the bill says:

- (4) Subject to this schedule, the administration order may also provide for the following—
  - (a) the period of the administrator's appointment,
  - (b) the terms of the administrator's appointment, including the remuneration the Minister determines to be appropriate,
  - (c) the functions to be exercised by the administrator.

I hear what the member is saying, but it is specified in the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-142B be agreed to.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:38):** I move The Greens amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-142B:

**No. 2 Limitation on requirement to provide assistance to administrator**

Page 6, Schedule 1, proposed clause 9 (1), lines 20–25. Omit all words on the lines.

require the relevant person to give the administrator documents in the relevant person's possession, custody, power or control that the administrator reasonably requires to exercise the functions.

The Greens amendment No. 2 relates to the limitation on the requirement to provide assistance to the administrator. Proposed clause 9 (1) (b) suggests there is a need for anyone, at the request of a written notice by the administrator, to "give the administrator any other information or assistance the administrator reasonably requires to exercise the functions". Our big concern is "any other information or assistance". We recognise that there is a need to give the administrator any documents that are in the relevant person's possession or custody to allow the administrator to do their duty. But to broaden the provision to include giving the administrator any other information or assistance that the administrator reasonably requires raises serious concerns about creating a situation where the administrator requires current or former officials of the union to rock up without pay or remuneration to assist the administrator in their functions.

I take members through it. The relevant person can be a person prescribed in regulations. It can be an officer or an employee of the union, an agent or former agent of the CFMEU, or a person that provides or formerly provided services under a contract or agreement with the CFMEU. In that sense, the administrator could require the relevant person to give them the reasonable assistance they require to exercise their functions. If their functions are to ensure the ongoing safety of construction workers in this State, can they require people who used to be officers or officials or employers of the union to assist them with that? Because we have just increased the penalties, they would face a penalty of 1,700 penalty units if they did not comply and assist the administrator. It would be wonderful if the Minister could indicate whether the Government supports the amendment. I am happy to speak to our Federal colleagues about trying to limit the provisions in the Federal legislation as well. It is critical that we avoid a situation where people are required to assist an administrator or face penalties. They may not be able to do so for a whole range of reasons.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:41):** I understand why the member for Newtown is raising these issues, but I put on record that I have only just seen the amendment. I hear what the member for Newton is saying, and I understand that this matter will be further debated in the upper House. Because I have only just seen the amendment and we are still analysing it, I inform the House that the Government will not support it. The provision relates to the administration scheme to address serious issues and allegations. Strict liability offences are not uncommon in

regulatory settings to encourage compliance. The exercise of the administrator's powers is tied to what is reasonably required in clause 9, which inherently constrains what documents and information can be sought.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-142B be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 3**  
Ms J. Leong  
Ms K. Shetty  
Ms T. Smith

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:47):** I move The Greens amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-142B:

**No. 3 Persons who may be required to provide assistance to administrator**

Page 6, Schedule 1, proposed clause 9(3), definition of *relevant person*, lines 36 and 37. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead "or agreement to the CFMEU (NSW) or the CFMEU, C & G Division."

Amendment No. 3 deals with the persons who may be required to provide assistance to the administrator.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** Members will remain silent while the member for Newtown is speaking.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** We have serious concerns that the current legislation is way too broad. Schedule 1 clause 9 (3) (d) refers to a relevant person as "a person prescribed by regulations". That could be anybody. We sought advice about whether it could indeed be anybody and whether it was too broad. Part of the reason why it is too broad is because we are waiting for the Federal law to pass and so we have to keep it broad and give all the powers over to regulations. I note a previous debate we had about regulations. The no-grounds evictions bill moved by The Greens included a provision that allowed for any other grounds as specified in regulations. The Minister and Government members who stood up to oppose The Greens' attempts to end no-grounds evictions through a private member's bill earlier in the year explained clearly that it was not good practice to put such gaps in legislation, to put in regulations that are so broad and to defer off to regulations. When that happened, I was pleased because I knew that it would not be long before the government of the day would attempt to say, "That is okay. We will sort it out in regulations." Here we have it, not even a year later.

In the bill, "a person prescribed by the regulations" could be a relevant person. They do not even have to be a person associated with the CFMEU NSW as prescribed by regulations. It could be any person. Indeed, I had a conversation with other unions. My reading of this is that it could be the secretary of the Nurses and Midwives' Association, who would no doubt chat to the CFMEU NSW. It could be the secretary of the Teachers Federation. It could indeed be Mark Morey from Unions NSW. "A person prescribed by the regulations" could be any person associated with a union and, indeed, they would be subject to this provision.

We cannot allow a situation where, on one hand, we cannot allow regulations, and then we allow regulations on the other hand. It appears that the New South Wales Labor Government is happy to put regulations in its bill because it does not know what it needs to cover. The Government does now know what it is looking for, and now we are in a situation where any person could be captured under these laws. That is too broad for The Greens. All we are seeking to do is remove "a person prescribed by the regulations" from the bill. If there are other relevant persons that the Minister believes are responsible, they can bring this provision back through a substantive bill. As it stands, The Greens do not support the inclusion of this in the bill.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:51):** With respect to The Greens amendment No. 3, I understand that the member for Newtown has concerns with clause 9 (3) (d) of the bill. The member has suggested that this definition is too broad. The wording is consistent with the Commonwealth legislation and ensures the same request can be made within the State-registered union, as it would apply to the federally registered union. There is a provision that the person cannot comply with a request if the person has a reasonable excuse. The intention of this clause is to allow the administrator to compel a relevant person to assist them with the task of rebuilding the organisation. Before any penalty is applied in relation to providing assistance to only the administrator, only the Minister, inspectorate or administrator or other authorised person which the Industrial Relations (General) Regulation identifies as an authorised person, which is an industrial organisation, can commence proceedings.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:53):** We are debating a piece of legislation that is supposed to align with the Federal legislation. It is reported that negotiations on the Federal legislation have been delayed, and the

Government will not be able to pass legislation forcing the CFMEU into administration tomorrow. We are rushing through this legislation while the Federal Government is still negotiating with its parliament on its legislation. It is concerning practice from the New South Wales Minns Labor Government that it wants to go harder and faster, cracking down on unions and appointing an administrator, than legislation is able to be delivered at the Federal level. I am not sure that the people of New South Wales voted for someone to go harder and crack down on unions when they voted in March last year. Given the delay in the Federal negotiations and that the Federal Parliament will not be passing its legislation this week, I urge the New South Wales Minns Labor Government to put a pause on debate on this legislation and bring it back in the future, once the Federal legislation is before us, as many stakeholders are urging the Government to do.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-142B be agreed to.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:54):** I move The Greens amendment No. 4 on sheet c2024-142B:

No. 4 **Administrator to report to Parliament**

Page 8, Schedule 1. Insert before line 15—

**15A Reports about administration to be tabled in Parliament**

- (1) The administrator must give the Minister reports about the administration of the CFMEU, C & G Division at intervals of not more than 6 months.
- (2) Without limiting subclause (1), the report must include details of the following—
  - (a) actions taken by the administrator under this schedule, including under the administration order,
  - (b) the expenses of, and incidental to, the conduct of the affairs of the CFMEU (NSW) and the CFMEU, C & G Division by the administrator during the period to which the report relates, including the administrator's remuneration during the period.
- (3) The Minister must table the report in both Houses of Parliament within 10 business days after receiving the report.

This amendment proposes that the administrator report to Parliament and looks at the idea that Parliament has some oversight of the administrator. The idea is that the administrator must give the Minister reports about the administration of the CFMEU Construction and General Division at intervals of not more than six months and that those reports would be tabled in both Houses of Parliament within 10 days of the report being received. It is completely unclear to me why the New South Wales Labor Government would oppose this amendment if the Minister indeed wants oversight over this process.

The amendment does not need to comply with the Federal Act or be aligned with it. It is about providing a safeguard to ensure that if a future industrial relations Minister is not friendly to the collective of workers, Parliament could have a line of sight to that. I am hopeful that the Government can support this amendment. It is simply a reporting measure, requiring the report to be tabled in Parliament so that we know what is going on. If, as the saying goes, sunlight is the best disinfectant, being able to ensure that everyone can see what is going on is probably a good idea. I urge the New South Wales Labor Government to support this Greens amendment that would simply see reports about the administration tabled in Parliament.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:56):** I thank the member for Newtown. I hear what the member for Newtown has said. As I indicated earlier, the Government has only just seen these amendments, and I have not had the opportunity to thoroughly go through them. I have no doubt that the member for Newtown is genuine and sincere in her advocacy with respect to these amendments. Between now and the bill going to the upper House, there will be an opportunity to have a look at this in a wider scope and to put the lens on. I say to the member for Newtown that the scheme already provides for reports to be prepared by the administrator under schedule 6 [3] (2) (1). I hear what the member is saying about reporting to Parliament and other processes. The Government does not support the amendment at the present time as it would have to seriously take advice on that. There might be amendments going to the upper House, but at this stage the Government opposes this amendment.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:58):** I thank the Minister for acknowledging that this amendment allows us to move forward in considering how reporting can be provided. I understand that the Minister has been seeking advice from a number of people as we have been discussing these amendments. I appreciate the timeline that we are dealing with in this moving feast of a process. This particular amendment is specifically about a reporting function. It would not have any ramifications for any intersection with the Federal Act. I urge the Minister to indicate that there is indeed a desire to ensure transparency and oversight, and I urge her to support

The Greens amendment, recognising that, if a tidying-up of the amendment is required in any way, there would be the capacity to do that in the upper House. Requiring reports to Parliament so that we know what is going on would send a strong signal that the Minister is willing to have at least some transparency and oversight of the actions of the administrator.

I urge the Minister to reconsider her position. I appreciate the tight time frame that we are working with, but this is a reporting mechanism; people are providing advice now as we debate it. We have the chance, as the Minister has identified, to amend the amendment slightly—if we need to and if there is wording that causes concern—in the upper House. The amendment simply seeks to require reports about the administration to be tabled in Parliament. It states:

- (1) The administrator must give the Minister reports about the administration of the CFMEU, C & G Division at intervals of not more than 6 months.
- (2) Without limiting subclause (1), the report must include details of the following—
  - (a) actions taken by the administrator under this schedule, including under the administration order,
  - (b) the expenses of, and incidental to, the conduct of the affairs of the CFMEU (NSW) and the CFMEU, C & G Division by the administrator during the period to which the report relates, including the administrator's remuneration during the period.
- (3) The Minister must table the report in both Houses of Parliament within 10 business days after receiving the report.

It is a simple reporting function; we are dealing with risks or accusations of corruption and bribery.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** It being 5.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

### *Public Interest Debate*

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:02):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the correlation and strong evidence of causal connection between declining mental health in young people and their growing use of social media.
- (2) Notes that over 114,000 people have signed the 36 Months petition to raise the legal age of social media access to 16.
- (3) Supports raising the legal age of access to social media from 13 to 16.
- (4) Calls on the New South Wales Government and Federal Government to work together to implement this much-needed change by July 2025.

Social media has changed how humans interact with each other on an unprecedented scale. In just over a decade, smartphones have become a fixture in daily life, a portal to what seems like constant connectivity and engagement. In many respects, that has brought people closer together. But the growth of social media is a double-edged sword. In some cases, it has outright replaced many of the face-to-face interactions we used to take for granted and, in others, it has turned personal experiences into commodities whose value is determined by others' likes and reactions. At its worst, we hear horrific stories of cyberbullying, harassment and posts promoting self-harm, among other things, that young people have experienced.

By all accounts, young people are most affected by the downsides. Over the winter recess I read what I believe should be compulsory reading for all members in this place. A number one New York Times bestseller, Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation* describes how a great rewiring of childhood and adolescence has resulted in a sudden and very large upturn in mental illness, seen across the western world. As one introduction to the book puts it:

Haidt shows how, between 2010 and 2015, childhood ... got rewired. As teens traded in their flip phones for smartphones packed with social media apps, time online soared, including time spent comparing oneself to a vast pool of others. Time engaging face to face with friends and family plummeted, and so did mental health.

For example, from 2010 to 2020 the rate at which Australians aged 12 to 24 were kept in hospitals overnight for mental health reasons increased by 81 per cent for girls and 51 per cent for boys. Recent United States data shows that 57 per cent of teenage girls now say that they experience persistent sadness or hopelessness, up from 36 per cent in 2011. Haidt argues convincingly that the loss of play-based childhood and its replacement with a phone-based childhood unsuitable for human development is the source of increased mental distress among teenagers.

He identifies four fundamental ways in which a phone-based childhood disrupts development: social deprivation, with time with friends in face-to-face settings plummeting; sleep deprivation, in both quantity and quality; attention fragmentation, with constant notifications meaning adolescents rarely have five or 10 minutes to think without interruption; and addiction, with the dopamine release pleasurable but not satisfying and making the addict want more of what triggered the release. A 2020 study found that the strength of correlation between social media use and wellbeing for all age groups and genders is broadly stronger than the correlation between childhood lead exposure and adult IQ. Parents of younger children I have spoken with describe the endless streams of likes, buzzes and quasi-validation as a siren song that overtakes other pursuits, including schoolwork, athletics and socialising.

This is not a moral issue; this is a health issue. The response to these trends cannot simply be that parents should be better supported to protect their children. Social media has become a norm for younger people, so restricting individuals' access would likely cause isolation from friends and peers. It means we need a cohort-wide response. Across the world we are seeing different policy responses to protect our young children. In 2023 the European Union, for example, introduced the Digital Services Act, which forbids platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and Snapchat from targeting children with personalised advertisements. Eton College in England has recently required that students only use basic Nokia bricks, without access to the metaverse. Those efforts are valuable, but they only really scratch the surface of the problem of the rewiring of childhood.

That is why I strongly support the 36 Months campaign. I commend Michael Wipfli and Rob Galluzzo, the founders of the campaign, for starting this important conversation in Australia. Over 114,000 people have signed the petition, calling for raising the minimum age for signing up to social media contracts from 13 to 16. I also acknowledge, with deep sadness, the advocacy of Mr Robb Evans, who is in the gallery and who lost his daughter Liv to suicide at just 15 years old after she battled anorexia. The campaign comes from the commonsense and evidence-based position that younger users are better off with three more years to mature and develop their offline identities beforehand so that they are better equipped to handle the challenge of social media when they eventually do sign up. Our kids deserve the best start in life. By supporting this campaign, we can help create a healthier, happier future for the next generation.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:08):** I am delighted to make a contribution to this public interest debate. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, and member for Cronulla for moving the motion in the House. It is a matter of public interest because it is in all our interests to look after our kids. Ultimately, that is what is set to be achieved by addressing this matter. It is of a serious nature. I do not just say that as a parent; I say that as someone who gets around the community, and who has friends with children who have had issues and continue to have issues, particularly around the outlandish behaviours we sometimes see on social media.

We are all adults here, but let us be real: It affects our kids in a very different way, and we must protect them. The Government supports the motion in principle and gives it all regard. We have not determined the minimum age as yet; that is under review. I am advised that that is part of the work of the Government and a determination is imminent. For the benefit of those in the Speaker's gallery, who I welcome to the New South Wales Parliament, I say that members work together in this place because that is how best outcomes are achieved. This is one of those serious issues on which we must work together. A number of steps will be put in place to address it. One of them is a social media summit that will be co-hosted by New South Wales and South Australia. The summit will inform the design and delivery of a range of policies, programs and resources to address the challenges posed by social media.

The key areas of focus include the impacts of social media on children and young people, online safety and social media's role in disinformation and misinformation, addressing online hate and extremism, and how social media is changing the way government delivers services. I return to what I said initially: We must put in place measures and provisions to protect our children because social media poses a danger to their health. The member for Cronulla rightly stated that it is a health issue. I would suggest that this is one of the most serious social challenges that parents face in society. I often see the commentary on social media and I have heard terrible stories through my electorate office, as I am sure many colleagues have, irrespective of which side of the political aisle they are on.

All members are well connected with their communities. We are listening to them and we have heard a lot about this problem, but it is getting worse. Thugs are out there using social media platforms to do wrong. Members use social media because we must tell people what we do. The reality is that if we do not tell them what we do, they will think we are doing nothing. But we follow each other's social media pages and, by and large, everyone is very respectful. There is politics, of course—one would expect that—but nothing along personality lines or personal views or anything like that. That is appropriate because we must set the standard. Adults must set the standard. We must put protective measures in place, but members of this great Parliament—the oldest Parliament

in the country—must set the example and ensure that whatever we do is consistent with what we would expect our children and young people to do.

Children follow our example. Politicians behaving badly—I am not suggesting anyone in this Chamber behaves badly because, as I said, we are well behaved and pretty respectful—indicates that such behaviour is okay. But we know it is not okay. The summit will be a very good step. It is the first summit of its kind. I commend the Premier for consulting with his counterpart in South Australia and putting the steps in place to hold the summit. Ultimately, it is designed to provide opportunities to address social media harms within educational settings. The Government has already taken the very important step of banning mobile phones at school, but there is much more to do. We have not determined the ages that will apply. But I believe the main priority is that, while a lot of matters should be discussed, nothing should be discussed more than the provisions that we must introduce to protect our kids.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:13):** I acknowledge the parents in the gallery—the mums, dads and carers—who are here today because they are fighting a battle that seems so big, foreign, insurmountable and new to so many of us. It is a battle for the health, safety and, importantly, happiness of our kids. In particular, I acknowledge Robb Evans in the Speaker's gallery and thank him for bravely sharing his story. Liv would have been 17 on Monday. Our hearts break for Robb. I thank him for using Liv's story to advance a very important cause. I thank also the school principals who are here today and the social media influencers who are harnessing apps for good. I acknowledge organisations like UNICEF, which is represented in the gallery, as well as, very importantly, the many young people who have participated in this important conversation. I thank the team from 36 Months, who have impressively harnessed the collective power of parents across the country by garnering more than 114,000 petition signatures. The simple call to action reads:

In order to safeguard their digital future, we think 13yr olds should take another 36 months to get to know themselves before the world does.

Rob and Michael are the founders of 36 Months. Those two guys are committed to their kids' futures, but they are also campaigning for the sake of all kids and for a generation of young people whose childhoods have been upended. When I met with Rob and Michael, I did not want to just sign their petition; I wanted to give them a voice where our laws are made. Hopefully members have a broader influence and come together to commit to solutions. We must act because this is one of the most important issues of our time. We are witnessing a de-programming of childhoods, where critical play-based development has been eroded, to a large extent, by phone-based activities.

An alarming increase in anxiety and depression in young people correlates with the uptick in the use of social media apps on mobile phones. According to Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data, from 2008 to 2022 rates of self-harm nearly doubled for girls aged 15 to 19 and tripled for girls aged 14 and under. The headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey found that more than half of young people, or 57 per cent, believe their mental health is getting worse, and 42 per cent cited social media as the main cause for that decline. Data released today in *The Lancet* found that mental ill health in young people in Australia has risen by 50 per cent in the past 15 years, and one of the reasons for that is technology. As a mum of three teenagers, the subject is very close to my heart. I must admit, when my kids were little, I said, "I won't be one of those parents who lets their kids on social media. That won't be me." But, of course, fast-forward a few years and I am eating my words. But I know I am not alone.

A recent NSW Health report showed that 93 per cent of parents are trying to get their kids off those apps. We must help them. How can we allow our kids to use their mobile phones for the tools that are very important for social connection and learning, and balance that with keeping them safe and protecting them from social media apps that are incredibly harmful? Some of those media apps prey on vulnerability. They take a 13-year-old girl who is going through a critical stage of development, figuring herself out, and make her measure her sense of self-worth through likes, shares and flame emojis. There are apps to make her skin look better, her teeth straighter and her body thinner. Those apps subject her to the scrutiny and judgement of strangers, then collect her data and feed that into an algorithm that takes her down a wormhole of despair.

We have all heard these dreadful stories, and it is bad for boys too. Boys are exposed to pornography before they hit puberty. There are so many issues. I am running out of time and I could talk for hours, but we must support this measure. We must provide parents with a circuit breaker. The New South Wales Government needs to lean on its Federal counterparts to bring about important change. We must stop the talkfests. We need action. Parents deserve it and we owe it to them.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:18):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for introducing the motion. As a parent and proud great-aunt in a family of four generations, I know only too well that we must protect our young people. That is why all of us are in this place. Yesterday we were talking about vaping with the



same concern. I must bring to the attention of the House and the gallery that the Leader of the Opposition bringing this motion to the House is nothing short of hypocrisy from the Opposition and needs to be called out in the first instance.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Members opposite ask why. I remind them that the Liberals and The Nationals opposed our ban on mobile phones in public schools. Former Minister Mitchell received a petition signed by 25,000 people calling for that ban, yet the government of the day refused to implement it. Politics aside, this issue is too important not to move on. The Minns Labor Government has been clear about our concerns, and we agree in principle with the motion. We share parents' concerns about the impact of social media on young people. Substantial evidence shows that social media harms young people's mental health and safety. Our job is to step up to help protect young people. Almost one in 10 young people feels pressured to be online and answer messages when in class; more than one in six feels nervous or anxious when they do not have their digital devices near them. That is why the Minns Labor Government is already acting to protect our young people. In term 4 last year we banned mobile phones in all public schools in New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. If the member for Badgerys Creek does not cease interjecting, she will be directed to leave the Chamber.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** I will try my best.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I will not tolerate interjections during this debate.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** The mobile phone ban introduced by the Minns Labor Government is working. We have already had a significant decrease in phone-related incidents, a decrease in suspensions and in bullying, an increase in attendance, and an increase in the focus and engagement of students. Teachers are reporting increased teaching and learning time. Physical activity in playgrounds and on ovals has dramatically increased. Members would have seen in the media that the New South Wales Government is hosting a social media summit with the South Australian Government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! I direct the member for Badgerys Creek to remove herself from the Chamber, under Standing Order 249A, for the remainder of the public interest debate.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Badgerys Creek left the Chamber at 17:21.]*

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** That summit will explore formulating a public health response, whose importance has been mentioned, to minimise the harms caused by social media. We are establishing a \$2.5 million fund for screen-related addiction to investigate the impacts of excessive screen time, video games and mobile phone use on young people and their learning. A new syllabus explicitly addresses online safety and cyberbullying. We need a consultative and measured approach based on evidence. Currently several reviews considering the increase of the age from 13 to 16 are underway. Former High Court Chief Justice Robert French is conducting a legal review on imposing a social media ban. The Federal Government is undertaking a trial on age verification technology.

Our Government's two-day social media summit will address the increasing harm of online platforms to children and young people. Scheduled for October 2024, the summit will bring together senior officials, policymakers and academics, as well as representatives from other jurisdictions, leading social media platforms and digital technologies. They will look at the impacts of social media on children and young people, online safety, the role of social media in disinformation and misinformation, online hate and extremism, and how social media is changing how governments deliver services. They will explore themes including formulating a public health response to social media harm minimisation; opportunities to address social media harms within educational settings; and understanding the role of social media in identity, belonging and world views.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! I direct the member for Oxley to remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of the public interest debate.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oxley left the Chamber at 17:23.]*

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** They will unpack links between extremism, misogyny and social media. The Premier said:

I hear from parents all the time – they are worried about their kids seeing something they can't unsee, online bullying, online predators, and the general increase in anxiety about what other friends say, do and show on their on social media.

We support the motion, but we make clear that there are ongoing reviews into the legality of raising the age for social media use. I thank the House.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:24):** I thank Rob and Michael from 36 Months and all of his supporters in the gallery today for bringing this petition to the House and to the Parliament. I especially thank Robb Evans for telling his deeply moving story. It goes to why we are speaking about this in this place. Social media has come a long way. In the mid-2000s I was working in marketing and advertising in Sydney, around the time when the social media age was born. Initially it was a way to connect with friends and family, but it was limited to adults. Early on, people needed a university email address to sign up to Facebook, which automatically limited it to adults.

Corporate Australia quickly woke up to social media and, of course, to the opportunities. At the beginning it was not well understood, with many attempts to create viral marketing campaigns. Back in those early days that was knocked on the head because the owners were afraid of losing control. Over the past 15 years social media has spun completely out of control. The algorithms are designed by software engineers to engage users and to keep eyeballs on the screen. I focus today on what social media is doing to our young people's attention spans. Older people have also become social media addicts. I set a screen time limit every day for my own usage, so even someone in their very early forties has to do that. We know that developing minds do not quite have the discipline of older minds. Over the winter break I read *Stolen Focus* by Johann Hari. It delves into the issues that social media algorithms are creating for our attention spans and especially for the next generation. He writes:

The ... reason we need to think about this subject is that this fracturing of attention isn't just causing problems for us as individuals—it's causing crises in our whole society. As a species, we are facing a slew of unprecedented tripwires and trapdoors like the climate crisis—and, unlike previous generations, we are mostly not rising to solve our biggest challenges. Why? Part of the reason, I think, is that when attention breaks down, problem-solving breaks down. Solving big problems requires the sustained focus of many people over many years. Democracy requires the ability of a population to pay attention long enough to identify real problems, distinguish them from fantasies, come up with solutions, and hold their leaders accountable if they fail to deliver them. If we lose that, we lose our ability to have a fully functioning society. I don't think it's a coincidence that this crisis in paying attention has taken place at the same time as the worst crisis of democracy since the 1930s. People who can't focus will be more drawn to simplistic authoritarian solutions and less likely to see clearly when they fail. A world full of attention-deprived citizens alternating between Twitter and Snapchat will be a world of cascading crises where we can't get a handle on any of them.

Our society's future will hinge on the ability for the next generation to think its way out of problems. But the feedback we are already getting from teachers is that attention spans are decreasing. The online world is addictive in general but social media even more so, because the software engineers in these organisations are A/B testing which set of conditions make users scroll for longer. They are designing the experience to be as addictive as possible. As someone who is very proud of a reel with nearly 200,000 views, I know that the hook for young people to do increasingly dangerous, illegal or damaging things to become the next viral sensation is increasing.

Another consideration is the digital footprint left behind. The teenage mind cannot comprehend future careers, and even adults are not immune. Seemingly innocent posts could be career-ending years or decades later. As a dad of someone on the cusp of this age, it is a real concern. As lawmakers, we limit the age for drinking, smoking and driving because they risk people's physical health. As lawmakers, we must act now to protect the mental and psychosocial health of our young people. We need to raise the minimum age of social media to over 16. I commend 36 Months for bringing this petition to Parliament.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:29):** I contribute to this debate not only as the member for Newcastle but also as the father of four kids. Social media has caused an enormous amount of stress in my home, from phones being used at the dinner table, to my kids staying up far too late on a school night, to having to confiscate phones so that homework gets done. It is very clear that this is an issue not only for me and my kids but also for parents and teachers across the country. New South Wales teachers have been very vocal on the impact of phones and social media in schools for many years now. The Minns Government listened to them and in term 4 last year we banned mobile phones in all public schools in New South Wales.

But members opposite did not listen to the teachers. They raised the debate when they were in government and 25,000 people called on them to introduce the ban, and they refused. Comments were made that it is a sugar hit policy that does nothing. I can tell members that it has done something. Comments were made that the ban was fraught with danger. Danger of what? Maybe it was the danger of improving the education of our public school students and working conditions of our teachers.

In the Hunter one of our schools has seen a 70 per cent drop in phone-related suspensions. Our students are not only more engaged in the classroom but also physically in the classroom more. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment found that one in 10 students feel pressured to respond to messages and notifications while in class and more than one in six felt anxious if they did not have their phones on them. I have experienced that too when texting my kids and I get an unexpected message. I tell them they should be concentrating on their study, not texting me.

Since the mobile phone ban was introduced, a teacher has told me that some of their students have confessed, uncool as it is, that they are grateful for the ban, purely because it has reduced the amount of stress

they feel because they no longer have to reply to every message they receive. My wife is a public school teacher and she said the ban has made an enormous difference, particularly to sport and outdoor activities. My kids were shocked to realise that they too supported the change once they realised they could focus a little bit more on their teachers and schoolwork. I will not complain about the flip-flops around this issue if we can get cross-party support for social media reform moving forward.

We often forget what life was like before social media, and with that we forget that it is still quite a new issue. For example, Facebook was established only 20 years ago. It is one year older than my eldest son, almost to the day. There is no denying social media has benefits. It helps me keep in touch with that same son, who is currently in Nepal. I miss him enormously, but at least I can contact him easily and get to see all his amazing adventures on Instagram. Social media helps MPs to keep their constituents informed of reforms, programs, grants and everything that we do here. We are very proud to have amongst us the social media king in the member for Heffron and his amazing number of likes. However, it is time that we strengthen our legislation and regulation surrounding social media, but it is crucial that we do it correctly.

Schools have provided a lot of positive feedback on the reforms that we have made to date. That is why this Government will host a two-day social media summit in October, alongside the South Australian Government. This summit is dedicated to crafting and implementing policies and programs that shield young people from the harmful effects of social media. There will also be a focus on the dissemination of information and combating hate and extremism online. I have witnessed firsthand what happens when young people are radicalised by online hate groups. It has become an issue that I will forever fight against. Public consultation is currently open on this matter. I encourage everyone to have their say and complete the survey. I look forward to meeting with 36 Months advocates shortly after this debate. I thank the member for Vacluse for arranging that event, and I look forward to hearing directly from experts and fellow parents.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:34):** I speak on behalf of The Greens on the motion. I put on record what we believe is a glaring omission in a lot of the debates that occur on this subject. One of the key things that we are missing in this debate—no offence to my colleagues in the Chamber—and indeed what we are missing in a lot of discussions, is the voice of young people. We often find ourselves in situations where we give our credentials on our devices. The New South Wales police chose to troll my Facebook page while I was a member of Parliament and pregnant with my daughter, so I have experienced the level of vitriol, vile behaviour and horrific trolling. I understand—probably more than most members—the harm and damage that can occur from that abusive, bullying and toxic behaviour that takes place in discussions on social media. My daughter is now of an age where she is starting to enjoy the use of digital devices, as we all are, because we all sit in the Chamber during question time and stare at our digital devices.

It would be nice to say that these things did not exist anymore. We would not need to have endless debates about whether people should get off social media, or about placing restrictions on when people should use their device. But the reality is social media is here to stay. We must also respect and understand the way we respond to this, and we must recognise that social media gives young people an incredible way to connect and get information about things that is really good for their mental health and support. It is for those reasons that we need to include young people when driving this response. I can say right now, and I am sure we all can, that the things our parents tried to shut down to protect us from the dangers of the world are now the things that we as an older generation would say we want to protect young people from. Because of what has happened to me as a result of toxic, vile attacks on social media, I choose not to put my daughter anywhere near it. I want to steer her away from social media, and I appreciate we should have that choice.

At the same time, I know that telling any young person not to do something is the best way to get them to do it. We have heard from young people who have said that they already get around age bans and they will get around the next ban. We might feel good if we say we are going to ban them from a certain age, but we know that the best thing we can do to ensure that young people will do it is to say we are going to ban them. Instead, we need to have a conversation where young people are at the centre and recognise that correlation is not causation. For many young people—and I use regional queer young people as an example—social media is the only way for them to connect with people like them, and that is really helpful for their mental health. Social media may be the only way for people to connect when they are experiencing racism, discrimination or isolation in their community.

I share the concerns that are raised, but we need to realise that we cannot just say that we will ban social media without recognising that we need to listen to young people, because they are the ones who are best placed to understand the harms of social media. We need to listen to them about what sensible regulation looks like. School students have told *ABC Radio Sydney* that current online age limits are ineffective and any new restrictions will easily be evaded. They say there needs to be more investment in social media literacy, which could be taught in schools.

We also know that when we report toxic behaviour on the internet to those who own the social media platforms—as I am sure many members in this place have experienced—those people do nothing about it. I can tell members that if I opened up my social media X feed now and started reading the comments that I complain about, I would be told it was unparliamentary language and I would be kicked out of the Chamber. There are bigger problems here. Young people need to be at the heart of what we are doing to solve this problem. We need to ensure that they are included when we have this debate.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:39):** By leave: I thank the House for allowing me the opportunity to contribute to this important debate. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, who has been on the journey of raising children for much longer than I have, particularly through the teenage years. He has survived and thrived. I am very fortunate to have two beautiful young children, my eldest now in kindergarten, who are learning through early education a sense of empathy, self-awareness, autonomy and understanding of their bodies and their own rights—things never taught to us as children.

I am incredibly proud of the systems that are in place to try to shape young minds in autonomy, decision-making and respect for other people. But they are only the beginning of foundations. I do not know about other parents in this place, but I am scared of what is to come. I am scared about navigating that as a parent and, as the member for Newtown said, not being able to keep our children safe from everything that we see in the world. As the member for Newcastle and the member for Newtown said, we in this place, in particular, face the horror and trauma of bullying, attacks and threats on social media. I have had death threats on social media—even when I was seven or eight months pregnant with my daughter. Those things can move into public life through social media. We have faced part of that and it is very raw for all of us in this place, particularly those of us who are parents and fear what comes next.

I share the views of the more than 100,000 people who have signed the petition and the many hundreds of thousands—probably millions—of parents who have not yet signed but feel the same. I thank Rob and Michael for their initiative in supporting the petition and debate. For me, so much of this is us figuring out what young people need and what we can do to support them. Although we have some wonderful young members, particularly on this side of the House—and, of course, the member for Dubbo is useful for his age—we need to constantly ask young people what they need. One initiative I have held every year since I was first elected—and even modified during the pandemic—is a youth mental health forum. I hold it every year with high school students from across my community.

Every year the narrative changes, but the themes are consistent. In recent years in particular, it has been about connection. How do we connect with our peers? How do we connect with our parents? How do we connect with younger people in our schools? How do we connect and identify the challenges that we face and the things that are different about us but create a sense of connection and sameness with people that may not be in our social sphere? How do we connect to support services? How do we connect to opportunities for our future, to find hope? That connection is so fundamentally embodied through social media.

Both the member for Newcastle and the member for Newtown made a really powerful point about how crucial social media can be for young people and for old people like us as well. We cannot fracture that access. We cannot fracture that connection. But, frankly, the social media environment is not safe for anyone, let alone young people. Until we can implement some level of safety and security for young people who do not have the capacity at their age to fully engage, understand and discern the social media challenges they are facing, we need reforms to ensure that we are doing what we can to protect them. We know the harms and the challenges of social media use. The member for Vacluse and the member for Cronulla have spoken significantly about those.

I am the mother of a girl and a boy, and I have very different, but profound, concerns for each of them. I am particularly concerned about pornography and access to it. I am concerned about young girls' perceptions of consent, of their sexual identity and of their value, and of what they should accept in sex. I am concerned about young men's perception of themselves and of their masculinity, of sexual consent and activity, as well as the way in which pornography is used by gangs and individuals who manipulate and threaten young men and boys, in particular, which has led to so much loss of life or risk of loss of life. They are profound challenges. We cannot solve them today. We cannot solve them even with the millions of parents in this State and country who want to see a difference. But we need to take steps. If we do not make changes, we are ensuring that future generations in this State and country do not have the safety and security that they need to live and to thrive, to be the best they can be with the best opportunities and hope for a brighter future.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:44):** By leave: I thank the House for the opportunity to speak in debate on this motion. I did not prepare any scripted remarks—I was not sure I would have the opportunity to speak—but, as one of only two members in this place aged 30 or under, I wanted to contribute to a debate that is ostensibly about young people and future generations. I confess that the 13- to 16-year-old age category that we are talking about is foreign even to me, and yet I am closer in age to that cohort. One of the great under-representations in

this State—indeed, in parliaments across the country—is that of younger voices. We do not see young people in positions of elected office anywhere near enough, which is a great travesty, because many of the decisions that are made are for the long term, and most of the time those who make the decisions are not around to inherit the future they have created; it is the generations that come after them.

I feel a sense of obligation to speak up. In doing that, I recognise that I am not the font of all wisdom on this matter, but I am the closest to being a digital native in this place to date. Before I was elected to this place, I was the youngest mayor in Ryde's history, which was an extraordinary honour and an opportunity to put forward many youth issues in my local community. It was an extraordinary experience to feel the responsibility and weight of that role, amplified by age and an expectation that I would participate in debates in a much more youth-friendly way, in a way that opened doors for people who would not normally participate in democracy, in councils and in decision-making for their communities.

Social media presents a huge opportunity to open doors and give more people the opportunity to participate, but it comes with enormous risks. I can think of a number of examples from my own school cohort where people who were on very well-defined journeys found themselves drifting off course because of things like cyberbullying, social pressure and the belief that their reality was not what it should be. Those are not challenges that many previous generations have encountered—in fact, I would argue that no previous generation has experienced or encountered those challenges. They are unique to the current generation and, in a way, all of us are shifting into uncharted territory.

I am enormously pleased that we are having this discussion. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Vacluse for bringing this public interest debate to the House. From my experience, half the battle is getting young people's issues on the table in front of people who, through no fault of their own, do not have lived experience and cannot understand. Let us not allow this public interest debate to be the end of the discussion. There is much more work to do. I note the forthcoming summit, which is another opportunity, but it should not be the end of the debate. We need real policy reform and cultural change that empowers younger people and their parents to navigate these uncharted waters and that creates a better future rather than perpetuating an unknown and uncertain one. I thank the House for the opportunity to contribute to debate. I look forward to getting to know and work with some of the stakeholders in this space.

As somebody who has a bit of lived experience, I am very supportive of this petition. I think it is the right place to start, noting that most young people are smarter than all of us and will probably figure out ways around many of the rules that we introduce. In saying all that, let us keep an open mind on the policy response. Let us make sure we bring young people into the discussion and that their voices are heard. Ultimately, it is policy for them and they should be part of it. It is important that we empower parents and all of those young people to be part of the journey. I thank the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:49):** By leave: I am pleased to make a brief contribution to this public interest debate. Like the member for Ryde, I did not intend to make a contribution when I sat down in the Chamber to listen to the debate. However, the contributions of previous speakers have really made an impact on me. This issue has resonated with many, not only in this place but across our community. For members who are not aware, for six or seven years I worked in youth mental health with young people across south-west Sydney to identify, when their mental health was not doing so well, services they could access and the factors contributing to their lack of wellbeing. This issue resonates deeply with me because of not only my professional background but also the types of issues that people within my community speak to me about on a daily basis.

As a fellow member of the millennial cohort within this House, I know that members of the younger generation coming through, namely Gen Z, are unaware of being able to navigate their lives without the use of social media. That said, they are also much more skilled than some of us in being able to make some of the important choices that determine how social media impacts them. They are able to utilise social media for some of the good things, which the members for the electorates of North Shore and Newtown spoke about: building connection and finding people like them with similar experiences. I am continually reminded of the young people that I worked with in my professional life, who made a deliberate choice of the social media platform that most suited their needs and stayed off other types of social media platforms. They chose how often they were going to access social media per day. They chose whom they would allow into their networks.

Those are just some of the tools that exist. But as other members have said, nobody is born having the tools in place to navigate not only the pitfalls of social media but life in general. Those are skills we develop, whether it is through observing others, life experience or the shared knowledge, understanding and mentorship that others might provide. When it comes to those younger teenagers, whom members have spoken about during this public interest debate, those skills are not very well developed. It is incumbent on us to put in place frameworks,

structures and measures to assist teenagers—as well as the parents, teachers and others who form part of their support network—to be able to do that in a more effective manner.

I am well aware that not only governments but institutions across the board are not very good at dealing with complex intersectional issues and their responses. This is one of those issues that cuts across many areas of government and different parts of institutions. Perhaps that is one reason why it has been so challenging to develop a framework and respond in a more comprehensive manner. I note that the social media summit is a huge opportunity to cut across those different areas of government and institutions and have the voices of young people centralised. Those young people will drive the response in relation to our social media usage in a way that supports people's wellbeing and mental health, rather than in a way that harms them. Unfortunately, that is what we are hearing and seeing more often than not at the moment. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Cronulla, for bringing this public interest debate to the House. All members of this House seek to work constructively in this space, on top of the many measures taken over the past 12 months that other members have identified. I thank the House for its indulgence.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:55):** In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Campbelltown, Vacluse, Heathcote, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle, Newtown, North Shore, Ryde and Liverpool for their contributions—and the member for Willoughby for the contribution he wished to make. A clear message has come from the debate today that something is going wrong at the moment and action needs to be taken. Over 114,000 people—over 80 per cent of them parents—have said that the response needs to be to raise the legal access age for social media from 13 to 16 years old, a period of 36 months. Those are 36 months for young people to develop their own identities, 36 months to focus on their hobbies and 36 months to make connections face to face before they join the metaverse.

I am delighted to be a signatory to the 36 Months campaign. By supporting this campaign, we can create a healthier, happier future for the next generation. This debate is not intended to demonise social media but to speak frankly about the realities we face. Across the world, states and countries are coming to the collective realisation that younger people are particularly at risk when it comes to social media. They are more at risk when it comes to mental health, body image and even social responses. Above all else, they are particularly vulnerable to cyberbullying and inappropriate conduct. Raising the access age is one commonsense solution to those concerns. It is a solution that is a down payment on opportunities for our community's future.

Particularly, I thank the parents who have spoken to the motion today, sharing their own experience. Many of them have seen firsthand the benefits and the impacts of social media, both positive and negative, on their children. Almost universally, we heard their concerns about the status quo. I thank Robb Evans for his advocacy in tireless and tragic circumstances. I thank Wippa and Rob Galluzzo, who have led this campaign and collected over 114,000 signatures—so far—for this petition. They have started a conversation that ought to lead to change. The ball is now in Canberra's court, in the first instance. But I sincerely hope that the New South Wales Government holds the Federal Government to account on this essential issue. The Opposition looks forward to participating in the joint New South Wales-South Australia summit that is on the table. Finally, to quote Plato, above all else, "Education is teaching our children to desire the right things." I commend the motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I clarify that during this debate I had two members removed from the Chamber for incredibly minor breaches of the rules. They are excellent members of Parliament, but I sought to set a certain tone for the debate today, and I thank most members for observing it.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATOR) BILL 2024**

### **Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:00):** I have nothing further to add to what I said before debate was interrupted for the public interest debate.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:00):** We were discussing The Greens amendment about additional reporting requirements. I understand that those reporting requirements would allow for additional oversight by the Parliament of the actions taken by the administrator. It was our hope that the Minister and the New South Wales Labor Government would support the amendment, recognising that we are moving quickly. There are reports coming out now on Workplace Express that things are moving quickly and provisions are being drafted quickly. I hope the Minister looks at the need to report to Parliament. I foreshadow that The Greens will move a number of amendments in the other place. We are working on a range of amendments. It would be great if this amendment was supported. If we need to tidy it up in the other place, we can do that as we see fit.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 4 on sheet c2024-142B be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 3**

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

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:06):** I move The Greens amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-142B:

**No. 5 Omission of Henry VIII regulation-making power**

Page 8, Schedule 1, proposed clause 16, line 16. Omit "(1)".

The amendment deals with what is referred to as the Henry VIII regulation-making power. It was raised as a serious concern by the Legislation Review Committee. In effect, the bill provides the Minister with a regulation-making power to change anything in the Act related to schedule 6 to the Act. We are debating the ins and outs of this bill, but the power would exist for the Minister to amend anything in the schedule. The Greens say that if we want to change legislation, we should come to the Parliament. That is a reasonable request.

I hope the Government recognises the serious concerns about that power, particularly if a future Minister of another political persuasion, who may not have such a long and historic connection to the union movement, is in charge of the laws. The Greens are asking the Government to support the omission of clause 16, which at the moment provides for a significant regulation-making power that would change things in the scheme. The Greens believe that is completely unacceptable and an overreach. If the Minister needs to change the law, we should come to Parliament. That is why we bring bills before Parliament.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:08):** The CFMEU Construction and General Division is a registered industrial organisation under both Commonwealth and New South Wales industrial legislation. As such, to address the current issues with the Construction and General Division, it is necessary that any action taken by New South Wales is consistent with steps taken by the Commonwealth. The regulation-making power allows schedule 6 to be amended if, when the provisions are operational, it becomes apparent that minor changes are needed for the New South Wales administration scheme to operate more effectively and consistently with the Commonwealth administration scheme. The regulation-making power only applies to this particular scheme and union and cannot be used for any other union. We keep saying that.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:09):** The Minister has absolutely nailed it. She has explained the reason we have such a problem is because we are passing legislation to support Federal legislation that has not yet passed. We do not know what that legislation will be. Indeed, why are we here? Reports in *The Sydney Morning Herald* suggest—or should I say the Nine News online paper—that negotiations in the Federal Parliament are still ongoing. Indeed, the industrial relations Minister in Canberra has been negotiating with my Greens Federal colleagues and also with the Federal Opposition. We know that the Federal Government does not have control of the Senate, so to get anything through in Parliament they need to have a conversation about what the bill would look like.

This is the problem we have. We have a situation where we are passing a law that creates a regulation that says that the Minister can change anything in the bill before us because we do not know what is supposed to be in that bill yet. The whole point of the bill is to align with the Federal legislation, but the Federal legislation has not yet been enacted because Federal members are still negotiating. So why are we here? I do not know. I think we are here because Premier Chris Minns is in a battle with Prime Minister Albanese to see who can be tougher when cracking down on the CFMEU.

Maybe we are here because the bill is urgent. But I do not know that it is. If members were to look at the timing of the issues that we are focused on now, it was 2020 when concerns were raised about the actions of certain CFMEU NSW officials. The Greens take these concerns and allegations very seriously. I understand that those officials have been charged, but that was in June 2020. It is now 2024, so why are we needing to act urgently on the actions of the CFMEU NSW officials? If it is not because of a battle between the Premier and the Prime Minister about who can crack down in response to reports in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, in the Nine newspaper, then surely, if the concerns are so serious, there should have been outrage in 2020 and urgent action taken. That is what the Premier was talking about.

We are now passing a bill that is so urgent that we cannot wait for adequate court processes to be completed, because, let us be clear, the Minister already has the power under the Industrial Relations Act to make an application to the court to appoint an administrator. The New South Wales Government has done that, but it does not want to wait for that oversight. Instead, as a matter of urgency, we are debating whether to provide the Minister with unfettered power to override union democracy. The incident that is being discussed still has not been considered by the courts. There is a presumption of innocence and a court process to be followed.

They are serious charges, but the matter happened in 2020. Why are we rushing this bill through the Parliament with a Henry VIII clause so that the Minister has the power, by regulation, to change anything in this bill when the whole purpose of introducing it was to align it with Federal legislation? The Federal members are still in negotiation on the bill. At the earliest, the Federal bill will be passed sometime next week. It is most likely that we will be back in a few weeks in September amending this bill because we will have to change it to align with the Federal bill—if it gets passed. Indeed, the fact that we need to create a regulation that allows the Minister to change anything in this legislation we are debating suggests that there is a serious issue with this process.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that The Greens amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-142B be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only three members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 3**

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

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (RURAL AND REMOTE COUNCILS) BILL 2024**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 7 August 2024.**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:17):** I speak in debate in support of the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. I advise that that support will be subject to a number of amendments. The bill represents a crucial step towards addressing the unique needs of rural and remote councils by proposing to establish a new schedule within the Local Government Act to provide a rural and remote council with a governance model that will have the same powers and functions under that Act as general purpose councils, including the ability to raise rates, fees and charges locally.

The bill was brought about by the issues faced by Central Darling shire. The shire council has been in administration for over 10 years. It is widely accepted that a return to a general purpose local government council is not sustainable due to the area's remoteness with dispersed towns and villages, low population and rates base, socio-economic disadvantage, and extremely high costs of providing both infrastructure and services. The Central Darling Shire Council is heavily reliant on government funding to provide the essential services that the



community needs. I have been out to the Central Darling shire and met with locals and the administrator. I understand the issues that they are facing. The Minister for Local Government and the Office of Local Government are working towards finding a solution to get this council of administration.

While the bill was designed to specifically assist the Central Darling Shire Council, it will apply to any other remote, rural community that is in administration. The bill will require a council to meet strict eligibility criteria. The requirement for a council to be made up of a mix of elected and appointed members, ensuring both democratic representation and stable governance, will help the council to govern effectively. The positions must comprise at least 50 per cent locally elected councillors along with ministerial appointees with the appropriate skills, expertise and attributes. Furthermore, the council will have the same legal status as a general purpose local government council. That means the Central Darling Shire Council will remain eligible for relevant State and Commonwealth grant funding, including financial assistance grants. That is important. The bill will not be successful without those grants.

The bill will see streamlined governance requirements—such as the council being required to meet only four times per year, once per quarter—while remaining consistent with the existing requirements of the Local Government Act for other meeting processes, planning, reporting and accountability. All members, whether elected or appointed, will be required to comply with the code of conduct as per existing councillor requirements, with both existing conduct and investigation provisions applicable to a designated council for a period of up to 10 years, with an option for further designations if necessary. The bill is essential because rural and remote councils face distinctive challenges that necessitate targeted support and tailored policies. By acknowledging the differences between metro, regional, rural and remote areas, acknowledging the challenges and enacting this amendment, we can empower councils to better serve their communities and address the specific issues they encounter.

The bill is not just about governance and administrative changes; it is about acknowledging the importance of local decision-making and ensuring that rural and remote communities have a voice in shaping their own futures. By providing those councils with the tools and flexibility they need, we will support local development, economic growth and improved service delivery. Furthermore, the bill underscores a commitment to equity and fairness across all regions. It sends a clear message that no community should be left behind and that every citizen, regardless of their location, deserves access to quality governance and public services. The Opposition will move amendments to the bill pertaining to proclamation by the Governor. Those amendments will allow the Minister to make regulation, which ultimately ensures that the Parliament is able to scrutinise decisions by the Minister of the day. It is important that those decisions by the Minister are subject to disallowance as it stands under part 6 of the Interpretation Act.

In conclusion, I thank the administrator, Mr Bob Stewart, and the staff from Central Darling Shire Council for the wonderful work they have been able to achieve during this period of administration. I urge all members to support the amendments to strengthen accountability in the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. Let us demonstrate our dedication to the wellbeing of all communities and work towards a more inclusive and responsive local government system.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:22):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. This is not a matter we choose to solve; we must solve it. I acknowledge the shadow Minister, the member for Goulburn, and her work, particularly around Central Darling. I remember all too well visiting that community when I was the shadow Minister for Local Government. I recall that, at that time, the rate base there was around 12 per cent or 13 per cent. That is a very low rate base to fund a council to provide for its local community. When we talk about local government and local councils, many people think about the three Rs—roads, rates and rubbish. In reality, councils provide so many other services, like disability support, libraries, footpath repair and senior support. Councils do so much. As the closest level of government to the community, it is important that we provide councils with the support they need and deserve to give communities what they need and deserve.

The reality is that the bill is before the House because there are ongoing challenges in remote areas of New South Wales. I was born and raised in Dubbo. It is not a remote community and it has a well-functioning council. But one does not have to drift too far west of Dubbo to see the challenges that councils face. The bill amends the Local Government Act 1993 to set out provisions for a new model of governance in rural and remote councils. Why is this so important, we may ask? It is because there are 128 councils in New South Wales and each and every one of them has unique challenges. A metropolitan council in Sydney—even in your electorate, Mr Temporary Speaker Greenwich—has a rate base of almost 100 per cent. That is because of the geographical area and the number of ratepayers who live within it. The good people of Sydney enjoy good governance and support from their council.

But in geographically enormous rural and remote areas in Central West and Far West New South Wales councils with a small rate base must receive funding and support to upgrade resources and facilities and provide services. A larger area absorbs a lot of costs and highlights financial challenges, which has led to the introduction of the bill. I commend the Minister for Local Government for taking a proactive and engaging approach to the bill. He has done a great job. He was motivated to work on the bill because he wants to help the Central Darling community. He has been there and seen firsthand the importance of providing them with everything they need. I reflect on my time there a few years ago. The community is confronted with enormous hardship and the council has been in administration for quite some time. We cannot let that community down, whether it is Menindee or another area.

The new model will operate like a typical local council, featuring a mix of democratically elected councillors and government-appointed councillors, with relevant experience in areas such as financial management, governance or local government administration. It is important to note that we need those people on the council because they are community people. We all agree that our local councils need to be about community. The best way to achieve that is by making sure community members are on the council and have the capacity to advocate for the needs, dreams and aspirations of the community. I note that the Opposition intends to move amendments to the bill. I am advised that the amendments are sensible and we will support them.

In my contribution to the public interest debate I highlighted the importance of working together to get the best outcome because the best outcomes are achieved when we work together. Premier Chris Minns has made that comment many times. When we can work together for the best outcome for the community, that is exactly what we achieve. The Parliament exists not for people who voted Labor, Liberal, National or Green or for any other party but to represent the needs of the people we are privileged to serve. That goes to the core of this legislation. The Minister for Local Government will appoint councillors who bring a mix of skills or diversity to the council—for example, to represent the interests of the local Aboriginal population, whose interests are unique and important. It is particularly important in the Far West and even the Central West, up to the north of New South Wales. I note that the member for Ballina is in the Chamber. I also acknowledge that the member for Barwon is in the Chamber, who is a great representative for Far West and central New South Wales. I think his electorate is bigger than some European countries—Switzerland, as I understand.

**Mr Roy Butler:** Germany.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** Bigger than Germany—there we go. He is a hardworking, engaged member, and he would welcome the changes in the legislation before the House because it will benefit his community. Every community needs to have a voice. Going back to Central Darling council, I previously mentioned its extraordinarily low rate base. Members are aware that councils rely on funding and revenue from both Federal and State government grants, as well as rate revenue. Outside of that, they do not have a lot of capacity to raise more money. If councils do not have money, two things happen: They cut services or go into debt. Among the many triggers for councils going into administration is misappropriation and, most importantly, gross mismanagement of finances.

A lot of the times it is not always the council's fault. As elected officials, we are responsible to make sure we make sensible decisions that do not have financial impacts on the people that we are privileged to serve. But that is certainly a circumstance which exists in so many rural and regional councils around New South Wales, such as out in the Far West. That is no better displayed than in Central Darling. Its administrators work hard. They are doing the best they can because they want to see that community get what it needs and deserves. We must make sure that better provision is in place. Councils cannot go to election for the reasons that the Minister outlined in the second reading speech. The Government has steps in place to make sure councils in regional and rural New South Wales, particularly Central Darling, get support from this Parliament and from this Government, and it is taking those steps.

I am not one to play political games around local government, but I note that the previous Government was limited in its support of councils. I commend the Minister for bringing the bill to the House. It has been a long time coming. Even my learned friends on the Opposition benches would acknowledge that this should have come a long time ago for those who have been suffering for some time. We have seen how grants for regional and rural communities get granted to councils like Hornsby. It is simply unacceptable. That practice has stopped with the change in government. This piece of legislation now before the House will ensure a more equitable and fairer approach for rural and regional councils. I thank the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:32):** I contribute to debate on the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. I indicate that this is not my portfolio area. I speak on behalf of The Greens in place of my colleague the member for Balmain, who is sick this evening. The Greens are in furious agreement with most parts of the bill. However, I foreshadow that our local government spokesperson Dr Amanda Cohn will move amendments to the bill in the other place, which I will outline in my contribution. I acknowledge

that the member for Barwon is in the Chamber, and I congratulate him on his advocacy on behalf of his community.

The Greens acknowledge that the intent of the bill is to address some important matters relating to Central Darling Shire Council, which has been in administration for more than a decade, as we have heard. I give a big shout-out to the mayor, the general manager and the hardworking members and staff of that council. It must have been a traumatic decade. There is clearly a need to assist so that local democracy can be returned to that part of New South Wales. We commend the Minister for addressing this issue. However, we think that there are aspects of the bill that do not quite get it right.

The object of the bill is to amend the Local Government Act to create a new designation for local government areas deemed rural and remote councils. We understand that this legislation has been designed with the Central Darling Shire Council in mind, but it is drafted in a way that could apply to any council under administration. We note the intention of the bill is to assist with bringing Central Darling Shire Council out of administration, which would obviously be a good outcome. This local government area has struggled with financial sustainability because of its huge geographic area, which includes hundreds of kilometres of remote road network, with a very low ratepaying population. Whilst I have not lived in that particular council area, I was a teacher in Broken Hill for five years, and I certainly know how hard it is to leverage rates to cover infrastructure out west with a very low ratepaying population. The per capita population cannot even be compared with that of Sydney metropolitan.

The vast majority of funding for the council comes from the hand-to-mouth existence of State and Federal government grants. We understand that a key motivation for the Minister in including "government-appointed councillors" is to ensure adequate First Nations representation on Central Darling Shire Council. Whilst The Greens agree that it is a good initiative and we want to see an increase in First Nations representation on stolen Barkandji country, and indeed across the State, the bill is drafted in such a way that this could be at the discretion of the Minister of the day. There is no guarantee that another local government Minister would make such an appointment. The Greens would welcome a more arms-length approach. This could be fixed with a simple amendment. I understand that my colleague Dr Amanda Cohn, who is The Greens spokesperson for local government, has been working positively with the Minister on this issue. No doubt we will hear more about this in the other place and from the foreshadowed Opposition amendments.

The governance model presented in the bill provides a period of up to 10 years before the Minister can decide whether the rural and remote council designation is renewed or the council can indeed resume democratic elections. Usually under the Local Government Act, changes to councillor numbers or significant boundary or ward boundary changes must go through a referendum process. The bill would circumvent that, removing local democracy and replacing it with ministerial discretion. Our chief concern is that the bill will redefine what a councillor is throughout the Local Government Act.

I note that this particular concern is unique and separate from this particular council and goes more to the big picture. We think that the model of governments appointing councillors is a model that we should not aspire to. We believe that it would fundamentally undermine the role of councillors. Quite frankly, I would like to hand-pick all of our councillors. I apologise for making the cruel observation that perhaps the Liberals today would probably also want to hand-pick their councillors. While we all would like to, that is not the democratic model that we have.

The Greens are also concerned that the bill will place too much power with the Minister for Local Government—no disrespect to the current Minister—who will decide whether a so-called rural and remote council will stay as such after the 10-year period or whether democracy, as we know it, should be returned to the council. To reiterate, The Greens absolutely believe that the residents of Central Darling Shire Council deserve democratic representation. We acknowledge that the member for Barwon has advocated strongly for the return of local democratic representation in the face of a decade of administration. I do not believe that we will hold that up. However, we think that the legislation as it stands does not do justice to the needs of that community or, indeed, more broadly, moving forward. There are areas that need to be fixed, and we look forward to continuing that conversation.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:38):** I speak in support of the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. The bill returns representative governance to the Central Darling shire. Members have heard that the unique challenges faced by Central Darling Shire Council have meant that it has remained in administration for an unprecedented length of time. It is a local government area with a population of one person per square kilometre. Just this morning, I spoke about the fastest growing suburb in the Parramatta local government area, Wentworth Point, which has a population of 25,754 people per square kilometre. That puts what we are talking about into perspective.

However, like all other residents of New South Wales, the people of Central Darling shire need and deserve community representation and to have their voices heard. The bill before the House today delivers that, while also safeguarding against the risk of future failure by providing for stable and experienced council membership to address the challenges faced by Central Darling Shire Council. The bill will provide skilled and experienced leadership. The requirements and responsibilities of local government are wideranging and varied, given the distinctive and differing needs across the 128 diverse councils in our State. As a former councillor, I can attest to that. But common to all councils is the importance of having suitably skilled and experienced councillors who, through strategic planning and decision-making, can lead the communities they serve and act in their best interests.

Unfortunately, the remote nature of Central Darling shire and its small population mean there are fewer candidates to draw from within the shire with the specialist skills and experience to support the council in finding a financially stable and sustainable path forward—although there may be a few candidates going begging at the moment who might be able to find a place in another location! Providing a balanced mix of elected and appointed councillors through the rural and remote governance model set out in the bill is the best way of ensuring both democratic representation and stable, experienced leadership for the shire.

The bill places the interests of the community front and centre. That is what local government is all about. The role of democratically elected councillors is to ensure that the views of the community are considered by the council as it makes critical planning, resourcing and service delivery decisions to provide the maximum benefit to local communities. Because of the dispersed and insular nature of Central Darling shire's main towns, separated by hundreds of kilometres of road networks, the needs of the shire's residents can differ quite significantly. While community members will elect one councillor to represent them across each of the council's three wards, the government-appointed councillors will have an important role in ensuring the shire's needs as a whole are appropriately considered during the decision-making process.

The appointed councillors will also play an important role in ensuring the council runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible and has the best chance of long-term success. They will be selected to bring a mix of skills, experiences and attributes to the council. For example, they could provide specialist financial, local government administration, environmental conservation or emergency management experience. They may also be appointed to ensure there is diversity on the council, including representation of the interests of Aboriginal people in the community. The appointed councillors will not necessarily be from outside the Central Darling shire community. We have been told that the Government will look to appoint local people with the necessary expertise or attributes whenever possible.

The rural and remote council model has been designed with the best interests of local communities front and centre. It protects the balance of representation by requiring that at least half of the councillors on a rural and remote council must be elected by the local community. Further, where there are wards, there must be an equal number of councillors elected from each ward. Importantly, all councillors, regardless of whether elected or appointed, will work together to make decisions that are in the interests of the community as a whole.

The bill provides an in-built upskilling opportunity. We have heard that it is intended that the bill will provide Central Darling Shire Council with a stepping stone out of administration towards a future return to being a fully elected council. The beauty of the mixed membership model in the bill is that less experienced councillors will have immediate and direct access to more experienced councillors or to councillors appointed by government who will bring specialist skills to the table. Over time, that provides an opportunity for the mentoring and upskilling of those less experienced councillors, building a pipeline of suitably skilled and experienced leaders within the local community. That element of the model reinforces the stepping-stone principle, providing a pathway back to a fully elected council in the future that will be able to successfully carry itself forward in the long term. As I mentioned earlier, as a former councillor I know that the role of mentors is extremely important in local government. The model provides that opportunity, which is something that people right across New South Wales should be able to benefit from.

While the rural and remote model has been introduced for the Central Darling Shire Council and could be applied to other rural councils in the future, that is not the Government's immediate intention. We want local councils, as an independent tier of government, to be run by people democratically elected by the community. However, the bill recognises that, in special circumstances, that is not always in the best interests of the community and the long-term sustainability of the council. The regulations will set out strict criteria for categorising a rural council as a rural and remote council under the model. One condition is that the council must be under administration. The intention of the bill is to provide a workable path forward for Central Darling shire but also to set up a mixed model that could be applied, if deemed necessary as a last resort, to a future rural council experiencing similar challenges.

In closing, the Central Darling shire community needs and has been asking for a strong and resilient local government framework that gives it a voice and also provides a stable and experienced governing body—one that

is capable of addressing the unique challenges the council faces in providing sustainable local government services. The bill, through its mixed governance framework of elected and appointed representatives, delivers just that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:46):** I speak in support of the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024 and thank the Minister for Local Government for his work in bringing this important bill to the House. The bill addresses the future of Central Darling shire and offers a way forward for the local community to have a say in how their council is run after over a decade of administration. The return of local representation is something that I, and the people of the shire, have been seeking for a long time. I acknowledge that the model is not perfect, but it sets up Central Darling Shire Council to make decisions in the future that are in the community's best interests.

Central Darling shire faces unique challenges. We have heard that the reasons for that are many, including its vast size and remoteness. I drive around the shire a lot and have done some tyres and some rims. It is a big local government area. The reasons also include its small, diverse population, spread across dispersed towns and villages and large pastoral landholdings; its low rates base; its socioeconomic disadvantage and lack of jobs; as well as the extreme cost of providing basic local services and managing ageing infrastructure that the community needs. That includes vital infrastructure such as roads to connect towns and pastoralists to each other and to regional centres, safe drinking water and waste removal. It also includes places for the community to gather such as community halls, swimming pools, football fields, parks and gardens. It includes airstrips to provide access to essential services, such as major hospitals, when those in the community face critical injury or chronic illness. In Central Darling shire, the issue is the duplication of assets. With five communities, asset duplication occurs across a huge geographic area, which costs a lot of money to maintain.

In July, the NSW Productivity and Equality Commission released a report into funding models for local water utilities that highlighted the difficulty Central Darling Shire Council faces in providing sustainable local water services. The towns in Central Darling shire are so far apart—at least a two-hour drive between most towns—that they each have their own water treatment plants, and the costs of providing water are enormous. However, the council has the lowest water service cost recovery in the State, at just 73 per cent for town water supply in White Cliffs, Wilcannia and Ivanhoe. The average water bill in 2021-22 was \$1,213, the second lowest in the State, because the community simply cannot afford to pay more. There are very low incomes there.

I take this opportunity to commend the current administrator, Mr Bob Stewart, for doing a great job in prudently managing the council's very limited financial resources and working hard to cut costs, streamline services, attract grant funding to improve water assets in major towns, and recover outstanding debts. In spite of his efforts, the vast asset network across the shire continues to age, and council continues to become more unsustainable over time. Central Darling Shire Council has a 30 years plus history of multiple government interventions and reviews into its finances and governance. Since the public inquiry into the dismissal of the councillors over a decade ago, the council has been in administration. The last election for Central Darling Shire Council was in 2012.

Over the past five years that I have been an MP, people of Central Darling shire have consistently been telling me that they want the council to come out of administration. But returning the council without change would put the shire at great risk of repeated failure. The bill before the House provides a unique solution to that issue and is flexible enough to suit the needs of different councils and communities. It is a path towards democracy, and each decision made has been deliberate to ensure that the Central Darling Shire Council does not land itself in administration again.

The bill enables Central Darling Shire Council to be designated as a rural and remote council, which will return representation to the local community at long last. Local people will, for the first time in over a decade, be a part of making decisions about how much-needed services for local communities are delivered. Just as importantly, the new council will also make sure that the shire is well managed and set up for long-term success. The Minister for Local Government has announced his intentions to designate Central Darling Shire Council as a rural and remote council made up of six councillors.

Three councillors will be directly appointed and three will be elected by the community. We are trying to create a council with three government-elected people who have the skills and experience to inform good decision-making in the council and to help upskill the people who are elected in future, because this is not set in stone. It is not an end point; it is a starting point. We could start with three elected and three appointed councillors and, in future, when the Government has the confidence to be able to expand that, we can expand it. But this is the start of a return to democracy.

I have heard the community's concerns about the wards. Once the new council is established, that decision can be reviewed and changed by the councillors. That means that local residents will have a strong voice within

their council's administration, while the State Government ensures the council has the skill sets required to succeed. The Minister will make sure that the appointed councillors bring specialist skills, experience and attributes to complement those of the elected councillors, as necessary. For example, they could bring skills and experience in financial management or be appointed to represent the interests of groups within the community, such as Aboriginal people or pastoralists. Those elected by the Government could be people from the local community. I think that is really important.

I note that the Minister is in the Chamber. When we were in Wilcannia and Menindee, the Minister was very clear that he was happy, if there were people with suitable skills and knowledge within that community who were either nominated to be elected to council or willing to be appointed by government, for them to be considered as the remainder of the three councillors. I think everyone would rather see people come from within the local government area, but the good news is that is not excluded by the bill. Like all councillors across the State, the elected and appointed councillors will be required to make decisions in the best interests of the shire as a whole. They will work together to ensure that spending is prioritised for the most important services needed by the people of the shire. Council will have elections every four years for its locally elected representatives, after which the appointed councillors will be chosen to complement the elected members' skills, experience and attributes.

The rural and remote council model, which will apply to Central Darling Shire Council, will have modifications to streamline governance costs in representing a community of approximately 1,800 people. That includes fewer councillors, down from nine to six, which is a fair and appropriate number to represent the population, and fewer meetings each year. The council itself will be able to determine how many are required. It currently says four, but if the council says it needs more, it can change that. That is in recognition of the sheer cost and distance of gathering councillors for a meeting across the shire. Due to the limited amount of business the council needs to accomplish, it may not need as many meetings as other councils. Of course, more meetings can be held if the council chooses to do so.

Fewer councillors does not mean less representation or less community engagement. In fact, the neighbouring council of Wentworth shire has nine councillors serving a population of just over 7,000 people, so the ratio of councillors to constituents is comparable, and by enabling the shire to alter the ward boundaries beyond a variance of 10 per cent, Central Darling can be organised far more sensibly than under the status quo. Under the current council ward boundaries, the two population centres are Sunset Strip and Ivanhoe, two towns that are 227 kilometres apart. That is despite the fact that Sunset Strip is only 21 kilometres away from Menindee, which would otherwise adequately represent its interests.

For Central Darling Shire Council, the rural and remote council model is the beginning of giving the community back its democratic voice. It will also make the council more effective and sustainable over the long term. It will improve the council's ability to plan, prioritise and deliver services for its diverse local communities. While council will continue to be eligible for government grants, more importantly, with the expertise from appointed councillors and government involvement, it will be in a much stronger position to develop a sustainable funding strategy to secure a better future for local communities across the shire.

It is in the Government's best interests for this model to succeed. The Government and the Minister now have skin in the game. They do not want to see the model fall over, and they will support the Central Darling's elected councillors to meet their governance requirements. I again thank the Minister for Local Government for bringing the bill to the House and acting on this important issue. I thank him for making the trip to Central Darling to meet with communities and inform them of the new rural and remote council model that will bring the council out of administration. Given the unique challenges the council faces, I believe that the local government model outlined in the bill is the best start for Central Darling Shire Council's exit from administration. The model has been informed by consultation with the community, the council, the administrator and other New South Wales government agencies to achieve what I believe is a sensible outcome and a good start.

The bill provides the people of Central Darling shire with a representative and stable governance model that is fit for purpose. It restores a democratic voice to the people so that they once again have input into important decisions about what they most need now and into the future to help them live and thrive in a shire they can be proud of. It has been a long journey over the past five years. I thank the local government Minister for bringing the bill to the House. It has been the product of much consultation with the community and much discussion with the Minister. I think it is a great start in bringing the Central Darling Shire Council out of administration. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:56):** I speak in support of the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. The bill provides for streamlined governance by creating a new type of governance model that will operate under the Local Government Act 1993. We all know the importance of getting a new council governance model right, particularly for rural and remote communities, which are unique in so many ways. I highlight the value of the streamlined approach that the bill introduces. The Government's proposed

rural and remote council model is simpler than the traditional local council governance model. Consequently, it is an effective and appropriate option for vulnerable rural and remote councils in the Far West of New South Wales. The rural and remote council model reduces red tape and costs for rural and remote councils and the communities they support, while upholding important local government functions, powers and standards under the Local Government Act 1993.

The bill ensures that rural and remote councils function, for the most part, as similarly as possible to all other councils in the State but with fewer administrative requirements to help keep costs low and to focus on providing services for the community. It is important, at the outset, to note that designation as a rural and remote council will not change the status of a council in any way. Rather, it simply provides a different type of governing body for the council. Much like a council that has an administrator in place for a period of time, a council that is designated as a rural and remote council will continue to be recognised as a council under the Local Government Act and any other relevant legislation, with all associated powers and functions, and it will be eligible for government grants including Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants.

The key features of the streamlined rural and remote governance model in the bill are, firstly, an opportunity to have fewer councillors, to reduce costs while maintaining an equitable ratio of representation for the local population. For Central Darling Shire Council, that will mean three councillors directly elected by the community and three councillors appointed by the Minister. A reduction in councillor numbers means lower governance fees, expenses and facilities so that this money can be spent where it is most needed. Let me be clear: A reduction in councillors will not erode democratic representation. Central Darling shire communities will have a direct voice on council for the first time in over a decade with the three councillors elected in each ward.

The second key feature of the streamlined governance model is that the council will be able to meet less frequently, with a requirement to meet four times per year. This is down from the current mandatory 10 meetings per year. This reflects the fact that rural and remote councils tend to consider fewer and less complex business matters compared with larger metropolitan and regional councils. They may not need to meet as often to discuss issues and make decisions. This also means saving money on servicing and reporting to council meetings as well as reducing councillor travel and accommodation costs. The third key feature is the regulation-making power. If required, this will reduce planning and reporting requirements so that the obligations of a rural and remote council are not as onerous. This will make the council more efficient.

In summary, these streamlined governance and administrative requirements will cut costs and help struggling rural and remote councils make decisions and deliver services and infrastructure in a more efficient and cost-effective way. The bill provides flexibility because not all councils are the same. While the Government does not currently intend to designate any other council besides Central Darling Shire Council as a rural and remote council, the bill provides the Government with the flexibility to do so if necessary. Importantly, however, the bill does not prescribe a uniform approach for all rural and remote councils because no one model fits all. Instead, the bill provides flexibility to consider the characteristics of each rural and remote council and provide a model that is suitable to local community needs.

The Governor's proclamation will provide the details of the rural and remote council model for each designated council on a case-by-case basis. Firstly, it will detail the period of designation, which can be up to 10 years. It will also set out the membership of the rural and remote council, including the total number of councillors and, within that, the number of elected councillors and appointed councillors—I note that at least 50 per cent must be elected. In addition, there is the option of further proclamations that can be made to amend the membership of a particular council over time. This acknowledges that the process of assisting rural and remote councils out of administration needs a staggered approach that can be adjusted over time to respond to community needs. For example, a further designation may reduce the number of appointed members and increase the number of elected members.

Finally, there is the option before its expiry to extend the designation of a council as a rural and remote council by a further period of up to 10 years if required. This addresses the fact that in some cases, a rural and remote council may not yet be financially sustainable and ready to return to the traditional local government model. The bill provides a streamlined governance model that is outcomes-focused and that cuts red tape to create efficiencies for small, rural councils like Central Darling Shire Council. It will assist a rural and remote council to improve decision-making for its local community and ensure that scarce resources are directed towards the services and infrastructure that are of the highest priority to the community. Importantly, the rural and remote council model ensures that communities still have local representation and a democratic voice through which to air concerns or raise issues that have a direct impact on them. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:03):** The Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024 will deliver on the Government's commitment to return democratic representation to Central Darling Shire Council by amending the Local Government Act 1993 to set out provisions for what is best

described as a mixed model of governance for rural and remote councils. Those councils will operate like a general purpose council with a mix of democratically elected local representatives and government appointees effectively running the governance structure.

The bill has come about due to the situation of Central Darling Shire Council, which has been in administration for the past decade. It is widely accepted that returning it to a general purpose council is not sustainable due to its remoteness, dispersed towns and villages, low population and rate base, socio-economic disadvantage and the extremely high cost of providing infrastructure and services. There have been significant financial and governance issues over the past 30 years and interventions and reviews by a succession of State governments. Effectively, a mixed model during the transition to a fully democratically elected local government is proposed. Although this may sound crass, I am genuine when I say that a little bit of democracy is better than no democracy at all. I think that the people of Central Darling shire will welcome that.

The member for Barwon supports the bill and spoke on it earlier. I am certain that the majority of people in Central Darling shire will welcome it. The bill proposes a new governance model for rural and remote councils that would require them to meet strict eligibility criteria. They will have the same powers and functions under the Local Government Act as any other general purpose council. They will be able to raise rates, impose fees and charges and will be primarily accountable to the local community that they serve. Prior to my election to this place, I was the treasurer of the peak body Local Government NSW. I enjoyed my time there, and I grew to have a great appreciation of the challenges that are faced by rural and regional councils. I understand that councils in certain parts of the State face challenges that most of us city slickers would not realise. Nonetheless, the communities have a right to democratic representation and to elections every four or so years to vote for who they want to represent them, voice their concerns, speak on their behalf and lobby the State and Federal governments. These changes will make sure that we have democracy across all parts of the State.

There will be streamlined governance requirements as the council transitions to a full council. There will be fewer councillors and they will be required to meet only four times a year. In governance parlance, they will act with a mixed membership board type of function. As I said earlier, some representation is better than none. That is an important consideration. Presuming that the bill passes and is assented to, we will see the return of local democratic representation to Central Darling Shire Council in 2025. The model will be implemented and there will be funding. After 11 long years, the community will finally be able to have some form of democratic representation. I hope that everyone is able to get their nominations in on time.

Some parties have had issues getting their nominations in when it comes to local government processes. But it is important that democracy is returned. As someone has remarked, if you cannot get your paperwork right, you do not deserve to be on a council. I support those words wholeheartedly. Hopefully everyone will get their nominations in on time at Central Darling Shire Council when democracy returns, presumably in 2025. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (19:09):** In reply: I thank the shadow Minister and member for Goulburn, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Ballina, the member for Parramatta, the member for Shellharbour, the member for East Hills, the member for Leppington and the member for Barwon for their contributions in debate on the Local Government Amendment (Rural and Remote Councils) Bill 2024. I thank them for their comments supporting the bill and note that they have all highlighted how the bill provides a sensible and practical pathway for struggling rural and remote councils to transition out of administration in a way that balances the restoration of local democracy with providing a stable council to deliver services. Each of those members spoke of the opportunity the bill presents for struggling rural and remote councils like the Central Darling Shire Council. I value their contributions.

Although the members of the other place have not had the opportunity of speaking in relation to the bill, I briefed crossbench members of the other place on it and some issues arose in relation to matters raised by Dr Amanda Cohn. I thank her for her contribution to the development of the bill. I will make some comments in relation to her concerns about the statuses of elected councillors and why those are not diluted by the bill. The bill's changes to definitions only apply to schedule 11 and the bill in no way dilutes the important role councillors play in the community.

I acknowledge that the member for Ballina foreshadowed some amendments that might be moved in the other place. But, for the purpose of the House, it should be clarified that the legislation provides that the Minister must ensure that the appointed representation has the ability to represent the interests of the Aboriginal population of the area. That is not optional; that is required. Although the Government did not go as far as to mandate a certain number of Indigenous representatives—as the legislation needs to be fit for purpose for all potential future cases—the legislation ensures that, whenever that model is used, the appointed councillors must have the ability to represent the interests of the Aboriginal population of the area.



In relation to the issues raised by Dr Amanda Cohn regarding the potential of any dilution of the definition of "councillors", the change in definition only applies to schedule 11 to the Act. Within that section there are specific provisions that apply to elected councillors, specific provisions that apply to appointed councillors, and provisions that apply to all. The change of definition that was referenced was in fact clarifying that, for the purposes of that section, when the Act says "councillors", it means both elected and appointed councillors. It does not dilute the definition of councillors but instead reiterates that the appointed and elected councillors are under the same responsibility and obligations to the community. The Government does not believe it dilutes the definition but that it instils equality between the appointed and the elected councillors.

The member for Goulburn foreshadowed moving some amendments in relation to the method by which a council is designated as a rural and remote council. The Government will support those amendments. I take the opportunity to thank the member for Goulburn for her contribution in relation to the bill and for approaching local government reform in a bipartisan way. It is essential for Parliament to effect, on a bipartisan basis, important local government reforms and changes to a sector that is struggling. We have to take the opportunity to remove politics from local government reform. That is best done in a bipartisan way by the two major parties. That has been the approach taken in relation to this bill. We have ended up with an amendment proposed by the member for Goulburn that the Government did not consider. It is more cleverly drafted than what the Government did consider, as it ensures that Parliament has an opportunity for legislative oversight on any decision to designate a council as a rural and regional council.

It will give either House of Parliament the opportunity to disallow a regulation to appoint a council as a rural or regional council, rather than allow it to be done by proclamation. It is a parliamentary protection and it is a worthwhile idea. It is a pity that I did not think of it and the member for Goulburn did. As I said, the effect is that a rural and remote council designation may be disallowed. The amendments also provide that a designation will not take effect until after the disallowable period, which is a period of 15 days. It is a mechanism to prevent a perverse outcome whereby implementation activities, such as the election or appointment of councillors to a rural and remote council, are commenced following the making of a regulation but a subsequent disallowance invalidates those processes.

The member for Campbelltown alluded to the fact that the Government will be supporting the Opposition's amendments. I also indicated that to the member for Goulburn in our discussions in relation to this bill when I briefed her. As many members have noted, we all agree that we need to find a sensible and workable solution to support struggling rural and remote councils which, due to inherent external challenges beyond their control, may find themselves unable to operate sustainably under a traditional local government model. We all agree that those communities, which are already doing it tough due to the impacts of natural disasters and economic downturn, deserve local democratic representation and a say in the services and infrastructure delivered by their council. It is not acceptable to allow a struggling council to remain in administration seemingly indefinitely simply because of the risk of a return to governance and financial failure. We need to find a solution that will enable democracy to be restored. In the case of Central Darling, it cannot be done simply by the traditional method.

As the debate has highlighted, the bill finally provides a way forward for the people of Central Darling shire, who have waited over 11 years for a democratic right to have local representatives making decisions on their behalf. I note, though, that the council's ability to return to democracy is a result of the outstanding contribution of the administrator, who I find to be remarkable, and the council's general manager. To be able to get the council to a stage where democracy could return is no easy feat. I have been seeking, as I indicated in my second reading speech, for the Secretaries Board to find a mechanism to ensure that stable grants can be provided to that council to enable it to be financially sustainable.

As the member for Barwon highlighted, while there is no perfect solution to the enormous challenges the councils and communities like Central Darling shire face, I am confident the bill provides the best way of giving those communities a voice and a more effective local council. I started work on the bill when I received representations from the member for Barwon on a mechanism that effectively worked for Lord Howe Island during the creation of the Lord Howe Island Board. Although the population of Lord Howe Island is fewer than 300 people, it was still a model that I suggested. I pay tribute to the member for Barwon, whose vigorous representations on behalf of Central Darling compelled me to find a solution to its problem. As members would understand, Central Darling is a shire the size of Tasmania with a population of less than 2,000 and about 1,100 voters. Most of its roads are virtually unsealed.

For a small population in the west of the State that represents very few people, and with a council in administration whose councillors were bickering as a result of a public inquiry, it takes a very effective and forceful local member to persuade the Government and the Minister for Local Government to attribute the enormous government resources that went into reaching this particular stage, and to persuade the Opposition to support the bill. However, that was not all that difficult because the shadow Minister is my predecessor and she

understands the difficulties associated with Central Darling. I thank the member for Barwon for his immense assistance in facilitating and promoting community consultation with the citizens of Central Darling at the community meetings that were held in Wilcannia and Menindee. While I understand that the member for Barwon would have preferred me to travel to Tilba, Sunset Strip and White Cliffs—

**Mr Roy Butler:** And Ivanhoe.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** And Ivanhoe. Distance and time did not enable me to travel to those towns, but I value, appreciate and thank the people who made their way to Menindee and Wilcannia to talk to me about the proposal. The bill provides a very important safety net for rural and remote local councils and their communities. The New South Wales Government's investment in these councils comprises about 80 per cent of their funding. The bill provides a fit-for-purpose governance model to support long-term strategic planning and financial sustainability, informed by local representation, which must include a representative of the Indigenous population. The council has avoided doing that in its entire history. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mrs Wendy Tuckerman.**

### Consideration in Detail

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:24):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 15 on sheet c2024-136C in globo:

**No. 1 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 3(1), lines 17 and 18. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

(1) The regulations may designate a council as a rural and remote council (a *rural and remote council*).

(1A) The Minister may recommend the making of a regulation under subclause (1) only if—

**No. 2 Regulation designating council as rural and remote council not to take effect until disallowance period has ended**

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 3(2), lines 23 and 24. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—  
period—

(a) starting on the day after the last day on which the regulation may be disallowed under the *Interpretation Act 1987*, section 41, and

(b) ending on the day specified in the regulation, being not later than 10 years after day the regulation commences.

**No. 3 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 3(3), line 26. Omit "proclamations". Insert instead "regulations".

**No. 4 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 5(1), lines 5 and 6. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead "If a council is designated as a rural and remote council, the regulations must make provision for the membership of the".

**No. 5 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 5(2), line 8. Omit "proclamation". Insert instead "regulations".

**No. 6 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 5(3)(a), line 14. Omit "a proclamation". Insert instead "the regulations".

**No. 7 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 5(4), line 18. Omit "A proclamation has". Insert instead "Regulations under this clause have".

**No. 8 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 5(5), line 19. Omit "a proclamation". Insert instead "the regulations".

**No. 9 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 6(1)(b), lines 26 and 27. Omit "the proclamation". Insert instead "the regulations".

**No. 10 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 6(2)(e), line 38. Omit "a proclamation". Insert instead "the regulations".

**No. 11 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 7, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 15(1)(a), lines 31 and 32. Omit "Governor by proclamation appoints". Insert instead "regulations appoint".

**No. 12 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 7, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 15(1)(b), line 33. Omit "Governor by proclamation otherwise provides". Insert instead "regulations otherwise provide".

**No. 13 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 7, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 15(1)(c), line 37. Omit "Governor by proclamation otherwise provides". Insert instead "regulations otherwise provide".

**No. 14 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 7, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 15(3), line 45. Omit "Governor by proclamation". Insert instead "regulations".

**No. 15 Designation of rural and remote council by regulation rather than proclamation**

Page 8, Schedule 1[2], proposed Schedule 11, clause 15(4), lines 5 and 6. Omit all words on the lines.

I thank the Minister for his remarks and for agreeing to the Opposition amendments. By doing so, the Minister has listened to many people in the sector and acknowledged their concerns. It is important to have a level of scrutiny over decisions that are made. I thank the member for Barwon for his advocacy and work in his electorate. It has been a long time coming and he has done a great job. These amendments will enable effective scrutiny. It is important to acknowledge the importance of the bill in ensuring that Central Darling is returned to democracy. Hopefully the transition will be successful in that regard.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (19:25):** The Government accepts the Opposition amendments and thanks the member for Goulburn for moving them. They will ensure parliamentary oversight on decisions made by rural and remote councils that are in administration. That oversight and protection will come from the government of the day, overriding the interests of the local government sector. As I said, it is a very clever suggestion. It is pity I did not think of it!

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:26):** I thank the Minister for Local Government and the member for Goulburn. These amendments make the bill better, and I am very happy the Government supports them. It is nice to see this level of cooperation.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 15 on sheet c2024-136C be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **KANGA CUP**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:27):** I recognise the achievements of two local teams at the recent 2024 Kanga Cup, an international youth soccer tournament held annually in Canberra—the largest event of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. I congratulate the Kemps Creek United under-9 boys team, who are the 2024 Kanga Cup winners. Their hard work and dedication paid off with a thrilling 2-1 victory over the Dunbar Rovers in the final. Enjoy this well-deserved triumph, keep up the fantastic work and here's to many more victories in the future. I acknowledge also the Eschol Park under-15 girls team, who finished grand finalist runners-up in their debut campaign. I give a special thanks to the dedicated parents, coaches and support staff who travelled to Canberra, providing unwavering support to both teams throughout the week. I congratulate all. They have made their community very proud.

**RIDDHIMA MATHUR**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:28):** Riddhima Mathur, a year 11 student from Willoughby Girls High School, reached out to me before the end of the school term to express her interest in interning at my office during her school holidays. I was truly impressed by her enthusiasm and drive, choosing to spend her break working, learning and growing with us in the Willoughby electorate office. During her time with us, Riddhima demonstrated a great work ethic and a genuine desire to learn. She accompanied me to various local events, including citizenship ceremonies and multicultural gatherings, quickly grasping the rhythms and responsibilities of an electorate office. Her contributions were welcomed, and she excelled in assisting me and the Willoughby electorate office with our work. As Riddhima enters her final year of school, I have no doubt she will continue to excel in both her academic and professional endeavours. Once again, I thank her for her time, effort and contribution, and wish her all the best for the year ahead and beyond.

**SURF LIFE SAVING SOUTH COAST**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (19:29):** I recognise and celebrate Surf Life Saving South Coast, which recently held its Awards of Excellence evening for the 2023-24 season. From the Nowra-Culburra club, Simon Finery was the Volunteer of the Year, and Chad Poland was the Masters Athlete of the Year. From Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, Michael Crowle was the Official of the Year, Mischa Boniface was the Under-19 Female Athlete, and Sam Zustovich was the Male Senior Athlete. The Appreciation Award was presented to Jeremy Murdoch and Richard Hingston of Sussex Inlet Surf Life Saving Club after the club endured 10 years of being run by an administrator. Jeremy and Richard have worked tirelessly and now run the club with a new management committee. I was honoured to attend and to celebrate all the members for their hard work, commitment, and passion for surf lifesaving. The mission of Surf Life Saving is simple: saving lives, nurturing great Australians and building better communities.

**BELLINGEN FIRE STATION**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (19:30):** Bellingen Fire Station, number 221, proudly marks its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a century of unwavering service and commitment to the community. Station 221 has been a pillar of strength and resilience, playing a crucial role in safeguarding lives and property through countless emergencies. The station's legacy is built on the courage and dedication of its firefighters, whose selfless contributions have shaped a century of excellence and reliability. Over the past 100 years, Fire and Rescue NSW Bellingen Station has navigated the challenges of both evolving emergencies and technological advancements while maintaining its core values of bravery, teamwork and service. The station's impact on the community is profound and enduring. This centennial celebration honours not only the achievements and milestones of the past but also the enduring spirit of those who have served and continue to serve. Station 221 stands as a symbol of dedicated public service, and its legacy of excellence will undoubtedly inspire future generations of firefighters. Congratulations on reaching this extraordinary milestone. May the next 100 years be filled with continued success.

**CAPTAIN HEDLEY PRIVETT**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:31):** I congratulate Captain Hedley Privett of Thirroul Fire Station for his recent retirement after a monumental 47 years of service in Fire and Rescue NSW, 12 of those years as captain. In addition to his work as a firefighter, Hedley taught as a primary school teacher at Tarrawanna Public School, attending emergencies after a day of teaching. At any time, Captain Privett's mobile phone or pager would sound, calling him to dramatic, dangerous and sometimes deadly emergencies. The work Captain Privett has undertaken over the years, as a primary school teacher and senior retained firefighter, is truly commendable. He is incredibly well deserving of receiving his third clasp to the National Medal, which recognises the long service of those who risk their lives or safety to protect the community. I thank him for his huge sacrifice in helping to keep our community safe and for all his work in prevention and education. May he enjoy the extra time to spend with his family. We send our best wishes for his good health too.

**LEO WATTS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:32):** Today I recognise Leo Watts of Leeton, who joined NSW Ambulance in 1968. His contributions are truly inspiring. His pioneering role as the first Indigenous Australian officer in NSW Ambulance, along with his deep connection to his cultural roots and commitment to community service, makes his story remarkable. His efforts in bringing essential first aid skills to regional and remote communities, as well as his involvement in various organisations like St John Ambulance NSW and Leeton VRA Rescue Squad, have undoubtedly left a lasting impact. His participation in the NAIDOC Week 2024 celebrations alongside his wife and his ongoing support for retired paramedics show his enduring dedication to his profession and his community. Leo would like to see more Indigenous paramedics. His legacy will be to inspire the next generation. I congratulate Leo on his exceptional career and his continued passion for helping others.

### PORT STEPHENS ARCHERS

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:33):** Katniss Everdeen, Legolas or Cupid I am not, but the members of Port Stephens Archers could well be. Earlier this year, Port Stephens Archers applied for a grant from the Office of Sport and hit the bullseye, securing \$10,000 to buy new targets. When I read "targets" on their grant application, I thought we were talking about the traditional round targets with a bullseye in the middle. So, when I was invited to be the first to hit one of the new targets, I could not resist. I turned up to sleepy Salt Ash on a crisp Sunday morning and was given some patient coaching from President Neville Spence and then shown the target. It was a lifelike deer. Then there was a boar and then a goat. But it was a heap of fun. The Port Stephens Archers provide a safe, family-friendly environment with a course of 3D animal targets set up one Sunday a month. I thank Neville Spence, Donna Gilroy and the Port Stephens Archers for offering me and others an opportunity to feel like Katniss, even for a moment. I highly recommend it to everyone.

### KIM WELLS AND CLAIRE WATT

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (19:34):** I record the significant achievements of Kim Wells and Claire Watt, who have each reached the milestone of 20 years of playing women's football for the Castle Hill United Football Club. Kim was the first woman to reach the milestone in 2019. Claire reached it earlier this year. I was present earlier this year when the club acknowledged and recognised Claire's wonderful achievement. I watched Claire play in Castle Hill United's Women's Premier League team against the Winston Hills Bears. Many players reach the 20-year milestone, and each player deserves to be recognised and congratulated for it. I do, however, take the time to recognise Kim and Claire as the first two female Castle Hill United players to reach it. Kim and Claire's achievement will inspire other women and will foster the continuing growth of women's football in the Castle Hill area. I congratulate Kim and Claire.

### CHIEF INSPECTOR ROBERT MONAGHAN

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:35):** Chief Inspector Robert Monaghan was the acting commander of Fairfield Police Area Command from late last year until recently. During his time in command he exhibited great leadership focused on public safety and community-led policing. His actions during the events at Wakeley in April of this year are a testament to this. He led policing operational efforts to protect families and property while engaging with local community stakeholders to foster a strong trust between the police and Fairfield. Whether in his Coffee with a Cop sessions, his work with me during Fairfield's first local faith forum or his ongoing engagement work with local community groups and religious institutions, Chief Inspector Monaghan has strongly represented the NSW Police Force in difficult circumstances. He is a credit to the NSW Police Force and New South Wales. I thank him for making a difference.

### COFFS HARBOUR KART RACING CLUB

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:36):** Coffs Harbour Kart Racing Club is celebrating its success in hosting round four of the Australian Kart Championship. This hardworking club deserves every accolade for bringing an event of this stature to the Coffs Coast. The nation's best kart racers were on show in our own backyard and on the recently upgraded track, thanks to a grant of over \$2.1 million from the former Coalition Government's Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund. As many as 400 competitors and up to 1,500 people were on the Coffs Coast for this signature event. I congratulate club President James Morrison, Vice-President Scott Hargans, Treasurer Colette Morrison, Secretary Helen Voysey, committee members Mick Booth, Chris Herraman and Damien Hill, and club stalwart Eddie Ruiz.

### SYDNEY CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:37):** The Sydney Cherry Blossom Festival was launched in 2011 and has since grown into one of Cumberland Council's largest and most iconic events. It really showcases the Auburn Botanic Gardens, one of the many hidden gems you will find in the Auburn electorate. It is Sydney's most Instagrammable flower festival and makes headlines across Australia every year, with thousands flocking to the gardens to experience a slice of Japan in Western Sydney. This is an important cultural event celebrating Japanese culture, traditions and food, to mark the cherry trees coming into bloom. This year's bumper program will include a celebration of Hello Kitty's fiftieth birthday. There will also be Japanese taiko drums, origami workshops, traditional Japanese dancing, ikebana—flower arranging—demonstrations, bonsai horticultural talks and demonstrations, and manga—Japanese comics—workshops, plus a range of live Japanese music and performances. The festival will run from Saturday 17 August to Sunday 25 August, and tickets must be pre-booked from the council's website. Residents' entry is free.

### HILLTOP LOOP LINE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (19:38):** Last Sunday I visited Hill Top and met with members of a small community who stood up for what they were promised. It was wonderful to see so many locals from Hill Top and the surrounding areas at the rail precinct, discussing the loop line upgrade project. This project will bring new and improved heritage train experiences to Wollondilly. I give a big thankyou to Transport Heritage NSW and the NSW Rail Museum for hosting such an informative and engaging session, connecting the community with the latest information about this important project. Ultimately, when complete, this will see the reopening of the loop line from Thirlmere to Colo Vale. I look forward to having trains ultimately stopping at Hill Top and having visitors come to see the improvements both State and local governments will provide for the town. I thank the Hill Top Community Association that continues the advocacy for the completion of the project, and the dedicated NSW Rail Museum staff members for their passion for the heritage rail line that will put Wollondilly on the global map as being the home of steam.

### ANTONIO CERQUEIRA

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:39):** On 3 July 2024 I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Antonio Cerqueira, the founder of the international food chain, Oporto, and presenting him with a special plaque in recognition of his support for the inaugural launch of Refugee Week. Antonio's journey is a compelling testament to perseverance and success. Arriving in Australia as a Portuguese immigrant in 1976, he started with humble beginnings, backpacking across the country. His dedication and entrepreneurial spirit led to the establishment of Oporto, which, by 2005, was recognised by *Business Review Weekly* as the fastest growing franchise in Australia. I extend my gratitude to Sawathey Ek, Rox G Molavin and Dylan Ek, members of the Australian South East Asian Network for organising this meaningful event and facilitating our meeting with Antonio. Antonio's journey and contributions embody the essence of success through hard work and community support, making him a truly inspiring figure in our nation and State.

### SUPERINTENDENT GLEN LORD

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:40):** I recognise the incredible service of Superintendent Glen Lord of Miranda in keeping our communities safe throughout his 38-year long career with Fire and Rescue NSW. By way of background, Superintendent Lord started his firefighting career in 1986. Since then he has served in many fire stations across Greater Sydney, including Woollahra, Balmain, Glebe, Rockdale, Leichardt, Kogarah and St Andrews, and earned significant support from his colleagues for his positive demeanour and collaborative leadership style. For the past 15 years Superintendent Lord has been based with the Operational Communications team at Fire and Rescue NSW Alexandria, where he has managed the organisation's response capabilities. Superintendent Lord has served with Fire and Rescue NSW with distinction. He has been recognised with the National Emergency Medal for his actions during the 2019-2020 bushfires, the National Medal with two clasps, the Fire and Rescue Long Service and Good Conduct medal with three clasps, a Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service, the New South Wales Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation and two letters of appreciation. I thank Superintendent Lord for his 38 years of dedicated service with Fire and Rescue NSW and wish him well in his retirement.

### ROTARY BLUE MOUNTAINS POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:41):** I congratulate five outstanding police officers who are this year's recipients of Rotary Blue Mountains Police Officer of the Year Awards. Constable Alana Lester, Acting Sergeant Atkinson, Constable William Schwarz, and senior constables Dan Skinner and Pat Dorahy have gone beyond the call of duty in various acts of courage to rescue members of the public as well as keep the community safe. Constable Lester's calm demeanour under pressure saved a young person's life. Acting Sergeant Atkinson's decisive action while off duty on an unpatrolled beach prevented two swimmers from drowning. As a highway patrol officer, Constable Schwarz's commitment to speed enforcement has made Blue Mountains roads safer. Senior Constables Dan Skinner and Pat Dorahy's extraordinary canyon rescue performed in dark, challenging conditions over 10 hours resulted in a successful airlift, saving the life of the injured canyoner. I also acknowledge Christine Upton who was awarded Administration Officer of the Year. With 42 years of dedicated service, 23 of those as Police Area Manager of Blue Mountains Police Area Command, Christine has shown extraordinary dedication and passion to her role. I honour all award winners.

### YOU CAFE DUBBO

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:42):** I acknowledge David, Belle and Pancho from You Cafe in Dubbo for their commitment to supporting the local community. Despite it being a time when many small businesses are dealing with high costs, David, Belle and Pancho have been supporting people who may be less fortunate and need a hand. They have been providing free, delicious and nourishing home-cooked meals in a

non-judgemental environment. You do not have to be a customer of their cafe; they just have genuine care and passion for their community and its members. They have welcomed people to enjoy meals such as chicken soup, pumpkin soup served with toast, croissants and recently honey citron tea to aid people's immune systems in view of all the lingering winter bugs. These generous offerings make a real difference to people who are experiencing difficulties, and certainly do not go unnoticed. We are lucky to have such generous and empathetic people like David, Belle and Pancho in our community. Well done to them and the You Cafe. I thank them for sharing their positivity and kindness.

#### **KAITLIN NOBBS**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:43):** On the day our Australian Olympians have arrived home it is fitting to send a message of congratulations to Newington local Kaitlin Nobbs, who proudly represented Australia as a member of the Hockeyroos at the 2024 Paris Olympics. I express my admiration to her family, friends and hockey-playing community for the achievements of such an impressive and skilled athlete. While Kaitlin was born in Western Australia, we will claim her as our own, having moved to Sydney's very own 2000 Olympic Village, Newington, in her youth along with her family. Sport is in her DNA, as both of her parents are distinguished athletes with their own successful careers. Kaitlin and the Hockeyroos played valiantly but fell short of a medal with a 3-2 loss to China in the quarter finals. Kaitlin represented Australia at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, when the Hockeyroos were also quarter finalists. She has won various awards, including the Jeanette Buckham Award for Outstanding Individual Sportswoman in 2015, and competed in the 2022 Commonwealth Games, winning silver. I congratulate Kaitlin. Thanks for making us proud.

#### **TRIBUTE TO GRAEME "SNOW" MCMASTER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:44):** I acknowledge the passing of Graeme "Snow" McMaster on 3 August 2024. Affectionately known as "Snow" due to a memorable incident with his hair in 1965, he was a tireless advocate for the Walbundrie community and local events for many years. Snow was not only dedicated to his family and farming but also committed to volunteering. He was a devoted volunteer at the Walbundrie Show for 60 years and at the Henty Field Days—both significant events in our region. He also left an indelible mark on the region through his extensive involvement in the sporting community. Starting as a young lad with the Walbundrie Tigers football team, Snow played 150 senior games, served as treasurer for 21 years and was a committee member for 31 years. I am personally grateful for the opportunities to catch up with Snow, particularly on my visits to Walbundrie. My thoughts and prayers are with Maxine, Lizzie and the whole family during this difficult time. May they find comfort in the beautiful memories and the lasting legacy he leaves behind.

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

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:45):** They are legends, they are icons, they are the moment. Last weekend we saw pure magic descend on Ken Rosewall Arena as the South West Mounties Magic netball team took out the Netball NSW Premier League Opens title in its inaugural season. After a white-hot first quarter, the Magic defeated North Shore United in a stunning display of the wealth of netball talent that hails from south-west Sydney. Big congratulations to the fantastic line-up: Jamie Hume, Gina Crampton, Papi Alaaloa, Caitlin Brady, Olivia Clark, Georgie Cottle, Charli Fidler, Levana Wayne-Boyle, Peti Talanoa, Hannah Kuhar, Liesl Millard, Elee Temu and Kait Fisher. Special mention also to the fantastic coaching team of Virginia Welsh, Shannon Timms and team manager Kerry Tobin. It is incredible to think that barely 18 months ago the team was just a twinkle in the eye of the Liverpool City Netball Association and Mounties Care. This is just the start.

#### **NSW AMBULANCE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (19:46):** Tonight I acknowledge the brave men and women of NSW Ambulance. The work they do should not go unnoticed—they are heroes all. Craig Hyde was recently awarded the Commissioner's Unit Citation for Courage. The citation reads that New South Wales suffered an unprecedented bushfire season during 2019-20. NSW Ambulance staff and volunteers worked collaboratively with the community and other emergency services, demonstrating commendable teamwork and courage. Paramedic Craig Hyde was part of a multi-ambulance and helicopter response into a bushfire-affected area at Ramornie with difficult access to a firefighter who was suffering a cardiac arrest. NSW Ambulance commends Mr Hyde for his courage and dedication to duty during this very difficult and challenging time. Congratulations to Craig and all his fellow paramedics in New South Wales.

#### **MAITLAND JUNIOR NETBALL TEAMS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:47):** Maitland's junior netball teams have excelled in their debut year in the elite Champions Division at the Netball NSW State Junior Netball titles recently. Both the under-12 and under-13 teams finished in the top 10, with impressive records of 11 wins and eight losses each. The under-14s, newly promoted from division 2 last season,

had a commendable debut, with six wins, three draws and 10 losses. The under-12s showcased their skills with victories over teams such as Charlestown, Northern Suburbs and Penrith, finishing strong by winning all six games on the final day. The under-13s, fresh from promotion, achieved notable wins against Lakeside, Manly Warringah and Campbelltown, demonstrating their strength and consistency. Despite a challenging start, the under-14s rallied, with significant wins against Newcastle, Bankstown and Charlestown, and secured crucial draws. Congratulations to all Maitland's teams on their outstanding performances and impressive results. We are the champions.

#### **ERROL BLENCH PAVILION**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (19:48):** Earlier this week I had the privilege of joining Errol Blench's family at Pearce Reserve in Kings Langley to unveil the Errol Blench Pavilion. As an active member of the Pearce Reserve parks committee, he oversaw the design and construction of the pavilion at the cricket ground. The pavilion at Pearce Reserve is testament to Errol's advocacy and lobbying efforts over many years. Errol was a life member of the Kings Langley Cricket Club and had been a strong supporter of junior cricket and local sport for more than 40 years. I thank Blacktown council, in particular local councillor Julie Griffiths and the mayor, as well as senior members of the Kings Langley Cricket Club. Errol will be remembered for his service, and now his name will be forever recorded in the Parliament's record and at Pearce Reserve.

#### **COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:49):** It was fabulous to join so many members of the Country Women's Association [CWA] for a cuppa and a catch-up in Parliament this morning. Thanks to all members of the 8,000-strong New South Wales wide membership for venturing in to join us. The CWA is so much more than cakes, scones and knitting. We have a number of fantastic branches in the Gosford electorate, including the very active Woy Woy, Umina and Mangrove Mountain branches, as well as Peats Ridge and District, and Somersby branches. It was great to hear members advocating and lobbying for many of the issues we are working on in the New South Wales Parliament, including rural and regional health and safety, and domestic violence and women's safety in regional New South Wales. We heard from Dr Joe McGirr, who chaired the parliamentary rural and regional health inquiry, that CWA concerns align with the recommendations of that parliamentary inquiry. It was fabulous to hear about collaboration with the New South Wales Government to develop regional co-working spaces being provided by the CWA in Canowindra, Dorrigo, Trangie and Walgett, opening the CWA to community members who now use that great office space and make connections in their communities.

#### **CEREBRAL PALSY ALLIANCE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:50):** It was wonderful to recently visit the Cerebral Palsy Alliance Centre at Erina and meet Rachael and her incredibly dedicated team. The Erina centre, which opened its doors in March 2021 and started with 143 clients, has grown to 267 clients as at the end of June 2024. That equates to a growth of 87 per cent in the number of clients for whom the Erina centre provides services in the Central Coast community. Cerebral palsy affects families from all walks of life and is the most common physical disability in childhood. Importantly, the Cerebral Palsy Alliance is providing groundbreaking research, advocacy and interventions. Thanks to recent research breakthroughs and improved diagnostic tools, cerebral palsy can now be detected earlier and more accurately. Research shows early intervention therapy holds significant promise for improving lifelong outcomes. During my visit to Erina I learned about early intervention programs for babies at risk of cerebral palsy run by their skilled team and providing time-critical, goal-specific therapies. By supporting children early, they are helping to increase independence and inclusion, ensuring those young ones can reach their full potential. Thanks again to Rachael and her team.

#### **REBECCA MURPHY**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:51):** I am delighted to congratulate Rebecca Murphy from my electorate who has received a New South Wales Government scholarship to travel to Japan and learn more about our nation's involvement during World War II. Rebecca attends St Patrick's College in Campbelltown, a school with a rich background of historical investigation and knowledge. The school works really hard to make sure that students are well informed. It is well-known for the historically accurate outfits worn at memorial services across the Macarthur area and a whole heap of Anzac places around Campbelltown. The girls do amazing things. They dress up. They do not just wear the uniforms; they get up and tell the stories of women of the past. It is something truly special, and I thank them for that.

#### **KAI TAYLOR**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:52):** I congratulate the outstanding Kai Taylor from Sylvania Waters on winning the 2024 Dance World Cup finals in Prague. Kai attends the Inaburra School and competed as part of the Australian team earlier this year. He proudly led the Australian delegation as a flagbearer during the



parade of nations through the streets of Prague to the contest's opening ceremony. This year's Dance World Cup finals saw almost 10,000 of the best dancers from 54 countries compete, performing across 10 days to a crowd of thousands. After an incredible performance, Kai took out the title of World Champion, receiving a standing ovation from a 2,500-strong audience. Kai also walked away with a second gold medal for the Junior Show dance. During this time of celebrating our young people's athletic prowess, I am pleased to acknowledge Kai and his incredible achievement. I again congratulate Kai on winning the 2024 Dance World Cup finals and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT DANIEL SULLIVAN**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (19:53):** I acknowledge Superintendent Danny Sullivan for his outstanding service in the NSW Police Force. Superintendent Sullivan joined the NSW Police Force in 1989, beginning his career as a constable at Waverley Police Station. He spent considerable time in the Hunter Valley working as a general duties sergeant before being promoted to inspector at the Police Assistance Line in Tuggerah. In 2012 Superintendent Sullivan was transferred to Brisbane Water Local Area Command as commander and then to the great Lake Macquarie Police District as commander. Superintendent Sullivan is an accomplished commander and has performed his duties for over 30 years with remarkable dedication, diligence and integrity. I thank Danny for his impeccable service. His contribution has made a lasting impact on the NSW Police Force and the communities he has served. I am proud that on Friday I will be at the attestation where Superintendent Sullivan will walk out.

#### **TRIBUTE TO THOMAS PRITCHARD**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:54):** I commemorate veteran Thomas Pritchard who passed away earlier this month at the age of 102. Mr Pritchard was the last surviving Rat of Tobruk. Some 14,000 Australian servicemen served during the siege of Tobruk in 1941. Born in Victoria in 1921, Tom grew up and attended school in the Hawkesbury suburb of Box Hill. Tom and his two mates enlisted in the army at the illegal age of 19. He was assigned to the 2nd/5th Field Ambulance, later attached to the 18th Infantry Brigade. Serving in Tobruk, Tom was involved in first aid and stretcher-bearing procedures to transport the wounded for further care. During the siege at Tobruk, a British traitor used broadcasting channels to scoff at men defending the garrison, referred to them as rats caught in a trap. The Australian soldiers adopted the term Rats of Tobruk as a badge of honour, to defiantly turn the derogatory comments against the Germans. Twelve months after the war Tom married his sweetheart, Gwen, and together they settled into family life, raising four children. Tom Pritchard was known as a larrikin, selfless to a fault. I acknowledge his service.

#### **PRODUCTIVITY BOOTCAMP**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:55):** Productivity Bootcamp in Penrith is a hands-on facility and its mission is to develop young people into the workforce of the future. The comprehensive training focuses on the construction industry, combining a unique blend of hands-on trade training and innovative soft skill components, such as personal finance, nutrition and mental resilience. Founded in 2015 in Mount Druitt, Productivity Bootcamp has expanded over the past nine years to include Campbelltown and Nowra. In 2025 it anticipates the launch of a mobile regional service in New England. To date, 833 bootcampers have begun their construction journey at the Penrith facility, with the vast majority securing permanent employment in key skill areas. Post-graduation, 82 per cent transitioned into permanent employment, those remaining either re-engaging with secondary school or beginning alternative vocational training. Productivity Bootcamp contributes much-needed skills in local employment.

#### **JANNALI PUBLIC SCHOOL OPEN DAY**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:56):** I congratulate Jannali Public School on a successful school open day to celebrate their eightieth year of teaching our little learners. Opened in 1944, Jannali Public School has taught generations of families and this month turned 80. To mark the occasion, Jannali Public School hosted an open day, and parents and grandparents of students were invited to attend. Students from different year levels staged eight performances, one to mark each decade in Jannali Public School's rich history. Alumni of all ages were also invited to speak, sharing what Jannali Public School was like back in their day. I acknowledge the role of the amazing student leaders in marking 80 years of Jannali Public School. I acknowledge Eva King, Lucy Smith, Charlotte Argue and William Bailey for giving an informative presentation about the history of Jannali Public School. I also note that Alan Heighway, president of the Rotary Club of Sutherland, was among the guests in attendance. I wish Jannali Public School a happy eightieth birthday and extend all staff, students and school community members my best wishes for the future.

*Private Members' Statements***MYRTLE COTTAGE, INGLEBURN**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (19:58):** Many of us have been bleary-eyed in recent weeks as we have watched the Olympic Games from Paris, cheering on our athletes in their green and gold and celebrating their very impressive medal tally. It may be a far cry from Paris, but in my local community of Macquarie Fields there is an organisation that is winning gold in every sense. Myrtle Cottage in Ingleburn provides activities for people 65 years or older, the frail aged and younger people with disability, and respite care for people with dementia. In late July, Myrtle Cottage was named Most Outstanding Specialised Business at the Campbelltown Local Business Awards. It is a fantastic achievement for a much-loved community organisation that helps older Australians and people with disability to remain in their own home for as long as possible. Myrtle Cottage enables people to lead independent lives, creates opportunities for social interactions and gives carers vital free time for respite.

Myrtle Cottage first commenced operating in 1977—the year I was born—in a small hall in the Ingleburn CBD. After much effort and fundraising, a new and expanded facility opened in Bosci Road, Ingleburn in 2006. This is not the first time I have stood in this Chamber professing my admiration for the organisation's fabulous programs. Indeed, when I spoke about Myrtle Cottage in 2017, I recall the facility and services had attracted international attention. A group of 28 recreation and leisure students from Texas State University in the United States visited the cottage through a partnership program with Western Sydney University. So impressed were the visitors from Texas State University that Myrtle Cottage featured in a textbook for students. From Ingleburn to Texas—what a remarkable achievement!

Of course, as Olympic athletes know too well, success is not achieved on one's own. Myrtle Cottage has a wonderful team of 23 permanent and four casual staff, all under the expert guidance of chief executive Kylie Richardson. Kylie is a wonderful asset to Myrtle Cottage and has overseen the organisation's continued growth in recent years. Of course, volunteers are essential to the operation of programs run by Myrtle Cottage. Currently there are 68 active volunteers who help at Myrtle Cottage, whether it is driving or assisting on the bus, delivering craft activities or providing social support. Volunteers are vital to Myrtle Cottage. Without them, Myrtle Cottage would be unable to offer the current level of support to its members. A volunteer told me how their time at Myrtle Cottage brought them a great deal of satisfaction. They thoroughly enjoy being able to assist with a range of activities.

In recent years we have learned of the benefits of social interaction and connection for people of all ages. Loneliness and social isolation have been linked with serious mental and physical health conditions, including cognitive decline and heart disease. Myrtle Cottage is connecting some of the most vulnerable people in our community by providing high-quality inclusive services modelled on best practice and the latest research. Wonderful support is provided to members, with the transport team offering a door-to-door service, and nutritional morning teas and lunches provided by the kitchen. I am pleased to report that Myrtle Cottage has been successful in receiving a \$50,000 grant through the New South Wales Government's Local Small Commitments Allocation program for the purchase of an accessible vehicle. This will enable Myrtle Cottage to continue its important work in transporting its members and help them access programs and activities that promote connection and wellbeing.

Over the years, Myrtle Cottage has forged partnerships with local institutions, including Macquarie Fields TAFE, Western Sydney University, Macarthur Workplace Learning Program, Ingleburn RSL Club and NOVA Employment. Myrtle Cottage's biggest achievement to date is the purchase of a property at Spring Farm to support the growing need for dementia services in the Camden and Wollondilly areas. Myrtle Cottage hopes to open this new facility later this year, which will expand its ability to provide vital programs for the Macarthur community. Myrtle Cottage is certainly helping the frail, the aged, people with disability and people with dementia live up to its motto: "Live social, live active, live well". With an award and an imminent expansion, Myrtle Cottage is indeed a winner and is going for gold. I am extremely proud of the work of Myrtle Cottage. I commend its work to the House, and to the people of Macarthur and New South Wales. I thank everybody involved with Myrtle Cottage for the great community service they provide to the people of my area.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:03):** The Wahroonga electorate has an abundance of wonderful businesses that contribute to our local economy and help make our community the best place to live, work and raise a family. Recently I had the pleasure of attending the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Local Business Awards at the Hornsby RSL, which celebrated many local businesses and congratulated them on the work they do. I had the honour of presenting the Fast Food and Takeaway Award to Satish Shrestha, director of The Pymble Grind in

Pymble. It is an incredible cafe located near Bunnings at 20 Bridge Street, Pymble. It serves coffee, other drinks and a range of delicious foods, and is very worthy of receiving this recognition.

Another business from the Wahroonga electorate that was recognised, in the category of Antiques, Arts, Crafts and Gifts, was that of talented local artist Kanak Kiran. Taking inspiration from the colours and textures of nature, Kanak works with mixed media to layer her colourful and vibrant paints. Kanak is largely self-taught. Her artworks, sold online, are absolutely deserving of recognition. KX Pilates Studio in Turramurra was also recognised in this year's local business awards. I gave the awards to many of the staff who attended on the night. They looked an absolutely fantastic, healthy group of young people. I congratulate Valeria Bablanyuk, Malini Srivas, Louisa Burns, May McMaster, Miya Hayward, Phoebe Coyle, Sam Shih and Tegan Coughlin, who are part of the staff at this incredible local business. Barr Automotive in Hornsby was recognised in the category of Automotive Services. I congratulate director Lydia Stjepanovic and the whole team on their award. Barr Automotive is located at 14 James Street, Hornsby.

There are many great butchers in our area. I congratulate manager Xing Zaho and the whole team at Westleigh Quality Meats in Westleigh Shopping Village for receiving the Most Outstanding Butcher Award. Another cafe I enjoy was recognised at this year's awards ceremony. Charlotte's, in Pennant Hills Market Place, is a family business. I congratulate owner Jason Ghebar, his family and the whole team for this achievement. My go-to florist in Wahroonga village, Wahroonga Flower Shoppe, won an award in the Floristry category. The shop is conveniently located just around the corner from my electorate office on Railway Avenue. I have visited it many times and it has supplied me with many flowers I have given to people since I became the local member. I congratulate owner Kerry Wells and the entire team for being recognised with this award.

A personal favourite local bar of mine, Kipling's Garage Bar, was also recognised in this year's local business awards. Just around the corner from my first home on the North Shore, Kipling's is located in Turramurra. It is where many locals go to catch up. In fact, in 2015 I had my preselection function there shortly after it opened. This incredible facility was converted from an old motor garage into a fantastic, elegant bar. I congratulate the Thompson family on this outstanding award. The Village Vet, in the Kendall Street Mall at West Pymble, received the Most Outstanding Pet Care Service Award. I can tell members that there are lots of fantastic vets in the Wahroonga electorate. I congratulate all the vets, the nursing team, the customer care staff and animal attendants, all of whom contribute to the West Pymble clinic.

Mr Nice Plumbing received an award in the Service and Trade category. Mr Nice is another family-run business in our local area. I congratulate director Charles Crane and his business partner, Rowan Harmuth, on the award. With everyone having a camera on their phone these days, you have to be outstanding to succeed as a professional photographer. The Most Outstanding Sole Operator award went to Jasmin Kooper from Jazzy Photography, based in Pennant Hills. I congratulate Jasmin on this fantastic achievement. Finally, I congratulate the Business Person of the Year, construction manager Joseph Antoun from Granny Flat Solutions. The company is the only multi-award-winning granny flat company and is absolutely excellent. I congratulate Joseph Antoun and the whole team. It was a terrific night. A lot of effort was put into matching the people who gave out the awards to the categories, which is why, for example, Philip Ruddock presented the award for Beauty Services, Mayor Sam Ngai presented the award for Fitness Services and I presented the Fast Food and Takeaway award. I congratulate everyone on such a great night.

#### TRIBUTE TO EVELYN JEAN CONLEY

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:08):** I honour, pay respect to, express love for and remember my darling Nanna. She was a colourful woman who lived a colourful life, from 21 February 1926 until day's end, 1 August 2024. We farewelled her at a beautiful funeral on Monday. There were tears, laughter, stories and dancing. Evelyn Jean Conley—known as Jean—was a daughter to Violet Frost and Donald Campbell. She was a beloved sister, niece, wife to three lucky husbands, mother to four, nanna to 10, great-nanna to eight, beloved aunty and friend to many, particularly through Scrabble, cards and mahjong. She was a wonderfully quirky, unique and high-spirited woman.

Two weeks ago when I was scheduled to tour the Blue Mountains Hospital with Minister Park, I was instead called to the bedside of my dear Nanna who fell and sustained terrible injuries. I found myself instead at Batemans Bay District Hospital. I express my gratitude to the fantastic Batemans Bay hospital team who cared for Nanna in her last week, particularly Dr Jude and Dr David, and Asish, Allie and Janet, nurses who went above and beyond. My Nanna was humble yet proud of her long and incredible life, her independence, her garden and plentiful indoor plants but, most significantly, her family. She also talked of the mantra she tried to live by for her 98 years: For a good life, you need to be healthy, happy, handy and helpful. I would add something we often discussed: Keep walking for as long as you can, be patient and positive, and spend time in the garden. As I grieve her loss and my heart aches with love and sorrow, she would want me, and everyone, to take something of her advice for longevity.

I thank my second cousin Jennifer, who was Nanna's special niece, and great-granddaughter-in-law Mel for their solid love and considerable important practical administrative care, which Nanna needed in her final years. I offer my sincere gratitude to Judith, Lesley and the brilliant My Aged Care team, her daily carers, for ensuring that Nanna benefited from the dignity she deserved as she became aged and frail and required support. I also thank the incredible paramedics throughout the district who would visit her often and considered her their special patient.

After almost 100 years of truly living, Nanna looked forward to her last and enduring sleep. My darling Nanna would often say in the last few years of her life, "Trisha, I think I'm getting old." I would reply, "You reckon?" and we would both laugh together. I loved her laugh. Nanna was the sunshine and the light, the joy and the laughter, the grounding of my feet on this earth, the fun and games and movement of life, the wisdom and humility, the generosity of spirit, and the essence of love that binds. We had some raw and honest conversations during some of her anxiety-ridden days and nights about her life, her death and her wishes. I am heartened to know that she reached out to many of us during those days and nights via text messages, phone calls and FaceTime.

I mention a couple of my memories of Nanna. They are a mix of my 55 years in her remarkable 98 years. I remember visiting her at her work when I was a small girl and playing secretary and boss in an office with Lindy-Lou, my little sister. As little girls, we were mesmerised by this side of Nanna. Through some harrowing childhood times, our happy escapes to be with Nanna showed us a different world with a smart woman well ahead of her time. I remember walking and riding bicycles, watering the garden, and writing letters to her as a little girl and then as a teenager and a young woman travelling. Nanna was my safe place, and I could share my heart, my dreams and my worries. She kept all of those letters and cards and gave me that bundle a few years back—a love story diary of my Nanna and her Trisha. I remember meeting with some of the Batemans Bay firefighters, police and paramedics who supported her during the Black Summer bushfires to say thank you. They were amazed by her resilience at the tender age of 94.

Nanna was my rock and my anchor in life, and I will be forever grateful for our connection. I could talk about her for days on end. I will mention the story of her last meal. She was high on morphine but she was bright and lucid, despite her traumatic injuries, sitting up in her hospital bed, and she leans in and says, "I wouldn't mind some oysters mornay and bubbles, Trisha." The next day, I brought her just that. It was a great privilege to be holding my Nanna's hand in her last days and when she took her final breath. Vale, Nanna, here is the sleep you craved. I am imagining that somewhere beyond this place, beyond this world, the garden is lush, she's enjoying a glass of riesling, the birdsong and the colours of a magnificent rainbow, and at peace.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** On behalf of all members, I express our sincere condolences on the passing of your nanna. I know that making that private member's statement would have taken a lot of strength. We really do feel for you at this time when you are hurting. My condolences to all of your family. We are so sorry for your loss.

### **BOOBS 'N' BOOTS GALA**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (20:14):** Boobs 'n' Boots—it sounds like some dusty outback B & S ball spin-off with topless cowgirls in Daisy Dukes and Wrangler-clad cowboys with 10-gallon hats, but it is not quite that. This event was different and special. It was a country gala fundraiser to remember, the brilliant idea of two very special women, Najana Pilbeam and Karly Dawson, both employees of St Joseph's Primary School West Kempsey. They conceived the idea because they wanted to do something special for the women of the Macleay Valley battling breast cancer.

Held in the beautifully renovated Stables at the Heritage Hotel of Gladstone near Kempsey, the evening was an extravaganza. With what seemed like effortless perfection, the organisers put together a night that filled hearts with pride and hope. It reminded us that the people of the Macleay Valley have not only enormous hearts but also, just like a family that intuitively knows what needs to be done at just the right time, each other's backs. The night was an array of bright lights, cocktails with funny names, gorgeous dresses, country jeans, suits, moleskins and boots, boots, boots. There were golden tickets inside chocolate bars, balloons with lucky door prizes, raffles that had been donated by a host of generous sponsors, a big Ariat boot that held a winning ticket for a bottle of Moët, music by the super talented Alter Ego and, again, lots of cocktails.

Najana and Karly's dear friend Erica was diagnosed with not one, not two but all three strains of breast cancer, and the big-hearted close friends wanted to walk alongside the courageous mum, loving wife and much-loved teacher, who also taught at St Joseph's school. They wanted to give her strength, encouragement and the will to continue as she faced a mastectomy, invasive treatment and reconstruction surgery. That was the birth of the Boobs 'n' Boots idea.

The girls originally wanted to help Erica's family with the costs that they would endure over the long road ahead. However, in a heartwarming and totally selfless act, Erica and her husband asked that the money raised go back into Kempsey's local outreach cancer clinic in the hope that local people could be treated in the Macleay, and not have to travel far or be separated from loved ones and young children. And fundraise they did. They have raised over \$20,000 so far that is now set to go towards specialised breast care nurses who do in-home treatments. Those treatments provide a sense of control for the patients, and for the children who can see their mums are being well looked after and can continue a sense of normality in the day-to-day routines of the household.

The money flowed, but the much-anticipated auction conducted by local real estate agent Carlos Peters was the highlight of the fundraising ventures. Gladstone local Irishman Stevo let the nods fly and the ales flow, and he finished up with all sorts of stuff, topping his haul off with a new Akubra that he paraded around in all night like a character from *Yellowstone*. Two local police officers were all guns blazing over a framed Penrith Panthers signed jersey—who knows who would want that!—supported by Luke Garner that reached over \$1,500 in the end. And we think the bear pit on Macquarie Street is entertaining.

Erica and her husband were both there on the evening as was the Macleay's favourite dance teacher, and our friend Danae Shore. Both were bravely battling cancer. Both looked stunning and larger than life, bringing an energy and a sense of courage that resonates throughout the air. That night was for them. Danae and Erica are a gift of hope and courage, and the true spirit of the Macleay. They epitomise the gift of unity, strength and love. It sure was a night to remember. I say well done to all involved, especially to Najana and Karly for their genuine community leadership.

### CAMPBELL STREET SCHOOL ZONE

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (20:19):** I share a major victory for the safety of children, families and the community of St Peters. After years of advocating for a school zone along Campbell Street, I am pleased to advise the House that this much-needed measure will finally be implemented by the Minns Labor Government. Almost 10 years ago I stood in this Chamber and told the House that "the impact on the small communities of St Peters, Tempe and Sydenham could be devastating if" the previous Government refused to mitigate the dangers of the St Peters Interchange.

Unfortunately, but not unpredictably, the former Government failed to ensure the safety of our community. That road is now a major thoroughfare due to the WestConnex project, which has caused traffic surge, putting our children in harm's way daily. Since the widening and realignment of Campbell Street into a six-lane arterial thoroughfare, the school has been physically cut off from parts of St Peters, in particular the St Peters Triangle, which is home to newer, higher density residential units, young children and families. Those young families who need to cross this major roadway to reach the primary school and pre-school on the other side have suffered several near misses because of speeding vehicles and drivers running red lights.

Campbell Street, despite becoming the main pick-up and drop-off zone for the school, was denied the crucial safety measure by Transport for NSW and its predecessor. Their refusal to put in a school zone was based on the misguided notion that those are only warranted where a school directly fronts a main road. This decision was not just bureaucratic stubbornness; it was a direct threat to the safety of our children. Along with successive school principals, the P&C and the Inner West Council, I have spent the better part of the last decade urging the Government of New South Wales to reconsider. Still, despite my repeated efforts to establish a school zone, the previous Government stubbornly refused to act.

When Labor was elected to government last year, we knew that we now had the chance to fix the mistakes of those opposite. Earlier this year I took the Minister for Roads on a site visit to the school so that he could see the danger with his own eyes. Together, with the school's principal and the current and emeritus presidents of the P&C, we walked the streets in the rain. The Minister saw firsthand what we have been saying all along: This problem needed immediate attention. During that visit, one of my staff members narrowly escaped injury when she was taking a photo for social media and a car ran a red light right in front of us. It was a chilling reminder of the stakes that we are dealing with.

I am pleased to announce that our efforts have paid off. From this week a new school zone will be in effect on Campbell Street. This zone stretches 200 metres between Florence Street and the Princes Highway. This is not just a change in speed limits; it is a life-saving measure. By reducing the speed limit to 40 kilometres per hour during school hours, we make our streets safer for the children of St Peters Public School. This school zone is a promise to every parent in St Peters that we are committed to protecting their kids.

I thank the Minister for Roads for agreeing to make that happen. I thank him for coming promptly to the site—and getting saturated in the pouring rain—so that he could see it with his own eyes. I also extend my gratitude to the principal, the P&C presidents and the St Peters community for their unwavering support and

advocacy. The new school zone is more than just traffic control; it is about ensuring our children's safety and giving our parents peace of mind. I am proud to have led this change. Together, we have made a difference that will be felt for years to come.

### NURSES AND MIDWIVES

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (20:24):** I venture to suggest that no member in this House has not had their life improved—or even saved—by a nurse. For many of us, that started when we first drew breath. From the moment of birth, and even before that, a midwife was there to ensure that we had the best start in life. Ever since, nurses have been there for us in times of accident or illness. They help bring children into the world and to give care to those children as they endure their own trials and sicknesses in life. Everyone admires, respects and is grateful to nurses. But admiration does not pay the mortgage, respect does not put food on the table and gratitude does not meet the costs of family medical bills. What pays those bills is decent wages.

I acknowledge that the Government has improved the wages of public sector workers, but now the time has come to back up our appreciation for our nurses and midwives with a wage rise that reflects their importance. This is not a "nice to have" pay rise or a "let's do it when we can afford it" pay rise. It is a pay rise that we simply must deliver, for the good of our health workers and the salvation of our health system. As a former emergency physician and senior health manager, I know the value of nurses. I acknowledge the presence of the Parliamentary Secretary for Health. I know that he shares my value of and respect for nurses from his long and distinguished career as an obstetrician. I know that their request for a pay rise is not only fair but also backed by a business case. It is also a request that is critical to our health services that are being threatened by its inability to retain a nursing workforce. The simple fact is nurses and midwives are paid more in other States. Too many nurses are leaving the New South Wales public sector just to earn enough to make ends meet.

In recent weeks I have received 25 letters from members of the Wagga Wagga branch of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association. Each letter reserves a space for the members to pass a personal message to the Treasurer. Let me illustrate the importance of this pay claim by sharing with the House some of the words of those nurses and midwives. One wrote:

As a newly graduated midwife I feel as though I am already burnt out. The working conditions can be unsafe with staffing and patient ratios ... I am considering moving for better wage and working conditions.

A long-term worker in the sector wrote:

I have worked 40-plus years for the NSW Department of Health as a nurse. In all that time I have never, as I do now, felt so undervalued ... We are worth more!

Another member writes of doing shiftwork and earning low pay while "my children are missing out on things when I am working extra shifts to make ends meet. It is not fair that we give so much to our patients and their families while our families miss out on so much." Another example from a nurse and midwife who began training for the profession almost 60 years ago warns that nurses are moving interstate for better pay and, "The New South Wales health system is on the verge of collapse with the exodus of staff to other States."

A member with two university degrees who wants to continue working in the public system to provide free health care to all women is nonetheless thinking of leaving because, "I have friends who work in a bar and earn more in an hour than I do." Another writer, who loves nursing but earns almost as much in a part-time job, asks a poignant question that should be directed at all members in Parliament, "How much would you pay someone to save your life or save your loved ones?" What a powerful question. It is a question without answer because of course there are no prices on lives.

I will therefore rephrase it in my own words, "Would you pay a nurse or midwife more to save your life or your loved ones?" There is only one answer, and that answer is yes. Armed with the testimony of the nurses and midwives who have written to me and with the knowledge that I have gained as a doctor and health administrator, I put that question now to the House. Do we agree that saving lives is beyond price? And should we find the funds needed to keep nurses and midwives doing the work that they love? As I see it, the answers again can only be yes. I urge the Premier, the Treasurer and Government to put that extra money on the table and give care and support to those who do so much to support us. Who knows—the lives of any of us, or our loved ones, could depend upon it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga. As the husband to a nurse and the son to a matron, I acknowledge the importance of nurses and I hope that their pay increases.

### VERONA SCHOOL AND YENNORA PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:29):** Every child deserves the best possible education, including quality facilities that provide an environment for students to grow and learn. Shortly after my election I visited Yennora Public School and Verona School. I was disappointed to discover that no school hall exists within either of these schools despite the schools being next to each other. In fact, students have to participate in assemblies and other important school meetings outside, despite it being cold in winter and hot in summer. The lack of a school hall at either school for decades highlighted the need for action.

I made the case for a school hall to the Labor Government and it was quickly addressed in the recent budget. Funding was allocated for a new multipurpose hall to be used by both schools. As the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Prue Car, told me, "It is the right thing to do." Thank you, Prue. When completed, the new hall will provide the schools with a suitable facility to hold assemblies, indoor functions and sporting activities, which will further the schooling experience for both schools' awesome kids. I commend the previous Yennora Public School relieving principal, Cathy Wilton, the Verona School principal, Carla Scott, and all the students who advocated for the hall. I give a special mention to Khalil Sharrouf, a student from Verona School who came to Parliament last year to advocate on behalf of his peers. I thank the Labor Government and the Department of Education for their work in this space. The hall will make a big difference.

### STARS OF THE HASTINGS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:31):** I congratulate the 2024 Stars of the Hastings, who danced across the stage on 28 June at Panthers Port Macquarie. The annual Stars of the Hastings is a unique event celebrated in Port Macquarie each year to unite local community leaders and the business world with the one goal of raising vital funds for Cancer Council NSW. Contestants take on the challenge of learning a dance or performance routine to woo the audience and judges, vying for the major award, the People's Choice. The main focus of the night is to raise money for the Cancer Council, with every contestant calling on the community to dig deep and support their rehearsed performance.

As a former contestant in the very first Stars of the Hastings, I assure the House that a lot of time and energy is invested into each dance routine, especially if one chooses to learn the '20s charleston, as I did. This year, 10 stars took to the dance floor at the Panthers auditorium, treating onlookers to a range of entertaining numbers, including the famous Broadway, disco, salsa and even pole dancing. I am pleased to advise that the night was an overwhelming success, with Stars of the Hastings raising an astounding \$161,467 for cancer research. That is a phenomenal amount for a cancer fundraiser in a regional community.

Taking out the highly coveted People's Choice award was Nicole Lindley, an oncology nurse from the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute, and her dancing partner, Kylie Morris, from SoulFire Pole Dance. Nicole and Kylie elected pole dancing as their genre, captivating the audience on the night with their technical routines and overall fitness required to perform. Nicole was inspired to take up the challenge on behalf of her patients who begin the journey of treatment and overcome the battles that follow a cancer diagnosis. Claiming the honours for the highest fundraising amount was Zoe Archer, the general manager of Settlers Inn Port Macquarie. Zoe collected an unbelievable \$30,139 from the community, in an inspirational effort that won the hearts of those attending on the night. Zoe led her hip-hop routine with Makayla Henson from Extravandance.

The night's overall success was thanks to a combined effort by all who performed and campaigned for donations over the months in the lead-up to the Stars of the Hastings event. I recognise all the competitors who performed on the night and congratulate them on their incredible efforts not only to learn their dance routines but also to fundraise for this important cause. Local radio presenter for the Hit Network Hope Endean energised the crowd with disco and synchronised her moves with her partner, Danika Clarkson, from Coastal Dance Performing Arts Studio. Holly King from Team King at McGrath Real Estate danced the lyrical with Taylah Hord from Extravandance.

Representing Watershed Insurance Brokers was Adam Button, who danced the salsa with Serena Entwistle from Port Dance Studio. Meghan Farnsworth from Blush Skin and Body Clinic strutted her stuff with Ellen Goulding from the Elite Dance Company, performing a commercial jazz dance. Laura Mayes from LJ Finance Capital mortgage broker danced a captivating burlesque routine with Sarah Dietrich Lovelock from Burlesque Fit Academy. Taking on everything jazz was Beck Stockwell from Soul Sister Grazing, dancing with Jodie Sallustio. Line dancing was the genre chosen by Loren Enfield from Soul Surfing, with her partner, Di Roods. Last but by no means least was Marina Trajkovich. Our NBN local news reporter showcased the iconic Broadway style and movement with Meg Smith from Dynamic Studios Dance and Aerial Arts.

The significance of the night and the difference it makes to the lives of people with cancer is profound. Our local fundraiser will go to the Cancer Council, allowing it to support world-class research, prevention

programs, advocacy and support services. Each of these aspects is immensely important throughout every point of a person's cancer journey. When one in two people will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85, it is these events, run and supported by our amazing community and talented dancers, that bring hope and comfort to those seeking treatment. I extend my congratulations to the organisers and contestants for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that the night and collective goal was a huge success that exceeded all expectations. Volunteers are truly the backbone of our community. I thank them for their incredible efforts.

### PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (20:36):** For months in my electorate of Port Stephens we have been putting up with a campaign against offshore wind that is increasingly turning nasty and now dangerous. Enough is enough. Tonight I set the record straight about the very small group of people within this campaign who insist on spreading lies and misinformation in order to mislead people in my community who hold genuine concerns about offshore wind proposals. The small group of people I target my contribution towards tonight can only be described as reckless and resentful thugs who, for too long, have been encouraged by the Liberal Party and One Nation to escalate tensions and aggression, which ultimately led to a boatload of protesters thinking it was okay last Sunday to harass Labor Party members and their friends, and put their lives in danger.

This all started last year when the Commonwealth Government made a declaration that an area 20 kilometres off the coast of Port Stephens and Newcastle could be suitable for offshore wind. For perspective, 20 kilometres is the distance between Salt Ash and Nelson Bay. The lies began after that declaration. Ever since, people in our community have been told by unscrupulous people that an offshore wind farm has already been approved to be built. These unscrupulous people have even been quoting how high the towers are going to be and how the turbines are already sitting in the Port of Newcastle ready to be put out into the ocean. But these are lies that have deliberately misled the community.

Whether one agrees with the Commonwealth Government or not, the process to build offshore wind is incredibly long, with various stages of significant community consultation in between. To be clear, no offshore wind proposals have been approved. Right now we simply have an area where one proponent out of seven applicants has been granted a preliminary feasibility licence to test exactly that: whether it is feasible or not to build offshore wind in that area. That proponent now has seven years to decide if it is feasible. If it is feasible, the proponent will be subject to significant environmental application and approval processes, including environmental impact assessments and a substantial amount of community consultation. If the environmental application and approval stages are passed, the proponent will need to develop a management plan that takes into account all of the competing industries and interests in that part of the ocean. If the management plan is approved, the proponent will then need to apply for a commercial licence. If a commercial licence is granted, only then could the construction of wind turbines be approved.

At every stage of this process, there is the opportunity for members of the community to have their voices heard. But the loudest and nastiest voices in this campaign insist on claiming that there has not been and will not be consultation. That is a lie. Many of these people insist on spreading misinformation online about my involvement in this issue. Let me be clear: Offshore wind is entirely a matter for the Commonwealth Government. Despite that, I have been doing my job as a local MP and I have been listening to local voices on both sides of the issue. Along with the Federal member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson, I have been making sure that our community's views are heard and shared. I have met with commercial fishers, prawn trawlers, recreational fishers, cruise operators and many others. I have attended a community forum at Birubi Surf Life Saving Club, with more than a hundred anti wind farm protesters, and provided a presentation about the proposals so that people have a chance to hear the facts.

In fact, I have even met with the nasty and resentful men who seem to spend their days flooding my Facebook page with lies and repeated claims that I refuse to listen to them. What they really mean, of course, is that I have not said what they want me to say. All of this ugliness and intimidation has gone unchecked for months. On Sunday it culminated in a shocking display of reckless and threatening behaviour. A Labor Party fundraising cruise on the 100-year-old *Wangi Queen* showboat was circled and harassed by a number of boats emblazoned with anti wind farm signs. They thought it was funny to speed past the *Wangi Queen*, creating a large wake that caused the boat to list and rock and roll into the waves, putting everyone onboard at risk, including elderly people, a child and a heavily pregnant woman. Maritime police responded and directed the boats to cease.

One of the instigators, Troy Radford, a local council candidate whom I saw standing on the offending vessel that quickly approached our vessel, admitted in the media that his intention was to "make waves" but insisted they had not broken any maritime rules. That was another lie. Today *The Newcastle Herald* has reported that New South Wales police have charged the skipper with "operating a vehicle in a menacing manner, and



operating a recreational vehicle recklessly" and ordered him to attend court in September. This sort of behaviour is not okay, and no-one in our community should be associating themselves with this thuggish, cowardly conduct.

### COFFS HARBOUR HOSPITAL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:41):** Coffs Coast residents are renowned for their pursuit of excellence as they help others. Whether it is volunteering or in paid employment, they are making a positive difference to the lives of people who need a helping hand. They do so because they are committed to their community and love where they live. I am extremely proud of our Coffs Coast locals, who selflessly reach out to help others whenever they can. Some of the best examples can be found at Coffs Harbour hospital. Take, for instance, our cherished Pink Ladies. They have a new president for the first time in more than 35 years, with Helen Mears, OAM, retiring from her leadership role. In her final president's report she thanked everyone for their support during her leadership and acknowledged the many friendships she had made along the way. Helen has always promoted the work of volunteers and says she looks forward to continuing as a Pink Lady.

Helen has been a Coffs Harbour Pink Lady for more than 40 years. She was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia last year for her services to the Pink Ladies, Coffs Harbour hospital and its patients. She was named Volunteer of the Year in 2022 at the NSW Health Awards and shortly after was crowned NSW Senior Volunteer of the Year by the Centre for Volunteering. I congratulate Leigh Galbraith, the Pink Ladies' new president, and her fellow executive committee members vice-president Helen Mears, treasurer Linda Friend and secretary Heather Hardwick. The Pink Ladies have donated almost half a million dollars in patient comfort items and medical equipment to Coffs Harbour Health Campus in just the past year. That is quite extraordinary.

Coffs Harbour hospital also boasts two finalists in the annual NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards. They are midwife Angela Sercombe and nurse Christopher Hammond, who are vying for honours in the Healing Heart Consumer category. All finalists epitomise the professionalism, diversity and commitment of the nursing and midwifery workforce in NSW Health. Angela was nominated for the award by a woman she supported through her birthing journey. An excerpt from the nomination states:

The night my daughter was born (she) needed CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) and close monitoring.

I was so heartbroken ... I told Angela how I felt and she went above and beyond and created the safe space for me to hold my daughter skin to skin for hours.

Angela was the most kind and genuine midwife and person I have ever met. She was bubbly and always happy to help. I never seen her waiver from being professional kind and caring. The empathy and compassion she shared with me and my daughter is not comparable to any other experience I have had.

Christopher Hammond works in Coffs Harbour hospital's intensive care unit and was nominated for the award by a patient. Here is an excerpt from the nomination. It states:

In February 2024 I was seriously ill, requiring ventilation, and round-the-clock care, Chris went above and beyond in providing care to me and supporting my family with gentle care and utmost compassion. His professionalism, expertise and kindness were evident in every interaction I or my family had with him.

Chris's expertise and confidence with care in all his interactions was always reassuring and gave me great comfort. This I believe was instrumental in my healing from a major trauma.

Quite simply Christopher is the nurse that makes the difference.

I wish Angela and Christopher all the best in the 2024 awards, which will be held on 25 November at Parliament House. Elsewhere at Coffs Harbour hospital, local couple Rob and Margaret Chapman continue to generously support the medical staff and patients. Most recently, the Chapmans donated a vital-signs monitor valued at \$4,551 to the renal unit and \$11,440 for an ECG machine for radiotherapy patients at the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute. I thank Rob and Margaret for their ongoing support to the team at Coffs Harbour hospital and for their extraordinary generosity.

### VISY GLASS RECYCLING CENTRE

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (20:45):** Last month in Penrith, at the heart of Western Sydney, it was a pleasure to have the Premier and the Deputy Premier join me for the official opening of the \$150 million Visy glass recycling remanufacturing facility, together with Visy chairman Anthony Pratt and CEO Mark De Wit. The facility is Australia's first ever low-emissions, oxygen-fuelled glass furnace. It is the most environmentally friendly glass furnace in Australia, using 45 per cent less energy than the one it replaced. To put that in context, it is the equivalent of saving enough energy to heat over 32,000 homes in Sydney every year. When it is fully roaring, the furnace will produce more than 800 million glass bottles and jars each and every year. This upgrade will allow for a 25 per cent increase in the production of glass food and beverage containers. If you put Vegemite or Cottee's jam on your toast, drink Bundaberg ginger beer or enjoy a cold bottle of Toohey's New, there is a good chance that it will start in Penrith—right off the factory line in Penrith, made by local workers.

Visy's Penrith site is the only glass bottle and jar manufacturing facility in New South Wales. This is a win for our local manufacturing sectors, a win for New South Wales and a win for our shared environment. That is because more than 70 per cent of this material will be made from recycled content. That is up to 30 per cent less greenhouse gas intensive than a container with no recycled content. The facility will also use advanced recycled cullet preheating technology to significantly increase the use of recycled glass in Australia's glass bottle manufacturing sector. When we return bottles to the container deposit scheme or recycle them in our kerbside bins, it goes into initiatives like this. This initiative is particularly welcome as a few short years ago, under the previous Government, hundreds of thousands of tonnes of glass were being stockpiled and landfilled instead of being recycled, threatening to seriously damage the community's faith in the billion-dollar recycling industry. Many companies with glass had nowhere to go because there was no viable market.

It is important to recognise that Visy has stepped up to be part of the solution. The Penrith investment is part of Pratt's 2021 commitment to invest \$2 billion over the ensuing decade to reduce landfill and help fight climate change while creating and sustaining thousands of green-collar Australian manufacturing jobs. I am particularly proud that our Government has prioritised growing manufacturing across our State. New South Wales is already the biggest manufacturing State by every measure, with more than 30,000 manufacturing businesses employing close to 300,000 workers and an annual turnover of \$150 billion each year. As a government, we want to see those numbers going higher and higher, which is why we support local manufacturing. Visy demonstrated that it is not just a manufacturer; it is also in the landfill avoidance business because recycling is an important weapon against climate change.

Finally, how good is it to see this kind of capital investment happening in Western Sydney? I proudly send the message that it is a great place to do business. More than a quarter of our State gross product is generated there. Millions of workers are doing millions of jobs. In Penrith we have workers who are highly motivated, skilled, talented and experienced, with all the know-how in the world. I encourage other businesses, if they are thinking about expansion, to embrace the opportunities in Western Sydney. I once again thank Visy chairman, Anthony Pratt, and CEO, Mark De Wit, for backing in Penrith and for expanding our State's sustainable manufacturing capability.

#### REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:49):** I enjoyed listening to the member for Penrith's speech about domestic manufacturing. I would like to see more of that in Barwon. It has been more than two years since the inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales handed down its report. It told us what we mostly already knew—that there were serious problems with the health system and access to medical care beyond the cities. It found:

That rural, regional and remote patients have significantly poorer health outcomes, greater incidents of chronic disease and greater premature deaths when compared to their counterparts in metropolitan areas.

That was due to difficulties in accessing medical care caused by a lack of adequately staffed regional facilities and services, or prohibitive costs of having to seek medical help further afield. The report stated that there was a shortage of healthcare professionals in regional areas, that it was difficult to retain experienced staff and that the system was chronically under-resourced. It identified a lack of accountability and transparency in the management of local health districts and poor funding models that are not fit for purpose in regional areas, along with confusion between State and Federal responsibilities. The report also spoke of the poor workplace culture in many regional medical facilities, and health workers worried about speaking out for fear of losing their jobs.

They are the sorts of things that I had been hearing for years from constituents, medical administrators and health professionals working in Barwon—long before I was even elected to this place. The fact that people in regional areas lack access to medical help has resulted in country people having a much lower average life expectancy than people who live in large cities. In 2023 a study showed that in the Far West the average life expectancy was 79.1 years compared with 84.5 years for those living in Sydney. That is because death rates are higher in the bush for conditions that could potentially be prevented if people had better access to medical services, such as cardiac services, cancer treatments and mental health services.

We hoped the bleak picture painted by the 2022 regional health inquiry report would spur government into quickly acting to implement all 44 recommendations. None of them seemed unreasonable. The government of the day accepted in principle 41 of the recommendations and began implementing them, but few were acted on before it left office in 2023. The current Government came to power with an election promise to implement all 44 recommendations. In May 2023 it appointed the Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health to inquire into the progress of implementing the recommendations. Chaired by my good friend and colleague the member for Wagga Wagga, the committee handed down its first report this week.

Fortunately, there is good news. There have been some important developments, such as the rollout of the Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme. Originally, the scheme offered people only \$10,000 to uproot their lives—potentially in the city or the east coast—to move to the country. In August 2023 that was increased to \$20,000 for the hardest to fill roles. NSW Health says that it has recruited 1,100 new health workers for remote, regional and rural locations. Hopefully the number of recruits will continue to rise, thanks to initiatives such as the key health worker housing scheme now being rolled out. There has been an increase in the numbers of intensive care paramedics in regional areas, which is part of a four-year plan "in its infancy". Part of that plan should be to expand the scope of practice for paramedics so that they can fulfil some of the minor functions of doctors to take pressure off regional hospital emergency departments and to save patients travelling to seek medical help time and money. But the report also states:

... there are still substantial shortfalls in a number of key roles, such as general practitioners, rural generalists, emergency department staff, paramedics, nurses, midwives and staff that provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It also recommends the extension of the Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme so that it can be accessed by non-government organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which are "key pillars in the regional health system". Non-government organisations often play a key role in providing services the Government either does not or cannot provide. Expanding the program would help them to recruit and train the best staff. The report also stated that regional general practice is in a state of crisis. The 2022 inquiry found that the existing GP and visiting medical officer model was creating difficulties for New South Wales in ensuring doctor coverage in hospitals, and that many doctors working under the model experience enormous pressure.

The Australian Medical Association submission to the committee stated that there is a dire shortage of GPs in regional, rural and remote areas. In the latter half of 2022 alone 72 GPs moved from rural and remote areas to larger regional cities. The problem is not just attracting GPs to country areas; there has also been a decline in GP training. The report shows that we are beginning to see some improvement in the regional health system and that it is possible to reverse the decline. But we need to act faster on every recommendation of the 2022 report to bring parity for people in the bush.

#### AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:54):** This week marks 110 years of the Red Cross in Australia. A humble volunteer organisation that started nine days after the outbreak of World War II has now evolved to over 1,200 volunteers delivering emergency response programs across New South Wales. No other organisation works where they do, when they do and how they do. But tonight I pay particular attention to one Red Cross program: the Young Parents Program, based in Randwick in my electorate of Coogee. It is an incredibly special and unique program that focuses on improving the capacity of young parents with complex needs aged between 13 and 25 to ensure that they can live and parent independently. We are talking about the most vulnerable women in our communities. Often when these women present to the Red Cross, they are experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence; they have mental health concerns and disability risks; and they are at risk of harm and disengagement from education. Women as young as 13 present to the home.

I have had the opportunity—along with the Minister for Families and Communities, who is in the Chamber tonight—to witness firsthand the remarkable work that the Red Cross does in supporting those most vulnerable women and helping to end the cycles of trauma and abuse to make sure that the next generation has much better opportunities for education and happier and healthier lives. In the past 12 months the program has supported 83 women, 17 men, 114 children and 79 families. As I mentioned previously, clients commonly present at the most challenging moment of their lives, and the humanitarian needs of clients include homelessness, mental health, and domestic and family violence, meaning that the program is unique because it focuses on individualised client interventions.

I tell the story of one beautiful young client who had had her baby. They had been talking about getting her training and what she wanted to do for work. I do not know if the Minister remembers this. They asked her, "What do you want to do for work?" She said, "I really think I could stack boxes at Coles. It would be a good job for me to have. I know I could fit it in the time and I've got the skills to do that and I can find a babysitter." They said to her, "But if you could do anything, what would you want to do? What would you like to do?" She said, "I'd really like to work with animals." They said, "Why don't we think about getting you a certificate in veterinary nursing and you can do an internship at a vet hospital?" She said, "Oh, I can't do that." They said, "Why can't you do that?"

Lo and behold, we met her and she is now a vet assistant nurse. This happy, bright young woman's world has just been completely opened up because of the remarkable work that the Red Cross does in the Young Parents Program. That is just one story. We have heard hundreds of stories of young women whose lives are completely turned around. The cycles of trauma and abuse are being broken. On behalf of me and my community, I thank all

of the volunteers and workers who are part of the Young Parents Program for the work that they do. I wish the Red Cross a happy 110th birthday. Here's to 110 more.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (20:59):** As the Minister for Families and Communities, I put on record my thanks to the member for Coogee for acknowledging and recognising the important Young Parents Program conducted by the Red Cross in her electorate. That program genuinely changes young people's lives, and it also changes the lives of their children. It changes the trajectories and futures of these young people and their children over their lifetime. It is a truly remarkable program. I acknowledge and recognise that for 110 years the Red Cross has supported communities right across our nation. The work that is done in the Young Parents Program in Coogee is truly extraordinary and worthy of recognition.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** The Minister beat me to it. I hope the veterinary nurse flies high with her new skills.

### HUMELINK

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (21:00):** I am profoundly disappointed by the recent decision made by the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] to approve funding for the HumeLink contingent project stage 2 [CPA2]. I have fundamental concerns about the decision-making process and the economic merit of the project. I am advised that the HumeLink Alliance met with the Australian Energy Regulator prior to the announcement of the earlier determination on the HumeLink contingent project stage 1 and was hopeful that its concerns would be taken into consideration. However, the Australian Energy Regulator did not see fit to offer the community a meeting prior to the announcement of the CPA2 decision. The AER has completely disregarded impacted landowners, who now face not only a cost-of-living crisis but also a loss of workability and liveability. Submissions to the planning department point to serious failings in the HumeLink project on the basis of economic merit and environmental consequences.

The fact that the AER has made concessions to push this seriously flawed project through, when it will profoundly impact communities and the environment for generations, means the project is entirely without social licence. The HumeLink Alliance has found substantial discrepancies and flawed assessments in the evaluation of the HumeLink project. The massive overestimation of the benefits by Transgrid, combined with clear mistakes and biased calculations, raises serious doubts about the entire assessment process. Moreover, the commitment made by Transgrid to reassess the project if undergrounding is feasible remains unfulfilled. The option of undergrounding HumeLink, which would be environmentally responsible, has not been given fair consideration. That is contrary to the wishes of the majority of Australians who are in favour of environmentally responsible underground transmission as we transition to net zero. The chair of the AER said:

We've made quite a number of concessions to try and support this project and to see Transgrid be able to invest in it and deliver the project.

The fact that the AER has made concessions to Transgrid to push this project through when it will profoundly impact communities and the environment for generations means the project is entirely without social licence. The AER's role is to enforce the National Electricity Law consistently and without favour, ensuring efficient outcomes. Affording concessions to Transgrid is inconsistent with the regulator's role. In a recent poll, 70 per cent of people believed that the transition to net zero should not be at the expense of communities and the environment. Additionally, 65 per cent of people were against overhead transmission lines. It is essential to consider the opinions of the people of this State and Australia when making project decisions. The majority of Australians want environmentally responsible underground transmission as we transition to net zero. The AER approval of the HumeLink project has allowed the requirements set out in the National Electricity Rules to be ignored, raising doubts over whether landholder and consumer interests are being protected to the advantage of the proponent.

### JOSEPH STREET PRECINCT PLAN

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:03):** It is with great pleasure that I share some exciting news for residents of Lidcombe and food lovers across Sydney. The Joseph Street Precinct Plan for Lidcombe, a visionary project that will transform this vibrant area into one of Sydney's premier dining destinations, has received the final tick of approval from Cumberland City Council. Works on this much-anticipated precinct upgrade are set to commence, marking a significant milestone in the efforts of the New South Wales Government and Cumberland City Council to enhance the quality of life for our local communities. This upgrade was made possible thanks to the strong support of the New South Wales Government, which has committed \$7 million towards the \$10 million project. This substantial investment is a testament to the Government's commitment to working hand in hand with Cumberland City Council to deliver projects that have a direct and positive impact on the daily lives of residents.

The vision for the Joseph Street Precinct is both bold and inspiring. At its heart, the project aims to establish Joseph Street as a vibrant "eat street", a destination that will attract both locals and visitors to enjoy the unique cultural and culinary offerings of our area. The precinct will be a place where families can gather, friends can meet and visitors can experience the best of what our community has to offer. Key features of the upgrade include the creation of outdoor dining areas, which will not only support local businesses but also encourage a lively street culture; and upgraded footpaths and pedestrian crossing points, which will enhance the safety and accessibility of the area, making it more welcoming for all members of our community, including families with young children, the elderly and those with disabilities.

New street tree planting and greenery will bring life and colour to the precinct, providing much-needed shade during the warmer months and creating a pleasant environment for everyone. Greenery will include garden beds with exotic ornamental plants native to Korea, a thoughtful touch that celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Lidcombe's large Korean community. The integration of cultural identity into the urban landscape is a powerful symbol of the diversity that makes our community so special. The Joseph Street Precinct will be not only an attractive and vibrant area but also a place that reflects the values and identity of our community. As construction begins on these upgrades, we will see a significant increase in the urban public domain within the precinct, with a 35 per cent expansion of public spaces. Those new open spaces will provide opportunities for social interaction, to foster a sense of community and belonging among residents and visitors alike.

I am particularly pleased to note that, despite the expansion of public spaces, there will be no net loss of parking spaces in the precinct. This is an important consideration, as it ensures that the area remains accessible to all, including those who rely on their vehicles for transportation. The Joseph Street Precinct is destined to become one of Sydney's great eating precincts, offering a wide range of local amenities for our families to enjoy. The distinctive character of Joseph Street will be preserved and enhanced, with a focus on retaining its unique cultural heritage. At the same time, the precinct will benefit from a revitalised streetscape that is clean, well maintained and inclusive for all members of our community. Our commitment to creating a high-quality public realm extends beyond aesthetics. The project also focuses on improving the environmental resilience of the community.

The upgraded precinct will be designed to protect against future shocks and stresses, including the challenges posed by urban heat. By integrating sustainable design principles into the project, the Joseph Street Precinct will remain a vibrant and liveable area for generations to come. This project is a shining example of what can be achieved when State and local governments work together towards a common goal. The funding provided by the New South Wales Government was instrumental in bringing this vision to life. I am proud that the Government has played such a vital role in the transformation of the Joseph Street Precinct. In conclusion, the Joseph Street Precinct upgrade is not just an investment in infrastructure; it is an investment in the future of our community. It is about creating a space where people can come together, celebrate our diversity and enjoy the very best that our local area has to offer. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this project will have on our community and the many wonderful experiences it will provide for residents and visitors alike.

#### **MAITLAND ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (21:08):** I update the House and my community on health and mental health in Maitland. First, a good announcement was made today. Community consultation has opened for a new mental health facility in Maitland, with a focus on rehabilitation and forensic mental health services. Currently those services are offered at Morisset, but they will be relocated to the Maitland campus at the new Maitland Hospital. A community consultation day will be held on 21 August between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. and between 3.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. People can also submit written submissions until 30 August. Plans for the facility are on my social media page, and I have already received community feedback about parking. Unfortunately, the images did show parking, but there will be more parking because we know that is an issue. Most importantly for the patients, it will be holistic and focused on rehabilitation. There will be three inpatient areas, which will have living facilities and indoor and outdoor therapy spaces. The site will have a completely new building.

I want to be clear about this because the community needs to know what is going on. My commitment to our community is to always be open about what is happening with our physical health and mental health services. We know that this is a critical need in Maitland. In fact, we still have some mental health services being provided from the old hospital site, which is why it is not quite vacant. That has had us in limbo. Paediatric and adult services are operating from that site now. This may provide the opportunity for them to move into that building. We are working on the other building too to consolidate the community services being operated from the old Maitland Hospital site. They include the sexual assault service, palliative care, the mental health facilities and some others—I think it is the Family Care Cottage. We are looking at how we can do that. When those buildings are complete, we can turn our attention to the site of the old Maitland Hospital.

I want to update the community. I have been meeting with Minister Park and his staff, and just today I met with his staff and the staff of the local health district. We talked about some of the concerns raised with me. We know that the former Government left that hospital in a terrible state. It was a brand-new hospital, opened with much fanfare in February 2022, and it then had the highest emergency department walkout rate in the State. People were presenting and then walking away because they could not get treatment. There has been a significant increase in staffing, but it is not enough because there are a lot of challenges. We heard Minister Park talking in question time yesterday about the real concerns we have. More staff members are on the way. We are training more and putting more on. We are recruiting and trying to work on the workload so that they can get the ratios they have been fighting for, and they are coming. We are trying hard.

The other thing about the hospital is that we recently saw the opening of the short-stay centre. It is not open seven days per week because we have a staffing issue, but it is open on four days. In the last half of the fourth day, because it closes, they try not to put patients in there, but that provides care for people who might need to spend between one and 24 hours in an emergency department. It is like a halfway admission. They get access to meals and things you do not get in the emergency department. It is for somebody who needs observation. It also has some good facilities for children who might be in need of isolation for protection or for contagious patients who need to be kept away from the general patients.

There is a lot of work happening here. I reassure the community because I know we are coming into local election time and many people want to make a noise about things. I want my community to know that I continue to advocate for that hospital. We waged a seven-year campaign with the community, the unions and Labor, backing our health workers and our community—less than one in five of whom has private health insurance—to have a fully public hospital. We won the fight. I will continue to advocate to have more health services delivered on that site, more staffing and shorter waiting time for all patients.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (21:13):** I thank the member for Maitland for her contribution tonight and remind her community of her incredible advocacy on its behalf to ensure that it has the health services it needs. She has prevented the hospital from becoming a private venture under the former Government and has ensured that the hospital now has the staff to deliver the health services her community needs. There could not be a stronger, louder voice for her community than the member for Maitland. I really thank her for what she has delivered for her community, which also services the Port Stephens community that I represent. I thank the member for Maitland for her incredibly strong advocacy over so many years to ensure that her community has the health services it needs and deserves.

## WATER MANAGEMENT

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (21:14):** Ever since I was elected to this place, I have focused my attentions on water. Initially, I could not believe that people in Sydney did not seem to care about water issues or even think about water, for that matter. But, over the years, I have noticed a change. I feel it in my waters, so to speak. Jokes aside, I have been really encouraged by how members in this place now seem to understand and care much more about water, and its incredible importance to rural New South Wales and everyone across the State. Governments can be like shipping tankers—once they get going in one direction, it can be hard to change course. But I give credit where credit is due. The Minns Government, in particular water Minister Rose Jackson, deserve credit for listening and taking my concerns seriously when I raised the serious flaws in how we manage our water in this State. I genuinely hope that the Minns Government will support my Water Management Amendment (Water Access License Register Reform) Bill 2024, but I am not one to count my chickens before they hatch. I am certainly not counting any chickens now, but I think I can hear a few clucks.

Just in case the Government needs more reasons to back my bill, here is another one. Without a register of who owns our water, we are unable to keep track of foreign ownership levels. Here is a question no-one I speak to seems able to answer: Why would anyone from overseas who wants to buy Australian water need to keep their identity secret? What do some of these foreign buyers of Australian water have to hide? In my electorate of Murray, people have real concerns about the secret ownership of water licences by foreign entities who use water trusts and a lack of a water register to hide who is really making the purchase. No-one should be allowed to buy our precious water anonymously, and my bill will end this madness.

It is not only that foreign entities are buying Australia water, often anonymously; it is about what these foreign entities then do with the water and how that affects the people who live in rural New South Wales. Many people have not realised what is happening, so let me tell them. In too many parts of rural New South Wales, we are losing Australian farms and water to overseas interests who deliberately obscure who they are. These overseas enterprises often add no value to the local community. They do not employ Australian workers. Instead, they can be found using foreign workers on holiday visas. The foreign owners also source their farming machinery and farming supplies directly from overseas; they certainly do not buy locally. Often the machinery and supplies arrive

in giant shipping containers. Then the things they produce, such as cotton, is shipped back overseas to foreign factories where the materials are used to make products, such as clothes, that are then sold around the world. They are not Australian products and do not benefit rural Australians in any meaningful way. These are, effectively, foreign farms set up on Australian land, using Australian water.

By disengaging with the community, these foreign farms, which use Australian water, hurt local communities. They do not send their kids to the local school because their kids live overseas. They do not play local sport or contribute to the local community in any substantial way. And because we do not have a water register, we do not even know who we can complain to about this. We simply do not know who owns these foreign-run farms that are set up on Australian land and powered by Australian water. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. New South Wales must finally have a water register, and my bill will achieve this. We must know who owns Australian water. That is why I ask all members in this House to support my bill. The time for anonymous water ownership is over.

### BUSBY FIRE STATION

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:19):** On 12 August 2024 the long-awaited official opening of the brand-new Busby Fire Station occurred. The new facility is on an expanded site at the same location as the previous station. The reopening of this essential community facility marks the return of local fire and rescue services to our community after they were indefinitely moved to Moorebank under the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. The land for the original station was purchased by New South Wales Fire Brigades in 1964 in what was then Green Valley. The land was purchased for £2,150—approximately \$73,650 today. Construction began on the original station in late 1965, and the crew opened its doors in March 1966 as No. 031 Green Valley Fire Station. Some say that the original building was never quite an appropriate station. In 1968 the local fire crew began a movement to improve the visual amenity of Green Valley station. A request from the crew for \$2 a year to buy seedlings delighted the chief officer and their deputy so much that this was expanded to brigades across the State, with \$10 a year—\$142 today—for station beautification.

A few years later, the Geographical Names Board clarified and subdivided the various suburbs of the 2168 postcode. As a result, in August 1972 the station was renamed Busby Fire Station to reflect its true location. Despite undergoing upgrades and expansion in the 1990s, by the early 2020s the fire station was beyond salvaging. It was clear that it no longer met the needs of the 2168 community. In September 2022 Busby Fire Station was closed and the crew were moved to Moorebank indefinitely. If members know south-west Sydney, they will be aware of the multiple barriers that exist between Moorebank and the 2168. Most notably there is the Georges River, not to mention the Liverpool CBD, which is often choked with traffic. I draw the attention of the House to a house fire incident in August 2023. It was just two minutes from the Busby station site, but a crew did not arrive until 11 minutes after the fire started. Those minutes are precious when responding to emergencies. As a result, one dog and a litter of puppies died in the fire and a woman in her twenties had to be treated for facial burns.

Although plans were announced for a new station, the 2168 community and the crew saw the old Busby station sit empty for months, with no end in sight. The signboard out the front of the abandoned station read, "We are moving to Moorebank for a year. Back in 2032." Unfortunately, they were only half joking. When we were elected to government last year, I was determined to bring services back to the 2168. Under the previous Government, many essential services in the 2168—police, an ambulance station, health hub and a public housing office—were shifted out. I was not going to let our local fire services follow them. That is why I worked with the Minister to secure the necessary funding for Busby Fire Station in our first budget. Now, less than a year later, Busby is home to a state-of-the-art facility, including a larger engine bay, circular driveway and comfortable amenities for crew on shift. These are the kinds of great facilities we get when we build in partnership with local crews.

The opening of the new station this week included a poignant smoking ceremony by Brendan and Jermaine from the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, as well as a fantastic rendition of the national anthem by Busby West Public School students. If you go anywhere in the 2168 you will hear just how proud they are to have a brand-new facility in their neighbourhood. Such things are exciting, especially after over a decade of neglect under the previous Government. I am proud to have played my part in securing this essential facility, but I also thank the local Busby crew for their advocacy. I thank, from A Platoon, John Milligan, Clinton Towill, Carlton Hillier, Matthew Webster and Lisa Anderson; from B Platoon, James Towle, Geoffrey Kanagaratnam, Timothy Jenner, Mitchell Nisbet and Chris Ziochos; from C Platoon, Paul Lynch, Kate Bendyk, Cody Benson and Jordan Kajewski; and from D Platoon, Tanya Marshall, Joel Solah, Martin Crighton, Emma Cobb and Robert Southwell.

I am lucky to have such community-minded firefighters serving our area. They deserve this facility and I look forward to joining them as they host a community open day very soon. This is something that our community has been looking forward to. A few weeks ago when I toured the facility with the Minister and the local media a young child approached us to ask when he could go inside the facility and see what it looks like. He

was very excited to hear that a community open day is coming soon so the community that the Busby crew serve can see inside this brand-new facility and view exactly what they have been advocating for.

### ALPHADALE CROSSROADS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:24):** The Bruxner Highway between Lismore and Ballina is a critical infrastructure link in our region. There is one particular intersection, the Alphadale crossroads, that I have referred to many times in this place and lobbied Ministers and shadow Ministers about for years. This intersection of the Bruxner Highway with primary roads Alphadale Road to the south and Cowlong Road to the north has a history of accidents, including a number of fatalities. The Minns Government made it an election commitment to deliver a safe intersection—with Minister Aitchison very supportive in opposition and now government—with a roundabout and a 60-kilometre zone. I have been checking on the progress of this commitment in meetings with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and the department because my constituents want to know what is happening.

I recently asked Transport for NSW whether it could start to engage with locals who live around the intersection, including the Alphadale Fire Brigade captain and members whose station is located at the top of this scary intersection. Motorists and residents have been pushing for decades for action on the notorious Alphadale intersection. It is good that we have the commitment and funding for action. I reassure them that planning is underway. It will take a while and when work starts it will be disruptive—as happens with major roadworks. I note as a caveat that the intersection is in the Lismore City Council area, where there is nearly \$1 billion worth of roadwork post the floods. That is a lot of work for the council and Transport for NSW—work that needed to be done yesterday. I reiterate the importance of this work and the challenge the intersection poses. Many locals avoid the intersection, detouring for many extra kilometres on country roads to make safer journeys to Lismore and the hinterland or to Ballina and the coast.

No-one knows this better than the Alphadale Rural Fire Brigade, captained by Tom Duncan. The station's driveway is near the intersection. The team wrote to me to outline the challenges they face. I preface my remarks by saying that the people I am about to quote are known for their bravery. These are volunteers who fight fires and bushfires and attend emergencies. Mr Temporary Speaker Kemp, you know that well, being a firefighter yourself. They are trained to go into very dangerous situations, but the most frightening part of their job should not be negotiating the exit and entry onto the Bruxner Highway. Captain Tom Duncan stated:

Access to the Alphadale Rural Fire Brigade Station from the Bruxner Highway is currently a safety risk for members arriving at the station for an incident or event. Members entering from eastbound often find themselves sitting between two lanes of 70 k traffic, with westbound traffic coming around a blind corner towards them. The area is a known blackspot.

Chris De Wall stated:

Every time I approach the intersection to enter the station there's a degree of anxiety in anticipation of how easily I'll be able to get off the main road. On one occasion a large truck passed me at speed from behind and I feared I'd be knocked into the oncoming traffic.

Aaron Lacey has had many close calls, and said:

Entering the station from the Lismore side is particularly dangerous. It is difficult to pick a gap in the oncoming traffic. And when you get a gap and start moving there will be a vehicle coming over the crest. That vehicle is generally on the brakes to avoid a collision with you. Westbound vehicles only have four seconds once they come over the crest and can't see our driveway until they are in line with it at 70 kilometres an hour.

Chris Francis stated:

Doing this entry with the truck can be tricky because the acceleration is much slower than a car. If one delays for just a few seconds a vehicle travelling west will be upon you very quickly.

Daniel Brett said:

I feel that the current entry/exit at the brigade is a tragic accident waiting to happen. I have personally had a few close calls when trying to enter the driveway.

Kari Derrick stated:

I have found the entry into the station quite daunting as I drive from the Lismore direction and I need to stop in the middle of the road to make the turn. Usually I slow right down and indicate well in advance and hope for the best that no-one drives into the back of me.

Oscar De Wall stated:

The current method of entering the station from the Bruxner Highway is very scary, especially during times with busy traffic. To be sitting between two 70 k lanes of traffic in an oncoming turning lane would make anyone feel anxious.

Daniel Purnell said:

Knowing that the brigade responds to numerous accidents in the vicinity only adds to the anxiety when attempting access.



The brigade wants the upgrade to include a dedicated turning lane into the station entrance. I agree, and I am having those conversations with Transport for NSW now. I know it will happen and I assure everyone it will happen. It has been decades long in the making. People have lobbied for it, and I urge them to wait just a little bit longer. We are doing it. We will get there.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I acknowledge the concerns of the member for Lismore about the safety of the intersection. I have used it and I appreciate the complexity of fixing it.

#### **TASKFORCE VETERAN**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:29):** I acknowledge the dedication of Taskforce Veteran, also known as Hunter Anzac Memorial Limited, to secure a site at Scheyville as a veterans, families and community hub. It is an organisation working towards a future where every Australian Defence Force veteran feels empowered, understood and seamlessly connected to the community. It is important to note Hawkesbury's vast history of defence, with the first New South Wales Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base established at Richmond on 30 June 1925. I commend some local Hawkesbury veterans. Mr Cunningham "Jock" Cassels, who is the last surviving Spitfire pilot in Australia, celebrated his 101st birthday earlier this week. Jock joined the Richmond RAAF in 1966 after he was offered a four-year engagement as a flight lieutenant. I also remember veteran Thomas Pritchard, who sadly passed away earlier this month at the age of 102. He grew up in Box Hill in the Hawkesbury and has an eternal legacy as the last Rat of Tobruk.

The Scheyville location selected to host the veterans, families and community hub appears on the list of reasons why Hawkesbury values its defence history. Upon arriving at the site, one is met with the historical Scheyville officer training unit. That venue was established in 1965 to train members of the Australian Defence Force for the Vietnam War. Since its closure in 1974, the unit has largely remained unoccupied and unmaintained. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has had ownership of that historical site since the mid-1990s. Taskforce Veteran aims to give new life to the historic site with a vision to create a thriving community hub that educates the public about the sacrifices of veterans while celebrating their role in shaping our nation into what it is today.

It is ironic that the people seeking to commemorate and honour the sacrifices of our veterans by raising awareness and educating our public are experiencing extreme roadblocks in the process of attaining this goal. We have noticed increased vandalism of war memorials and historic monuments by people who remain uneducated as to the reasons they themselves exist in Australia today. Unfortunately, the Scheyville project is not moving forward as quickly as anticipated. It is hoped that the barriers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service will be removed. The site belongs to the people of New South Wales and our veterans. Should we not be ensuring that we sustain the legacy?

Vietnam veteran numbers are in decline, with only around 760 of a total of almost 1,900 officer cadets trained on the site still with us today. With an investment of \$9 million from Federal and private philanthropy and at no cost to the New South Wales Labor Government, surely cooperation should be paramount so that the site is eternal and reflects our solemn commitment: We will remember them; lest we forget. We should be standing and rejoicing for the service and dedication of our serving members who sacrificed so much in defence of our nation. Who is standing up for those veterans? Why are there barriers for those who want to create change through education and enhance community assets? The hub also offers benefits to veterans who are experiencing mental health issues and supports Hawkesbury community charity organisations that seek the help of volunteers. I note the importance of veteran rehabilitation programs.

A whole range of issues need to be resolved, including guaranteed tenure—with the investment of \$9 million in the project the facility needs a long-term lease—and unimpeded access to the construction site to be able to finish the job. In 2026 we will commemorate the anniversary of Long Tan. At the moment there is unkempt and uncared for accommodation for 80 veterans on site. The funding is available to do the work. We just need the cooperation of the State government body to work with the organisation to finish it. We have accommodation opportunities for 80 veterans who need respite or to find a safe place. We do not want them to be sleeping under bridges or in cars when we have a place for them. I have been told that there are six tennis courts, two squash courts and a football field all lying dormant. Taskforce Veteran is keen to collaborate with the New South Wales Government to resurrect those assets for a good outcome.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:35 until  
Thursday 15 August 2024 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL LIFEGUARDS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the efforts of the Sutherland Shire Council lifeguard team in rescuing two young surfers caught in a rip off Cronulla Beach in June. The rescue happened one Monday morning when the surfers, who were experienced in big swell conditions, found themselves being dragged by the rip towards North Cronulla. Senior lifeguard Chris Iredale spotted the situation as he was getting ready to start work and together with lifeguards monitoring the surf cameras they worked out the surfers were in danger. The team then quickly activated the response and lifeguard Francisco 'Frankie' Desrets rescued the surfers on a jetski. Team leader of the lifeguards Bede Elphick said the young men rescued were experienced surfers and surf lifesaving competitors and thankfully were surfing off a patrolled beach or the outcome could have been different. Bede, Chris, Frankie and their Council colleagues worked together on this day to make sure two lives were not lost, and I acknowledge their skill and rapid response. We are fortunate as a community to have Council's lifeguard team and the dedicated teams from our Bate Bay surf clubs keeping us safe on Cronulla's beaches.

### JONO MOSLEY – LIFELINE PUSH UP CHALLENGE

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the efforts of Cronulla's Jono Mosley who has again led the way in The Push Up Challenge as the event's top individual fundraiser in 2024. The Challenge is held each year in June and sees hundreds of thousands of Australians completing the number of push-ups that represents lives lost to suicide in Australia in a year while raising funds for various mental health charities. Jono has become a local legend after taking up the challenge in 2022 and over the three challenges since he's raised more than \$73,000 while completing a total of 9,531 push ups. More than 218,000 participated in the challenge in 2024 and by the end of it Jono was on top of the fundraising leaderboard for another year having raised \$23,090 for doing the 3,248 push ups. Jono is passionate about increasing awareness of mental health and raising money so support is available for people struggling with their mental health. I applaud him for his dedication to helping others and for raising valuable funds to help Lifeline to do its life-changing work.

### VALE JOHN SUANN

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Vale John Suann who passed away on 12 July aged 95 after a life of living, serving and competing in Cronulla. John is one of only a few to have become 75 year members of the Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club. For 79 consecutive years he attended every club AGM. As an exceptional swimmer and board and ski surfer, John won a range of awards, led as the Club's Patrol Captain from 1948 to 1956 and with fellow club members made headlines in December 1956 when they saved a man's life in a dramatic rescue in heavy surf. He served on a range of club committees, was a great financial donor, and someone who was always helping around the club. John also enjoyed being part of the Kurranulla, Cronulla RSL and Cronulla Polar Bears Swimming Clubs. The Polar Bears' rooms in the Cronulla pavilion are named in his honour in recognition of his instrumental role in them being one of the few winter swimming clubs to have a clubhouse. I extend my condolences to John's family and friends, including his sons Craig and Drew and their families.

### FIRST GRAMMAR, CASTLE HILL, EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK 2024

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Our Early Learning Centre are a vital part of the community and our economy. Early Learning Matters Week held this year between 5 August 2024 and 9 August 2024 aims to raise awareness of the importance of early learning in the wellbeing and development of our children. This week I visited the First Grammar Early Learning Centre, located at Castle Hill. I was able to witness the children enjoying playing and learning in a friendly and safe environment. I was able to see how First Grammar provides quality early care and education supporting the growth of our children. First Grammar, like so many other quality early childhood educational centres in my own electorate, achieves the important goal of helping our youngest citizens graduate to school. I recognise the team at First Grammar for their work in early childhood education. I recognise the Centre Manager, Jean Grima, and the Acting Centre Manager Priyanka Surreth. I also recognise early childhood staff, Sonia Thakur, Helen Moralla, Gayatri Chavada, Evangeline Zacharias, Sajia Mohiudden, Ajab Gangardiwala, Sandra De Souza and Nyrine Crasto.

### 2024 NATIONAL NAIDOC WEEK AWARD FINALISTS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each year during the first week of July to honour and celebrate the rich history, vibrant culture, and remarkable achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The centrepiece of National NAIDOC Week is the National NAIDOC Week Awards Ceremony, which highlights the excellence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals. This year, Kempsey's own Ieysha Roberts was recognised as one of the three finalists for the National NAIDOC Youth of the Year Award 2024. Ieysha Roberts, a proud 24-year-old Dunghutti woman, has faced significant personal challenges. Diagnosed with end-stage renal failure at just 12 years old, her condition has profoundly impacted her life. Despite this, her unwavering commitment to helping others has led her to

become a research assistant at the University of Sydney, where she passionately advocates for Indigenous health, particularly focusing on kidney care. Her dedication ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients receive culturally appropriate treatment. Ieysha's resilience, compassion, and determination have made her a highly regarded advocate and have profoundly impacted the lives of many. Well, done.

#### **HEATHER EDWARDS RECOGNISED WITH HEALTH HONOUR**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Local healthcare workers were celebrated for their innovation, collaboration, and dedication to continuous improvements in healthcare at the Mid North Coast Local Health District's [MNCLHD] annual Excellence Awards. Heather Edwards, a member of the BowraMacksville United Hospital Auxiliary [UHA], has been named the Mid North Coast Local Health District's 2024 Volunteer of the Year. The prestigious award recognises Heather's dedication and commitment to excellence in volunteering at Macksville District Hospital for the past twelve years. Heather has volunteered for the UHA for twelve years, and in that time, she has completed about 4700 hours of service. Those who have had the good fortune to interact with Heather both inside and outside of her volunteer hours are lucky enough to have experienced her infectious laugh and boundless compassion, as well as her unwavering commitment to helping others maintain their health. This honour is a testimonial to Heather's generosity and the support she provides to everyone in her vicinity. I applaud her on this accomplishment and recognise the altruistic deeds she performs.

#### **A CENTURY OF MEMORIES**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Bellingen Fire and Rescue Station 221 proudly marks its 100th anniversary, a century of unwavering service and commitment to the community. Station 221 has been a pillar of strength and resilience, playing a crucial role in safeguarding lives and property through countless emergencies. The station's legacy is built on the courage and dedication of its firefighters, whose selfless contributions have shaped a century of excellence and reliability. Over the past 100 years, Bellingen Fire and Rescue Station 221 has navigated the challenges of both evolving emergencies and technological advancements while maintaining its core values of bravery, teamwork, and service. The station's impact on the community is profound and enduring. This centennial celebration honours not only the achievements and milestones of the past but also the enduring spirit of those who have served and continue to serve. Bellingen Fire and Rescue Station 221 stands as a symbol of dedicated public service, and its legacy of excellence will undoubtedly inspire future generations of firefighters. Congratulations on reaching this extraordinary milestone and may the next 100 years be filled with continued success and service to the community.

#### **BASIL KING**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)**—I honour the memory of my dear friend and esteemed colleague, Basil King. Basil's dedication to the South Sydney Graphic Arts Club and the broader Mascot community was extraordinary. As President of the Club from 2000 until his sudden retirement in 2016, his vision and determination were the driving forces behind its success and growth. Basil's journey with the South Sydney Graphic Arts Club began following the merger of the Graphic Arts Printers' Union Club and the South Sydney Businessmen's Club. Under his leadership, the Club flourished, embodying a spirit of community, engagement, and civic duty. His unwavering commitment to the well-being of the Club's employees and members and his integrity were guiding lights for us all. Beyond the Club, Basil supported local schools, community groups, and charities with great generosity, particularly the Eastern Zone Bear Cottage Committee, which is dedicated to caring for children with life-limiting conditions. Basil King was not just a leader; he was a true gentleman and a pillar of our community. His legacy will inspire us, and his absence will be deeply felt. Vale Basil King.

#### **BAYSIDE WOMEN'S SHELTER**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)**—I congratulate the Bayside Women's Shelter on their successful Winter Solstice fundraiser, inspired by the long nights faced by women escaping domestic violence. This event helps the Shelter provide safe, temporary accommodation for up to 24 women and their children each year in southeast Sydney. Each night, there are 52,000 homeless women in Australia, with domestic violence causing 75% of this homelessness. One woman a week and one man a month are killed by a current or former partner. Meanwhile, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced violence by a cohabiting partner. The Bayside Women's Shelter is crucial in offering secure refuge, and their efforts are deeply appreciated in our community. On behalf of my residents, I thank them for their dedication and support.

#### **DONNA BLISS AND YAROONA GUNYA FAMILY HEALING CENTRE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I am pleased to recognise Donna Bliss, CEO of Yoorana Gunya Family Healing Centre Aboriginal Corporation in Forbes. During my recent visit, I was impressed by the dedication and hard work of Donna and her team. Yoorana Gunya offers crucial services including medical care, mental health support, family violence assistance, and social and emotional wellbeing programs for Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal communities. Donna has been named Forbes' Indigenous Person of the Year in 2020 and 2023 and recently received the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council 2024 Staff Member of the Year award. Starting as a receptionist 22 years ago, Donna has grown Yoorana Gunya into a multi-disciplinary Aboriginal Medical Service with a diverse team and visiting allied health services, such as a dietician, podiatrist, optometrist, audiologist, cardiologist, telehealth psychology and a visiting counsellor. Donna's leadership and the team's dedication provide invaluable support to Forbes and surrounding communities. Thank you, Donna, Taylor, and the entire Yoorana Gunya team, for your inspiring commitment to our community's health and wellbeing.

#### **LARA HOOPER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate one of my younger constituents, Lara Hooper, on proving being an allrounder can lead to some great opportunities. At just 10 years old, Lara was chosen to represent NSW in combination athletics event held as part of the School Sport Australia track and field championships in Tasmania last year. The invitation came after Lara placed consistently in the top ten of a range of events, from the 100m sprint to the high jump, at the Primary School Sports Association's NSW track and field titles. The Calare Public School student made the most of her NSW representation, winning the silver medal in the combination event with a great second place in the 800m leg getting her onto the podium. It followed a solid performance in the 100m and a record-setting leap in the long jump. She then earned a gold medal as a member of the medley relay team. Mr Speaker, Lara is a young lady who loves athletics and has already set a goal of competing at the Brisbane Olympics in 2032. I wish her every success and look forward to cheering her on in the Green and Gold! Go Lara!

#### **GRANDFRIENDS MENTORING PROGRAM**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to give a shout out to two quite different Orange establishments, who are collaborating for the benefit of their diverse clientele. I speak of Orange Grove Care Community Care and its partner in the 'Grandfriends' mentoring program, Anson Street School. The program, facilitated by Intergenerational Learning Australia, pairs residents from the aged care community with special needs students from Anson Street for weekly visits to Orange Grove, where interaction through games, pets and morning tea chats is leading to gains on both sides. Forming friendships are at the forefront, with some residents along way from family members while some students don't have grandparents. Along the way, the students, on the verge of leaving school, are improving their communication skills and gaining more confidence engaging with adults while the isolation and boredom often associated with aged care living is countered. Research has shown this interaction can also stave off the onset of dementia. While in its infancy, the program's benefits to both parties mean efforts are being made to ensure its longevity and I congratulate Anson Street School and Orange Grove Care for exploring its potential.

#### **FORSTER TURTLE OCEAN SWIMMERS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Forster Turtle Ocean Swimmers for their outstanding performance at the annual Sydney Invitational Swim Meet, held at the Bondi Icebergs on the 28th of July. Competing against eight strong city clubs, the Turtles secured an impressive 4th place overall, with exceptional results across the board. In the 50m events: Russell Jackson won Gold in the over 85s; Phil Stokes claimed Gold in the over 65s; Lynne Graham earned Bronze in the over 65s and Kate Vergona took Bronze in the over 35s. The relay events: The Women's over 60s team placed 2nd; The Women's over 40s team placed 3rd and the Men's over 30s team placed 3rd. More mature swimmers filled in gaps for the younger age relays. In the over 30's Men's Relay, swimmers were aged 44, 55, 61 & 78! I congratulate the Forster Turtle Ocean Swimmers on their success, what great results!

#### **LIZ JARVIS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Liz Jarvis, a business finance mentor based in Wingham who has reached the top of the Amazon best seller list in nine categories for her recently published book – 'Financial Rebellion.' This book empowers businesses to understand their numbers, grow their profit, save tax and build financial freedom. The book's goal is to teach business owners their financial statements are more than just things that have to be prepared for an account. It encourages people to take back control of their financial information. Liz chose the word 'rebellion' because there are many different pieces of the big picture of holistic accounting, and no one is helping that business owner navigate the bigger picture. Liz is helping people to get their financial power back. I congratulate Liz on her success and wish her all the best as she develops her Financial Rebellion app and online Facebook community.

#### **SUNNY WILLIAMS AND MILICA IVIC**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Forster Bodyboarding Club members – Sunny Williams and Milica Ivic, who were both named state champions at this year's NSW Bodyboard

Titles. Held at Bar Beach in Newcastle, the one-day event featured eight divisions. Sunny Williams was crowned as the under 16 years champion, facing tough competition, Sunny secured victory in the third and final event by a margin of 3.03 ahead of the second-place finisher. Milica was ranked number one in the tournament and led all the way against her opponent, winning the Open Women's title by 2.17. The event was challenging with athletes battling the elements of heavy winds and rain and the judges were highly impressed with the level of talent the state's best had to offer. I congratulate Sunny and Milica on their well-deserved titles – well done Forster Bodyboarding Club.

### **BOYS TO THE BUSH SCRUB UP FOR A GALA NIGHT**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**— I was delighted to attend the Young Boys to the Bush annual gala night, held on Saturday June 29 to celebrate another successful year and to raise much needed funds for the not-for-profit organisation. This year the total amount raised was in excess of \$35,000. The gala night is an event that supports the mission of Boys to the Bush, a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring and empowering young students through outdoor experiences and personal development programs. Held annually, this gala night brings together community members, supporters, and sponsors to raise funds and awareness for the organization's vital work. Boys to the Bush was founded in 2017, by three regional schoolteachers who had extensive experience dealing with students with complex behavioural needs and requirements. Boys to the Bush stated aim is to reach and engage with 130,000 youth at risk by 2030. The Boys to the Bush Charity Gala Night is more than just a fundraising event; it is a celebration of community spirit and a collective commitment to nurturing the next generation. I was delighted and privileged to attend and look forward to next year's event.

### **LEGO CITY COMES TO YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Year 8 students from Young High School recently embarked on an exciting project: the construction of a LEGO city. This initiative aimed to foster creativity, teamwork, and hands-on learning among students. Over several weeks, students collaborated to design and build various elements of the city, including a focus on sustainability, green spaces and efficient public spaces. Each student had a role, from architects who designed the layout to builders who meticulously placed each brick. This project wasn't just about fun; it integrated lessons from subjects like mathematics, where students calculated dimensions and spatial relationships, and social studies, where they discussed urban planning and community needs. The LEGO city build will culminate in an unveiling event with the official opening on 15 August, where parents and community members are invited to see the students' hard work. This project has been a resounding success, not only showcasing the students' creativity and engineering skills but also highlighting the importance of collaboration and perseverance. This LEGO city will stand as a testament to what can be achieved when young minds come together with a common goal and a passion for learning.

### **LIFE SAVING SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The Charles Sturt Hotel's Social Club, thanks to the generosity of community patrons and their Saturday morning raffles, has again been able to support some of the youngest members of Narrandera thanks to their life-saving donations. Members of the Charles Sturt Social Club and representatives from Narrandera Public School, St Joseph's Primary School, Narrandera High School, and Narrandera East Infants School all attended the Sturt Hotel on Saturday, 18 May 2024, to receive the incredibly generous donations from the Social Club. Each of the four (4) schools has now been equipped with a new defibrillator, a life-saving device valued at around \$2,500 each, totalling \$10,000. These defibrillators, specially designed for schools, have the potential to save lives, including those of our youngest students. The current survival for students who suffer a sudden cardiac arrest at school and have Automated External Defibrillators [AEDs] on hand is 70%. Having an available AED on school premises protects students, teachers, parents, and visitors to the school. Over the past few years, the Charles Sturt Hotel Social Club has donated over \$100,000 to its community, and I thank them for this incredible achievement.

### **BODALLA YARNING CIRCLE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—June 14th 2024 saw the unveiling of the Bodalla Yarning Circle at Bonnie Cottage in Bargo. Located on Dharawal land, the yarning circle was funded by NSW Government Youth Opportunities Program and is the place for the community to connect with each other, the land and the culture. The community spirit was strong on the opening day, and all present were moved by the contributions of those who made it possible. The dedication of Leann Dykes (Garingbal), Aboriginal Community Cultural Engagement Worker from Community Links Wellbeing, to teaching traditional dance and artwork to the school children was evident on the day with the youth conducting the smoking ceremony, the dances, playing the didgeridoo and an artwork display. Local elder Aunty Karen Adams warmly delivered Welcome to Country and The Lions Club of Tahmoor Inc. kept everybody fed by cooking the BBQ which included crocodile, kangaroo and emu. I am particularly buoyed by the connection that the youth of Wollondilly are showing to their Aboriginal

culture. This Yarning Circle is a Community Links resource that can be accessed by anyone, and I am confident that it will form the backdrop to many meaningful conversations well into the future.

#### **KIDS OF MACARTHUR HEALTH FOUNDATION GALA**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—One of our favourite events every year is the Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation Gala, and this year was no exception. Held on Saturday June 1st at Campbelltown Catholic Club, supporters and associates of the foundation gathered to raise funds and awareness. I was pleased to be there with my Parliamentary colleagues, Anoulack Chanthivong MP, Sally Quinell MP, Greg Warren MP and Nathan Hagarty MP. The theme of the night was Out Of This World Kids, and the opening music by Jamie P Reston set the scene for a beautiful night enjoyed by all, for a great cause. I acknowledge Campbelltown and Camden Hospitals for their exceptional work in providing high-quality care to the children in our community. Their commitment to health services, particularly in the Children's Unit, raising much-needed funds for vital paediatric medical equipment, special care nursery, and numerous community health programs for children's well-being, truly makes a difference. Seeing our community come together to support this wonderful cause is great. We can continue to make a difference in the lives of our local children.

#### **MACARTHUR YOUNG CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2024**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I was delighted to attend the Macarthur Young Champions Awards on Friday 31st May, an initiative of Rainbow Crossing Incorporated, an Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Government registered charity. The Awards are empowering positive change through recognising the achievements of our young people and the valuable contribution they make to the local community. Rainbow Crossing Incorporated works to motivate young people to chase their dreams and the Macarthur Young Champions Awards are a chance to reflect on the hard work and dedication of our youth. These awards recognise the achievements of young people in the local community across over 20 categories, including individual, group, and special needs. Our future is in good hands with the leaders of tomorrow present on the night, I was pleased to join in celebrating their talent and achievements. The Awards have now expanded from Macarthur to five Local Government Areas around Sydney. Congratulations to all the young people and everyone involved in this initiative.

#### **WESLEY CASTLE HILL UNITING CHURCH, CASTLE HILL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I acknowledge the importance of the Wesley Uniting Church, Castle Hill. The Wesley Uniting Church dates back to 1903 when the then Parramatta Methodist Church began services in a timber shed in Arthur Whiting Park, Castle Hill. The current church was constructed and dedicated in November 1977. Many activities are held at the Church including, Young Adults Group, Youth Groups, Kids@Wesley, Creative Writers, Art Workshops, Book Club, Seniors Lunch and many more. The Wesley Church also holds Community Markets and Garden Markets. The Markets includes stalls where Manchester, books, toys, are available as well as afternoon teas and a sausage sizzle. I attended the Markets where I spoke to Aiden Armstrong. Aiden helps with the running of the Young Adults Group. The Group provides a place for young adults to meet and engage as well as movie nights and local restaurants nights. Aiden explained to me that "the group provides a sense of belonging for young people". The Wesley Uniting Church is wonderful place in our community. Thank you, Reverend Carmel Ieraci and your team at Wesley Uniting Church for everything you do for our community.

#### **CAMBODIA VISION INC**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On Sunday 9 June 2024, I had the privilege of attending the Cambodia Vision Inc. annual fundraising dinner in Canley Heights. The event was a heartwarming showcase of the organization's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of those less privileged in Cambodia. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Chairman Mr. Ming Ly for the kind invitation to this inspiring gathering. His leadership and dedication were evident throughout the evening, reflecting the organization's mission to make a tangible difference in the lives of those in need. The dinner brought together a supportive community united by a shared vision of humanitarian aid and social justice. It was an honor to witness the passion and generosity of the attendees, who are instrumental in driving forward Cambodia Vision Inc.'s important work. The funds raised will undoubtedly play a crucial role in supporting various initiatives aimed at providing essential services and opportunities for disadvantaged individuals. This includes giving the gift of sight to the poor in rural Cambodia who suffer from preventable blindness largely due to cataracts. I wish Cambodia Vision Inc. continued success in their mission and commend their ongoing efforts to bring about positive change.

### **FLAG-RAISING CEREMONY BY THE VETERANS OF THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 15 June 2024, I had the honour of attending the flag-raising ceremony and wreath-laying event at Cabra-vale Diggers, organized by the Veterans of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam-NSW [ARVN-NSW]. This event celebrates and marks the establishment of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam [ARVN] in 1955, and is traditionally held on the 19th of June each year. The ARVN played a crucial role as the main military force of South Vietnam, dedicated to defending the nation throughout the Vietnam War. The event also brought members of the community together to honour and remember the contributions and sacrifices made by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam [ARVN]. The ceremony was conducted with the utmost dignity, reflecting the deep reverence for the history and values of the ARVN. Following the National Anthems, the wreath-laying ceremony provided a solemn opportunity for reflection and tribute. The laying of the wreaths was a moving gesture, acknowledging the sacrifices made by those who served and paying homage to their memory. I extend my gratitude to the ARVN-NSW for organizing such a meaningful event.

### **AUSTRALIAN HEALTH HUMANITARIAN AID**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I had the pleasure of attending the Australian Health Humanitarian Aid [AHHA] annual fundraising dinner on 25 May 2024. AHHA is an Australian not-for-profit charity organisation actively involved in my Electorate of Cabramatta. The organisation offers a wide array of humanitarian aids to those in need within Australia and overseas. These include charitable medical treatments, education assistance, natural disaster relief and reduced poverty. AHHA's dedicated efforts to combat global blindness, a major cause of poverty in developing countries, are commendable. With a strong network of over 300 passionate professional volunteers, AHHA has directed its resources to help reduce blindness for underprivileged people in Vietnam and Cambodia, through humanitarian and sustainable methods. The fundraising dinner was part of AHHA's ongoing efforts to fulfill its commitment to improving the lives of disadvantaged people. I thank AHHA's Chairman Dr William Trinh and the organising committee for their kind invitation, and I wish AHHA and their team continued success.

### **OCEANNA ROGERS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge Oceanna Rogers, a 19-year-old Shell Cove surfing prodigy. She has recently participated in the Nias Pro Surfing Competition in Indonesia. On competition day, the competitors were graced with perfect conditions of four to six-foot waves. Oceanna won all but one of the heats she surfed, placing her second out of all 60 competitors. This amazing result for Oceanna puts her on a great path for World Surfing League Challenger Series qualification in 2025. I cannot wait to see what Oceanna will continue to achieve into the future. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Oceanna and wish her well in all her future surfing endeavours.

### **ANNE-LOUISE MERZ**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Anne-Louise Merz, a SES Shellharbour unit volunteer, for receiving the National Emergency Medal on Wednesday 19 June 2024. The National Emergency Medal is awarded to persons who rendered sustained or significant service during nationally significant emergencies in Australia. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Anne-Louise for this award and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

### **NIKITA HURT**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Nikita Hurt, a SES Shellharbour unit volunteer, for receiving the National Emergency Medal on Wednesday 19 June 2024. The National Emergency Medal is awarded to persons who rendered sustained or significant service during nationally significant emergencies in Australia. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Nikita for this award and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

### **RECORD REGISTRATIONS FOR FOOTBALL FAR NORTH COAST**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Football Far North Coast is the local peak body for 24 clubs in Northern NSW and recently released some exceptional metrics that demonstrate the 'rise and rise' of the 'World Game' at grassroots level. Despite the hurdles of Covid in 2020, that saw all sporting participation fall, Lismore and Northern Rivers region was further impacted by the natural disaster of the 2022 floods, with devastating loss and destruction at more than half of the local football clubs. However, the resilience of our community refused to allow these events to define us and football, as the highest teams participation sport in the region, has surged to record participation levels in 2024. A staggering 7932 players have registered this season, more than 500 above the previous high, with female participation rising to 33 per cent (from 31 per cent) of historical numbers. Football

Far North Coast General Manager Steve Mackney, who has been in his role since 2009, believes that the game provides a sporting experience that resonates with the local community. Mackney is a staunch believer that sport at the grassroots should be about providing a participation opportunity that is inclusive, affordable and enjoyable.

#### **NORTH COAST TOURISM AWARDS 2024**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—The 2024 North Coast Tourism Awards recognised growth, entrepreneurship and celebrated tourism businesses' success across the North Coast Destination Network region. I congratulate Tweed Shire Council on taking gold in Outstanding Tourism Start-up for the North Coast Rail Trail – Tweed Section and bronze in Excellence in Innovation for the Tweed Regional Museum in Murwillumbah. Council's Program Leader Destination and Industry Development Nicole Manderson says winning the gold award is testament to the hard work and dedication of her team and the community support they have received. "We are so proud to contribute to the North Coast's tourism landscape and look forward to continuing to provide unique and memorable experiences for our visitors," Nicole says. The competition in this category was fierce with Hirehood taking the Silver Award and Port Macquarie Distillery receiving the Bronze Award. I also congratulate Tumbulgum's Husk Farm Distillery on taking silver in the Excellence in Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries category. Bucket Brewery won the Gold Award and The Lord Howe Island Brewery won the Bronze Award. I congratulate all winners and finalists of these awards, presented in partnership with Business NSW and Destination North Coast, in Port Macquarie on August 1.

#### **MURWILLUMBAH MUSTANGS CELEBRATE 35 YEARS OF LEAGUE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I Congratulate the Murwillumbah Mustangs Rugby League Football Club on the 35th anniversary of the successful merger of Old Boys and Brothers football clubs way back in 1990. Current Mustangs players, former players and supporters from the local community came together on July 13 for what was a special Old Boys' Day at the Murwillumbah Leagues Club. Original Old Boy David Lofts told The Tweed Valley Weekly newspaper that the merger was a strategic move. "There just weren't enough players in the town at the time, but we had a lot of talent," Lofts said. "Murwillumbah Souths made the decision to go to the coast and eventually became Tweed Coast Roaders today, leaving us with only two clubs in the valley." Barry Harding, of Harding's Earthmoving, has been an integral sponsor of the Murwillumbah Mustangs throughout its history. Other major sponsors include Marrison Hydraulics and Tweed Fruit Exchange, the latter sponsoring the Colts division from its inception. Harding, originally a Murwillumbah Souths supporter but now firmly Mustang, emphasised the importance of local support for sporting clubs. "If we don't support these local footy clubs, they won't exist," he told The Tweed Valley Weekly.

#### **BEAR COTTAGE SUPERHERO WEEK**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, last month, a very special event took place in my electorate. On Sunday 28th July, Bear Cottage hosted the launch party of its annual Superhero Week, a fantastic initiative which aims to raise funds and awareness for this crucial facility. Located in Manly, Bear Cottage is NSW's only children's hospice, providing essential care and respite for children with life-limiting illnesses and their families. Mr Speaker, Superhero Week encapsulates the ethos of Bear Cottage: that life, no matter how brief, should be cherished and celebrated. I am delighted to say that this year's event was another big success, raising more than \$63,000 so far. In addition to raising much-needed funds, Superhero Week presented an opportunity for the community to connect with Bear Cottage and the truly life-changing care they provide to so many across our State. I acknowledge the extraordinary staff and volunteers at Bear Cottage who dedicate their time to ensuring that Bear Cottage remains a place of comfort, laughter, and positivity. Finally, I acknowledge the children and families who call Bear Cottage their home away from home, and whose strength and courage is truly immeasurable. Mr Speaker, they are the real superheroes.

#### **SIENNA HEARN**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I wish to recognise the remarkable achievement of Sienna Hearn from my electorate of Manly, who at just 21-years-old has not only made her Olympic debut in Paris but has managed to secure a silver medal in the process! Growing up on the Northern Beaches, Sienna began her water polo career at the age of seven, playing with the Northern Beaches Breakers Water Polo Club. Sienna rose through the ranks as a junior before eventually making her senior national team debut for the Aussie Stingers at the 2022 FINA World League Intercontinental Cup in Peru. Since then, Sienna has continued her dominant run of form, competing on the world stage with the Stingers at the 2024 World Championships in Doha and now most recently at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Manly boasts a proud history of grassroots participation in water polo, and Sienna is a true testament to this. I have no doubt that her Olympic success will help the sport continue to grow on the Northern Beaches. I congratulate Sienna on winning a silver medal in what was a truly thrilling Olympic campaign. She has a bright future ahead of her and I wish her every success.



**BRONTE HALLIGAN**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I recognise Bronte Halligan, an impressive Manly local who was selected to represent Australia at the Paris Olympics this year in water polo, and who I am delighted to say will be returning home with a silver medal. Bronte began her water polo journey at the Sydney Northern Beaches Breakers, excelling from the get-go. In 2014, at just 17-years-of-age and whilst still a student at Stella Maris in Manly, Bronte was selected for the Aussie Stingers senior team. She would go on to further her water polo career in the States at UCLA, eventually earning her much-deserved Olympic debut at the 2020 Tokyo Games before earning a professional water polo contract with Ekippe Orizzonte in Italy. After a remarkable campaign with the Stinger's at this year's Paris Olympics, Bronte can now call herself an Olympic silver medallist. I know I speak for all those in the Manly community who were up early and tuning in when I say that it has been a joy to cheer on Bronte and the Stingers over the past month, and we are so proud of their efforts. Congratulations, Bronte, on such a wonderful achievement.

**RECOGNITION OF RILEY BARTLETT**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Inverell local Riley Bartlett on winning the 15-year-old Championship Belt at a major Boxing competition held the Gold Coast recently. I congratulate Riley on his selection and title win, which has come at the back of considerable training in preparation for this event. Special thanks to Darren and Dean Finn from the Sapphire Academy of Sports Gymnasium, for training Riley and underpinning his transformation from beginner to title holder, in just two short years. I commend Riley for the hard work and commitment shown to his chosen sport of Boxing. I thank all those involved in Riley's journey for their support and encouragement, providing Riley with the opportunities to excel and reach his goal of becoming a Champion Boxer.

**RECOGNITION OF WENDY BALDWIN**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Wendy Baldwin of Moree for winning two first prizes at the District 90 Toastmasters' Finals held in Sydney recently. I congratulate Wendy on competing against the best public speakers in NSW, with District 90 having more than 3000 members in 150 clubs across 35 areas and seven divisions. Essentially Wendy had to win three levels of competition to be selected for this finals event, with the first win for the topic 'What every person should know' and the second win was for the humorous category, with her speech entitled 'The Super Duper Snake Whacker.' I commend Wendy on these wins, for being the pinnacle of what Toastmasters represents and for being rewarded as an exemplary confident public speaker.

**VALE SANDY MUNRO**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the many achievements of Mr Sandy Munro, a long time Shorthorn Cattle breeder from the Moree area, who sadly passed away recently. Mr Munro made an outstanding contribution to Australian Agriculture and was immensely respected among his peers and the wider cattle industry. Sandy was a fourth-generation agriculturalist, with the Munro family recently celebrating 150 years of farming on their property Weebollabolla, for which he made a significant contribution as Managing Director. Sandy was known far and wide for the Weebollabolla Bull sales held over an enduring 56 years. Above all Sandy was a friend to many, a volunteer who contributed greatly to the Moree community and a great supporter to the sport of racing. I commend the late Mr Munro on his accomplished career, as well as for his contribution and commitment to the Shorthorn Cattle industry and to Australian Agriculture. Such a highly regarded leader in his field, his passing will be a considerable loss to all, and we offer our sincere condolences to his wife Jude, daughters Kirst, Jac, Treen and Jen and to all Sandy's extended family.

**VALE PETER COPLEY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Peter James Copley, an acclaimed Albury football player and district league coaching legend, who left an incredible mark on the sport, following his unexpected passing while holidaying overseas, at the age of just 62. Peter, joined Ovens & Murry Club Lavington in the early 1980's, quickly establishing himself as a star wingman, he played in two premierships in 1983 and 1986, during his 150-plus matches with the club. After turning his hand to coaching, Peter Copley successfully led Holbrook, Culcairn, Mitta United, and Thurgoona to premiership wins between 1991 and 2016. Loved ones say no matter what Peter put his mind to, he gave it 100 per cent. He is remembered as a talented player, a visionary leader, and a genuine friend who could bring any team together. Vale Peter Copley.

**OVENS AND MURRAY HALL OF FAME 2024**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Chris Hyde of Albury and Matt Pendergast from Lavington, who have been inducted into the Ovens and Murray Hall of Fame. The significant

recognition highlights and acknowledges the profound impact these individuals have had on our league and community. Chris Hyde arrived in Albury in 2009 as a 26-year-old and, over the next decade, played more than 200 games for Albury, including seven premierships from ten grand final appearances. For the past four decades, the O&M League has been a significant part of Matt Pendergast's life. During his career, he played 300 matches, 246 of which were for the Lavington as a midfielder. His remarkable achievements include a club record for best and fairest, and his crowning glory was the Panther's 2001 grand final victory at Lavington Sports Ground, clinching the premiership alongside his father Wayne. Chris and Matt, this significant honour reflects your outstanding achievements, contributions, and leadership over the years. Thank you for your dedication to your footy clubs, sport, and the community.

#### **STUDENTS SPREAD SMILES ON MAIN STREET**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge All Saints Catholic School Tumbarumba senior students, who have once again demonstrated the true spirit of the school motto "Heart Speaks to Heart", through their annual free street stall event. Each year, the town's main street comes alive with joy as students set up their stall, with treats and baked goods and offer complimentary raffle tickets - all for the price of a smile. Timana, Orlando, Isabelle, Angus, and Maria, led their peers in creating an atmosphere of generosity and warmth. The event gave students the chance to practice community engagement and teambuilding skills, as well as learning firsthand the value of giving back and the importance of kindness. Thank you to everyone from All Saints Catholic School involved in this event, it is a wonderful initiative. May this tradition continue spreading smiles and strengthening the community in Tumbarumba for years to come.

#### **GLENMORE PARK – REGENTVILLE CAMERA USERS GROUP**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend Ben Sharif and his fellow members of Glenmore Park – Regentville Camera Users (Photographers) Group for sharing and assisting one another through their common interest in photography. The group was established for those with an interest in the field of photography to get together, support one another and provide a social environment to meet and undertake photographic excursions. The Facebook group currently has 168 members and is growing in numbers. They enjoy taking photos around the beautiful scenery of Glenmore Park and further afield with different people having different approaches in their photography. I thank the members of the group for being community-minded and open to having others with an interest in photography join their group.

#### **DAFFODIL DAY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I recognise the Cancer Councils 2024 Daffodil Day to be held on Thursday 22 August. Daffodil Day is one of the Cancer Council's most well-known fundraising events and has been held annually since 1986. Last year, Australians gave an impressive \$2.5 million towards this worthy cause and the Cancer Council are again calling on our communities' generosity so they can continue with their lifesaving research. The statistics are alarming with almost 1 in 2 people being diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85. I commend the Cancer Council in their ongoing quest to find a cure for this insidious disease and thank everyone who participates and supports Daffodil Day.

#### **NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I wish everyone who works, studies and has an interest in the field of science a Happy National Science Week! National Science Week was established in 1997 and is our nation's annual celebration of science and technology, in which we celebrate all the ideas and inventiveness of our great country. The week will be celebrated through more than 100 events around Australia, including those delivered by educational institutions, libraries, museums and science centres. I acknowledge and thank all involved in the field of science across the Badgerys Creek electorate and country for their important contribution. I wish them the very best in their work.

#### **KATHMANDU BUTCHERY PENSHURST**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Dinesh and Gunja Kathayat, owners of Kathmandu Butchery Penshurst, for their exceptional work over the years. Dinesh and Gunja have been proud business owners since 2018 and I think they do a wonderful job. Kathmandu Butchery has been serving up delicious food in our local area for six years now, including noodles, meat, goat, fish and traditional spices. They now employ 25 people and have opened further locations in Hurstville and Bankstown. Many small businesses have an immigrant backstory and there are countless examples of individuals like Dinesh and Gunja, who have worked incredibly hard to grow our local economy and contribute to the overall success of the community. I truly believe that we can learn so much from our Nepalese, Indian and Sub-Continental community. I am deeply grateful that many individuals from these vibrant communities have chosen to make our local area their home. Speaker,

I would like to thank Dinesh and Gunja for their hard work once again and wish them every success with their business. Thank you.

#### **KINGSGROVE COMMUNITY AID CENTRE - ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre for hosting their 'Festa Della Repubblica' celebrations, also known as Italian National Day. Italian National Day commemorates the referendum of 1946, celebrating Italy becoming a republic. More than 100 people from the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre's Senior Group attended on the day to celebrate. From all accounts, it was a wonderful day, with many of the senior residents partaking in singing and dancing, celebrating this important part of their culture. Whilst I unfortunately did not get the chance to attend, events like this help to strengthen the multicultural bonds in New South Wales, whilst also keeping our local seniors engaged with the community. Italy and its people have had an enormous impact not just in NSW, but across the world. NSW is home to more than 270,000 people of Italian heritage, who continue to practice and preserve their culture and language. I would like to wish everyone of Italian heritage in my community a very happy Della Repubblica Italian Festa. A big thank you to Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre for hosting this important event.

#### **RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE'S NEW YARNING CIRCLE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to celebrate the recent opening of a Yarning Circle at the Riverwood Community Centre. During NAIDOC week, I had the opportunity to attend the opening of their brand-new Yarning Circle, with an Indigenous performance and traditional smoking ceremony to welcome visitors into the space. What a fantastic experience! Indigenous culture is a big part of our community and it has roots that stretch into Riverwood and beyond. It always brings me great joy to see this type of cultural exchange within our local area. I have worked alongside the Riverwood Community Centre for many years and would like to commend their 50-years of service to the community. Offering aged care, disability support, as well as youth and family services, the centre is home to a diverse group of staff that truly care about community. I'd like to thank the Chairperson, Pauline Gallagher, for her commitment to serving the community and all the attendees for their participation in this wonderful opening. I look forward to working with the team well into the future.

#### **THE FATHERING PROJECT FOR DAD'S MEET UP, ARTARMON**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—As the father of three young children, it was my pleasure to join the monthly Dad's Meet Up at the Salvage Café in Artarmon. This is one of many monthly Meet Up groups for local Dads, an initiative of The Fathering Project. The Fathering Project supports fathers and father figures to be the best parent they can be so their children can thrive. It educates, connects, and mobilises fathers and families to create brighter futures for their children. One way The Fathering Project achieves this is through local Dads Groups, where Dads can connect for mutual fellowship and emotional support. I thoroughly enjoyed the Artarmon Dads Group and would encourage all fathers to consider joining a local group. I want to acknowledge Edwin Gee, the organiser, for his dedication to bringing this group together, Michael Chen, the owner of Salvage Café, for hosting us and Aziz Tan, the owner of our communities local Island Hopper Brewery, for sponsoring the evening. Their contributions made the event even more special for everyone involved.

#### **REV BILL CREWS AND THE EXODUS FOUNDATION**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—With the soaring cost of living, the problem of homelessness is becoming even more acute, and Homelessness Week in July helped shine a timely spotlight on it. To help the plight of the homeless in Sydney, Reverend Bill Crews of the Bill Crews Foundation is one of our lead champions. On 19 July, I had the honour to visit Rev Crews and praise the work of his foundation that has provided compassionate, practical support to the poor, homeless and vulnerable for over forty years. With more than 122,000 Australians experiencing homelessness on any given night, it's crucial to address the root causes, including domestic violence and economic instability, and provide the support necessary to ensure every Australian has a safe and stable home. Together we can make a difference. I express my heartfelt appreciation to Reverend Bill, his team and the more than 800 volunteers at the Foundation who tirelessly help those who are hungry, homeless and in need of health care.

#### **GALA CONCERT, NIGHT OF AUSTRALIA-CHINA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On 30 July, I had the pleasure of accompanying my friend, former member of the Legislative Council and Willoughby resident, the Hon Dr Helen Sham-Ho, to the Night of Australia-China Gala Concert at the Sydney Opera House. The Gala Concert was a key part of the 5th Chinese Culture Festival in Sydney which celebrates the rich cultural and social ties between the people of China and Australia. This Festival aims to strengthen the communication and cooperation between Chinese and Australian art groups and thereby enhance the broader understanding and friendship between the Chinese and Australian people. As the representative of Willoughby with a large Chinese-Australian population, this Gala Concert was a

great opportunity to show my support for strengthening the ties between our two peoples. The Gala Concert at the Opera House was a spectacular showcase of music, dance and performing art that celebrated the best of Chinese and Australian culture. I thank the Organising Committee of the Culture Festival 'China meets Australia' for their kind invitation.

#### **LIDS FOR KIDS – ANGELA CARROLL**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise Angela Carroll and acknowledge her work in doing the planet a big favour by collecting small things. Angela began her charity crusade by supporting a local coffee shop who collected lids for children with a disability at a local school. After the café sold and the lids were no longer needed at the school, Angela wanted to continue to save the lids from landfill. The initiative Lids for Kids was created - a charity that recycles these little pieces of plastic into useable items such as garden furniture, household products and pens. Angela now has all four service clubs in Laurieton saving the lids, both pubs, three schools, plus over a dozen cafes and medical practices. She washes and sorts the lids, packing them up according to colour and code, ready to be collected every few weeks by a volunteer who drives from Brisbane to Canberra collecting donations. It is truly an impressive effort! Angela's ultimate vision is to work together to save our planet. Her immediate aim is to keep as much plastic out of landfill as possible. I am inspired and thankful to Angela for her efforts and commitment.

#### **2024 NORTH COAST TOURISM AWARD WINNERS – PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate our local tourism operators who were successful at the North Coast Tourism Awards held on 1 August 2024 at Sails by Rydges Port Macquarie. Innovation and inspiration are at the forefront of the annual Tourism Awards as success is celebrated for creating strong, vibrant communities through growth and entrepreneurship. On the night, 18 award categories were announced, recognising outstanding leadership and excellence in tourism. Ritchie Villages, Dunbogan Caravan Park scored Gold in the Excellence in Invocation category. WildNets Adventure Park won Gold in the Excellence in Specialised Tourism category. Island House on beautiful Lord Howe Island claimed the Silver Award in Outstanding Accommodation Experience. Likewise, Lord Howe Island Brewery took out the Bronze Award for Excellence in Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries. Positive Energy Adventures and Retreats achieved Bronze in Excellence in Wellness Tourism. Port Macquarie Distillery claimed Bronze in Outstanding Tourism Start-up. The Port Macquarie Museum took home Bronze in the Excellence in Cultural Tourism category. Billabong Zoo won Bronze in the Tourism Attraction and Festival/Event of the Year categories. Also from Billabong, Jake Stone took out Bronze for Outstanding Young Tourism Business Leader. A wonderful honour, congratulations!

#### **OUTRIGGERS GOLDEN MASTERS WOMEN'S CREW**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I congratulate the Port Macquarie Outriggers Golden Masters Women's Crew on the eve of their participation in the World Sprint Titles in Hawaii. The crew of Karen Newman, Lyn Lovering, Jane Lundberg, Kerry Owens, Derelle Douglass and Glenys Cummings have qualified for the World Sprint Titles after competing at the Australian Sprint Titles in 2023. Their events are the Golden Masters Women (60 plus years) V6 1000 metre turn race and the 500 metre sprint race. These women came together in outrigger paddling at about the same age and with a shared passion for the sport and a determination to push themselves to the limit in regattas. The team ethos of training hard together in the canoe and individually off the water has built the necessary trust in each other. After the sprint titles, the crew will go on to an iconic outrigger event, the Queen Lili'uokalani Outrigger Race in Kona - the largest distance race for outriggers. The trip to the World Sprint Titles is a wonderful occasion to represent their outrigger club of Port Macquarie and share their passion with other like-minded paddlers from around the world. I wish them every success.

#### **THE PONTIAN SOCIETY – 60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to The Sydney Pontian Society on celebrating their 60th Anniversary! The Sydney Pontian Society, Panagia Soumela, is a not-for-profit organisation committed to preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the Hellenic (Greek) Pontian people since 1964. Led by President Hellene Flame and Vice-President Chris Klazidis and supported by many dedicated volunteers the Pontian Society is passionate about educating the Australian-Hellenic community and beyond about the rich heritage of the Pontian Hellenes, celebrating their unique traditions, language, and history. The Society works hard in support of local charities that provide services and assistance to those in need, as well as providing financial support to local community students facing hardships. The Society is dedicated to ensuring it creates an inclusive environment, one that celebrates diversity, and fosters connection to uphold a sense of belonging within their community. Congratulations Hellene, all the executive team and the many members of The Sydney Pontian Society on achieving your 60th anniversary!

### THE INNER WEST TOY SWAP

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations and thank you to the local team from Joy of Giving who held their successful Inner West Toy Swap in Summer Hill on Saturday 3 August. Joy of Giving was formed in 2019 with the aim of instilling in future generations the value and benefit of giving, as well as the importance of sustainability. The Inner West Toy Swap allows people to come together to exchange their used toys, giving each toy a new lease on life with a new family. It is also a wonderful opportunity to build community connections as people share the joy of their toys with others. The Toy Swap is also a notable example of the sustainable circular economy that is so valued by our community and a shining example for our kids of the power of sustainability and the value of reusing. The Toy Swap was supported by the Green Living Centre, an initiative of Inner West Council, and hosted at the Sustainability Hub in Summer Hill. Thank you to the team at Joy of Giving, the Green Living Centre and all our local community who made the Inner West Toy Swap such a great event.

### LIVING ROOM THEATRE

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I wish to recognise the success of The Living Room Theatre, a community theatre group based in Summer Hill. Next year will see the Theatre celebrate their 25th year of operation, a wonderful achievement for any organisation. Congratulations and thanks to Michelle St Anne, founder of Living Room Theatre. Prior to founding the organisation, Michelle was dissatisfied with the expectations and requirements put upon her art by the sector. Michelle, by founding Living Room Theatre, created a space in which she and artists alike were able to present the art that they wanted to create and tell their stories how they wanted to tell them. Importantly, Living Room Theatre truly lives its vision to create immersive experiences in unusual and forgotten places to shift perceptions and engage in critical dialogues reflecting the significant issues of our time. The most recent series Ms Kitteridge & Boy Choy is playing to sellout crowds and there are two more upcoming dates on 21 August and 28 August for you to enjoy the show. Congratulations to Michelle and all the team on building such a vibrant and valued addition to our community.

### RETIREMENT OF SARKIS YEDELIAN OAM

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the remarkable service of Clr Sarkis Yedelian OAM, who will be retiring in September after 20 years of service on Ryde Council. Clr Yedelian was elected in 2004 and served five consecutive terms, making him Ryde's longest-serving councillor. Throughout this time, his leadership has been unwavering, including through his service as Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Chair of various committees, including Planning and Environment and Ryde's Community Harmony Reference Group. With a journalism and electronic engineering background, Clr Yedelian enriched his council contributions. After migrating from Beirut in 1979, he co-founded the 'Armenia Weekly' magazine and the Armenian Community Radio Hour and established Community TV Sydney CH31. As the first elected councillor of Armenian heritage in Australia, Clr Yedelian played a crucial role in Ryde's Multicultural Advisory Group, connecting with diverse communities through his fluency in five languages. His service extended to the State Emergency Service and the Ryde Multicultural Centre, reflecting his unwavering commitment to the community. We thank Clr Yedelian for his exemplary service and dedication to Ryde. I have personally valued his friendship, and know his legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

### BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - ERIN LEE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Erin Lee a joyous 4th birthday! Erin's mum, So Hyun, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy 4th Birthday to a very special little girl! May your day be filled with fun, laughter, and all your favourite things. You are loved more than you can imagine. Have a magical birthday, Erin!." 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 Erin'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 Erin!

### CITY OF RYDE PRAYER BREAKFAST

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I rise to acknowledge the success of the City of Ryde Prayer Breakfast. This event has brought our community together in prayer and reflection since 1992. Held on Friday, 28 June 2024, at the North Ryde School of Arts Hall, this year's event was particularly significant in light of our community's challenges due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. The guest speaker, Simon Miller, CEO of Anglicare, delivered an insightful address on the theme "Our Hopeful Response in Uncertain Times." Simon's extensive experience advising Australia's top companies and his leadership within Anglicare provided invaluable perspectives on how we, as Christian leaders, can respond to the pressing needs within our community. His words inspired all attending

to consider our roles in supporting those affected by the current economic hardships. The City of Ryde Prayer Breakfast continues to foster goodwill, unity, and a sense of purpose among community leaders. It remains a cornerstone event that not only strengthens our community faith but also reinforces our collective commitment to serving the people of Ryde. I want to personally extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who participated and contributed to its ongoing success. Your efforts are truly appreciated.

#### **MARINE RESCUE PORT KEMBLA**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)**—I want to acknowledge the dedicated crew from Marine Rescue Port Kembla, who volunteer their time, to look after those people who spend their time on the beautiful and sometimes treacherous waters, off the Illawarra coast. In 2023 the dedicated volunteers of this unit completed 169 search and rescue missions including 112 emergencies, safely returning over 350 people and one dog, to shore. Marine Rescue Port Kembla is a 100 per cent volunteer organisation, that also provides important 24/7 radio monitoring and Log On services from their Hill 60 Search and Rescue Coordination Centre. They are a crew of approximately 80 volunteers, who give up their time to provide marine search, rescue, and communication services, to the Illawarra boating community. But their roles are not just limited to this, they also have very valuable volunteers who help with the administration of, and fundraising for, this important organisation. I recently visited their Port Kembla Offshore Boat Crew Base at Port Kembla Harbour and took a tour of their facility. My thanks to Unit Commander Kevin Bradley and his entire crew for their dedicated work in keeping our boaties safe.

#### **5TH ANNUAL MAYDAAN CUP**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Ahmed Karat, the organizer, and all participants of the 5th Annual Maydaan Cup. This year's event was the largest to date, bringing together over 400 attendees from 29 diverse cultural and multifaith backgrounds. The event was a remarkable display of community spirit and cultural unity. With more than 120 archers from across Australia—primarily from NSW, Queensland, and Victoria—competing, the event highlighted the growing interest and skill in this traditional sport. Additionally, 20 vibrant stalls showcased various crafts, creating an engaging atmosphere for all attendees. The communal efforts of everyone involved have significantly contributed to the success of the Maydaan Cup, fostering a sense of community and shared cultural appreciation. I extend my best wishes to all as they continue to celebrate and promote cultural diversity.

#### **STREET INDUSTRIES FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL AT PHILLIPS PARK LURNEA**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognize the exceptional efforts and achievements of the Friday Night Football [FNF] program and its participants in the Lurnea/Liverpool area. The Liverpool FC (Premier Champions), 3 P (Senior Champions), and Lurnea 5V (Junior Champions) have displayed outstanding skill, teamwork, and dedication, setting a high standard for youth sports. I would like to extend a special acknowledgement to CEO Samey Minkara and the dedicated Friday Night Football Team: Taci Kumsuz, Billy Nunez, Eren Kumsuz and Abdul Kurdi. Additionally, I would like to thank the program sponsors: Western Sydney Wanderers, South West Wanderers Academy, Liverpool City Council and Macquarie Group. Their support has been instrumental in the program's success.

#### **NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Newbridge Heights Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2024, namely Captains Jesinta Davies and Blake Waugh, Vice Captains Elena Djurdjevic and Aymen El Masri, and Prefects Lilah Dao, Alisha Khan, Angad Aujla and Wael Khaled. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Irene Faros, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Newbridge Heights Public School.

#### **SIENNA PEARCE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate 18-year-old Sienna Pearce of Dubbo on her recent success at Trangie's Junior Judging Day. The popular event attracted around 60 enthusiastic participants from near & far, such as Tottenham, Coonabarabran, Bathurst, Warren, Dubbo, Narromine and Trangie, ranging in ages from 6 to 20 years of age. Each competitor is given the opportunity to assess beef cattle, meat sheep, merino sheep, cotton samples, wool fleeces and grain samples whilst learning more about these agricultural products. The competitors are assessed on how they placed the products or animals, and

on how they speak about the process they went through. Sienna was awarded 1st place in the Senior Cattle, Senior Merinos, Senior Grains, Senior Wool and Senior Cotton sections, 2nd place in the senior meat sheep section, Champion and overall point score winner! Your passion, dedication and commitment are evident through these outstanding results Sienna, and I am confident you have a bright future ahead of you in the agriculture industry.

#### **SHARON GOLLAN**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to recognise Sharon Gollan for her commitment to the Wellington community. From a young age, Sharon always had a passion to become a hairdresser. Demonstrating her dedication to achieving this dream, at the age of just seventeen and with the support of her parents, she took out a bank loan, bought a salon, left school, and became an apprentice in the business she owned! At the age of eighteen she was legally able to register her business name, Sharon's Hair Cut Shop in Lee Street. The business and name remain today, forty years later! It is an incredible feat to remain in business and the industry for this long, but what is also a credit to Sharon is the number of opportunities she has created for the youth of Wellington whilst being in business. She has provided jobs and apprenticeships for many Wellington youth over this time, giving them the opportunity to also realise their dreams of a career in hairdressing. For regional towns to continue to thrive, supporting youth and providing opportunities for them is essential, so thank you Sharon for all you have done and continue to do!

#### **DAVID DUGAN**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate David Dugan of the Trangie Lions Club who received a "Changing The World" certificate of appreciation at their recent changeover dinner. David was formally recognised for his significant work in reviving the Trangie Lions Club after a lengthy hiatus. Special Guest, former District Governor, Geoff Freudenstien, was in attendance to make the presentation of the prestigious award to David. Not only has David been instrumental in the revitalisation of the club, but he is leading it as the President, contributing to new traditions for the club, such as singing the sixty's pop classic "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" at club functions! David is well known for his passion for Trangie and is a very active member of the community. Being recognised with this award is testament of his commitment and unwavering dedication. Thank you for all you do for the community David and congratulations on this well-deserved recognition. Trangie Lions club is in very capable hands!

#### **ROTARY PARRAMATTA CHANGEOVER**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to the Rotary Club of Parramatta on their changeover dinner on 23rd June. I make particular reference to outgoing President Graham Cook, who served from 2023 to 2024. A highly regarded president, Graham worked hard to make a difference right here in Parramatta and also through involvement in programs across Australia and internationally. A big shout out to incoming President Cheryl Deguara. Cheryl's attention to detail, fundraising skills and her presidency will only strengthen the club to further Rotary's goals and execute excellent projects and events in her 2024-2025 term. I have full confidence in incoming Secretary Graham Cook and Treasurer Yvonne Scorer, and the rest of Cheryl's team, in their stewardship of the club. Rotary provides such an invaluable community service, and I know how this year's theme "The Magic of Rotary" can apply to all our lives. Rotary provides support for individuals interested in being involved in their local community and opens opportunities for people to develop leadership and communication skills. Congratulations again to the new board.

#### **LIONS CHANGEOVER**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to the Parramatta Lions Club on their recent Changeover Dinner in June. Thank you to outgoing President Graham Estreich for his commitment to the Lions, and his ongoing service on the incoming 2024-2025 board. I would also like to congratulate Jon Copson, incoming President and longtime member of the Lions on his appointment as President. Jon and the incoming board will work to continue the vital work of Lions in Parramatta. An incredibly active club, Lions demonstrate exactly how much service clubs play an essential role in supporting our community. I have every confidence that the new executive will continue to fulfill that role. A special congratulations to Harrison Loy for receiving the Barry Palmer Award, in recognition of his continued and stalwart service to the Parramatta Lions Club and the broader community. Congratulations also to the recipients of the Australian Lions Foundation Community Service Award for their contributions to the club. These are the people that consistently show up for their community. It was a pleasure to attend the event, and catch up with old friends and see familiar faces. I look forward to seeing the Club continue to prosper under the new executive.

#### **GARY ELLEM**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Is with pleasure that I recognise Gary Ellem for his commitment and dedication to the Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library as he steps into retirement after

45 years of service, 27 of them as Manager. Gary has overseen libraries in Casino, Evans Head and Kyogle and throughout his tenure has transformed the libraries into thriving community hubs where people of all ages come to read and connect with others. His passion is evident in the 38 successful grants he secured through the NSW Government's Public Library Infrastructure Grants program totalling \$2.3 million which included the construction of two new libraries and two mobile libraries. Gary oversaw the transformation upgrade of the manual library system to an automated one, introduced the Internet and new library collections like eResources. Gary is known for his calm, caring manner and his creative thinking. His efforts in improving public library buildings, spaces and information technology has not only enriched the lives of countless individuals but has also strengthened the fabric of local communities. I know Gary has left an indelible mark on all who have worked with him and on behalf of the local community wish him a happy, healthy and fulfilling retirement.

#### **GRAFTON JACARANDA FESTIVAL WINS SILVER**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—A huge congratulations to everyone involved in the Grafton Jacaranda Festival for taking out the silver for Festival/Event of the year at the North Coast Tourism Awards. The Grafton Jacaranda Festival is a truly remarkable event and a major part of Grafton's annual calendar, bringing thousands of visitors into the town and most importantly bringing the community together. Putting on the festival takes a huge effort, and it is managed and run largely by volunteers. I congratulate and thank each of the volunteers for the hours invested. Such an honour to see the Grafton Jacaranda Festival receiving this recognition, demonstrating that it is one of the North Coast's premier events, second only to Bluesfest Byron Bay, what an achievement. This year is the 90th anniversary of the Grafton Jacaranda Festival, and it is guaranteed to be another memorable experience. With less than three months to go before the commencement of the festival, the locals are getting in the spirit organising their costumes and events and locking in the important dates to the calendar. Here's to another unforgettable festival this year and of course for years to come.

#### **TREVOR BAILEY – RETIREMENT**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Mr Trevor Bailey on his retirement as Production Supervisor after his 47 years working with Marshall Notaras Hardwoods, formally known as J Notaras and Sons Sawmill. Mr Bailey, a loyal and dedicated employee, has spent his years performing many tasks and duties, to name a few, helping customers, driving the forklift and identifying many different species of timber. Staff will miss Mr Bailey's often loud and humorous interactions. General Manager, Donna Layton, has worked alongside Mr Bailey for 46 years and enjoyed his friendship. She will miss his technical expertise, his company during morning tea and lunches and the office banter. Mr Bailey has been presented with a special gift, a handmade wooden forklift, made by members of the Grafton U3A Men's Shed using offcuts from the sawmill, a fitting gesture. Such an achievement working and enjoying 47 years in the same industry, it is now time to take a step in a different direction and enjoy retirement.

#### **FLYNN SOUTHAM**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Congratulations to Tweed Heads' Flynn Southam who has added two Olympic medals to his already impressive resume, winning silver as part of the Men's 4x100m Freestyle Relay and bronze in the Men's 4x200m Freestyle Relay at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. At just 19 years old, Flynn has made his mark on the swimming world at what was his very first Olympic Games. Well done Flynn on your Olympic achievements, the Tweed is incredibly proud of you and we will be cheering you on as you continue to achieve greatness in swimming.

#### **JACK ROBINSON**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Congratulations to Tweed's Jack Robinson on claiming a silver Olympic medal in the men's surfing competition at the Paris Games. This is Australia's best result in Olympic surfing and an achievement that will inspire a generation of young groms, especially here in the Tweed where we have some of the best surf breaks in the country. Jack's Olympic performances included one of the highest scoring waves of the competition, a 9.87 barrel in an early heat, and Jack beat world number one John John Florence in the round of 16. Held at Teahup'o, an infamous shallow reef break that produces extremely large waves, the men's competition was fiercely competitive and the Tweed is incredibly proud of Jack's Olympic success. Well done Jack!

#### **MOESHA JOHNSON**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Swimmer Moesha Johnson will be returning to Piggabeen in the Tweed with an Olympic Silver Medal after her outstanding swim along the River Seine in the Women's 10km marathon swim at the Paris Games. Moesha led the breakaway pack for the majority of the race and it wasn't until the final stretch when her Dutch training partner overtook to claim the gold. Moesha's silver medal is Australia's second-ever medal in the demanding 10km swim event. The Paris Games were Moesha's Olympic debut and she



also placed 6th in the Women's 1500m swim. Congratulations to Moesha on representing Australia at the 2024 Olympics and for taking home a coveted silver medal. The Tweed is incredibly proud of your achievements.

#### VRA AWARDS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Australia is blessed with volunteers who devote their time, skills and energy to protect and support our community, often literally saving lives. Among those to rise to this challenge are the members of the Volunteer Rescue Association. This month, I was honoured to recognise some of the achievements of those amazing men and women at an awards function in Wagga Wagga. Among them were Wagga Rescue Squad members Jodie Carter, Joshua Jones, Nigel Glennon and Helen Bodel who rescued a distressed woman from a flooded Murrumbidgee River in highly dangerous conditions. Separately, Mr Glennon also received commendation for his leadership and dedication to the squad since 2007. Also, squad member Martin Gregory received a Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation for his assistance to a driver who crashed into a tree. If not for Mr Gregory's actions, with the support of an off-duty nurse, the driver would not have survived. The awards night also honoured members for their long service, with Helen Bodel, Nigel Glennon, Richard Rooke, Ray Willet and Tim Lidden receiving medals and clasps. All up, 590 years of combined service was acknowledged by VRA members from across the Southern Region. Congratulations and thank you to all.

#### HUNTER SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful staff, students and school community of Hunter Sports High School in Gateshead on receiving a Secretary's Award for an Outstanding School Initiative at the 2024 Public Education Awards. The recognised initiative was the Hunter Academy, aimed at addressing socioeconomic challenges in Windale. The program delivers personalised learning and project-based approaches to learning and has resulted in remarkable results. All students have an individual learning plan that identifies their needs, strengths, interests, and aspirations, and can transition back to mainstream schooling as their needs and abilities develop. Increased attendance, reduced behaviour referrals, improved literacy and numeracy results have all stemmed from the implementation of this evidence-based approach to teaching. As the award citation reads, Hunter Academy "stands as a beacon of transformative education, deserving recognition for its profound impact on student success and community empowerment." I'm so proud that a Charlestown electorate school is leading the way on this. Congratulations to principal Rachel Byrne and her team on this fantastic program and well-deserved recognition.

#### LOGAN ROMANI

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I would like to acknowledge Warners Bay High school captain Logan Romani, who was recognised with a Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement at the 2024 NSW Public Education Awards. The Public Education Awards are an important opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing work of our teachers, school communities and other staff who each day work together to bring out the best in our students. Logan has demonstrated commitment, passion and dedication to his studies and school community. He is involved in a number of sports, drama and music—Logan is a grade 8 level musician and an accomplished saxophonist. His willingness to step into a leadership role as school captain is also to be commended. Alongside his fellow Warners Bay High recipient and captain, Jazmine O'Brien, Logan spoke at the awards ceremony, highlighting the importance of education. In his words, "Education is so valuable because it builds relationships and embraces the individuality of all students." Very well said, Logan. I wish you all the best for your HSC and your future studies!

#### CARDIFF BOOLAROO DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Cardiff Boolaroo District Cricket Club is celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year, and I want to take this opportunity to recognise this milestone and the club's history. Cardiff Boolaroo debuted in the hot summer days of 1949-1950. By 1955-56, the club had grown to the point where they featured in a final—and though they missed out in a photo-finish three-run loss against six-time final winners Hamilton, the club had arrived. Today, the club boasts 160 members and extensive groups of club supporters and volunteers, fielding a number of teams including mens, womens, Junior U16 and U21, and a masters/vets side. The club prides itself on the type of cricket they play and the way they comport themselves on the field, as well as their community-based, inclusive ethos and their strong connections with the junior club, Lake Macquarie Junior Cricket Club. Congratulations to the Cardiff Boolaroo on seventy-five years of cricket and community, and here's to many more years to come.

**DR MARGARET BEEVORS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Dr Margaret Beevors. Studying at the University of Sydney, as an intern, resident, and registrar in hospitals across Sydney and Tasmania. During her Royal Australian College of Surgeons Fellowship, Dr. Beevors was offered positions at both Hornsby and Goulburn Hospitals. She chose Goulburn and began her role as a Visiting Medical Officer [VMO] at Goulburn Base Hospital. Here, as a General Surgeon, she applied the full breadth of her surgical training. Dr. Beevor's role as a VMO was demanding, yet she also worked full-time at Goulburn Medical Clinic, where she undertook a wide range of surgical interventions and developed a particular interest in breast cancer surgery. Over her 31-year tenure in Goulburn, Dr. Beevors witnessed and contributed to significant growth and development across the region. Her practice has always been patient-centred and holistic, reflecting her dedication to providing the highest standard of care. As Dr. Beevors steps into retirement, I extend my heartfelt thanks for the medical services she has provided to our community. We wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement, Dr. Beevors.

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CROQUET CLUB**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to commend the Southern Highlands Croquet Club for its outstanding role in hosting the 2024 Croquet New South Wales Advantage Golf Croquet Doubles and Singles Championships at the picturesque Exeter lawns. Competitors travelled from Queanbeyan, Canberra, Sydney, Wollongong, Jamberoo, and Maitland, with five players representing the Southern Highlands Club. The championships featured eight pairs in the doubles event and fourteen individuals vying for the singles titles. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Southern Highlands Croquet Club for their exemplary hosting of the championships and for their dedication to nurturing the sport within the community.

**CROOKWELL ST VINCENT DE PAUL VOLUNTEERS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Crookwell St Vincent De Paul Volunteers. It is wonderful to acknowledge the number of community minded individuals who readily volunteer with St Vincent De Paul to support and assist others in the Crookwell region. For the past fifteen years, Beryl Smith has given her time to Crookwell St Vincent De Paul. Beryl has demonstrated an authentic commitment not only to serve the community and organisation, but to continuously encourage and welcome new volunteers to the organisation. The commitment of these many volunteers creates a harmonious and joyful environment that welcomes people in need, as well as the community members who donate goods to St Vincent De Paul. Tracey McDonald has worked at the store for three years and is also a key contributor to the welcoming environment for those in need, providing assistance and guidance. I take this time to express my sincere thanks to Beryl, Tracey, Kelly, Lazette, and the many other volunteers for the valuable positive impact that they have had on their community.

**NATIONAL MEDAL RECIPIENTS – MACMASTERS BEACH SLSC**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the dedicated Surf Life Saving volunteers from MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club who have recently been recognized with the prestigious National Medal. This medal, a cornerstone of Australia's honours system, celebrates long and diligent service by individuals who risk their lives or safety to protect or assist the community in times of emergency. Today, we honour Stephen Kleppen, Bruce Staples, Graham Johnston, Nerida Powell, Peter Roden and Alan Blackman for their 25 years and Matthew Hingerty for 15 years of unwavering commitment to our community. Their dedication to Surf Life Saving has made a lasting impact, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of countless individuals who enjoy our beaches. The National Medal is Australia's most recognised civilian award, celebrating those who have shown exceptional dedication in critical roles, both in government and voluntary organisations. These volunteers embody the spirit of service, and their contributions are invaluable to the Surf Life Saving movement and our community. Congratulations to each of you on this remarkable accomplishment. We deeply appreciate your many years of service and thank you for the positive impact you continue to make in our community.

**NATIONAL MEDAL RECIPIENT – ANDREW PARKER FROM AVOCA BEACH SLSC**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It is with great pride that I stand before you today to acknowledge and congratulate a dedicated Surf Life Saving volunteer from the Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club who has recently been recognized with the prestigious National Medal. This medal, a cornerstone of Australia's honours system, celebrates long and diligent service by individuals who risk their lives or safety to protect or assist the community in times of emergency. Today, we honour Andrew Parker for 15 years of unwavering commitment to our community. Your dedication to Surf Life Saving has made a lasting impact, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of countless individuals who enjoy our beautiful beaches. The National Medal is Australia's most recognized civilian award, celebrating those who have shown exceptional dedication in critical roles, both in government and

voluntary organisations. These volunteers embody the spirit of service, and their contributions are invaluable to the Surf Life Saving movement and our community. Congratulations Andrew on this remarkable accomplishment. We deeply appreciate your many years of service and thank you for the positive impact you continue to make in our community.

#### **NATIONAL MEDAL RECIPIENT – JOSHUA DUGGAN FROM NORTH AVOCA BEACH SLSC**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It is with great pride that I stand before you today to acknowledge and congratulate a dedicated Surf Life Saving volunteer from the North Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club who has recently been recognized with the prestigious National Medal. This medal, a cornerstone of Australia's honours system, celebrates long and diligent service by individuals who risk their lives or safety to protect or assist the community in times of emergency. Today, we honour Joshua Duggan for 15 years of unwavering commitment to our community. Your dedication to Surf Life Saving has made a lasting impact, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of countless individuals who enjoy our beautiful beaches. The National Medal is Australia's most recognized civilian award, celebrating those who have shown exceptional dedication in critical roles, both in government and voluntary organisations. These volunteers embody the spirit of service, and their contributions are invaluable to the Surf Life Saving movement and our community. Congratulations Joshua on this remarkable accomplishment. We deeply appreciate your many years of service and thank you for the positive impact you continue to make in our community.

#### **PATTY MARKOS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to congratulate and acknowledge Kogarah High School teacher, Ms Patty Markos, who was recently awarded the Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching. The Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching honours educators who demonstrate exceptional teaching standards and have made significant contributions to their school communities. Ms Markos, an esteemed leader in the English faculty, was recognised for her exemplary instructional abilities and profound commitment to cultivating a passion for literature among her students. Her innovative teaching strategies and deep expertise in curriculum development have consistently provided students with enriched learning experiences, fostering both academic excellence and a genuine love for the subject matter. Ms Markos's contributions to education extend beyond her immediate environment, positively influencing the wider educational community. Her continuous dedication is true testament to her outstanding career and her unwavering commitment to the advancement of education. I extend my sincerest congratulations to Patty Markos on receiving this prestigious award and express my deepest appreciation for the work she does to ensure our children receive the best possible start in life.

#### **SENIOR CONSTABLE SONIA KRICALOVIC**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to thank and honour Senior Constable Sonia Krcalovic, who has dedicated 15 years of exemplary service to the St George Police Area Command. Constable Krcalovic's commitment and tireless efforts have significantly contributed to the safety and wellbeing of our local community. So often, Sonia's has gone above and beyond her official duties - building strong relationships with local businesses, community organisations and diverse cultural groups. Her proactive attitude and genuine concern for the welfare of our community has set a high standard of engagement and support. Constable Krcalovic has been instrumental in enhancing community safety and strengthening ties amongst our multicultural communities. Her dedication to these causes has inspired continued efforts towards better safety strategies and community relations. I extend my heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to Senior Constable Krcalovic as she embarks on a new chapter in her life. Her presence will be greatly missed, but her legacy of compassion, professionalism, and generosity will remain an enduring part of our community's history. I sincerely thank her for her unwavering commitment to protecting the people of St George and wish her every success in her future endeavours.

#### **SYDNEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise the Principal and Deputy Principal of Sydney Technical High School, Mr Steven So and Ms Alison Peachey. It was through their guidance and leadership, that earned Sydney Tech the Secretary's Award for School Achievement. The Secretary's Award for School Achievement is awarded to schools that demonstrate accomplishments in teaching and create a sustainable learning environment. Principal So and Deputy Principal Peachey started a 'Innovating Student Representation' initiative. The program was designed to foster well-rounded students by encouraging them to achieve excellence in not only academic fields, but also in physical and creative fields. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing work of the school's teachers and broader community who each day work tirelessly to bring out the best in our kids. Congratulations to Principal So and Deputy Principal Peachey on this much-deserved award. I wish you both continued success in furthering the potential of your students.

**ABBEY LEE CONNOR – OLYMPIC SWIMMER**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Congratulations to former Panania resident, 19-year-old Abbey Lee Connor, who showcased an incredible performance in the 200m butterfly at the Paris Olympics this month. Abbey's journey to the Olympics began with her debut at the 2022 World Championships in Hungary, followed by her participation in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the 2023 World Championships in Japan. Her determination and resilience have been evident throughout her career, especially after she briefly retired and then made a triumphant return to competitive swimming. In the Olympic finals, Abbey Lee Connor placed 7th behind another Aussie, Liz Dekkers who placed 4th, narrowly missing the podium by 2.02 seconds. Competing in what is arguably one of the most challenging swimming disciplines, the butterfly, Abbey has not only represented her country but also inspired countless others with her dedication and spirit. Abbey, you've made us all proud with your Olympic journey. We wish you continued success and all the best in your future competitions.

**LIVERPOOL MEN'S CENTRE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Homelessness Week is a time to shine a light on the struggles faced by so many across communities who are sleeping rough. It's also a time to reflect on the fact that any one of us could experience homelessness at any time, for a myriad of reasons. To mark homelessness week, I took the time to visit the Liverpool Men's Centre. The Men's Centre is a service run by the St Vincent de Paul Society, providing crisis accommodation for men aged 25 or older, who are single and without children. This service operates within a client centred service delivery framework, with the staff operating on principles of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment. It offers a place for people to rest, refresh and access services. As Liverpool is a diverse community, it was heartening to see that the centre also emphasises a culturally competent framework to its practices. Thank you to the staff at the Men's Centre for all you do for those doing it tough in Liverpool. Although Homelessness Week is marked annually, I know their work takes place 365 days a year and I credit these fantastic workers for their continuing dedication.

**JAMES BUSBY HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—In the words of author Michael Morpurgo, "it's the teacher that makes the difference, not the classroom". I'm sure the many young people who have been taught by Marianne Kasavetis and Van Dinh over the last 2 decades would agree. Both just celebrate 20 years of teaching at James Busby High School, a significant milestone. Miss Kasavetis is a recognisable face in the Human Society and Its Environment [HSIE] department. She is also currently the Assistant Year Adviser for Year 12, helping the class of 2024 strive for its very best in their upcoming HSC examinations. Mr Dinh is a long-time mathematics teacher at James Busby, a faculty which adopts a focused and analytical approach to learning that is stimulating, inspiring and engaging. I may be biased, but Liverpool is home to public schools that are going above and beyond to ensure opportunities and success for our young people, and that is no small part due to the continuing dedication of our teachers. Congratulations Miss Kasavetis and Mr Dinh on this remarkable achievement, thank you for your longstanding contribution to the education of kids in the 2168.

**DHEE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Although she's been a professional singer for over a decade, it wasn't until recently that Dheekshitha Venkadeshnan, known professionally as Dhee, launched her first English language songs. She is a household name in India, has an average of 5.7million monthly listeners on Spotify and her discography contains some record-breaking hits. But last week, the girl who grew up in Western Sydney released her newest English-language song - I Wear My Roots Like a Medal - right here in the New South Wales Parliament. Dhee was born in Jaffna, of Sri Lankan Tamil descent, and this newest single explores generational trauma and dealing with emotional baggage. Self-written and self-produced, the song emphasises Dhee's pride in her heritage. The music video was mostly shot on location in Jaffna and is a gorgeous visual ode to her roots, reinforcing her dedication of this song to "everyone who is in search of their roots." Dhee's creativity is another reminder of the breadth of talent in our multicultural community and reminds us to embrace all that makes us unique, as Dhee has. Congratulations Dhee on bringing this wonderful endeavour into the world, I look forward to following your growth as an artist.

**CUBBY HOUSE TOY LIBRARY IN FORESTVILLE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 29 August 2024 I look forward to visiting the Cubby House Toy Library in Forestville. Since 1979, the Toy Library has been an initiative that locally supports families, the educational needs of children, and our environment. Whatever way you look at it, it helps reduce costs, allows children to try before they buy, and means that the 51% of toys are likely to become waste can now be recycled. It is a wonderful success story! The Toy Library is a partnership between EarlyEd and Northern Beaches Council. They have a wonderful and wide range of over 2,000 toys and books suitable for all abilities and ages. In good

news for local families, the Toy Library has expanded to Mona Vale and Manly libraries. A recent trial over 12 months successfully saw 103 members sign up for the service with 997 items borrowed. I recognise those individuals that make the Toy Library a success. Thank you to EarlyEd CEO Kerry Dominish and the team Elise Bulie and Jane Georgiades for all the work they do. I am proud to be a strong supporter of the Cubby House Toy Library.

#### **SCHOOL TREE DAY – GORDON EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 26 July 2024 I marked School Tree Day with Gordon East Public School students, parents and staff. That afternoon we planted three trees, including a Davidson Plum. These trees, now small, will one day become big and tall, providing shade and shelter for the school community. Schools Tree Day is an integral part of Planet Ark's National Tree Day that has planted over 27 million trees across Australia since 1996. Held annually in July, it is a wonderful opportunity to encourage our next generation to venture outdoors and care for our natural environment. I recognise and thank the students, teachers and parents of Gordon East Public School. Thank you to P&C President Simon Taylor-Cross, parents Di Panther and Matt Chamberlain, Principal Ruth White, and all the dedicated students and teachers. I am proud to represent a local school community in the NSW Parliament that has such a wonderful passion of taking care of our environment for both present and future generations.

#### **YOUTH MEMBER FOR DAVIDSON DAVID GRIESZ**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise David Griesz from St Ives who represented the Davidson Electorate in the Y NSW Youth Parliament. The motto for 2024 is Youth Parliament is "Think Big, Have Fun, Go Far!" Organised by the YMCA, the program focuses on leadership and advocacy. It enables high school students in years 10 to 12, like David, to build confidence, develop leadership skills, engage with civic leadership, policy development, and democratic parliamentary debate. David served on the Housing and Homelessness Committee that introduced the "Out of Home Care Transition Bill" aimed at assisting young people in their transition from living at home to independent living. David also delivered a Community Recognition Statement, addressing the issue of abandoned shopping trolleys in our local community. I thank David for his public service, and I wish him all successes in his ongoing studies at Masada College in St Ives. I look forward to witnessing his very bright future and supporting his ongoing work in exercising leadership that benefits our community.

#### **ABORIGINAL DANCE THEATRE REDFERN**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate the Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern for their successful 2023 Community Building Partnership grant. Founded in 1979, occupying part of the old Black Theatre building before moving to Renwick Street, the Aboriginal Dance Theatre offers accredited courses in Aboriginal dance and theatre skills and provides a dance outreach program for young people in our Newtown community. The Aboriginal Dance Theatre continues to promote health and well-being through culture, dance, sports and recreational programs. This grant will be used for urgent repairs and maintenance to ensure the Aboriginal Dance Theatre remains a safe and accessible space for its clients and, importantly, the many Elders who use the space to share culture. We are so pleased to be able to support this project and the ongoing work of the Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern. We acknowledge and thank the staff and volunteers at the Aboriginal Dance Theatre for their outstanding contributions to our community.

#### **GLADYS WHATSON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Gladys Watson on her 2024 Jean Arnot Recognition Award. Gladys attended Telarah Public Primary School and left school at 14. Her first job at 16 was at Miss Barber's making buttons, then as a waitress in a café in Boronia, Maitland and as a kitchen maid and a waitress at the Imperial Hotel. Gladys' next role was working for eight years at the tobacco factory in Morpeth. She was married at age 18 years and had three children. Gladys has volunteered at St Vincent de Paul in East Maitland for 35 years and is still doing so one day a week. They will not let her retire saying 'there won't be as many people coming in if she is not there! Gladys also crochets and knits rugs, socks and beanies for the homeless. Gladys raises money through garage sales for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service and is very involved with the Uniting Church of East Maitland where with a group she makes pies, jam and pickles which are sold once or twice a year. She was proudly nominated by her carer Fay Mary Welch. Congratulations Gladys on this recognition.

#### **JACQUELINE FALLS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Jacqueline (Jill) Falls on her 2024 Jean Arnot Recognition Award. Jill Wright was born in Sydney and moved to Maitland in 1953. Jill joined the Young Wives Club at St Peter's Anglican Church in East Maitland, where her cake decorating skills were utilised at special events and occasions. In the 1970s Jill began painting porcelain

brooches and plates donating works to charities, including the Royal Blind Society and Rotary. In the 1908's Jill began painting watercolours, and quickly developed into a multi award-winning artist. Jill won first prize at the Dungog A&H Art Show in 1983, and in 2024 at age 92, won first prize for watercolours at the Maitland Region Society of Artists. Jill has donated many of her beautiful watercolour works to the Macular Foundation, becoming involved with the organisation after she was diagnosed with macular degeneration in the early 2000s. Jill is a patient advocate for the Foundation, presenting on TV, radio, a panel hosted by Ita Buttrose, addressing politicians, including The Honourable Mark Butler MP and receiving an invitation to morning tea at Government House to meet Governor General The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO. Congratulations Jill on this recognition.

#### **NOELENE BOYCE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Noelene Boyce on her 2024 Jean Arnot Recognition Award. Noelene was the first life member of Maitland Netball. In 1994 she received the Ministerial Sports Appreciation Award, and the NSW Ann Clark Medal for this service. Noelene's service to the club as President, Secretary and Vice -president began at the inaugural meeting of the Maitland District Netball Association in 1947. Noelene went on to play and umpire from 30 years, represented at state level, was a state representative selector, public and Catholic school selector and held a Level 1 Coaching Certificate for 70 years. In 2003 Noelene receive an Australia Day Certificate and in 2004 was named Maitland Council Citizen of the Year. Noelene has received the NSW RSL Achievement Award, Julia Gillard National Volunteer Award, the NSW Netball Volunteer Award, and Maitland City Council Volunteer of the Year. Noelene also served breakfast's at local schools for Red Cross, delivered meals for meals on Wheels and taught ball skills to disabled children at the Hunter Valley Community School for 14 years. Noelene is an active patron of Maitland RSL Netball, is a member of Maitland RSL Women's Auxiliary and was proudly nominated by Maitland RSL Netball.

#### **HSINCHU SCIENCE PARK BUREAU**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—As Co-Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Taiwan, I was pleased to attend the signing ceremony for the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Ryde and the Hsinchu Science Park Bureau on Tuesday 9th July 2024. New South Wales has a substantial relationship with Taiwan, which includes investment and trade with the 22nd largest economy in the world. This groundbreaking agreement signed by the City of Ryde and the Bureau is a testament to developing on that relationship, and to a shared commitment towards advancing semiconductor and biomedical industries in both countries. This includes incubation for start-up companies in both Hsinchu Science Park, near Taipei, and Macquarie Park – recognised as Australia's original innovation district. I was happy to join state and federal parliamentary colleagues for the occasion at City of Ryde Council Chambers, with the signing ceremony live streamed to Hsinchu where a reciprocal ceremony was held. My heartfelt congratulations go out to Trenton Brown, Mayor and Wayne Rylands, CEO, City of Ryde, David Chen-Wei Wu, Director-General, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Wayne Yeong-Junaq Wang, Director-General, Hsinchu Science Park Bureau, who conducted the signing in Taiwan, and all stakeholders on this historic initiative.

#### **AQUABLITZ TOONGABBIE SWIM CLUB**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Wednesday 17th July, I was happy to meet the team from AquaBlitz Toongabbie Swim Club at the state-of-the-art Royal Life Saving Aquatic Academy, Seven Hills and present them with a Local Sport Grant. Established in 1972, AquaBlitz Toongabbie has a proud history of providing an opportunity for all to have fun and engage in competitive swimming. Today, they offer a range of programs including regular meets, training, and social gatherings for swimmers in our local Prospect Electorate and across Western Sydney. As one of the largest clubs across the Swimming Metro South West area, they regularly achieve great results at all levels of competition, with members regularly representing at Area, Metropolitan, State and National levels. This year, AquaBlitz Toongabbie successfully applied for a Local Sport Grant of \$3239.50 to purchase new Dolphin stopwatches, which significantly reduces the amount of effort required to run swim meets and manage data, making them an important tool for any swim club. My heartfelt thanks go out to Brad Fahey, President, Anthea Garbet, Secretary, and all team members and officials at AquaBlitz Toongabbie for being such a vibrant home for swimmers in our local Prospect Electorate community.

#### **CARITAS AUSTRALIA**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Tuesday 18th June, I was delighted to welcome supporters and officials from Caritas Australia on their 60th Anniversary, with a celebratory event in the Parliament of New South Wales. Caritas Australia is the Catholic Church's international aid and development agency, working hand in hand with the most marginalised communities in Australia and overseas. Caritas partners with local communities worldwide, supporting them to build better lives for themselves by improving access to sustainable livelihoods. Today, Caritas serves in 20 countries and works with more than 60 partnerships to bring hope, support

and compassion to some of the world's most vulnerable people. Over the years, families in our local Prospect Electorate and across Western Sydney have both supported and been supported by Caritas' vital humanitarian efforts. At the event, I was pleased to hear from the Hon. Bob Carr, Former Premier of New South Wales, on global challenges that Caritas faces, and how it has made lifechanging impacts on the lives of many. My congratulations go out to Kirsty Robertson, CEO, and to all the Board and Leadership team at Caritas Australia on celebrating 60 years of hard work and compassion for people from all walks of life.

#### **ISABELLE SHAPIRO OAM WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to recognise Councillor Isabelle Shapiro OAM for her incredible service to Woollahra Council. Isabelle joined Council in 2004 after mobilising the community against overdevelopment in Bellevue Hill. As a freshly elected Councillor, she was given the oversight of community safety and achieved lasting impact in suicide prevention at The Gap and management of graffiti in the area. In 2010, Isabelle became the first-ever Jewish woman to have been elected mayor of Woollahra. Isabelle's love of art drove her to the establishment of public art in the municipality and support for arts projects which have culminated in the establishment of the Gallery at Redleaf. Isabelle will not contest the next Local Government Elections, which will mark the end of 20 years of public service. This Parliament recognises your incredible commitment to local government and your community. Thank you for your service.

#### **BANKSTOWN'S SQUIGGLES AND GIGGLES EARLY LEARNING CHILD CARE CENTRE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Emergency Services workers in our community do amazing and lifesaving work and are deserving of our community's gratitude. On June 12, children and staff from Bankstown's Squiggles and Giggles Early Learning Child Care Centre delivered hampers and certificates of appreciation to Bankstown Hospital's doctors and nurses on 'Thank a First Responder' Day. This initiative is a shining example of community spirit, kindness and recognition for those who tirelessly serve on the front lines of healthcare. Centre Director, Ghada Diab said that each week in June, they hosted a first responder, including a police officer, firefighter and a nurse to explain to the children about their roles in the community. To show their appreciation, hampers and certificates of appreciation were crafted by the children with items that could bring comfort and joy to the healthcare workers during their demanding shifts. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to everyone involved at Bankstown's Squiggles and Giggles Early Learning Child Care Centre for their remarkable effort on 'Thank a First Responder Day'. Thank you for being shining examples of compassion within our community.

#### **INTERCOLLEGE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—It gives me great pleasure to congratulate students Josette, Elizabeth, Eliane and Joseph who represented St Charbel's College in the Intercollege Public Speaking Competition. The competition, organised by the Maronite College of the Holy Family along with St Maroun's College, allowed all students to present their speeches in front of an audience which included teachers, students and parents from all participating colleges. This competition allowed these students to present themselves and opinions on certain topics and prove their perspectives. I am pleased to acknowledge and congratulate Joseph for winning the stage six public speaking competition. Joseph's remarkable ability to articulate ideas with clarity, engage audiences with charisma, and address complex topics with insight has truly set him apart. His dedication to honing his skills and his commitment to excellence have earned him this well-deserved recognition. Joseph's achievements are a testament to his hard work and perseverance, and they reflect the high standards of our community. The Bankstown community are proud to celebrate his success and look forward to his continued contributions to public speaking and beyond. Congratulations to all the students on this significant accomplishment! Your talent and effort have inspired us all.

#### **BANKSTOWN VETERINARY HOSPITAL – LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to congratulate Bankstown Veterinary Hospital on winning the 2024 Local Business Award for Outstanding Pet Care. This recognition is a testament to the veterinary staff's dedication, expertise, and exceptional service to our community's beloved pets. Celebrating their 76th birthday this year, Bankstown Veterinary Hospital has been the center of the veterinary community in our area since 1948. The hospital's mission is to bring the wonders of modern veterinary medicine to our community, ensuring pets are healthy and long-lived. They offer quality, affordable care tailored to individual needs, focusing on preventative medicine and fostering strong, friendly relationships with clients. Winning the Local Business Award multiple times, highlights the exceptional standards maintained by Bankstown Veterinary Hospital and their continuous efforts to improve and innovate in veterinary medicine. Their dedication to

providing compassionate and high-quality care has not only enhanced the lives of countless pets but also strengthened the bond between pets and their owners in our community. Once again, congratulations to Bankstown Veterinary Hospital on this well-deserved recognition. Thank you for your outstanding service and for making a significant difference in the lives of our community's pets.

#### **LAUREN MALCOLM AND SAM MCKAY - FEELS PILATES**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge the wonderful team behind the popular northern beaches-based Feels Pilates Studios, Lauren Malcolm and Sam McKay. Feels Pilates was established in 2021, when Lauren and Sam found the perfect spot in Narrabeen to open their dream pilates studio. Despite COVID restrictions, the pair remain dedicated to their vision and the first Feels Pilates Studio opened its doors in October 2021. A few short years later, the Feels Pilates family has grown, with studios operating in Narrabeen, Avalon and Frenchs Forest, and a Cromer studio opening later this year. The Feels team now includes twenty amazing trainers. Congratulations to Lauren and Sam for building such a successful business, I'm sure you will continue to grow. Thank you for your steadfast dedication to providing welcoming spaces where individuals are encouraged and supported in their health and wellbeing journey. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Lauren, Sam and the Feels Pilates community is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **ALEX LIEBMANN – TRANSPLANT AUSTRALIA NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge Mona Vale local, Alex Liebmenn for his advocacy for organ donations and its benefit to so many Australians. When Alex was 18, he experienced end stage kidney failure and was on dialysis before having a transplant thanks to his mums' donation. A few short years later, Alex has now been able to return to surfing and football, two of the things he loves most. Alex was recently selected to join the Transplant Australia team at the Transplant Football World Cup to be held in Italy in September. I wish Alex and the team all the best as they represent Australia. Thank you for your work to help transplant recipients improve their physical fitness and promote the benefits of organ and tissue donation. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Alex's advocacy and testimony is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **TOM WARREN – TOMBUCHA**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge the popular and tasty, Trainer Tom's Tombucha. Brewed in Avalon, Tombucha was born from local fitness trainer Tom Warren's desire to help people improve their overall health and fitness. After years of training his clients towards physical improvement, he began to appreciate the importance of what was going on inside the body, especially around the issue of weight control and gut health. This pivotal moment led Tom to explore the benefits of fermented foods, ultimately discovering the remarkable advantages of kombucha. Inspired by a gift from a friend—a starter kit from Mullumbimby—Tom immersed himself in the science of fermentation. His curiosity and passion rapidly evolved into a full-fledged commitment. What began with a few 5-litre flasks expanded to 100 litres, as he perfected his craft to meet the growing demand from family and friends. Today, Tom's dedication has culminated in Tombucha, a tasty, low sugar, highly probiotic kombucha with added prebiotic fibre. Thank you, Tom, for your unwavering commitment to enhancing our community's health and wellness. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Tom Warren and Tombucha's journey is now preserved for all time in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIANS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—What a successful Olympics we achieved this year! As a former Paralympian, I understand how difficult and terrifying it is to compete at an international level, alongside truly gifted athletes from around the world. Our Olympians did us proud and brought home 53 medals. This is the first time in the history we proudly won 18 gold medals. Yes! 18 GOLD medals! However, tonight, I want to shine the spotlight on the athletes who have not yet secured a medal. You did not come back home empty handed. You brought back hope, unity, and perseverance, and our nation loves you for that. It was evident that our Olympians put on their best performances, and I'm confident that Australia was one of the strongest teams that competed at the Paris Olympics. What amazed me the most about this event is the patriotism which was ignited in every single Australian, inspiring events across preschools to retirement villages. I went to one such visit at Ettalong Ingenia Village, and oh boy, our seniors were competitive! I want to commend our Olympians for inspiring Australians, regardless of their medal tally.

#### **JUDY HATTON**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Last month, I had the privilege to join the Australian Reptile Park to celebrate its Gold Award for Major Tourist Attraction and it was wonderful to talk to Judy Hatton who has been with the Park for 40 years and counting! Starting in 1984, Judy Hatton has been with the Park from Wyoming to Somersby. Judy knows the Park inside out as she has worked as Kiosk Supervisor, Gift Shop Supervisor, and



Reception Supervisor. Judy has a passion for welcoming children and families to the Australian Reptile Park. She thoroughly enjoys running the gift shop and organising functions. She is a Central Coast local through and through and has lived here her whole life. Regardless of her busy schedule of being a mother of 3, and grandmother of 4, she is still with the Park and contributing as a part-time Receptionist; also known to rock a cool colour in her hair, and keeping visitors entertained with her amazing customer service and charismatic personality. I thank Judy for her tireless effort to ensure Australian Reptile Park continues to be one of the best tourist attractions on the Central Coast as well as Australia.

#### **JOCELYN MAUGHAN**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to acknowledge celebrated local artist and long-term Patonga resident Jocelyn Maughan, for her ongoing contribution towards the beautification of the Patonga area. Patonga is a special hamlet on the Hawkesbury, towards the southern end of the Central Coast, that is well known for its close-knit community, calm waters, and of course its fishing. If you look at the doors and walls of Patonga, you may notice they're adorned with beautiful artworks, of rainbow lorikeets, of seagulls, of water dragons and the occasional pet dog too! You'll observe a treasure trove of over forty artworks, each individually painted by Jocelyn! Over forty of these delightful artworks, that Jocelyn prepares and paints, are dotted around Patonga. Jocelyn encourages property owners to pick up a paintbrush too, particularly to paint the high parts – and talented local teenagers often lend a hand as well. Jocelyn's artworks are created free of charge, driven by a love of community, although she encourages people to make a donation to the local fire brigade if possible! A big thank to you, Jocelyn – your lovely artworks are a pleasure to behold and I hope they continue to beautify Patonga for many decades to come!

#### **BLAKE EDWARDS**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate local resident Blake Edwards who represented Australia as co-captain of the Aussie Sharks Water Polo team at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Blake represented Australia with the Sharks across 8 games, with Australia finishing 2nd in their Preliminary Group, and going on to the Quarterfinals and placing 8th overall. Blake has also represented Australia at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which was another strong campaign where Australia secured ninth place. Blake's elevation as co-captain of the Aussie Sharks is a testament to his passion for the sport and commitment to teamwork. In all aspects of his sporting career, Blake has embodied what it means to represent Australia with camaraderie, dedication and perseverance at the highest level of the sport. His achievement is an inspiration for young people across our community, and especially for budding players of the Drummoyne Devils Water Polo Club. On behalf of our community, I offer our sincerest congratulations to Blake. We are immensely proud of your achievement, and we wish you all the very best in the future.

#### **SALLY BETTS WAVERLEY COUNCIL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to recognise Councillor Sally Betts for her incredible service to Waverley Council. Sally has served on Waverley Council for 28 years, including two terms as mayor from 2008 until 2011 and 2012 until 2017. There are thousands of Waverley locals who have Sally Betts to thank for swift action on their behalf – big projects and small. Sally has been a trailblazing leader for our community and has been a role model for the next generation of female leaders. Sally will not contest the next Local Government Elections, which will mark the end of almost three decades of service. She will resign as the longest serving Waverley Councillor. This Parliament recognises your incredible commitment to local government and your community. Thank you for your service.

#### **JESSICA HULL - OLYMPIAN**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges Olympian Jessica Hull, former Albion Park High School and Albion Park Little Athletics Club trail blazer. Representing Australia in the Athletics Women's 1500m final of 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, Jessica claimed silver with a cracking time of 3 minutes and 52.56 seconds, only 1.27 seconds behind Kenyan Faith Kipyegon who set a new Olympic record. A world-class runner, Jessica started her journey in cross-country under the guide of her father, Simon Hull, a national level runner in his own right, and Jessica's biggest influence. Jessica also represented Australia in Tokyo at the 2020 games. Jessica's journey from the tracks of the Illawarra to the global stage of the Olympics is a remarkable story of dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment. We acknowledge Jessica's relentless pursuit of excellence in the academics and on the field. With the nation cheering her on, Jessica has once again made Australia proud and inspired young athletes across the nation. Congratulations Jessica Hull and her message to "never place any limitations on your ability or potential outcomes. Persevere, make the most of opportunities and take ownership of your process."

### ILLAWARRA OLYMPIANS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Olympians who have returned home after doing their country and region proud at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Gold, silver and bronze medal swimming legend, Emma McKeon, from Wests Illawarra Aquatic, now the most successful Australian Olympian of all time. Superstar runner Jessica Hull who claimed silver in the 1500m from Albion Park. Gold medallist, Saya Sakakibara from the South Illawarra BMX Club. Matildas Caitlin Foord, Mary Fowler and Michelle Heyman former Illawarra Stingrays. Four-time Olympian, Equestrian Shane Rose. Surfer, Tyler Wright from Nowra, representing Australia for the first time. Gymnast Ruby Pass from Shellharbour, representing Australia for the first time. Three-time Olympian, Blake Govers, Kookaburra and former Albion Park Hockey Club and University of Wollongong player and teammate and two-time Olympian, Flynn Ogilvie also formally from UOW. Tennis star, Ellen Perez, Oak Flats Junior. Hockeyroo legend and captain, Grace Stewart, former junior at the Gerringong Hockey Club. Skating superstar, Kieran Wooley from Minnamurra. Hurdler, Sarah Carli, former Senior of the Kembla Joggers. Sporting communities transcend electorate boundaries and I know my colleagues will join me in acknowledging the 11 women and 4 men from our region. Congratulations.

### NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges National Science Week running 10-18 August this year, an annual event to celebrate science and technology. The Parliament acknowledges the scientific community getting behind this year's Science Week - universities, schools, research institutions, libraries, museums and science centres. I acknowledge Kiama High School who visited the University of Wollongong Science Space and STEM Zone. I acknowledge Budawang Coast Atlas of Life and Chair, Annie Lane who provided an opportunity for the community to uncover hidden wonders and become a citizen scientist, with iNaturalist, exploring Bomaderry Creek and its beautiful bushland. I acknowledge Birdlife Shoalhaven's Yolande Cozijn and a talk at the Nowra Library about endangered birds and flora and fauna found in the Shoalhaven. I acknowledge the University of Wollongong who transformed the Shoalhaven Campus into a place of inspiration for the next generation of scientists and the curious, with guided tours, robotics, medicine, biology, anatomy and nursing on display. The 2024 school theme was Species Survival – More than just sustainability; a timely reminder of the challenges we face as a nation, a civilisation, and a planet. Thank you to all who contributed to this year's Science Week.

### JACOB MERCEP

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate local resident Jacob Mercep who represented Australia as part of the Aussie Sharks Water Polo team at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Jacob represented Australia in 8 matches including when the Sharks defeated Olympic Champions Serbia 8-3 in the group stage. The Sharks placed 2nd in the Men's preliminary group stage before going on to the Quarterfinals and finishing 8th overall. This is an achievement that has made our community, State and Country proud. This Paris Games marked Jacob's Olympic debut, a milestone very few get to experience and a milestone that I am sure he will value and remember forever. Jacob's selection to the team is a testament to his hard-work and perseverance throughout his nearly 20-year career. His dedication to his sport is an inspiration for so many young people in our community, and especially for our local water polo club, the Drummoyne Devils. On behalf of our local community, I offer our sincerest congratulations to Jacob for this achievement and wish him all the best in the future.

### CHRISTOPHER IUS

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate local resident Christopher Ius who represented Australia in Athletics Squad at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Chris was selected as a reserve member of the Men's 4 x 100m Relay squad after his success in recent domestic events including a personal best time in the 100m sprint of 10.20 seconds. Representing Australia at the Olympics is an honour and Chris' selection is a testament to his hard-work, dedication, and perseverance throughout his sporting career. His selection to the team has made our community proud, it great to see locals on the world stage. I have known Christopher's family for many years, and Christopher and I went to the same primary school. I know his selection to the Olympic team has inspired many local students and budding athletes. On behalf of our community, I sincerely congratulate and thank Christopher for representing our community, State, and Country with pride. I wish you all the best in the future.

### WALKTHRUS

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the team at WalkThrus for winning the Best Photography Business category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Run by the husband-and-wife team of Garry and Jackie Mautner, WalkThrus is an innovative photography business that

specialises in 'making a reality' by creating 3D digital tours. The virtual tours are fully interactive and allow viewers to totally immerse themselves in the space whether it be a museum, restaurant, retail store, school, or open house. They also specialise in creating fly-thru videos of spaces using drones, as well as modern 3D floor plans. Some of their clients include the Sydney Maritime Museum, the historic Glenmore Hotel in the Rocks, Cronulla RSL and even the Parliament of New South Wales. Small businesses like WalkThrus are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services, and jobs. I again congratulate Jackie and Garry from WalkThrus for winning the Best Photography Business category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **OYSTER BAY PHARMACY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team at Oyster Bay Pharmacy on winning the Most Outstanding Pharmacy category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Like many small businesses, Oyster Bay Pharmacy is at the heart of our local community as a key provider of goods, services and jobs. The pharmacy has strong ties to the Oyster Bay community and is a place that locals can rely on, not only to fill a prescription but also to receive quality care from the team on a wide range of health conditions. In addition, the pharmacy offers vaccinations and an impressive range of health supplements to assist their clients in reaching their health and fitness goals. I acknowledge the exceptional team behind Oyster Bay Pharmacy. I acknowledge owner Nawras Attala, pharmacist and manager Michael Aquino, as well as Penelope Kooiman, Chanice Begue, Mandy Atalla, Danielle George, Caroline Toomey, Ryan Abrook and Jessica Poscai for their efforts. I again congratulate the team at Oyster Bay Pharmacy on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

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