

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 15 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

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (WAR MEMORIALS AND OTHER PROTECTED PLACES) BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Robyn Preston, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (10:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Opposition is honoured to introduce the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024. The bill proposes amendments to the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Act 1988. We have a problem with certain sections of our community showing disrespect to our war veterans who have either made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms that many of our community take for granted or survived their service only to have terrible mental and physical scars because of their service. In order to ensure that the monuments to our esteemed veterans properly show the respect that the overwhelming majority of our community have for them, we need greater sanctions against those who disrespect our veterans and the memorials we have created in their honour.

The bill, which makes amendments to the Summary Offences Act, makes clear that all war memorials are included as "protected places" under section 8 of the Act for the offence of damaging or desecrating protected places. The bill will also increase the penalty for the offence of damaging or desecrating a protected place. The Opposition is committed to honouring the contribution of our veterans and current and past serving defence personnel. Schedule 1 [1] inserts into the Act at section 8 (1) (a) the definition of "war memorial" to make it clear that the definition includes the Pool of Reflection in front of the Anzac Memorial building in Hyde Park, Sydney. Introducing this provision follows an act of vandalism that was committed on 7 May 2024 during a protest rally. Red dye was thrown into the Pool of Reflection at the Hyde Park Anzac Memorial and banners were found nearby which read, "Lest we forget, Australia is complicit in genocide."

When the Summary Offences Act 1988 No. 25 was originally assented to, it did not specify the Pool of Reflection, which was built in Hyde Park in 1934 as a symbolic monument to Australia's participation in the First World War. The bill will see that this monument is included in the Summary Offences Act 1988 and that any act of damage or desecration will see offenders liable to penalty. Schedule 1 [2] substitutes the Act at section 8 (1) (b), which contains the definition of "war memorial", to provide that the definition includes all war shrines, monuments, statues and other similar structures or places, unless excluded by the regulation. The provision provides that it includes things or areas within the vicinity of war shrines, monuments, statues and other similar structures or places, and gives examples of gardens, pools and other integrated designs.

On 13 February 2019 vandals tampered with more than 100 white crosses in a plot outside the Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre that commemorated those who died. This centre is run by volunteer Legacy members. At the time it was estimated that this has occurred up to 10 times in recent years. Following a 5.00 a.m. Anzac Day dawn service on 25 April 2023, a statue commemorating Governor Lachlan Macquarie within the vicinity of the Windsor War Memorial was doused in red, covered in red handprints and sprayed with illegible writing. In the past couple of weeks the war memorial in Turrumurra had the names of dead veterans stolen from it. These instances signify the purpose of the schedule 1 [2] substitution to the Act to define "war memorial". Schedule 1 [3] amends the Act at section 8 (2) to increase the maximum penalty for the offence of wilfully damaging or defacing a protected place from 40 penalty units to 50 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or both.

The bill seeks to discourage the vandalism of Australia's war memorials through an increase in penalty units. A comparative penalty can be seen in section 11B of the Summary Offences Act where custody of an offensive implement has a similar penalty to that which is proposed. Currently a war memorial must be nominated by regulation before it is given the protection of section 8 of the Act. Rather than an opt-in provision, the bill amends the Summary Offences Act so that all war memorials in New South Wales will be subject to these penalties, unless the Government opts out by regulation to exclude them. Again, this is a further strengthening of the protections for our State war memorials and an increasing of the penalties for those who would damage them. Schedule 1 [4] substitutes the Act at section 8 (4) and inserts new section 8 (5) to allow regulations to be made to exclude a war shrine, monument, statue or other similar structure or place from the definition of "war memorial".

I have spoken proactively to our veterans and community members about this proposed change, and not one has said that this is not a right or proper amendment to make to the Act. We should send out a strong message that there is zero tolerance for the desecration or denigration of our war memorials. Our diggers fought and died for our freedom. Some paid the ultimate sacrifice. These memorials were erected with great respect, honour and love for the locals in the area who paid that price or who served and came back. Those veterans still deal with the torment and anguish they faced in years gone by. I invite all members of Parliament to support this amendment to the Act. It is an opportunity for members to come together collaboratively to support this necessary and important change to the Act.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AMENDMENT (RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR PLAN) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 9 May 2024.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (10:27): On behalf of the Government, I contribute to debate on the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Amendment (Renewable Energy Sector Plan) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Barwon. The member is always a strong advocate for his community and for economic development throughout regional New South Wales. He has been particularly strong in calling for more ambitious local content requirements to support the development of local manufacturing in New South Wales. He is committed to seeing his community share in the economic opportunities of the State's transition to renewable energy. The Government shares that ambition and is committed to building things in New South Wales again.

I thank the member for working in good faith with Minister Sharpe and the Government on these issues. Unfortunately, the Government cannot support the bill in its current form. However, it does intend to amend the bill with the intent of supporting the member's aim to promote the social and economic benefits of the energy transition to the New South Wales economy.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): Order! The debate is adjourned. I order that resumption of the debate stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (AFFORDABLE HOUSING) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 16 May 2024.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (10:29): On behalf of the Government, I indicate that we do not support the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Newtown. Let me be clear from the outset that it is not because we do not support more affordable housing in New South Wales; rather, we do not support the approach proposed by the bill. This Government has done more to advance the construction of affordable housing in its short time in office than any government before it. I will outline the details of some of those initiatives later in this contribution because I think it is important that they be recognised and acknowledged as part of this debate.

The member for Newtown in her second reading speech said that this bill seeks to amend the definition of "affordable housing" to mandate that all affordable housing be in perpetuity and to create a register for all affordable housing properties in New South Wales. But this bill, despite its best intentions, actually goes further and does more. It undermines the suite of policies and initiatives the Government has put in place through Parliament and through other mechanisms to address the housing crisis. The bill as currently drafted would create uncertainty for community housing providers and for the construction industry. The Government believes the bill

would increase unnecessary red tape for Homes NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office by removing existing exemptions for social housing providers. Further, this bill would remove the flexibility and adaptability of having things like affordable housing implemented through a State environmental planning policy rather than through an Act.

As a matter of principle, as the Minister responsible and accountable—not just to New South Wales but also to this Parliament—for the planning system in New South Wales, its performance, and the planning instruments that underpin it, I do not believe that private members' bills are an appropriate or effective way to seek to amend a State environmental planning policy or, for that matter, the primary legislation of the planning system, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Despite the best of intentions, which I believe the member for Newtown to have had, the bill risks creating uncertainty and inconsistency in the planning system. Unintended consequences in the planning system lead only to unnecessary complexity, and this Government is seeking to make the system simpler, more efficient and more effective.

In her second reading speech, the member for Newtown suggested that The Greens want to work with the Government to deliver affordable housing. We believe that this bill in its current form would do the opposite. In several discussions between the member for Newtown, her office, my office and the office of the Minister for Housing, she was advised that the Government is doing the hard work to address the very issues the bill raises.

Ms Jenny Leong: And I have asked to be involved and have been cut out. Let me put that on record.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I note the interjection of the member for Newtown about wishing to be involved. That is why we have been engaging with her office. But, unfortunately, this bill has been brought on for debate prematurely. The Government asked the member for Newtown to delay debate on the bill because the hard work on the issues of affordable housing, including with other jurisdictions, such as the Commonwealth Government, is already underway. But, unfortunately, it appears that The Greens have instead decided to put politics before policy—much like the Opposition in the other place with its Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Disallowance of Transport Oriented Development SEPP) Bill 2024, which I note was roundly defeated yesterday with the support of The Greens, which we appreciate.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: I ask the Minister to withdraw his comments about how we are working with his office and us being asked to withdraw the bill and then be in a situation where I, unfortunately, did not. I was waiting to hear back from their offices about the discussion we had. I did not hear back, so we proceeded. I am keen to have a conversation with the Minister and work constructively, but I ask that he withdraw that comment because I am not sure whether the message got through appropriately. I am keen to continue working with the Government. I was waiting to hear a response to a request we made, and we did not hear back.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I am not sure there is anything to withdraw. Normally members are asked to withdraw directly offensive comments made across the Chamber, as opposed to criticisms of strategy or tactics. Does the Minister wish to withdraw his comments?

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I do not believe I need to withdraw anything. I believed that engagement was happening and that my office responded to all contact. However, the member has not engaged with me directly, and I cannot be held accountable for something I was not engaged directly with. For the same reason that the Government opposed the Coalition's anti-housing bill yesterday—to not undermine the maintenance of the integrity of the planning system—we do not support this bill. The same principles apply in this circumstance. It is true that we have a housing crisis in New South Wales and that we need more affordable housing. Only a few members opposite would seek to deny that that is the case, and the member for Newtown is certainly not among them.

The housing crisis will not be addressed by grandstanding and virtue signalling but rather by doing the hard work the State Government is undertaking across multiple portfolios and in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government. When it comes to addressing this important issue and delivering affordable housing for the people of New South Wales, there is no place for political or media grandstanding. Neither the extreme nimbyism that is now at the core of the Liberal Party's philosophy nor headline-grabbing attempts at political debate will replace the hard work of reform that is needed to generate more housing, more affordable housing, more key worker housing and more social housing in New South Wales. In introducing this bill the member for Newtown is not working towards that practical solution that is the shared responsibility of governments, stakeholders and communities.

At a time when housing affordability and availability are the biggest concerns for people and households across New South Wales, the Government is taking significant steps to deliver more affordable housing. As I said earlier, I am happy to use this opportunity to outline the Government's work in this space. When I seek to present some of those initiatives through responses to questions from my colleagues in question time, it is often simply

too hard to pack it all into the relatively brief period of five minutes—if I am lucky enough to be granted an extension of time. That is a good thing. My Parliamentary Secretary, who is working diligently with me on this task, is at the table. The Government is making a genuine effort to pull all levers of the housing system to maximum effect to deliver not only social housing, affordable housing and initiatives for housing for essential public sector workers but also market housing.

As I said, I am happy to outline to the House how the Government is supporting the delivery of affordable housing in New South Wales. We are encouraging council-led affordable housing contribution schemes, the enabling provisions which are part of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and part of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing). The infill affordable housing provisions in the housing State environmental planning policy [SEPP] provide incentives for developers to deliver affordable housing alongside increases in the delivery of market housing. Importantly, for the first time ever—for the first time in the history of New South Wales; it is important to acknowledge this point—a mandated affordable housing requirement is part and parcel of the Transport Oriented Development SEPP locations in perpetuity. These are to be maintained in perpetuity and managed by a registered community housing provider. The Government is committed to increasing the rate of affordable housing in these precincts to a published schedule over time in a way that reflects market conditions.

The larger Transport Oriented Development - Accelerated Precincts—the rezoning proposals, seven of which are on public exhibition and on which we are seeking community feedback right now—have mandatory affordable housing rates with those properties to be held in perpetuity and with the rates to be finalised through the current master-planning process and rezoning that is currently on display. The rezonings of those accelerated precincts will also implement affordable housing contribution schemes in a number of local government areas: North Sydney, Hornsby, Ryde, the Hills and Strathfield. A dedicated and faster assessment pathway has been created for government housing delivery and registered community housing providers. We have had a good response to the concierge service and concierge initiative that the Government has implemented to make sure that those community housing providers who are putting forward good proposals to ensure we have more affordable housing are getting smoother treatment and a clear path through the planning system in New South Wales. Self-assessment powers for Homes NSW agencies and Landcom have also been adjusted to deliver more social and affordable homes more quickly.

Unfortunately, if passed, the bill would jeopardise some of these reforms and once again create uncertainty for investors to deliver affordable housing that I think both the member for Newtown and Government members are seeking. I emphasise that all the reforms I have just outlined were achieved through comprehensive consultation, discussion and collaboration with local councils, community and industry before they were made. The reforms have considered not only the affordable housing benefit but also the impacts of the feasibility of their locations. And, as that feasibility and land values improve over time—at least in those second tier transport oriented development sites—the rate of affordable housing contribution will increase. The bill does not consider the wider economic challenges that the New South Wales construction industry and home building sector are facing right now. As much as some of us would like to wish away reality, the facts are that the construction industry is facing higher building material costs, skilled labour shortages and higher labour costs.

We cannot ignore that reality when we are considering fundamental changes to how housing is delivered in this State. Those issues—the strong economic headwinds, the challenges of securing finance in a climate of relatively higher interest rates, the challenges faced by builders in the form of material costs, the challenges faced in securing labour for the residential construction sector substituting from the non-residential sector—have an impact on the feasibility of projects to deliver housing. As much as some would like to wish that away, the facts are the facts when it comes to those challenges. Introducing a new rule or legislating this change or that change without broad consultation, as the old saying goes, makes the perfect the enemy of the good.

New South Wales needs more homes and more affordable housing across the State. As I said earlier, I think that most of the 93 members in this place agree with that fact. There are some hold-outs. They generally carry a Liberal or Nationals membership card, and the member for Newtown is certainly not among them. She has been pursuing this issue for some time. For as long as I have been in this place she has spoken about it. There should be no doubt in any of our minds, I hope across the House—although I do sometimes wonder whether the Opposition actually understands the challenge, given it wants to block rather than build—

Ms Jenny Leong: I think they like the broken system; they profit from it.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Newtown. She thinks the Opposition prefers the broken system. They broke it.

Mr Tim James: Through you, Chair, through you. Come on!

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Willoughby objects.

Mr Tim James: Point of order: There is a debate occurring across the Chamber. You can see what is happening, Mr Temporary Speaker.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): It is my role to make a judgement as to whether interjections are disrupting the flow of debate. I ask the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I will happily direct my comments through the Chair, but I think it is important to acknowledge some interjections. I often acknowledge interjections from members opposite when they complain that the Government wants to deliver homes and they do not, and I will continue to acknowledge interjections in various debates in this place. I return to the substance of the matter before us. There should be no doubt in our minds that we need more market homes, we need more affordable homes and we need more social homes. If we go ahead and make changes such as proposed by the bill without thinking them through and considering some of the flow-on effects and the potential unintended consequences, then we risk the delivery of homes more broadly. It is important we take that into consideration.

I reiterate some of the important steps that the Government is taking to address those issues in more detail. In the recent 2024-25 budget the Government delivered \$6.1 billion for social housing: \$5.1 billion to deliver 8,400 social homes and \$1 billion to repair another 33,000 existing social houses and get them tenanted, making sure they become homes for people once again. That \$6.1 billion is the largest single investment in social housing that New South Wales has ever seen. It is important to acknowledge that we needed to do that, because elements of the system were broken under the previous Government. My office used to deal with Housing on a regular basis. When it was contacted, the approach was to fix one house by selling someone else's house. That is a crazy system and it left us with 57,000 households on the social housing waiting list.

Our commitment does not stop at that \$6.1 billion investment. The Government also invested \$5 million to continue the audit of surplus government land—a process that has already committed to deliver 44 sites across the State, which the Government expects will produce around 30,000 new homes. That is a massive contribution to addressing the task we have in front of us. We are investing \$450 million for Landcom to deliver a key worker housing build-to-rent program across Sydney. That is in addition to the \$300 million in the previous budget for the delivery of more homes by Landcom.

Again, that is a new initiative from this Government and the first time it has been done in New South Wales—much like mandatory, in perpetuity affordable housing near transport hubs has been done for the first time by this Government—to see how we can best support key workers, particularly in Sydney. Hopefully it will extend further. As we speak, build-to-rent schemes are being developed by Landcom both on the South Coast at Bomaderry and in the Northern Rivers at Lismore. The schemes will make sure key workers have an opportunity to live in great communities close to where they work and close to opportunities for their families. It is a great initiative. I have not heard whether the Opposition is supportive of it, but given its historical approach to housing I suspect it is not.

We have also invested \$200 million for key health worker accommodation across rural and regional areas of the State to enable NSW Health to provide homes for healthcare workers in remote communities. Often when we are trying to attract the healthcare workers those communities need—to keep people well and closer to their communities when they are receiving care—we find that housing is one thing that holds those workers back from moving. We are addressing that by making sure we have some of that key health worker accommodation in those more remote communities. There is also \$8.4 million in the budget for the Rental Commissioner to develop and enforce protections for renters across the State, and a further \$11.8 million to expand the remit of the Strata and Property Services Commissioner to regulate strata schemes and support the growing number of New South Wales residents living in apartments.

But the Government's commitment to addressing the housing crisis does not stop at the budget. Recently the Premier and the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading announced that this Government is ending no-grounds evictions once and for all in New South Wales. It means an end to the uncertainty and financial pressure renters face with the prospect of having their lives turned upside down and having to move at relatively short notice. We have extended the termination notice period in instances where there is a reason for eviction so that renters have longer to find a new home, which is particularly important.

Mr Tim James: But you haven't done it yet. The bill hasn't even come yet.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I notice the full-throated support of the Opposition, through the member for Willoughby, for that initiative. I am pleased that he will be making sure his party addresses and supports the Government's initiative.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): Order! The member for Willoughby will come to order.

Mr Tim James: Well, hurry up and bring it to Parliament!

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It is the first time we have had confirmation from the Opposition that it will be supporting that change. I welcome that full-throated endorsement of our initiative.

Mr Tim James: We need to see it first, obviously.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Willoughby will come to order. This is his final warning.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Yes, there we go; there is the asterisk that comes out whenever it comes to housing. But as the member for Willoughby would know, the Liberal Party does afford its members the opportunity to cross the floor and vote. Given his vocal support, I am sure he will be joining members on this side of the House no matter what his colleagues want to do on that bill when it comes before the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Newtown will come to order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The Government is investing \$6.6 million in the Rental Commissioner to create a portable bonds scheme, a modern solution to a longstanding issue. I note the member for Willoughby is doing his best Marcel Marceau impression, gesturing with his hands.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I ask the Minister to concentrate on his contribution to debate.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: No longer will renters have to find the money for a new bond each time they move. The bond they have already paid will be transferred to the new property. But to return to the issue of affordable housing, which the bill before the House seeks to address, I outline some of the things the Government is doing to increase affordable housing across the State. Before I do so, I will correct one comment made yesterday in the other place during debate on the Opposition's anti-housing bill, the anti transport oriented development bill. Ms Sue Higginson noted:

... publicly owned and operated housing has not been particularly considered in these changes, despite the cost-of-living ... We know that even the affordable housing that could be constructed under this plan will, in most cases, only be 15 per cent of total homes and will revert to full-price housing after 15 years.

I wish to correct that. In transport oriented development scheme areas, the affordable housing provisions are not only mandatory but in perpetuity. It is the first time that has been done. I accept that the bonus scheme that has been introduced to make up the shortcoming with affordable housing in the immediate term is not in perpetuity; however, it is important to recognise that, in a New South Wales first, in the transport oriented developments it is mandatory and in perpetuity. Developments around those 37 stations—from the Hunter through Greater Sydney, the Central Coast and Illawarra—have the capacity to deliver hundreds of thousands of new homes over the next 15 years. That scheme is in place.

As part of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing), for those second-tier transport oriented development, or TOD, sites there is a mandatory requirement for buildings over 2,000 square metres to have a proportion of affordable housing held in perpetuity. That contribution will be managed by a registered community housing provider [CHP]. That provision for affordable housing within the State environmental planning policy will mean that those local communities will have affordable housing set in stone into the future.

The member for Newtown has brought to my attention her view that the 2 per cent is not as much as it could be, and I accept that; however, we are starting at zero. I respect the fact that she and I differ on that. We would also like that figure to be higher, which is why we have committed to increasing the rate through time on a published schedule. That schedule will mean the construction industry and local residents can be aware of the plan to increase affordable housing requirements in those locations through time. That is an important development in the way we deliver not only housing but also affordable housing in New South Wales.

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure is doing the hard work now to determine how the affordable housing schedule can be localised to market conditions given that, as members would appreciate, there are large variances across the 37 TOD locations in the value of land and the underlying finances. That might mean that in places where feasibility is better, we see a higher or faster increase than in other places where the underlying economics and financing might be more challenging to deliver at the same speed. But that affordable housing will remain managed by a registered CHP in perpetuity.

The schedule is a clear indication of the Government's ongoing commitment to providing and increasing affordable housing in New South Wales. We are committed to doing this in a way that actually delivers those affordable homes. Members can have all the policies in the world, but if they produce zero, there are still no

families in new affordable housing. The Government wants to see those homes built. Our plans are a balanced way to make sure we see those homes built as well as provide the affordable homes people want to see. We do not want to unnecessarily put the delivery of those homes at risk.

The accelerated precincts—the other component of the Transport Oriented Development Program—also have mandatory requirements for affordable housing. Between them, those precincts will deliver over 60,000 homes in the coming five, 10 and 15 years. Again, the affordable housing provisions in those precincts will be held in perpetuity and will be required to be managed by a registered community housing provider. Again, with a localised, site-specific lens, those rezonings include affordable housing requirements tailored to the conditions of the local market. I know the Government has been criticised for what is allegedly a one-size-fits-all approach to some of its planning reforms, but the schemes are as localised as they could possibly be; they could not be more localised. Earlier in the week in this place some members opposite gave notices of motions on this subject. I am looking forward to reading their feedback as it comes through.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Kellyville will come to order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I am sure the member for Kellyville and others who object to this sort of stuff will probably object to the affordable housing provisions. They object to making sure not only that people have good homes but also that those homes are in good communities. Again, it is a localised, site-specific lens over the master plans for those precincts, which are on public exhibition right now. Those plans have ranges of possible affordable housing requirements so that we can get feedback from the industry, the community and, most importantly, local members. The member for Riverstone has been making sure that his family is involved and his community is involved, and he is making sure that they are having their say. He has been doing the work of the member for Kellyville as well.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): 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.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) If any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business are received before or during private members' statements, business before the House to be interrupted for the consideration of the messages forthwith and to resume once the consideration of the messages has concluded.
- (2) The House to continue to sit after the conclusion of private members' statements to consider any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business, including the option for the Speaker to leave and resume the chair on the ringing of one long bell, with the House to adjourn without motion moved once consideration of the messages has concluded.

Motion agreed to.

Members

MEMBER FOR MIRANDA

MEMBER FOR WAKEHURST

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

MEMBER FOR CHARLESTOWN

MEMBER FOR WILLOUGHBY

The SPEAKER: I wish members representing the electorates of Miranda, Wakehurst, Upper Hunter, Charlestown and Willoughby all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have wonderful celebrations.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: We have a lot of guests to acknowledge. I am guessing not everyone in the gallery will be acknowledged, but everyone in the Chamber is a guest of the Legislative Assembly and we thank them for being here. I extend a warm welcome to guests of the member for Bankstown, Emmanuel and Ruby Busuttil. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Liverpool, the year 7 to 12 student leadership team from Minarah College. I welcome guests of the member for Vacluse, members of the NSW Justices of the Peace

eastern suburbs branch. I acknowledge students from St Charbel's College. I acknowledge and welcome a guest of the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Swansea, Ellie Stamatelatos, who many members know.

Announcements

GARY CHAN

The SPEAKER (11:04): Members may be aware that Gary Chan, one of our longest-standing catering staff, is retiring today. Gary has served the Parliament since 1995. Gary is in the Speaker's gallery. As well as the obviously great coffee that Gary made, I think everyone would agree that his sense of humour and quick wit have served everybody in the Parliament well. As I have said to Gary, he looked after the members, our staff and our guests, and everybody who came to the Public Cafe left feeling that they were very special. He looked after us all. He fussed over everyone and made everyone feel important. Gary's career is extraordinary, and we thank him greatly. We are worried about what we are going to name the bar and whether it will be "Gary's Bar" as a memorial. Gary will be greatly missed, and I thank him for his service to the Parliament.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

Question Time

PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will be respectful. The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I will start again. My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Next year the Government is axing the support class for kids with autism at Cronulla Public School. How many schools across the State are losing support staff because of the Government's decrease in real terms to education funding?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:09): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that important question. I acknowledge his interest in what is happening to the support class for students with autism in Cronulla. Let me take that question away and come back to the Leader of the Opposition. I am explicitly answering the question. I am not sure what has occurred at Cronulla and I will find out the details. I can guarantee to the member for Cronulla, the members of this House and the people of New South Wales that this is not about any decrease in funding. The funding that we have given to public schools has increased significantly this year.

As I have informed this House on many occasions, and I am happy to do so again, we have increased the funding to public schools by an extra \$481 million. That is more funding—it is an addition, not a subtraction. In every single way we have increased money to public schools. Those opposite can say until they are blue in the face that it is something else, but it is not. We have increased the Schooling Resource Standard funding from 72 per cent to 75 per cent. That has happened three years earlier than those opposite would have delivered it. We have given teachers the biggest pay rise in a generation. We have, for the first time in almost a decade—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

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

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister has gone nowhere near answering the question on how many support staff have been across lost across New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition. The Minister is being directly relevant. It may not be the specific answer the Leader of the Opposition is seeking. The Minister will continue her answer.

Ms PRUE CAR: I clearly said to the member for Cronulla that I will investigate what is happening at Cronulla Public School.

Mr Mark Speakman: That wasn't the question.

Ms PRUE CAR: That actually was your question, and I am answering it.

Mr Mark Speakman: The question was about losing support staff across the State.

Ms PRUE CAR: This shows the sincerity of those opposite when it comes to education. Ask me any day about what they did for public education and I will go through all the schools they failed.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

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

Mr Gurmesh Singh: The question was how many schools across—

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. If the member's point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, I have already ruled on it. I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

Ms PRUE CAR: I understand that morale is low today in the New South Wales Opposition, but I have answered the question.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: I will look into what is happening at Cronulla Public School. We have increased funding to public schools.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (11:12): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier in her capacity as the Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to invest in the communities of Western Sydney.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:13): I am pleased to answer this question from my great friend, the indefatigable member for Penrith. Our Government is committed to delivering for the local communities of Western Sydney—local communities that many on the Government side of this House represent, including me and of course the great member who asked me the question. They were communities that were forgotten for 12 years by those opposite.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The local schools, the local roads and the local projects of those communities were forgotten. Those opposite forgot to build local schools in places like Box Hill and Jordan Springs. The facts do not lie.

The SPEAKER: The member for Badgerys Creek will come to order. I call the member for Badgerys Creek to order for the first time.

Ms PRUE CAR: They forgot to build local road projects like Mamre Road and Richmond Road. But that is not all they forgot. They also forgot to fill out the basic paperwork. It is no wonder they forgot to do something that basic. The Minns Labor Government is making up for 12 years of underinvestment in our communities in Western Sydney, and we are proud to do it. Western Sydney is one of our fastest growing areas. It is in fact the nation's fastest growing area. We are proud to really commit to deliver on the projects that those opposite forgot about, among many other things. We are also proud to take action on one of the major issues that our communities are desperate for us to address—that is, the creation of local employment opportunities. Supporting workers is something that is foreign to those opposite.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The Government is ending the wage suppression for 120,000 public sector workers in Western Sydney; delivering a historic pay rise for 27,000 teachers in Western Sydney; and ensuring there are safe staffing levels at Bankstown-Lidcombe, Campbelltown and Westmead hospitals. It is supporting working parents with 50 new public preschools in Western Sydney so that they can return to work earlier and, crucially, give their children a better start to education with a transition to kindergarten. We on this side of the House believe that it is a crucial job of government to support workers across a vibrant region like Western Sydney. I call out the high proportion of gig workers that live in Western Sydney, and we are proud to be rolling out reforms in support of their rights at work. That is why we are bringing in legislation for the very first time to protect them under labour laws. *[Extension of time]*

They are the workers who are in vulnerable, precarious and insecure work, just like so many poor Liberal Party councillors are in vulnerable and insecure work, finding themselves out of a job overnight. I say to those

councillors: Join your union! That is what they are there for. Just make sure you fill out the form correctly and get your paperwork in. That is what the union movement is all about. I will just say something that is very close to my heart. We know that opportunity in Western Sydney, like everywhere else, starts with education. Ensuring that every student in Western Sydney has access to a quality education is what drives us as a government. We want dedicated teachers who are supported and valued with pay that shows the respect that our society has for them.

We are rolling out a curriculum in primary schools with key foundational skills like maths. Students will learn, for instance, to connect days of the week to familiar events and actions and use terms like "today" and "tomorrow", "before" and "after". Year 1 students will learn to recognise monthly and annual cycles and to identify a day and a date using the Gregorian calendar—a key foundational skill. We are pleased to roll out this explicit and key work. In fairness and in seriousness, what has happened in the Liberal Party in New South Wales is quite a disappointment. It is a slap in the face to all those people who want a choice when they go to the ballot box; it is a sad day for our democracy. I will leave the last word to that great member of the upper House, the Hon. Wes Fang, who just tweeted about Mark Speakman, "Spoken like someone who knows intimately what untenable positions look like".

RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE HOUSING SUPPLY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:18): My question is directed the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Prior to the election the now member for Riverstone stated, "We're going to have a bit of a pause on the amount of development that's going on, the amount of residential development." Has the member for Riverstone requested "a bit of a pause on development" in his electorate given that the Minister is proposing 7,477 apartments in Stanhope Gardens?

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will come to order. The member for Camden will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. All members will come to order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:19): I am pleased that the member for Hawkesbury managed to get the question right today. I am pleased that she picked up the right piece of paper. It seems that the member for Hawkesbury—the deputy deputy assistant deputy shadow leader, I think, at the moment—might be the only member on that side of the House who can read and comprehend. Over the past couple of days we have seen that following simple instructions, rules and commands are not the Liberal Party's forte.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129 relating to relevance.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Minister is making some introductory comments.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I am pleased that members opposite have finally decided to ask some questions about housing. In the midst of a housing crisis, one would think they might have been onto this a little earlier. But, in truth, they are quite happy not to talk about housing, because they created the housing crisis. I am also pleased that the member asked about our election commitment. In his short time in Parliament, the member for Riverstone has proved to be the most effective member for Riverstone that I have seen in this place. He speaks to me on a regular basis about the matters affecting his community that he inherited from his predecessor, including the lack of school infrastructure, housing availability and affordability problems, and the lack of open space.

To clarify our election commitment for members opposite—because it seems that comprehension is not their forte—we went to the election with a commitment to rebalance housing growth across Sydney, and that is exactly what we are doing. But the reality is that we did not start with a blank piece of paper. We were not going to cancel contracts for homes, we were not going to stop construction and we absolutely were not going to stand out the front of a brand-new metro station—

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129 and is about the lack of relevance. Labor candidates say one thing before an election to get votes and then do not follow through in the House. They have done it in Coffs Harbour, and they have obviously done it in Riverstone.

The SPEAKER: I understand the point of order. The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. I uphold the point of order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Riverstone has been entirely consistent. He is looking for the best outcomes for his community, and those outcomes come from Labor.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Port Macquarie is fractious today.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINEESHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (11:23): My question is addressed to the Premier. Given the Government's recent announcement that it will employ 1,300 trainees and apprentices in the local government sector, will the Premier update the House on local government across the State?

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:23): The New South Wales Government has committed \$252 million to hire 1,300 apprentices across local government in New South Wales. That is particularly important when we consider that there are 128 councils in the State employing 50,000 people. But over the past 12 years there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of apprentices employed in those councils, particularly in the regions. Graeme Kelly, secretary of the United Services Union, has been saying that, in order to give young people a start in regional New South Wales, the best thing to do is to start employing apprentices directly in those local council areas. We do not regard that as a drag on the budget; we regard it as an investment in the future. Young people can come through local government as apprentices—and if they stay with local government their whole careers that is great—and then open their own shop and become a chippie or an electrician or a plumber in regional communities that are desperate for them.

A big part of this apprenticeship process will be mentoring young people about the importance of what happens at work, including paperwork, organisation and deadlines. We cannot miss a deadline. That is particularly important. As Woody Allen said, "90 per cent of success in life is just turning up." But we have to put in our nomination. Today's front page of *The Daily Telegraph* reads "Election Farce", and the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* reads "Libs in disarray over poll blunder". It is pretty bad. In fact, the Tele reports that the party's State director, Richard Shields, is now fighting to save his job and was ordered to front up to Parliament today to explain what went wrong. That meeting is due to start at 12.00 p.m. but it probably will not kick off until 12.30 p.m. He is not big on time. He will get there when he gets there. There was an important update in the Herald, "When asked about it, Mr Speakman said"—because this is a matter involving the Leader of the Liberal Party—"basic administrative tasks were left to the State director. It's not a matter for the State parliamentary leader." That was his view in the Herald this morning.

[*A member interjected.*]

Stay out of it then. For what it is worth, I think Richard Shields is doing a great job. Do we really think that Liberal Party State directors grow on trees? Who would do that job? [*Extension of time*]

It is a viper's nest in the Liberal Party. It is asking somebody to take on a role that is effectively adjudicating between retired, entitled junior Liberal Ministers who tell the rest of the Liberal Party what to do all day, led by—I have to say this—the insufferable Don Harwin. Is that not true? Opposition members are all nodding. I know it is the case. He actually runs the Liberal Party. Maybe we can give Matt Kean a third job. He is on lookout. At the end of the day, this is obviously a farce. If the Liberal Party cannot govern itself, what hope does it have of running the State of New South Wales?

That is particularly acute if we look at some of the party's candidates. Some Independent councillors quit as Independents to become Liberals. One candidate on the northern beaches, Michael Gencher, quit as an Independent to run as a Liberal candidate, but someone forgot to submit his nomination and now he is not running. In the Shoalhaven, Paul Ell and Serena Copley were Independents on the council expecting to run. They quit as Independents and joined the Liberal Party and no-one submitted their nominations.

Mr Paul Scully: They could have done it themselves.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: They could have done it themselves. It is the party of self-reliance. If the candidates actually bothered to put in their own nominations, they could have run. This has blown up. I have some quotes here that are really out of character. The member for Lane Cove has come out and said, "This is a catastrophic failure. I've never seen anything like this in my entire professional life." Another Liberal source said, "This is a catastrophic stuff-up, the worst in living memory and the worst of my career." I wonder who that Liberal source was. It is exactly the same quote. Things are so bad that he has forgotten whether he is on or off the record. If the Liberal Party cannot govern itself, it cannot govern New South Wales. The party is a farce, and this just proves it.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I note that Nayce Dalton has joined us in the gallery, somewhat late. I assume he has brought a note, which we will look at later. Before I give the call to the member for Barwon, I note that the Minister for Education and Early Learning—and perhaps the member for Sydney—may be particularly interested to know that 35 year 11 legal studies students from Inner Sydney High School are present in the public gallery, along with their teacher, Jade O'Brien. I welcome them to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

MURRAY-DARLING WATER MANAGEMENT

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:29): My question is directed to the Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast, representing the Minister for Water. The release of the Connectivity Expert Panel's final report raises many questions about the potential conflicts between the Commonwealth's ambitions and the New South Wales Government's responsibilities to its own people. Recent years have seen progressive adjustments in the northern basin water policy, including the June 2020 rule changes, and the protection of low and medium flows to ensure the supply and retention of water in the Darling-Baaka and its weirs, particularly the Menindee Lakes. Will the Minister prioritise the Menindee storage targets over the transfer of water to the Commonwealth's 450-gigalitre target to South Australia?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:30): I thank the member for Barwon for his question. As shadow Minister and now as Minister, I have been fortunate enough to spend time with the member on multiple occasions.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Good guy.

Mr RYAN PARK: I think members collectively agree that he is a good advocate for far western, rural and remote New South Wales. I say that from the outset. As the member would be aware, Barwon has important agricultural communities and towns, where consistent access to clean drinking water has been a challenge, and has seen the ecological disaster of two mass fish death events in recent years. In fact, early on in my time as Minister, the issue of drinking water was raised with me when I visited Walgett with the member for Barwon. Dr Kerry Chant and Water officials have been working on that issue in that community.

The Minns Labor Government is committed to improving river connectivity, based on expert evidence, science and full community consultation. Part of the reason that the Minister in the other place established the independent Connectivity Expert Panel was to review existing and proposed protections in water sharing plans across the northern basin to meet downstream needs. Establishing the panel was a recommendation of the chief scientist's review into the mass fish deaths, announced by the Premier on the banks of Lake Menindee on his first full day on the job. Members all remember that day very well.

The report, including its findings and recommendations, has now been released. It is important that the Government takes time to carefully review all of the recommendations in the panel's report and undertake the hydrologic modelling and economic analyses required to fully understand the benefits and impacts of those recommendations. As the Minister has said on a number of occasions, the Government needs to have the right data in front of it before making any decisions. On behalf of the Minister in the other place, I can certainly say that the Government will not be making any decisions without consulting closely with local stakeholders, including the member for Barwon.

We on this side of the House are committed to delivering the Basin Plan in full. We do not support water buybacks, and we have repeatedly made that case. We will do what we can through infrastructure and rules-based projects and programs to contribute to the 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water. We are not just saying that we do not support the blunt instrument of buybacks; we have done the work to show an alternative pathway forward. The alternatives to a buyback plan identify changes that enhance connectivity between our flood plains, wetlands and rivers, along river stretches and between catchments, and allow more water to stay in river systems as an opportunity that could contribute to the 450 gigalitres. [*Extension of time*]

Importantly, as I am sure the member for Barwon is aware, the Minister wanted me to highlight the level of agreement between New South Wales and the Commonwealth that this is an option that should be explored. We welcome the agreement from the Commonwealth that exploring these alternatives should come before any decisions on buybacks. Menindee is another place I have had the opportunity to visit with the member for Barwon, as have other members in this place, including the Minister for Water in the other place. Basin States and the Commonwealth have all agreed that we need to improve connectivity between the northern and southern basin. Part of this agreement in recent months was to undertake a trial to recognise the held environmental water that is now protected through the northern tributaries and through the Barwon-Darling.

The trial was a huge success. Around 45 gigalitres of additional protected water was shepherded from the northern tributaries down the Barwon-Darling River and into the Menindee, with positive results, bringing more turbid fresh water to displace the overload of blue-green algae. This outcome was only possible through good cooperation with our Basin State colleagues and with the full support of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. That is why there is value in working together, as has been emphasised by the Premier and the Minister in the other place on this particular issue.

However, on behalf of the Minister in the other place, I give the member a commitment that the New South Wales Government will not take a backward step in advocating for the interests of the community, particularly

his communities. Fundamentally, our obligation is to the people of New South Wales, not the Commonwealth or Victoria or South Australia. We have to work together because water is a shared resource. We know that the New South Wales Government must be the champion for the people of New South Wales. I thank the member for Barwon for his ongoing advocacy on behalf of western New South Wales.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is working with communities to deliver more well-located housing across the State?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:35): I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question. Today there are 23 sites around train stations, from the Hunter through to the Illawarra, where development applications can be lodged for medium-density buildings of up to six storeys under the Government's Transport Oriented Development program. Those sites will be added to in the coming months as the Government finalises negotiations with local councils. The Government is working with councils to develop those local solutions to the housing crisis—local solutions to a statewide problem. We are pulling all the levers that are available to us to build better homes and build better communities.

In addition to those sites—around seven larger sites—feedback is being sought on rezoning proposals to deliver more than 60,000 new homes that will be supported by open space, close to transport and amenities, and in areas that will support around 100,000 jobs. Good homes that are close to transport, jobs, services and amenities is sensible planning policy from the New South Wales Government. After all, Sydney is the second-most expensive city on the planet, so we have to get on and build more homes. Sydney is one of the least dense cities on the planet, so it makes sense that we stop urban sprawl and start to consolidate around those transport assets. It makes sense that we rebalance housing growth around existing infrastructure rather than putting a big burden on taxpayers and communities at the urban fringe to continue sprawl and increase debt.

The Premier and I have previously said that Sydney and New South Wales have a date with density to house more people, to create more vibrant and exciting communities, to stop young people leaving the State in droves, to take—and back in—our action on climate change, to improve lagging productivity and enhance living standards, and, ultimately, to get more people into homes either by renting or buying. If we cannot build homes in the middle of a housing crisis near existing infrastructure, when can we build them and where should we build them? If we cannot build homes in Sydney around that metro investment, then where should we be building homes?

I read the headlines in the papers this morning screaming about a catastrophic blunder by the Liberal Party that was robbing people of opportunity. The Opposition leader has said in a letter to his colleagues today, "This failure to lodge many local government election nominations is a debacle." I could not agree more. He goes on to say, "It is probably the worst act of mismanagement I can think of." I can think of one better. For an aspiring councillor or anyone with any sense, yesterday was a pretty tough day to be in the New South Wales Liberal Party.

Mr Edmond Atalla: I seek an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: I will grant an extension of two minutes, but I remind the Minister to be mindful of where he goes with his answer. The Minister has the call.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Mr Speaker, this is all about housing. Yesterday, in the other place, a united coalition opposed the Opposition's anti-housing legislation. The 12 Liberals and Nationals who supported that bill were left absolutely friendless in the other place. After all, nobody wants a friend who does not want them to own a home. After creating uncertainty in the housing and construction market by using an anti-housing Trojan Horse to attempt to upend the New South Wales planning system, common sense prevailed in the upper House. That is a sentence I do not say very often. Importantly, that debate gave us an insight into the modern Liberal Party. It is filled with forgetful minds who cannot keep things on time and cannot get things underway. It is a party captured and controlled by nimbys. It is an anti-housing party operating in the middle of a housing crisis.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It takes a special kind of tin ear to ignore the public mood and introduce a bill that goes against people's aspirations to secure a home for themselves and their families. At workplaces, community events and family barbecues across the State, the number one conversation is about how hard it is to get a new home. The Liberal Party's only policy is an anti-housing policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Goulburn to order for the third time. I call the member for Wahroonga to order for the first time.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: After the 25-12 vote against the anti-housing bill, a number of would-be Liberal council candidates will be breathing a sigh of relief that they do not have to front up to people and defend a policy and a party that does not want people to get into homes. The Liberal Party has contempt for people trying to get into homes, and it is not going away. The Opposition has defined itself by that legislation and that vote. Opposition members have defined themselves as against housing, against tradies and against the people building homes. The Liberal Party is not only against aspiration; it has been captured by nimbys.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The Opposition is against sensible planning policy. It supports a future for New South Wales with lower growth, reduced opportunity and fractured living standards.

TAFE NSW

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:41): My question is directed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister guarantee no job losses in regional areas as a consequence of the TAFE NSW restructure?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. Opposition members will come to order. The member for Albury has asked a question and the Minister is ready to answer it.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:41): I am delighted to be asked a question about TAFE by the shadow Minister. It is the first question Opposition members have asked me about TAFE. I do not think any member in this place thinks that the state TAFE was left in by the former Government, including the operating structure, was fit for purpose.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: What a load of rubbish.

Mr STEVE WHAN: The member for Goulburn should talk to her neighbour, the member for Tamworth, who came to me to express his concerns about the failures of the structure that the previous Government left TAFE with. He is so open about it that he published a photo of us talking about the issue on his Facebook page.

Mr Jihad Dib: Did it get your good side?

Mr STEVE WHAN: It might have got my good side—I am not sure about that. But clearly there are concerns across New South Wales that TAFE's operating structure, which was left in place by the former Government, is not fit for purpose. In particular, it is not fit for purpose in regional New South Wales, where communities have lost touch with their TAFEs because they were not doing any outreach or discussion. They were not talking to their communities and industries about the skills or courses needed. One of the key recommendations of the interim review into vocational education and training in New South Wales was to change the operating model for TAFE. Right now, TAFE is consulting on a new operating model. The concept of that model—I know this will be a surprise to members of the Opposition—is to put more resources into teaching.

Mr Justin Clancy: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat while I hear the point of order from the member for Albury.

Mr Justin Clancy: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister is two minutes into his answer. The question was, "Will the Minister guarantee no job losses in regional areas as part of the restructure?"

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

Mr STEVE WHAN: The relevance is the operating model. When the Government changes the operating model to put more people into teaching and flatten the administrative structures to make sure that TAFE is responding to and working directly with industry, there will be changes. That is difficult. Right now, we are consulting with and talking to staff about the fact that some jobs will change and some jobs will likely disappear. That has been openly acknowledged. We are talking to the unions about that. We are focusing on delivering a structure that responds to industry, delivers for communities and works well for regional New South Wales.

TAFE NSW

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:45): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to deliver long-overdue upgrades to TAFE campuses across New South Wales?

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:45): I have had two questions in a row—that is a record for me. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for her question. She

is a passionate advocate for TAFE in New South Wales. The skills sector in New South Wales was decimated by 12 years of neglect. This week we have seen firsthand the importance of skills in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Goulburn will come to order.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I inform the Liberal Party that a certificate III in business administration is now available at 85 TAFE locations across the State. Liberal Party members can complete important units, including how to maintain business resources and organise personal work priorities. They will learn how to write to-do lists—and lodge nominations. Beyond the State office of the Liberal Party, the skills shortage is felt most heavily in our regions. I was surprised that one of the first letters I received when I took on the TAFE portfolio was from the Labor branch in Albury. Its members told me that students at the Albury TAFE could not access wi-fi on their campus. I looked into the issue and found that that is a problem on campuses across regional New South Wales.

Systems were put in place by Labor in 2009, but the former Liberal-Nationals Government had not updated them since. Seriously, in 2023 a lot of campuses did not have working wi-fi. Communications are very important, which I may come back to in a minute. TAFE has struggled from chronic underinvestment for more than 12 years. I am pleased that this Government has allocated \$300 million this year to upgrade campuses across New South Wales. There is \$1 million to upgrade the infrastructure at Tamworth TAFE; I know the member for Tamworth will be pleased. There is \$1.4 million to upgrade the Kurri Kurri TAFE in Cessnock. There is \$340,000 for the Singleton TAFE campus in the electorate of the member for Upper Hunter.

Ms Kate Washington: He's not here.

Mr STEVE WHAN: No, he is not. I was looking around the Chamber for him. The member for Blue Mountains will be interested to know that \$350,000 is going to the Wentworth Falls and Katoomba TAFE campuses in her electorate. But do not just take it from me. The head teacher of construction at TAFE Wellington in the electorate of the member for Dubbo—and there is \$3 million going to Dubbo—said, "Many of our students rely heavily on campus-based digital infrastructure to complete their coursework." Previously, during lessons, he had to walk around the room to find internet coverage because there was no wi-fi. [*Extension of time*]

I am not sure Opposition members should be talking to us about the quality of communications today. It was interesting to see that in Queanbeyan in my electorate, as of last night, all the Liberal candidates were ungrouped. Mysteriously today they now have a group, but not before one of their lead candidates put out a press release saying how upset and disappointed he was by the failures that had occurred. Maybe this campaign is a bit different to some of the others, because it is apparently being run out of a pub in Canberra. The address for their material is Hotel Realm in Canberra. Maybe some of it happened after a few beers. Who knows?

We have some really difficult things to address when it comes to TAFE. One of those is the revised operating model that the member for Albury mentioned. He put out a press release where he went overboard in his claims about the issue. This is about getting an efficient system in place. I am tempted to call him Clancy of the Overblown for some of the comments that he has made. It is important that TAFE has an operating model that helps it respond to industry and takes forward its relationships with the delivery of courses in New South Wales. I am looking forward to releasing a draft new charter for TAFE, which will help set its agenda for forward years. I understand that the member for Albury would like my job, but I doubt he'd suit the office, Clancy of the Overblown.

TAXI QR CODES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:51): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Does the Minister support the Opposition's proposal, supported by the NSW Taxi Council, to put QR codes into taxis to monitor whether customers are being charged the correct fare?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:51): I thank the member for North Shore for her question. I am interested in the fact that she wants to see better public transport across the board. That is a good thing and we are open to all ideas—whether it be QR codes, better and stronger regulation or working with the industry constructively—to make sure that people have a reliable, fair trip and they are not ripped off. It is one of the reasons our Government has been dealing with the taxi industry mess we were left by those opposite. We had a situation where taxi licensees were left in complete limbo and passengers were worse off.

But we are taking action to protect passengers, and our city's reputation as a great global destination. The journey from the airport or the cruise terminal to the hotel or the Airbnb should be a fair, reasonable price. It is one of the reasons the Point to Point Transport Commissioner has been on the ranks hailing cabs, busting illegal and unsafe driver behaviour. Taxis are required to show the commissioner's 24-hour Taxi Fare Hotline because of the changes our Government has made to ensure that passengers have a number to call with issues and complaints. We have increased the penalty for fare-related offences to a \$1,000 on-the-spot fine.

We do not want taxi drivers ripping off passengers; we want to make sure that everyone gets a fair ride home. I will be clear, though, that the vast majority of taxi drivers are hardworking men and women working in a tough environment. In fact, they are small business owners. They know that there are requirements that they have to meet. They know about deadlines. They know about forms. They know that they have to make sure that they tick all the boxes. They are part of our public transport system, which runs on a timetable. We talk a lot about timetables. One of my absolute objectives as the Minister for Transport is to provide a more reliable transport system.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Goulburn will come to order. The Minister will resume her seat. The member for North Shore rises on a point of order.

Ms Felicity Wilson: The Minister can continue. It is fine.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: She missed her opportunity. It happens a lot on that side of the Chamber. And it is a big opportunity they have missed, too.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will resume her seat.

Ms Felicity Wilson: I am entitled to take a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Nothing has changed since the member rose to take her previous point of order and then resumed her seat. The Minister made a remark, but it was not offensive.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Mr Speaker, you do not know my point of order and you are already ruling on it.

The SPEAKER: I do not want to know the point of order.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Am I entitled to take a point of order in this House?

The SPEAKER: Not right now you're not. We can discuss it later. The Minister's time has expired.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Is it your ruling that I am not entitled to take a point of order in this House?

The SPEAKER: You know that is not what I am saying. The member for North Shore will resume her seat.

Ms Felicity Wilson: You are not allowing me to take a point of order.

The SPEAKER: You are wasting our time. The member for North Shore will be directed to remove herself from the Chamber if she does not resume her seat.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Wow.

The SPEAKER: It is not a matter of "wow". It is a matter of the decorum of the House.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Loser.

Ms Felicity Wilson: The member for Mount Druitt just called me a loser. That is unparliamentary language.

The SPEAKER: I am unaware of the exchange, but all members will come to order.

Ms Felicity Wilson: I would appreciate not being called a loser in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: If that was said, I ask the member to withdraw it.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Miranda will resume her seat. I am dealing with the matter. The member who said that will withdraw their comment.

Mr Edmond Atalla: I withdraw my comment.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Small Business. Will the Minister update the House on the work the Minns Labor Government is doing for businesses in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (11:56): I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. He is a relentless, passionate advocate for small business. I am happy to inform the House that NSW Labor is pulling every lever we can to support small businesses in this State. We have increased the direct procurement threshold with government to \$250,000 to get more money flowing into small businesses. We have simplified bidding for government contracts for small businesses. We have provided targeted relief for the cost of doing business through energy bill rebates and toll relief programs. We have created the New South Wales business grants and funding finder to ensure businesses understand what assistance they can access. We have implemented the Charter for Small Business to ensure all government departments are exploring opportunities on how they can work better with small business.

By far the most important service we have delivered is the Service NSW Business Bureau, which provides businesses with one front door, so we can understand their problems and direct them to the services that they require. We understand that no two businesses are alike. That allows us to tailor support depending on their unique problems. Since the Business Bureau launched in October, it has delivered 24,000 hours of personalised advice and assisted more than 160,000 business inquiries. Our rapid response teams have assisted businesses with a range of issues such as supply chain disruptions from fire ants or the impact of the M6 sinkhole. The Business Bureau is making a difference to the business community in New South Wales.

Due to its limited resources, we understand that the New South Wales Liberals secretariat is technically a small business, employing fewer than 20 people. I am pleased to update the House that small businesses are eligible for eight hours of free personalised advice, which is great news. That means the New South Wales Liberal Party will qualify. Our Business Bureau concierges are available both in person and over the phone. They are well practised at helping people to fill out forms. The bureau supports growth. That is exactly what the Liberal Party needs to grow beyond 300 nominations. The Business Bureau also provides personalised help for sole traders—like the member for Oatley. Sadly, the nominees for the member's section of the Georges River could not be nominated within Don Harwin's constraints. *[Extension of time]*

The member for Oatley was the coordinator-in-chief for Don Harwin's appointment as Liberal Party president. He wanted the oracle, and he got his man. But I hear the Liberal Party president has retreated to his coastal hideaway. While the Business Bureau can provide advisory services and rapid response teams in difficult times, greater assistance is required. That is why I have asked the Business Bureau to reach out to Minister Dib and the Reconstruction Authority to help with this monumental disaster.

WATER SHARING PLAN

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (12:00): My question is directed to Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Water. Why is the Government shirking responsibility for the devastating impact to winter crops that were flooded by environmental water released under the State Government's water sharing plan for the Gwydir River?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:01): I thank the new member for Northern Tablelands. My office has already had an opportunity to meet with the member. I hope he has settled in after the first few weeks. It must be good to be a Nat today! I have been hanging around this place for a long time. When I received a text from someone yesterday to say what had happened, I thought, "Hang on! It's not 1 April." Because of my incredible knowledge and passion for local government, I had to check a few times. But I hope the Nats enjoy today. Days like this do not happen.

Mr Gurmeh Singh: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister has spent the first 1½ minutes of his answer joking. Farmers are losing their livelihoods.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour does not need to make additional comments. The point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. I uphold the point of order. The Minister must be directly relevant. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Mr RYAN PARK: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for the question. I will certainly arrange for the Minister for Water in the other place and her office to meet with the member to discuss his legitimate concern. This week it is unusual that a Nationals member has asked a question about a country area in New South Wales. Earlier this week we had a question from The Nationals about the metro. An enormous number of rural people are worried about the metro. When I am out in rural and regional New South Wales, I hear over and over again people asking, "What is happening to the metro?" Of course, then the National Party introduced the "I want to work four days a week" bill.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: I do not know what Nationals members were thinking when they asked a question about why we have to work on Fridays. I will give Nationals members a tip: I am not sure they will get a lot of support for that from their communities. Apart from that, it has been a very good day for the National Party. It has been an unbelievable day. I understand its members will now be welcomed back to the Expenditure Review Committee. That would never have happened if it was the National Party.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order: The Minister has 10 seconds remaining. He must be relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has the call.

Mr RYAN PARK: It is a good day. I thank the member for asking the question about rural and regional New South Wales. The Labor Party will always be the party for regional and rural New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members have twice sought the call to take a point of order but then declined to do so. That is time wasting.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: I took a point of order.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour rose on a point of order, said something about "10 seconds" and then sat back down.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: My point of order related to relevance.

The SPEAKER: I missed that, but I had ruled on relevance earlier. I call the member for Cessnock.

CENTRAL WEST ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:04): My question is addressed to the quietly spoken Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to improve roads across the State's Central West?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:05): I thank the member for his question because, like all regional members of the crossbench and Government, Minns Labor Government members are consumed by issues that impact regional New South Wales not only in their own electorates but also across the State more generally. That is why Labor, when it came to government, made a commitment to send out \$390 million to flood-impacted people and councils in the regions. It took that whole bucket of money, up to \$670 million in one year, to help the regions fix their roads. It did it again in this year's budget by providing \$3.3 billion, quadrupling the effort made by those opposite when in government to fix and repair roads after floods. The Government is also rolling out \$32 million in betterment for four councils in the Central West that were most affected in 2022, and it has rolled out another \$64 million in advance payments to a number of those councils under the tripartite agreements.

The candidate for Calare in the other place, as the Hon. Wes Fang refers to him—he tells us that that is what we should call him—recently put out a media release saying that there is lots of work to do on the disastrous state of regional roads in the Central West. The Government could not agree more. That is why Government members have been doing that work. When the people of Calare get to the ballot box—that is, if the member manages to get his nomination form in to the Electoral Commission—they should ask themselves what the member was doing when he was in the box seat as Minister for Regional Transport and Roads in 2022, because the money did not go to them. The Government has put \$128 million into the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. Opposition members have been noisy. As the Minister for Health said, they have a spring in their step.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the second time.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: That is okay, because the Government knows those opposite blasted their chance at big government earlier this week by asking silly questions that had already been dealt with. We know why the former agriculture Minister cannot ask questions about regional trains: It is because the Opposition could not deliver them. We have been waiting for the 2016 Regional Rail fleet. It is an absolute mess! The Minister for Transport and I have had to work together to fix up the mess that six years—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the third time.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: How many trains did they develop? Zero! Doughnuts!

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Port Macquarie to order for the third time.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The Government already has one, and more are on the way. They will be steaming ahead. They will be great trains, but it will not be thanks to any Opposition members. [*Extension of time*]

I must paint the picture: Nationals members do not want to work Fridays, they are resigning to go to Federal Parliament or to stop work, and they are not really committed. But if we look at what is happening in these local government elections, they are not running under their own banner. They are too scared. My electorate has an Independent candidate in green and yellow. It looks like Wattle Day, not the membership of the National Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time. I remind the member for Coffs Harbour that he is on three calls to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The other thing that is important to hear is that, as the Premier said, in electorates like mine it is really about taking away people's choice and democracy. The one Liberal councillor who got nearly 400 votes on his own in the last election, the previous Liberal mayoral candidate, forgot to put his forms in. No, sorry, he did not forget, but his colleague who could not even crack 200 had a little thought and put out a statement saying, "I have successfully submitted a nomination form as an Independent candidate", but he forgot to tell the other two candidates. That is the kind of collegiate, supportive, helpful work we get across—

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Minister's response has nothing to do with the question. The Labor Party needs to remember that it is in government and focus on the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order at this stage.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: In my last 25 seconds, I will say that the Independent candidate the Liberals co-opted from the last local government election to run against me in 2023—who dropped the vote to 22 per cent, mind you—did not get his nomination in, thanks to them. It is an outrage. They have destroyed democracy not just in the city but in the bush. They should be ashamed.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. A bit of banter across the Chamber is understandable. I call the member for Balmain, and she will be heard in silence.

WHITE BAY CRUISE TERMINAL

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:10): My question is directed to the Premier. In 2022 the previous Government announced that White Bay Cruise Terminal would become the first Australian port to install shore-to-ship power, taking a huge stride towards ending cruise ship pollution in a densely populated part of Sydney. From opposition, the Labor Party made an election commitment to see the project through, with the first berth to be complete and operational by the end of 2024. Is the Government on track to meet that commitment?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:11): I thank the member for Balmain for her question. The cruise ship industry is an important one for New South Wales, worth \$2.5 billion and supporting 9,000 jobs. Millions of Australians consider a cruise holiday option as a great thing to do. A few Australians who are free come September may choose to go on a cruise. They thought they were going to be on pre-poll but are suddenly off to Hawaii. And they will do it from White Bay. It is not all bad news. Those opposite should not look so glum; some of their friends may be on a cruise ship soon.

There has been a major policy change regarding shore-to-ship power. That has to do with the European Union deciding that all cruise ships, particularly those on the Mediterranean, must have access to shore-to-ship power, rather than running diesel engines for 24 hours a day. Those who were in Greece or parts of the Mediterranean during the winter period would know that the cruise ship industry over there dwarfs ours. It is massive, and much of the supply chain is being redirected to ensure that those requirements in the European Union are prioritised. That is not at our discretion; the fact is that there is now competition for the technology that needs to be rolled out in terminal one. We are committed to it. We will do it in this term of office. We cannot meet the 2024 deadline. I am being honest with the member. We would love to do that. We understand that it is a key priority and commitment of the member for Balmain. We want to ensure that it can be done but it cannot be done on the 2024 timeline. The previous Government did commit to it. I am unsure as to whether the previous Government knew of the regulatory change in the European Union, but we will do it as soon as we can.

PARALYMPICS 2024

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:13): Following yesterday's fabulous public interest debate, my question is addressed to the Minister for Disability Inclusion. Will the Minister update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to support our fabulous Paralympic athletes leading up to the Paris opening ceremony at 4.00 a.m. on Thursday 21 August?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (12:13): I thank my friend and colleague—and friend to many—the member for Gosford. It was a bit hard to hear the question over the clanking of all her Paralympic medals, but I got the gist.

We are so lucky to have such a fierce advocate. In this place we could not have a fiercer advocate for people with disability than the member for Gosford or such a strong ambassador for the Paralympians. I have a quick test for everyone in the House. Those opposite can relax; it is not about them this time. How many Paralympics has the member for Gosford competed at? I will make it easy. It is not once. It is not twice.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Three?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is not three times.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Four.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is not four.

Mr Jihad Dib: Five.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is not five.

Mr Jihad Dib: Six?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is not six.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Seven.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Seven times the member for Gosford has represented our country. Not only has she competed seven times; she won gold in sailing in London in 2012 and in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and was vice-captain of the Australian wheelchair basketball team when we topped the medal tally at the Sydney 2000 Paralympics, which is amazing. It gets even better. Soon we will be able to hear her dulcet tones when she is commenting on the Paralympics in Paris, on Stan—so tune in. The Paris Paralympic Games will kick off on 28 August and run for 12 days, bringing together 4,400 athletes competing across 549 events. The Paralympics are a chance to showcase the sporting excellence of people with motor, sensory and intellectual disabilities across a range of sports, including wheelchair tennis and wheelchair basketball, swimming, athletics and equestrian events. The Australian team will include 160 athletes across 17 sports.

But getting to Paris takes not just a heap of hard work, raw talent and relentless focus, as the member for Gosford has; it also requires resources to get there. To make sure they can compete at the highest level, the New South Wales Government committed \$750,000, thanks to the Minister for Sport, to support New South Wales Paralympic athletes competing in the Paris 2024 Paralympics. Our Government is dedicated to promoting the Paralympic movement and backing our Paralympic athletes. I am pleased to say that, with that support, more than one in five members of the Australian Paralympic team is from New South Wales. The Government proudly invests in our athletes as they train. [*Extension of time*]

The NSW Institute of Sport identifies and supports athletes who are likely to qualify for the next Paralympics. It has partnership programs that foster talent in particular sports. The institute has supported many champions, including our Paris 2024 flag-bearer, Madison de Rozario, and Lauren Parker, who lives in Chisholm in the electorate of the member for Maitland. Lauren will compete in cycling and the triathlon, making her the first person in 32 years to compete in two sports at the same Paralympic Games. There are so many other talented athletes in our Paris team, including Telaya Blacksmith, from Heathcote, who is making her Paralympics debut in athletics; Paralympics veterans Tristan Knowles, from Bellambi, and Ben Weekes, from Granville, who are competing in their sixth games; and Dan Michel, from Cronulla, Jamieson Leeson, from Sydney Olympic Park, and their ramp operators, Ash Madden and Jasmine Haydon, who are heroes in the boccia world. Of course, I make special mention of Lisa Martin, from Wallalong in my electorate of Port Stephens, who will represent us in the para-equestrian team. Lisa and other regional athletes are carrying their towns and communities to Paris, and I have to say the Hunter is punching above its weight.

Real magic comes with the Paralympics. The sheer grit and determination and the incredible stories of overcoming massive barriers to achieve sporting success will inspire our nation. I know that everyone in this Parliament and communities across New South Wales come together to wish all of our Paralympic athletes all the best and every bit of success they deserve. On behalf of the Government and this Parliament, I say good luck and go hard to all of our amazing athletes and all of their support crews. Whether they win a medal or just go their hardest, our State and our nation will be cheering them on loudly and proudly.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Minister. I congratulate the member for Gosford on everything she has achieved.

*Documents***ROYAL COMMISSION INTO VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY****Government Response**

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I table the New South Wales Government response to the final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Threatened species and ecological communities*, received this day and authorised to be printed.

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

Mr PHILIP DONATO: As Chair: I table report No. 1/58 of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission entitled *2023 review of annual and other reports of oversight agencies*, dated August 2024.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Reports**

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: As Chair: I table report No. 3/58 of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Draft Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 2024*, dated August 2024.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1503 to 1532 have lapsed.

WITHDRAWAL OF BUSINESS

Mrs HELEN DALTON: I withdraw general business notice of motion (for bills) No. 1 [Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register) Bill 2024].

*Bills***ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (AFFORDABLE HOUSING) BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:22): I continue my contribution to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. As I was saying before question time, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure is doing the hard work to determine the affordable housing schedule of increases through time for the second tier Transport Oriented Development [TOD] Program locations—the ones where we have already finalised the boundaries, the

ones where development applications can be accepted, and the ones that communities are very excited about because they know it will help to deliver not only more market housing but also sensibly sized affordable housing. Obviously we are now dealing with 37 locations—and were already dealing with 23—so the land economics of those areas change quite dramatically.

There is no point suggesting that a train station area, say a well-located spot in Ku-ring-gai, has exactly the same land economics as somewhere in the Hunter or near Dapto. Nonetheless, all of those areas need housing, and all of them will have mandatory in perpetuity affordable housing as part of the planning controls. They will all have a schedule of increases through time that grows that delivery of affordable homes. As I was saying before question time—and, in fact, during question time and on any given day of the week—the Government wants to see more homes built. Our plans are a balanced way of making sure of the delivery of both market and affordable homes, in addition to the largest investment made by a New South Wales government in the delivery of social homes.

As I touched on, the accelerated precincts in the Transport Oriented Development Program also have mandatory in perpetuity affordable housing targets. Those precincts combined will deliver about 60,000 new homes to those communities over the next 15 years. Again, those affordable housing dwellings delivered in perpetuity will be required to be managed by a registered community housing provider. Again, we are examining those rezonings through a localised, site-specific lens. The affordable housing requirements are tailored, along with heights, floor space ratios and other planning controls, to meet those local conditions. The master plans for those precincts are now on public exhibition and they have a range of possible options. The precincts will deliver up to 15 per cent affordable housing in communities across Bankstown, Crows Nest, Homebush, Hornsby, Macquarie Park, Bella Vista and Kellyville.

It is important to emphasise in this debate that many community housing providers as well as the peak body, the Community Housing Industry Association, have publicly supported the Government's plans to drive the delivery of more affordable housing. During the Legislative Council inquiry into the Transport Oriented Development Program, the Community Housing Industry Association representative gave a strong defence of the Government's policies for affordable housing in the TOD State environmental planning policy [SEPP] locations. Naturally, I was pleased to hear that. It was welcome support and a recognition that there must be a starting point for the broad-based inclusion of affordable housing in housing delivery in communities across New South Wales.

I look forward to contributions to debate on the bill from other parties in this place to hear about how they propose to deliver such an important commitment. It is easy for members to say one thing in Macquarie Street but the opposite in their local street—to crow about large developments and investments in infrastructure and communities but then, when rezonings are proposed with affordable housing, to stand in front of that same infrastructure and complain about a lack of infrastructure. They cannot have both sides. It seems that yesterday Opposition members picked their side when it comes to housing. They are against it. They remain against it. That is to the detriment of not only everyone who currently lives in New South Wales but also everyone who wants to live in New South Wales—and ultimately places an artificial cap on growth.

Affordable housing has been included in these areas so that we do not have a situation where essential workers—whether they are like my mum, who was a cleaner, or a healthcare worker, a teacher or a barista—are forced to travel for hours across Sydney, each way stuck in traffic, largely in private vehicles because the former Government did not roll out public transport to areas where it preferred housing to be built. Affordable housing has been included so that we do not have that productivity loss with people spending hours in a car to get to and from work to provide the sorts of services that people expect in modern-day Sydney—as well as in Newcastle, the Central Coast and the Illawarra.

The bill proposes to transfer the definition of affordable housing from the housing SEPP into the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. That is entirely unnecessary and I am yet to hear a compelling argument for it. This would add red tape, time and bureaucracy when we are trying to strip that out of the planning system. We are trying to streamline the planning system so it is focused on delivery, not churning through assessments and blocking those sorts of things. It will mean that any future changes to what is currently a simple matter—affordable housing—would likely require legislative rather than regulatory change. Every time there was the potential to increase, say, the amount of affordable housing to be delivered, we would run the gauntlet of members opposite, who, there is no doubt in my mind, would move amendments to decrease or abolish affordable housing.

Yesterday in the other place Opposition members wanted to abolish the entire concept of housing around transport hubs. Thankfully, in a particularly embarrassing defeat—but not the most embarrassing turn of events for the New South Wales Liberal Party yesterday—everyone who was not a Coalition member or had recently been a Coalition member lined up to say that would be an unacceptable outcome for modern-day Sydney and New South Wales. For the benefit of the House, I will lay out the differences between a SEPP, an Act and

guidelines when it comes to working within the planning system. It is important there is a clear understanding of all the elements that members are talking about in this debate because it is a complex framework in New South Wales. We are working on addressing that, but at the moment we deal with the framework we have.

The Act sets out a framework for how the planning system works and it requires the oversight of Parliament to change it. That is straightforward. SEPPs—or State environmental planning policies—are environmental planning instruments and a category of legislation that allows for flexibility in the planning system to respond to changes in land use, development types, environmental factors or other policy changes. SEPPs can be quickly amended to respond to State policy and planning issues. An example is the introduction of the affordable housing bonus scheme through an amendment to the SEPP. Another case in point is the introduction of the Transport Oriented Development SEPP, which allows for more affordable housing. Of course, members opposite—not the member for Newtown, who is in the Chamber, but others—will recognise some of those instruments because they have tried to overturn them on a regular basis. I am sure they will continue to take that Neanderthal-like approach to housing and planning in New South Wales—so long as they get their nomination forms in and return to this place.

In this context, the definition of "affordable housing" exists under the Act. The environmental planning instrument in this case is the housing SEPP. Rather than having conflicting definitions, the Act simply refers to the most relevant planning instrument for the definition of affordable housing. This is because, as an instrument that can be readily adapted, the housing SEPP has the most contemporary definition of affordable housing. It would actually be really useful if some Coalition members were in the Chamber to hear this part of the discussion. I did not realise it was a thing, but I understand there is a shadow assistant planning Minister, who I do not believe is in the Chamber at the moment.

Mr Clayton Barr: Who is that?

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I believe it is the member for Castle Hill—someone who has an interest in development and how the community is developed. It is a shame that the shadow assistant Minister is not in the Chamber. But as I said, we include that definition and refer to it in the housing SEPP so it can be readily adapted to a contemporary definition of affordable housing. It is a definition that replicates the detail of the *NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines 2023-24*. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979—the EP&A Act—refers to the housing SEPP, which has the same contemporary definition of affordable housing as the ministerial guidelines. Consistent guidelines with a consistent definition save a bit of confusion. The Minister for Housing has been open about wanting to achieve a nationally consistent definition of affordable housing. I know she is pursuing this definition with her trademark dedication to task, which we have all become very familiar with, and is having those conversations at national forums between housing Ministers across the States, Territories and the Commonwealth.

Moving these provisions to the Act, as this bill seeks to do, would make any further amendments to the definition more time consuming and uncertain. If passed, it could mean that New South Wales would be off kilter with the rest of the country when it comes affordable housing. The SEPP, however, provides more flexibility to make amendments to legislation and regulations to make sure they are fit for purpose and operating as intended. As an example, the definition of affordable housing in the SEPP references the National Rental Affordability Scheme introduced by the Rudd Government several years ago. When that scheme ends in 2026, the definition will need to be amended. That kind of administrative amendment can be done easily through a SEPP but would not be done as easily if inserted in the Act. The SEPP maintains a definition of affordable housing that has been in use for some time and is widely accepted and recognised, as well as used successfully by community housing providers [CHPs].

Additionally, the community housing providers who are engaged to manage affordable housing determine the rent to be charged to occupants. They can—and overwhelmingly do—set rents on affordable homes at 30 per cent of household income. Members might not be aware of this, but there is in fact a regulatory body within New South Wales government to oversee the practices of CHPs—the Registrar of Community Housing. It is the role of the registrar to monitor the practices and maintain the registrations of all registered community housing providers in New South Wales. Obviously particular criteria need to be met to be a registered community housing provider, which is precisely why in all its reforms the Government has made sure that properties are managed by a registered community housing provider. Doing so ensures a line of sight from government to those we have tasked with managing an important part of our housing sector.

The existence of the Register of Community Housing Providers is important for another aspect of the bill, which is the creation of a register of all affordable housing properties in New South Wales. The Government is committed to enhanced tracking and data collection related to the number of affordable properties delivered under our planning policies and local affordable housing schemes. We support mandating reporting requirements for the number of affordable housing properties, but this cannot be rushed through without integrating such a register into

the existing systems of the Planning Portal. We do not want to make the Planning Portal perform worse than it currently does. I am initiating a program to fix the portal and make sure it is working in the interests of the people of New South Wales. I do not want to knock that work off course or take it backwards. That is an important reform, which Minister Jackson is also working on right now. I understand the Minister will have more to say about those reforms later in the year.

It is essential that this kind of reform is implemented in a way that does not unnecessarily increase the administrative burden on councils or affordable housing providers. From the Government's perspective, it is also important that the register be maintained by the Registrar of Community Housing, which already exists, is already doing part of this work, and is best placed to continue and enhance this work into the future by creating a register of affordable homes. The creation of such a register as set out in the bill would create unnecessary duplication within the bureaucracy and unnecessary administrative burdens for councils. The bill will also have unintended consequences in the form of impacts on the ability of Homes NSW to deliver more social and affordable housing. Again, we do not want to get in the way, given we have set that agency a mighty task to deliver the biggest investment in social housing in the history of New South Wales.

As currently drafted, the bill's amendments to both section 21 of the housing SEPP and the Act remove the nuanced delivery of management dispensations for the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Land and Housing Corporation. Those are the two main government agencies responsible for delivering and managing social and affordable housing. As their primary role is in the provision of social and affordable housing, they are exempt from requirements such as land title registration, payment of contributions for affordable housing, and evidence of agreements with registered community housing providers.

These are all requirements that private developers are subject to, and they should be. However, the government agencies delivering social housing should not be. This bill, however, removes that existing exemption and would result in them having additional financial, administrative and time burdens. It would also slow down and add costs to the delivery of social and affordable homes by State government agencies. Again, I do not think that was the aim of the member for Newtown in the approach of the bill, but that would be the effect, as the bill is drafted. If this were to be reversed, it could happen. This would mean that there could be months or years of delay on the delivery of social housing, which, again, as I say, I do not think was the intention of the bill.

Finally, I turn to the points the member for Newtown made regarding affordable housing being in perpetuity. I reiterate that the Government has already taken steps to achieve the goal of affordable housing built in New South Wales being held in perpetuity by making it a requirement of our Transport Oriented Development Program. That is, however, a very active topic as part of the debate the Minister for Housing is having with her national colleagues on the definition of "affordable housing" and how long "in perpetuity" is. If perpetuity is forever, then does that mean that an affordable home can never be knocked down and rebuilt, regardless of how much disrepair it is in? Is it the goal of the bill to make sure that those in our community who rely on the provision of social and affordable housing are relegated to living in increasingly substandard housing? I do not believe it is.

If the Government decided to change the infill affordable housing bonus scheme from affordable housing held for 15 years to being held in perpetuity, we would see the delivery of affordable homes by the private market grind to a halt overnight. That is because it would change the feasibility of projects. The industry is unlikely to build them to the same level that they currently are. They would probably revert to market homes only, which, again, does not achieve what we are all seeking to do. However, the Government has made the important change and the planning system will work towards it.

I conclude my contribution with some key data on the performance of the Government's infill affordable housing bonus scheme. The policy was introduced on 14 December 2023, so it is not particularly old. We estimated at the time that around 20 applications a year might utilise the policy. However, in the policy's first eight months, the department has already issued secretary's environmental assessment requirements, or SEARs, which are the first stage for a State significant development [SSD], for over 40 projects. That is double the number that we expected, so it really has some strong interest. Eight applications for projects have already been formally lodged in this affordable housing SSD pathway. They will create around 480 affordable homes in addition to the more than 1,300 market homes. Of the projects that are in the process of formally lodging an application, there are another 3,200 potential affordable homes and more than 10,000 market homes.

The policy is really starting to deliver more affordable homes in New South Wales. It is also delivering market homes. It is delivering both of them now, when we need them. I acknowledge that the intent of the member for Newtown with the bill is to do the same. However, as I have said, the Government cannot support it in its current form for the reasons I have outlined, particularly the uncertainty that might be created in delivering homes. Before I finish, I acknowledge a member of my staff, Peta, who is in the advisers area. It is her birthday, and I think it is important that those sorts of occasions are recorded in *Hansard* because she does not like attention being drawn to it. She is an excellent member of the team, and I wish her all the very best for the day.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Happy birthday, Peta!

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:43): On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. The Opposition will not be supporting the bill. I will come back to the bill in a moment. I want to make a few general remarks in response to the efforts by the Minister to paint the Opposition as being anti-housing. I present some simple facts: Building approvals under this Labor Government are at a 12-year low; costs are up over 10 per cent; and the Government has set a 75,000-homes target, which it has no hope of ever meeting. Government members and their Federal Labor mates are absolutely shameful and hopeless in that respect.

The Government has increased development costs, land tax, the cost of doing business, the cost of living, and union dominance and control. None of that stacks up to build more homes. That is not going to happen under Labor's watch. Furthermore, Labor is casting aside local government and telling communities to get out of the way. That, too, is not going to work. Building under Labor is an abject failure. If any member needs confirmation of that, they can look at the scoreboard and see what is actually happening out there; talk to builders, developers and people on the ground and members will get the real story and not the Labor nonsense we heard from my colleague opposite.

The bill, while well intentioned, has the potential to produce unintended consequences that could undermine the Coalition's desire for, and our State's fundamental need for, an increase in the housing supply in New South Wales. Unfortunately, actions by the Minns Labor Government have already harmed the viability of building more homes in New South Wales. Actions are more important than words, and the actions of this Government do not stack up, as I have outlined, to build the homes we need in New South Wales. I note the member for Newtown's intention to help, but we respectfully disagree on the approach. The legislation may destabilise both the feasibility of new affordable housing developments and the current arrangements of community housing providers, ultimately leading to a reduction in the availability of affordable housing.

Let us be clear: The private market is already struggling to provide affordable housing. The extra taxes and charges imposed by the Minns Labor Government have made it increasingly unviable to build new homes. The Minns Labor Government is creating a situation where, because private developments are unviable to be built, the flow-on impact is the prevention by Labor of a new supply of affordable housing. Labor's housing tax means \$12,000 for new homes in Greater Sydney, with a further \$10,000 tax on many developments in Western Sydney. Labor's shameless \$1.5 billion land tax grab, with a removal of indexation, hurts renters because of Labor's reckless sweetheart deals with militant trade unions.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia has warned that the viability of private developments is already prohibitive in 2024 and, as Labor's housing taxes increase, that will be even worse in two years time. The supply of new affordable housing is directly impacted if private developments have no chance of getting off the ground. It is harder for people to buy into the private market, with interest rates increasing by 400 basis points during the two years of the Albanese Labor Government in Canberra. When the cost of construction rises, the return on investment for private developers is diminished, further discouraging the pursuing of affordable housing projects.

In that environment, no number of zoning changes or height and floor space ratio bonuses will be sufficient to incentivise the development of affordable housing. The Coalition is working to formulate constructive policies to address the housing crisis by consulting and working with industry and local communities. The shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and shadow Minister for Housing, Scott Farlow, recently held a round table in Penrith with the local Federal member and shadow Minister for Western Sydney, Melissa McIntosh, to discuss many worthy ideas for addressing the housing affordability and availability crisis in Western Sydney and building more affordable and community housing.

I now turn to the detail of the legislation. New section 4.71 of the bill ensures rent is no more than 30 per cent of gross income in an affordable housing dwelling and sets out a new three-part definition for "affordable housing". The Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson, soon after becoming a Minister, called for a national definition for "affordable housing". But through national ministerial councils there has been no progress on that issue. Eligibility for affordable housing and resulting income eligibility limits are outlined under section 7.2 of the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines, which were last updated in August 2023 by the housing Minister. Income limits are reviewed annually. The income eligibility limits were unchanged between the final year of the Coalition Government and the first year of Labor. We await the 2024-25 review, which should be forthcoming.

Various tests are applied to affordable housing, but the predominant test is a discount to market rent, which is required to be at a discount of at least 20 per cent of market rent. The bill would change this requirement to a maximum of 30 per cent of household income. New section 4.72 of the bill will fix rent for an affordable housing

property below 30 per cent of tenant income in perpetuity across New South Wales. While the aspiration for affordable housing in perpetuity is noble, we must recognise that such a policy does not account for the varying feasibility of developments across different regions. Imposing uniform requirements without considering local conditions can undermine efforts to increase affordable housing by making developments financially unviable. The Property Council argues that holding affordable housing in perpetuity further exacerbates continuing feasibility constraints in the industry. The Urban Taskforce has proposed a financial contribution instead.

New section 4.73 establishes a statewide affordable housing register. Concessions to create new affordable housing or government funding are required, because the return on affordable housing dwellings is less than a typical private housing dwelling, which are already becoming economically unviable to build in a tenuous building market. Labor's attempts with affordable housing concessions will fail miserably because of its increased housing taxes on private developments rendering entire developments unviable. Labor's result is no new homes at all. In summary, while some of the intentions behind the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024 are admirable, its potential consequences could be detrimental. By destabilising the feasibility of new developments and failing to address local variances, the bill risks exacerbating the very problem it aims to solve. For all of those reasons, I restate that the Opposition is opposed to the bill.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:50): I am delighted to make a contribution to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. I thank the member for Newtown for bringing the bill before the House. While the Government does not support it at this time, I acknowledge the member's passion and her reasoning for introducing the bill. Ultimately it is motivated by the serious issue of homelessness in New South Wales, particularly in Sydney and in the electorate of Newtown. I acknowledge that motivation, good intent and goodwill in that space.

I listened with interest to the contributions of those opposite and I will go into more detail on that in a moment. We have heard numerous contributions in this place on housing development. I acknowledge the planning Minister and his staff and thank them for their preparation in response to the bill. I note the shadow Minister's contribution. The reality is people in New South Wales are in this situation largely because of the ignorance and opaque means of the former Government. The former Government is not to blame for everything; I do not suggest that. I have a realistic view. There are market challenges out there with a number of other contributing challenges. But, at the end of the day, it was the NSW Liberals who had the reins when it came to housing delivery.

I have lived with that challenge in my electorate, which is a growth area, as you know, as the member for Sydney, Mr Temporary Speaker. You have been to Campbelltown a couple of times. The southern areas, from Appin Road towards the Illawarra, are developing areas that were put on hold for a long time, which in turn held up investment and infrastructure. It held up the installation of the important and desperately needed koala crossings—so that our precious koalas do not get run over—along the Appin Road. The ongoing effects are still being felt. But there is progress. Work has now started on the Appin Road. There are now adequate approvals in areas so that people can get in the market. That has been under the Minister's watch and that of his team. I thank him for his collaborative approach with me and my community while we navigate the balance between housing and essential infrastructure delivery with environmental preservation and koala habitat conservation.

Members know of the legacy of former Government members, and I will not carry on any more about them. I now understand why they were so against delivering housing: It must be the application process that they struggled with. Perhaps any application process where they had to fill out paperwork is too confusing for the NSW Liberals. It is interesting that a motion was moved in the other place that would have totally abolished the Government's Transport Oriented Development Program and meant that the State would miss out on 175,000 houses. That is 175,000 homes for people. Members know exactly where Opposition members stand on that issue. Members know exactly where the member for Newtown stands, which is in an honourable position addressing serious issues.

In summary, the bill seeks to amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act—the EP&A Act—and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 to transfer the definition of "affordable housing" from the State environmental planning policy into the Act and to retain affordable housing in perpetuity. The bill also seeks to create a register of affordable housing across the State, to keep track of all of the affordable homes that exist and are being built, and requires that the register be established through the EP&A Act under the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Both of those things are good in theory. However, there is a concern within the Government that theory and reality are not always aligned in this circumstance. In the real world, wishing does not make it so. Government members take into account the advice of the people who have to implement this, which is ultimately why we have landed in the position that we have on this matter, among other matters. The unintended consequences of the bill could lead to further unnecessary complexity to the planning system, which the Minister is progressively and

proactively working on to address. The feedback I get from the industry is that the opaque system that has been in place for a long time has led to the serious shortfall of housing, resulting in inflated prices and affordability issues. I note the commentary from those opposite about affordability. The reason the market is currently so inflated is because of the lack of supply that occurred for over a decade and possibly beyond. When you reduce supply, you inflate the market. The Government now has to play catch-up everywhere, no matter how dense the area.

Density planning around the transport corridor is a good thing. I draw on the example of Macarthur station in my electorate. With Macarthur Square, the university and the TAFE close by, it is the perfect location. A lot of the people who would move into the units currently being assessed by Campbelltown council would be university students. The location attracts international students. The hospital is just a few hundred metres away. A lot of it is affordable development as well. That is something that I truly welcome. I had a briefing from Landcom the other day. I will leave that process for Landcom to go through, but I appreciate the information. The Government will work with council and any stakeholder, because New South Wales needs homes, but it needs them in the right place.

The other good thing about density around the train station is that building up, which the community accepts, removes the pressure to bulldoze trees to the south of the electorate, and that is a good thing. The Government does not want to do that unless it is essential. But it is essential to build roads and houses, and sometimes trees are in the way. It is truly disappointing to have that circumstance, but the reality is the Government has to move on because the market says it has to. The more dwellings are built around the transport corridors, the more pressure to bulldoze trees and other sensitive environmental areas is removed. That is a serious concern for me and our communities. It is also a serious concern for the Government and the Minister. It gets back to what I was referring to, which is about finding the balance between conserving the environment and habitats while also delivering houses for the thousands of young people and others trying to get into the market.

My children happen to be a couple of those young fellas trying to get into the market. They are struggling at this time for a few reasons: first, the homes are not there; and, second, they cannot afford them, which comes down to supply. Again, that is the objective that the member for Newtown is ultimately trying to achieve. Almost all members in this place are trying to achieve that too. But it is a light on the hill moment. We want to get to the light on the hill, but how do we get there? The how is where the Government varies with the member for Newtown and other crossbench members. But we all agree and are on the same page that we need to do everything we can to address the issue.

The Minister and the Government are working with The Greens and the crossbench and anyone else who wants to find better solutions. That is because, as I have repeatedly stated, the best outcomes are achieved in this place when we work together. That is what the Government wants to do. I know not every member in this place feels that way, but thankfully the majority of members do subscribe to that approach to achieve a better outcome. I note that some of the planning and development going on around the west and south-west has not been complemented with adequate preservations and investment in infrastructure. Again, we need to play catch-up. *[Extension of time]*

The areas around the north-west or the south-west or the far west of Sydney have been weathering the housing storm without adequate infrastructure. Previously, we saw more housing with more road tolls and no infrastructure or investment. That is the frustration of the people of west and south-west Sydney. When I make my representations as the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney, working with the Deputy Premier and the good Minister for Western Sydney, that is the overwhelming feedback that we receive. The reality is that that is not going to change overnight. The Minister rightfully referred to some of the positive steps that have been put in place and the results that the Government has achieved in a short time.

It is heartbreaking to visit our communities and see hardship and homelessness. There are many different reasons for homelessness, but one reason is because people cannot afford to live in a home. Many of those people earn a good living from great occupations and they still cannot afford it, particularly those escaping domestic violence. The Government's position on reducing homelessness in the recent budget is a very positive step forward. I have drifted away from the bill, but this is all relevant. At the end of the day, it is all about supply. A lack of supply causes a whole heap of other problems, like market inflation and homelessness. I know that the Temporary Speaker works hard for his constituents in the CBD and around his electorate. It is heartbreaking but, thankfully, the member for Sydney is working hard to support them.

Going back to the Minister's contribution, I give credit to the Minister and his team for working proactively. The Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces is in the Chamber with me today. He also works very hard. As a former mayor of Blacktown he worked very hard on local council—but we will not talk about local councils. We will not go there. We have already debated that. But he knows, as a member in Western Sydney and a former mayor in Western Sydney, the ongoing plight of families and businesses. There is a significant variance

between a good development and a development. This Government, the Minister and his team are focused on delivering good developments that not only build houses but also build communities. That is a variance in itself. It is one thing to construct a building or a house but it is a totally different objective to build a community. That is why it is important to stay engaged with stakeholders and to maintain a good relationship with the local government sector and the developing communities that need support.

It is not that people do not like change; they get scared of change and what they do not understand. It is important to give people the right information. For me, as a local member, I am truly committed to making sure that I am making representations consistent with the community's needs, dreams and aspirations. That is for existing residents and also for future residents because future residents, like existing residents, want to live in a good community and enjoy the lifestyle that the residents of Campbelltown, like myself, have enjoyed for many years. That will only happen with a strong contribution and commitment from a government that understands that we need supply. People do not want to live in trees or caves. We need to live in houses. While we continue to want to live in houses, we have to build them. That is just the market reality. That is a fact of any society and community.

Mr Clayton Barr: There are only so many caves out there.

Mr GREG WARREN: We have a lot in Campbelltown. I am happy to take the member for Cessnock through them all. He makes a very good point. My electorate in Campbelltown has the very proud people of the Dharawal. I note the Bull Cave and the sensitivities of Aboriginal preservation in those sacred sites. I spend a lot of time in the Dharawal National Park, engaging with country and particularly with my own Aboriginal heritage from my late grandmother, who was a Yuin woman. I did not have much connection with my Aboriginal heritage when I was growing up but I certainly enjoy it as I get older, and I enjoy it most through the Dharawal. I thank the member for Newtown and acknowledge her passion. I appreciate her bringing the bill before the House today.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (13:05): I enthusiastically support the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024 brought before the House by my colleague the member for Newtown. I contribute to debate on the bill because New South Wales does not have any truly affordable housing other than the housing that is supplied in public and social housing. We are calling properties "affordable housing" when the reality is that it is actually not affordable at all. The bill will require affordable housing that is described as such to be held in perpetuity. Currently, that housing is not held in perpetuity; it has a 15-year minimum period or a 10-year period for some. We find that, after that period, those houses go back on the market and join a massive number of properties that are hugely unaffordable in this State.

The bill will cap rents for affordable housing at 30 per cent of a tenant's gross income. To consider affordable housing, we must consider the tenant's income. The market rate does not deliver affordable housing at all. An article in the Herald from March this year outlined that the rental costs in many areas of Sydney jumped on average about 20 per cent in just one year. If affordable housing only gives somebody a 20 per cent discount on the market rate, they will end up not much better off than they were the year before. That does not deliver affordable housing at all. We must get serious. If we are going to call housing "affordable housing", it needs to be actually affordable.

The bill will also establish a statewide register of affordable housing to be maintained by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Bizarrely, we do not know how many affordable properties we have in the State. There is no data available on the total number of affordable housing properties in New South Wales. Nobody knows how much there is. How on earth do we make sure there is enough affordable housing for people if we do not know how much there is? If we do not know how much affordable housing there is in the State, it is impossible to understand the need and then fix the issue. The suggestion in the bill to establish a register and make sure that the housing we are calling affordable is actually affordable is not a pie in the sky idea at all.

I counter the Minister's assertions that The Greens are grandstanding on the bill. We are not grandstanding. We know that the current system is not working. The system should not call housing affordable when it is not. The system should not allow developers to build more densely and not deliver properties that will be of public benefit at all because the properties they are delivering are only slightly cheaper than the exorbitantly priced rental properties in Sydney and in New South Wales.

I talk about the Transport Oriented Development [TOD] Program State environmental planning policy [SEPP]. There is a lot of talk from the Government about the transport oriented development. We support the concept of building more densely around transport hubs. But this is not going far enough towards the expectation of the affordable housing that should be delivered on those sites. The rate has not been finalised on the first round of TOD SEPPs in the prime sites that the Government is talking about. It is up to 15 per cent. That is a ceiling, not a floor. What does up to 15 per cent mean? Is it 1 per cent? Is it 5 per cent? If we are talking up to 15 per cent—

which I would argue is still not enough—how will we ensure that there will be 15 per cent of affordable housing delivered on these sites?

Then the second round of the Transport Oriented Development locations are starting off at a whoppingly ambitious rate of 2 per cent affordable housing! We are told that that will be ramped up over time and that it will slowly be ratcheted up—depending on the market conditions, of course. How do we know that in another five years time the market conditions will be such that we do not have any more than 2 per cent affordable housing on these additional sites? We have exactly the same problem that we started with: Not enough affordable housing is being delivered in this State. I do not even want to get started on the diverse and well-located housing SEPP that affects a huge area of my electorate.

Mr Clayton Barr: Come on, get started!

Ms KOBI SHETTY: All right, I will get started on it. The areas of the City of Sydney and the Inner West Council have a different zoning of R2, and a huge majority of my electorate will be impacted by those planning reforms. This change to the planning laws requires zero affordable housing unless they are getting a density bonus. So one reform will deliver up to 15 per cent affordable housing, but God only knows what we will end up with. Another one will deliver 2 per cent, which apparently might be ratcheted up if the market—which is always so keen to deliver affordable housing—works in a way that it actually means conditions will be improved. And then diverse and well-located housing will deliver a total amount of affordable housing that is exactly zero.

In this State we have a government that does not want to cap rent increases. The Government is very reluctant to tell landlords that they should not be able to increase rents by 20 per cent every year. We have a government that does not want to make developers build housing that is affordable. We have a Federal Government that has no interest in tackling the hugely contributive issues around negative gearing and capital gains. While we are in this situation, it is not enough to simply rely on building more supply, and yet all we hear is, "Supply, supply, supply." We need more supply; we get that. But if we are not delivering supply that will be affordable for people in this State, we are getting nowhere.

The Government loves to talk about the fact that Sydney will be a city with no grandchildren. We have heard that wheeled out countless times over the past six months. My kids are in primary school, and I would very much like them to be able to afford to live near me in the inner city, but it is not looking good at this point and they are only in primary school. For those of us who have grandchildren, we want them to be able to afford to live near us in our communities in our cities. We want a truly diverse population of people to come and live in our cities like nurses, teachers, garbage collectors—people who are absolutely critical to the social infrastructure of our city—yet they cannot afford to live here. We have a government that says we are going to have a city with absolutely no grandchildren in it, and we are not doing enough to make sure that our city is affordable.

The Camperdown dive site in my electorate, a former WestConnex site, is sitting empty. The big site sitting on Parramatta Road will be used to deliver social and affordable housing. We had an election promise that 30 per cent of all government land will be used for social and affordable housing. Yet the 100 homes that will be delivered on that site—and it can fit a lot more than that—will be private market homes. So no affordable or social housing is being delivered on that site. It is simply not good enough. The bill introduced by the member for Newtown is a sensible reform. It will mean that when we talk about affordable housing, we can genuinely say, hand on heart, that when somebody is building an affordable dwelling in this city or across this State, it will be affordable. At the moment developers are building affordable housing that nobody can actually afford, and we are not doing any better as a State to make sure that the people we want to be living in our cities—a diverse population of key workers, our children and grandchildren—can stay living here. It is simply not good enough.

I am sick of hearing the Government's endless stream of, "Supply, supply, supply. Supply will fix it." The market is not designed to deliver affordable housing. The market is designed to enrich property developers who are building the houses, which is why it never looks feasible to build more than 2 per cent affordable housing. I commend the member for Newtown for bringing this bill before the House. The Greens, along with housing advocates who have been calling for these reforms for decades, will continue to push for this type of reform, as we did with ending no-ground evictions and dragging the Government kicking and screaming on community housing. We will continue to work until the State Government takes seriously the need to deliver affordable homes. We will continue to support reform that limits increases on rental properties and enables people in this State to afford a house to live in and have a roof over their heads.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:15): I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024, introduced by The Greens. From the outset, as explained in great detail by the Minister, I indicate that the Government opposes the bill. I will start where the member for Balmain finished off in terms of the free market. I do not know how to insert sarcasm into *Hansard*, but I think the phrase is, "It's a free market, baby"—the free market will fix everything, and the market is the

solution! Clearly the housing market has completely failed the humans, not just in New South Wales but in many sites across the globe. Affordable housing is a step in the direction of trying to do something about that abject failure. It is not just in New South Wales. I make that point again, and I probably will make it a few more times.

I was trying to get to the roots of the term "affordable housing". After searching around online a bit, I just could not. I read stories from different countries and different states within countries in preparing my remarks today. I found lots of instances that had definitions of "affordable housing" and other instances that did not. I also found different interpretations of percentages and of what is affordable and what is not. I am a member of Parliament from a more regional area, the Cessnock electorate. Prior to my arrival in this place—and, to be perfectly honest, in the first couple of years I was in this place, having been here for 13 years—the concept of affordable housing was something that did not really trouble the good people I represent, for a couple of reasons.

First and foremost, it was still possible to purchase a home at a reasonable price with most wages. There was that element. The other side to it was that if people did not have the means to purchase a home, it was still possible to rent at a reasonable price. Increasingly, though, and at an extremely heightened level over the past five or six years, people have come into my electorate office to see me and my staff, desperate for some support, with really heartfelt stories. As local MPs, members will know how difficult it is to sit with somebody who is crying about being homeless and being left on the streets. I have seen an increasing volume of people in the electorate office at Cessnock living under this reality. Those people are working. They have jobs. They have incomes. In many cases, they have good, reliable jobs and earn reasonable wages, but they can no longer afford the market in little old Cessnock.

Affordable housing has now definitely become an important part of my work as a local member, and my understanding of what is affordable and what is not affordable has grown. I go back to the point that when I first came to this place as the member for Cessnock, I did not need to know too much about it. I can only imagine that this issue has been front and centre for the good burghers of Sydney city, and down around places like Newcastle, for decades. I despair at how difficult it has been. I am sure—I am certain—that that underpins the purpose of this bill. I have had the good fortune of working with the member of Newtown around a number of important rent and tenancy reforms.

Ms Jenny Leong: Short, sharp inquiries, I believe.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Short, sharp inquiries are indeed what we specialise in, no matter who the chair is.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Order! Consideration of general business orders of the day (for bills) has now concluded. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Motions

HUMELINK COMMUNITY BENEFITS FUNDING

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (14:30): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that Transgrid as the developer of the HumeLink energy transmission project has pledged community benefits funding to "boost the people who live and work in the regions local to Transgrid assets or construction".
- (2) Notes that the current proposal put to the regulator for community benefits is approximately 0.003 of the project's total cost and a small fraction of the amount allocated to communities elsewhere in the State affected by similar infrastructure.
- (3) Calls on both the State and Federal governments to do all they can to make sure the Australian Energy Regulator and Transgrid approve and provide appropriate and adequate compensation for communities along the route.

We are in the midst of an energy revolution. We are moving from a system of coastal coal-fired power stations to a network of solar factories and wind turbines across rural Australia, connected by tens of thousands of kilometres of powerlines. It is a critical transformation for the future of our planet, but it will be a burden to rural communities. As a result of the decision to build powerlines overhead and not underground, the impact on communities will be even greater. The towers are a massive blight on the landscape. They are 85 metres tall, with a 70-metre swath of land cleared beneath them. The HumeLink towers and wires will leave a lifelong burden on those who live in their path. Whether landowners like it or not, these lines will loom over the landscape, robbing people of their lifestyle amenity, livelihoods and, in some cases, even their homes.

Communities are, quite understandably, furious. The whole thing could have been easily avoided. For a long time, I have advocated that these lines should be underground—and I still believe that is the case. Instead, we will be stuck with the cheap alternative. As the member for Goulburn said during her private member's statement last night, there remain very significant issues with the approval of the HumeLink funding. Despite establishing that underground lines are better for the environment, safer, more efficient and far less expensive

than overground proponents claim, the regulators and the Government continue to support the overhead option. In doing so, they have absolutely failed to win the social licence that is so important for these projects to succeed.

The core tenet of this motion is the need to support the communities that have to put up with these powerlines. I am not talking about individual compensation for landowners—that is an issue I have fought on and have made some progress on. I am not talking about community consultation. Again, that is something I have had to fight for since the start of this project, when landowners were treated with disrespect and dismissed out of hand. At least in the past two years the builders of these projects and the Australian Government have recognised that they do need to have a social licence, but a social licence is not free. That is why we need to discuss the effect of these powerlines on the whole community.

We need to discuss proposed benefits for communities that will be forever scarred by the HumeLink. In return for the HumeLink, the operator at Transgrid is proposing to pay approximately \$15.5 million in community benefits on a project worth more than \$4.5 billion. There are two problems with that. First, the amount being offered is paltry. The offer represents only 0.3 per cent of the total project cost for HumeLink. Under the new guidelines for renewable energy infrastructure, community benefits are recommended to be paid at the equivalent of 1 per cent of the total project cost. Why should the communities affected by HumeLink not have at least that level of community benefit? Instead, they are being offered the paltry sum of \$15.5 million. It is an insult and it needs to be corrected. It is no wonder the communities remain angry.

The second problem with this paltry offer is that it was framed by Transgrid and submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator, neither of which is an elected body nor has proper accountability to the communities concerned. The regulator tells me it can do no more than review the proposal from Transgrid. At least now it is prepared to accept it can approve some social licence. Before, the only consideration by the regulator was cost—build the cheapest. It is not clear to me what community consultation took place on this proposed sum. Basically, the unelected proponent is asking the unelected regulator to decide what is good for the community. It is not fair. It is not respectful. It is what happens when government is outsourced.

I note the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner Community Engagement Review into renewal energy infrastructure in February this year. It was a great review but, unfortunately, it was five years too late. It made nine recommendations for renewable energy infrastructure, including the equitable sharing of the benefits of the transition to renewables. So far, that has not been the experience of the people dealing with HumeLink. In fact, it has been far from it. I note that earlier this year a similar motion to this one was passed by the Legislative Council, with the support of the Government. I urge the Government, the Opposition and my crossbench colleagues in this place to follow suit and do all they can, including seeking the support of the Federal Government, to make sure that the Australian Energy Regulator and Transgrid provide appropriate benefits to communities along the HumeLink route.

I am not talking about the so-called community benefits that are part of the ordinary business of the project, including the workforce that will be employed, the local expenditure on acquiring goods and tree planting to offset the destruction of the environment. I am talking about lasting benefits that will compensate the community for the lasting impact of the powerlines. This week at the Regional Australia Institute national summit in Canberra, CEO Liz Ritchie said:

Claims about additional local jobs or benefits-sharing from projects need to be backed up with actions because, based on previous experience, often people don't believe it.

I could not agree more. People in my electorate are indeed sceptical about benefit sharing. Why would they not be? Actions speak louder than words. The onus is on the renewable infrastructure developers, particularly Transgrid, to stop talking and start doing. With that in mind, I call for the community benefits to reflect the impact of HumeLink, with community benefits to equate to at least 1 per cent of the project cost. That is the fair thing to do. That is the right thing to do. It is one significant step that can be taken to begin to address the impact that HumeLink will have on communities now and into the future. That way, HumeLink can at last begin to earn the social licence it needs for the project to be accepted by communities as part of our renewable energy plan.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:37): The Government supports the motion and acknowledges the work of the member for Wagga Wagga, who has stood up and argued hard for his community every step of the way. I once lived in his community. I went to school there. It is a community I care deeply for. The good member for Wagga Wagga continues to have productive and important discussions with the Government, Transgrid and landholders as we move through this project. The New South Wales Government recognises the important role that landholders and local communities play in the transition to the clean, affordable and reliable energy system the people of New South Wales need and deserve for their future prosperity. The energy transition is ultimately all about people. We will not deliver on our vision if we do not have a lasting positive legacy for the people who host electricity infrastructure and a better world for future generations.

Whether it be through early engagement, local workforce development or benefit-sharing schemes, the New South Wales Government is focused on putting people at the heart of the energy transition. When the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap was established, it did not consider payments to those hosting transmission lines beyond the compensation mandated under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. Through the Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme, the Government has enhanced the benefits to landholders hosting major new transmission infrastructure. Through the scheme, private landowners in New South Wales will receive \$200,000 per kilometre of transmission infrastructure on their land. The payments are in recognition of the critical role that those landowners will have in the transition to a clean economy and to ensure that they share directly in the benefits of that significant economic investment. The payments will also establish an ongoing and diversified income stream for those landholders, which will, in turn, provide indirect economic benefit to the local community.

Transmission is a critical enabler of the energy transition, which is essential for achieving our net zero goals—something that all sides of the House agreed on through our support for the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and the climate change bill, which passed this House earlier this year and committed to and legislated our need to meet our emissions reduction targets. Achieving those targets will not be easy. Transitioning our economy and tackling climate change is the challenge of our lifetime. The HumeLink project and other major transmission and New South Wales renewable energy infrastructure projects are essential for decarbonising our energy system and meeting our net zero targets. Meeting those targets is essential for the future health, wellbeing and prosperity of the people of New South Wales, our communities and our environment.

The New South Wales Government is fully committed to delivering a successful and timely energy transition. New South Wales has long been at the leading edge of that transition in Australia, and we intend to continue to lead the way. The rollout of the new transmission network creates opportunities to grow, transform and diversify our regional economies, and deliver tangible, lasting benefits for those communities. As a regulated network business, Transgrid must apply to the independent regulator—the Australian Energy Regulator, or the AER—for determination on what project and operating costs it can recover from consumers through network charges on electricity bills.

Transgrid's social licence framework outlines its approach to building and maintaining community acceptance across its projects. Transgrid's social licence framework indicates that it would like for around 1 per cent to 1.3 per cent of a major project's total cost to be directed to social licence measures. In Transgrid's recent contingent project application for stage two of the HumeLink project, it requested \$89.9 million in expenditure directly related to achieving social licence for the project. The AER accepted those costs in its published determination, which amounts to around 2.3 per cent of the total approved stage two capital costs. In its decision the AER noted that it is the responsibility of the project proponent, Transgrid, to determine how best to spend those funds to obtain social licence for the project.

The member for Wagga Wagga and other community representatives along the HumeLink corridor should engage directly with Transgrid to discuss how those funds may be best used for the long-term benefit of their communities. The AER, in its role as independent regulator, has indicated that it recognises the importance of investing in activities to build and maintain social licence for those critical projects. That investment is necessary to ensure that they can be delivered on time and maximise benefits for all electricity consumers. The AER is currently reviewing its guidelines to provide clearer direction to network businesses on the inclusion and justification of social licence activities and costs for major infrastructure projects.

I applaud the AER for its initiative as it is extremely timely to consider how the regulatory framework that governs major transmission projects can better serve the communities that are hosting them. The New South Wales Government is also continuing to explore opportunities to further enhance benefits for communities impacted by the energy transition. In the July meeting of the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council, Minister Sharpe raised the issue of taxation on payments to landholders for hosting transmission infrastructure. From that meeting, Minister Sharpe obtained a commitment from the Australian Government to work collaboratively with the States and Territories to explore the issue and to return with recommendations at the December 2024 meeting.

New South Wales has also worked collaboratively with the other jurisdictions and energy sector stakeholders on national guidelines for community engagement and benefits for transmission projects. The guidelines aim to enhance and continually improve community engagement and benefit-sharing practices for transmission projects nationally. They were endorsed by the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council at the July meeting and are published on the ECCMC website. The New South Wales Government is committed to minimising the negative impacts of HumeLink and leveraging its opportunities for enhancing our regional infrastructure and economies. We will continue to explore opportunities to improve those outcomes. We support the motion.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (14:44): I commend the member for Wagga Wagga for moving this motion, particularly because high-voltage transmission towers are being constructed for HumeLink in his electorate. At least out west in the Tamworth electorate there is the option to put them underground. The high-voltage transmission towers will be a blight on the landscape. Healthy rivers, healthy farms and healthy communities, and a cleaner, greener environment is the overarching message that needs to be sent across New South Wales. That is understood. But it should not be at the expense of regional communities, who have to suffer purely because a regulator has drawn a line on a map from A to B—from Queensland down to the Hunter Valley—and bureaucrats have said, "Well, that's the quickest, cheapest and easiest route". Building high-voltage transmission towers of steel will impact the skyline of beautiful regional New South Wales. That route happens to go through backyards, farmlands and highly productive agricultural land, which includes equine facilities.

That carelessly thought-out plan to draw a line and say, "This is where we're going to go. Now let's go and consult with the community", is very poor indeed on the part of the Government and the regulator. Landowners and residents have contacted my office outraged at EnergyCo's lack of consultation, its lack of social licence, the impact on properties, and the ongoing lack of adequate response to those concerns. Voluntary community groups in the Tamworth electorate have formed in opposition to the project. Community members and farmers are being forced to give up their time to investigate alternative routes and build a case in opposition to EnergyCo's existing route. There is an ongoing perception that the investigation of the transmission route is flawed and ignored the practical route—which is a government-owned, Crown land stock route—the Aberbaldie travelling stock route.

The message is clear: remove high-voltage transmission lines from the easy route that has been chosen, which will ruin and impact community members' lives, and get them off private land and onto public land. When we think about the options that are available on public land—on travelling stock routes and Crown reserves—for those particular pieces of electrical infrastructure, it stands to reason that is where they should go. We implore EnergyCo and the Government to consider the options that we took to them. We suggested the travelling stock routes to them. They did not know they existed until we said, "Have you looked at these options to get them off private land and onto public land?" That is where they should go. They should stop impacting our community. The planning system and the consultation process are broken when it comes to the headlong rush into renewables. Again, clean, green renewable energy is where we need to be but not at the expense of ripping families and communities apart.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:48): I support the motion. I heard the contribution of the member for Tamworth. I entered this debate quite a few years back. I do not mean to throw stones, but under the former Government renewable energy projects were being rolled out in my electorate without consultation. I worked with the member for Clarence because our electorates border each other. The first project was a battery project at McKees Hill, and there was a solar and wind project in Tenterfield. There was absolutely no consultation whatsoever; there was no architecture or machinery of government to allow that to happen. The lack of consultation was not just in March 2023; it is an ongoing issue and it was due to the machinery of government. I worked with the Ministers of the day to try to change that, and I have done so with Minister Sharpe. Change has come. It is changing, though it has been a battle.

The member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Goulburn know about that battle because we have been talking about it for quite a few years. But the change has come because we cannot roll out an energy project and have a person first find out about it from their neighbour who spoke to the company. That has changed, which is important. It is why members are debating the matter. In December 2023 the Government passed the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 with bipartisan support across the New South Wales Parliament. The same thing happened previously with the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020. For the first time that climate change Act enshrines in law those emissions reductions targets for New South Wales, which is a good thing. That needed to be enshrined in law.

Achieving those targets will not be easy, but there is a commitment from the Government, and the processes are in place to do it. We have to transition our economy. It is not a choice; it is not optional. The HumeLink project, like other major transmission and renewable energy infrastructure projects, is essential to decarbonise our energy system and meet the net zero targets. Those targets are not there for some odd reason; they are there because we need them for our future health, wellbeing, livelihood and economic future. Renewables are the most affordable source of new-build energy. The debate about nuclear energy is nonsense. It is never going to happen. Nuclear power plants are expensive and the sort of nuclear option being talked about does not exist.

There are many reasons to upgrade the electricity network and harness the State's abundant solar and wind resources to deliver more affordable clean energy. The member for Wagga Wagga has advocated on behalf of his community, which is welcome. That advocacy benefits not only the member's community but also the State. That is important because we must work together to achieve the targets. As I have said, there is no other option.

Otherwise we will not have an economy, an environment or any health or wellbeing. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for introducing the motion and I commend the Government for supporting it.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (14:52): I welcome the opportunity to make a short contribution to debate on the motion, which I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for introducing to the House. The HumeLink project impacts my electorate, but it has obviously impacted the electorate of the member for Wagga Wagga much more than it has mine. The community of Yaven Creek in my electorate has been impacted. EnergyConnect has had an impact to the west in my community around Cullivel, north of Urana, and on Coleambally, in the Murrumbidgee council area. There are two aspects to it. First, at the end of the day, the rollout of transmission infrastructure does have an impact on regional communities. While members acknowledge that the transmission infrastructure benefits communities at point A and point B, the communities and individual landholders in between are affected, and we must look at that.

I vividly recall several meetings with the former energy Minister, together with the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Goulburn. We achieved a more just recompense program for individual landholders, which was significant. Second, we must build social licence and benefit the broader community that is impacted by the projects. I am passionate about ensuring that the community benefit is more than just another lick of paint for the local community hall. It is not just Transgrid, but too often as major projects occur through our regions, community benefit programs offer a coat of paint or a new fence at the local school. That is all well and good, but those benefit programs must have a deep, meaningful and positive impact on our communities moving forward. I reiterate that call.

The general manager of Murrumbidgee council, John Scarce, and the mayor, Ruth McRae, are great people. John asked me, "Why can't we look at digital connectivity improvements and improvements in mobile connectivity through co-location with the transmission infrastructure? It can be done." In that regard, I recognise Naveen Bhutani, formerly an employee at Transgrid, from the strategic business unit at Essential Energy. That unit has looked at how transmission and electricity infrastructure providers can work to provide benefits in telecommunications. During my earliest conversation with Transgrid on the matter, I asked, "Why can't we provide community benefit by improving digital connectivity for mobile phones?" Transgrid said, "Where could we trial that?"

I looked at the map and there was a mobile black spot where the transmission infrastructure goes, so I asked, "Why not south of Coleambally?" One of the Transgrid employees said, "I was there a fortnight ago. You're right: You can't get any phone connection there." That is the sort of community benefit we should look at and examine. Those sorts of projects occur in Canada and North America and, as part of the social licence, they provide lasting, meaningful, positive and deeply impactful benefit for communities. I encourage the Government to look at that.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:56): I am pleased to contribute to debate on the motion. I have great respect for the member for Wagga Wagga, who introduced the motion. He is a fierce advocate for his community. He comes to this place with ideas and solutions. I always appreciate that. But I call out some of the hypocrisy from Opposition members because I have not seen such hypocrisy before. The member for Tamworth contributed to the motion. He was a Minister in the former Government that delivered renewable energy zones [REZs], and he had the opportunity to have conversations. To his credit, the member for Albury spoke about having had access to and conversations with the Government. But when the renewable energy zones were introduced by the former Government, Labor in opposition did not receive that same access.

Labor members had to fight and advocate to have the Hunter and Central Coast included in the REZs even though they had the transmission lines, workforce, skills and capacity to deliver them much quicker than in the Central West, New England, north-west and south—all of those other regions. While it is great that there are renewable energy zones in those other regions, as the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, I can tell members that not one cent was set aside to look at the necessary infrastructure upgrades to get the blades, generators, transformers or any of that material out there. Not a dollar was spent on rail upgrades to help with solar or other projects. The former Government left a real gap in preparing for those REZs, which were introduced with glitter and glamour, by not looking at the community impact or the necessary infrastructure upgrades.

I pay the member for Wagga Wagga the courtesy of updating him on the Government's work in recent months. The Government has been working on this for some time. A memorandum of understanding has been signed by my agency, Transport for NSW, and EnergyCo so that Transport for NSW planners can look at those routes. That will be funded by EnergyCo. There is a commitment in the budget of \$128.5 million for the Port to REZ project on the Golden Highway. That has been a real issue because it was not identified by the Opposition when it was in government, so Labor is having to clean up the mess while it is in government.

The Government is also putting money into councils. In July I met with about 18 different councils—and another couple of councils last week—at their locations, about the concerns they are raising about this. Transport for NSW is also now leading a whole-of-government steering committee on transport and logistics about how we get this material to port, and from the port back into the regions where it is happening. This is all happening. Transport used to look after only State roads in this space, but it is looking also at roads in local councils and local communities because it is that last mile that really impacts on communities.

Transport is also looking at the cumulative impact of these projects. As I heard from the fantastic mayor Ambrose Doolan when I visited Coonabarabran, it is all right if their key performance indicator is 5 per cent to 10 per cent of their workforce. But if there are 10 projects, that is 50 per cent to 100 per cent of the workforce at risk. It is the same with housing and so on. These are things the Government has been doing. I have just given members a really small slice of my work as the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and the passion and the energy from my agency.

That energy and passion is right across the Government, in the work of Rose Jackson in the other place; the planning Minister in this place; and the wonderful Penny Sharpe in the other place, supported by her Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Blue Mountains. They are actually coming up with solutions. Former Ministers from the other side of the House sat around the Cabinet table with former Minister Kean and did nothing. It is a disgrace. Good on the member for Wagga Wagga for raising the issue. The Government is looking at it. Labor has the back of people in the regions because it is the party of the bush.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:00): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for continuing to raise this issue that our communities are facing. I appreciate the Minister's comments about what the Government is doing, and I take my hat off to the Government for that, now that it is starting to happen. It is because of the advocacy from us on the backbenches, with Mr Kean too, to try to make sure that some sensibility was brought into the conversation about the impacts on communities. As the member for Wagga Wagga said, the community benefits are a drop in the bucket with some of these projects. It needs to be looked at holistically, within communities who want to adopt these sorts of projects, as to the best benefit they can get out of them.

It is not all about the renewable energy zones. It is also about these corporate cowboys picking capacity in lines and just dumping these projects, without social licence and without talking to communities about what those projects might mean for them. That is the issue we are seeing in the Goulburn electorate. It is an absolutely unbelievable rush to try to get these projects in. The planning framework is falling short in recognising where these projects should be going and how best to serve the communities with these projects and bringing them along. That is where the planning system is failing, particularly for Goulburn.

When it comes to HumeLink, right from the get-go the consultation around this project was a disaster. That is where this project has fallen down and continues to fall down. I have spoken in this House many times about the issues around HumeLink and even around some of the information the Australian Energy Regulator has generated about HumeLink. The misinformation has let the community down. Trying to seek material changes to the project has recently been thrown out the door. It is an absolute disgrace. So it is about the process as well. If we are to go down this path, we must make sure that we are not absolutely wrecking regional areas and regional communities. They must be brought on board in this process. There absolutely must be social licence. We cannot allow these foreign-owned companies to come in and override community expectations. It simply must be done better.

I know that my community is frustrated. I continue to hear every week that we have new projects popping up, but there is no real community engagement about that. There is no real structure around the planning process. Corporations are picking capacity out of lines and just making sure they are offering huge numbers of dollars to landowners to allow these projects in, without really thinking about what is going on around those projects, who is being affected and what benefits can be given to the community, for the benefit of all of us. That is the question I have. I thank the Government for really taking this issue on board. More needs to be done. I have plenty of examples of consultation and other things not being done correctly in my electorate. We really need to fix this issue.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:04): In reply: I thank all members who have contributed to this debate: the member for Blue Mountains, who is the Parliamentary Secretary, and the members representing the electorates of Tamworth, Lismore, Albury, Maitland and Goulburn. I will address a few points raised. Firstly, I think we all agree that the people affected by this issue need to be acknowledged and recognised. As the member for Tamworth said, it is the people between point A and point B who need to be recognised. I acknowledge the work of the Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister, who have genuinely engaged with me around this and are supporting this. The Parliamentary Secretary mentioned the Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme, which has come into place. I pay tribute to the member for Albury and the member for Goulburn, who with me took that issue to the previous Minister. We were able to get traction on that—I think we led the way in Australia on that, actually—

so I take my hat off to them for that and acknowledge them. It is great that that advocacy is continuing with the current Government.

The member for Blue Mountains mentioned the quantity labelled as social licence funding under the latest determination. I make this point: The regulator, which is unelected, and Transgrid, an unelected company, are deciding what will be labelled as social licence funding. As a component of that, only \$15.6 million is for community benefits. It is easy to label stuff as social licence funding, which is business as usual. I just call that out. What I am talking about here are materials for the community, a benefit for the community, similar to the amount allocated through renewable energy projects. I think it should be three to four times what has been allocated so far. I make that point. It is important, and I share with the Parliamentary Secretary the need for a "vision"—using her word—for the people affected. I thank her for her work and the Government's work.

The member for Tamworth shared his constituents' experience with EnergyCo. It is disappointing to hear about the fights they are having. But the member for Lismore did point out there was a lack of machinery of government to deal with consultation when this started. That is absolutely right. In fact, the renewable energy zones [REZs] were set up because the Government suddenly realised it had outsourced government and there was no means of community consultation. The REZs are an improvement on that, but HumeLink is not in a REZ. I acknowledge and was delighted to hear of the work that the transport department is doing as part of the REZs. That was part of the idea. However, HumeLink is not in a REZ.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It will be all of them. It is all good. We have the member's back.

Dr JOE McGIRR: That is excellent. The member for Maitland actually did remind me of how lonely it was when the debate started. I thank her. I was not quite triggered by the memory of it, but it is good to have support here today. I acknowledge once again the support of the member for Albury and the member for Goulburn and the work they have done to support and continue the discussion about this. We are seeing improvements in community engagement, but this issue of community benefits remains on the table.

Just before I finish, I mention one piece of good news. I think the Parliamentary Secretary mentioned that our Minister had taken the issue of taxation relief for payments to the Federal Government. That is good news because I have only ever heard a no on that. That is excellent. Finally, the issue of the community benefits is what is critical to getting the social licence. No one disputes the need for renewable energy. My communities are behind it, but they do not want to be left behind. They should share in the benefits of these projects, and community benefits are key to that. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TOLL REBATES

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (15:09): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the positive impact that the toll rebate is having for the residents of Western Sydney, especially in the electorate of Penrith.
- (2) Condemns the previous Government for its reckless agenda of privatisation, especially the roads.
- (3) Applauds the Government for delivering our pre-election commitment of a toll rebate that is easing cost-of-living pressures.

I am proud to move this motion because it was a key election commitment of the Minns Government, which has delivered it at a time when it is most needed. We promised an independent review, and it happened. We also said that while that process was underway we would implement a \$60 toll cap, and we delivered. The independent tolling review has found that Sydney's network of 13 tolled motorways is an expensive mess that benefits the private investors and costs the hardworking drivers of Sydney. That \$2.5 billion annual cash drain sucks the most from the motorists of Western Sydney, Central Coast and the Illawarra. Every day tolls drain money from the pockets of hardworking families at a time when they can least afford it. I know regular users of the M4 who constantly ask me why a toll was reintroduced on a road we had already paid for in February 2010 and was fully owned by the New South Wales Government. Those of us who have lived in Western Sydney and south-west Sydney will be forgiven for thinking this is a case of *deja vu*.

Let us explore some historical facts, because the toll roads of New South Wales have been contentious for some time. The Coalition has previous form on this issue from when it was in government over the decades. During the 1995 New South Wales State election Bob Carr pledged to scrap the hugely unpopular tolls on the M4 and the M5. However, as it turned out, that was not feasible due to the onerous contractual arrangements that the Liberals had agreed on with the motorway operators. As a result, Labor had to fashion the cashback scheme.

I agree that it was not ideal, but it was left with a mess. The cashback scheme, which was introduced in January 1997, offered motorists who used electronic tolling for private trips on the M4 and the M5 a refund of the toll, excluding the GST, which reduced the M4 toll for cars from \$2.75 to just 27¢. That is what Labor governments do.

The privatisation agenda of the previous Coalition Government contributed to its downfall last year. It needs to be highlighted that WestConnex alone accounts for around 52 per cent of the estimated toll figure in today's dollars. Based on those figures, users will be paying the cost for this scheme three times over in tolls because of the contracts that are locked in until 2060. That is another 36 years. All our grandchildren will still be paying for it. The residents of Western Sydney, south-west Sydney, Central Coast and the Illawarra have well and truly reached the point of toll saturation. Members on this side of the House heard it constantly during the election campaign. The aim of the tolls was to maximise the profits accruing to company shareholders rather than ensure that roads are well used and maintained. Indeed, before we put the toll rebate in place on 1 January this year, the exorbitant tolls forced drivers onto back streets. Some of the current toll contracts prescribe toll increases of an amount that is the higher of inflation and 4 per cent each and every year. Those shackles have, once again, been left by the previous Coalition Government.

A survey conducted by the independent review found that residents of Blacktown, south-west Sydney and Parramatta who used toll roads more than once per month spent, respectively, \$95.90, \$87.63 and \$84.35 a month on average. That is a cost of up to 30 per cent more than the average user. The data demonstrates that western and south-western Sydney residents pay the most but have the fewest public transport options available, highlighting the urgent need for reform. We heard the cry from residents and we have a plan. This Labor Government understands the enormity of the cost of living for New South Wales households and remains committed to ensuring that key transport routes do not place an extraordinary burden on the people who need to use them.

The Government is currently considering the recommendations of the Independent Toll Review and is preparing its full response, which will be announced in coming months. While the hard work on toll reform progresses, we are providing that relief via the \$60 a week cap, and we are now offering that crucial cost-of-living relief to up to 720,000 drivers. To date, the suburbs of Blacktown, Marsden Park and Baulkham Hills are receiving the most in toll relief. However, Penrith residents are telling me they are also getting substantial financial reimbursements. Tolling reform provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reduce the burden for Sydney drivers and we have a mandate to do that. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:16): The Opposition is concerned about the motion brought before the House by the member for Penrith and I make it clear that the Opposition does not support it. The Government applauds its toll cap rebate as an apparent delivery of a pre-election commitment to ease the cost of living. I wonder if the people of Western Sydney have been considered—an area home to pensioners, students, single parents, single-income families and apprentices. How does a toll cap rebate reduce cost-of-living pressures for people who more than likely are not even utilising the toll roads? They cannot afford to. The Government is insinuating that those lower income earners have \$60 per week to spare. That brings me to Labor's mismanagement of the toll cap, which it did not cost correctly.

Before the election Labor said that it would cost \$126 million and apply to accounts, meaning that a family under one account could benefit. Of course that is if it delivered on its pre-election promise. Instead, it now costs \$400 million and the cap is much harder to access than Labor promised it would be. Where did the \$200 million Labor needed come from? The cost-of-living support provided by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government is where it came from. The Labor Government will not say how long the rebate will continue for. Will it be funded beyond one year or was the promise an election sugar hit? What about those who use tolls as a one-off and therefore do not need to have a tag, the commuters who cannot warrant the fees associated with the tag? I dare say those people also need assistance with cost-of-living pressures.

I refer to paragraph (2) of the motion and note that a former Labor Government built toll roads in Sydney, including the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, the Eastern Distributor, the Cross City Tunnel, the M7 and the Lane Cove Tunnel. Guess who was Minister Carl Scully's right-hand man at the time? It was Premier Minns. Then there were the "Bob Carr built nothing" days, so there was not much to contribute from this period. My fear is that Premier Minns will maintain that legacy. Premier Minns has cancelled and underfunded so many projects across Western Sydney, which is where the people who those opposite think matter to them live. Premier Minns will not answer questions on what he will build. Does he have a vision? He is not sharing it with us. Those opposite should ask the people of Penrith—those who choose to use it—whether they benefit from WestConnex. Does the member for Penrith ever use WestConnex perhaps to come to Parliament or to cross to the other side of the city? The former Liberal-Nationals Government funded and built that infrastructure. Are those opposite going to boycott it because they did not build it?

Those opposite condemn the privatisation but love to stand next to the projects built off the back of the former Government's economic management. We designed, funded and built those projects—and those opposite cannot even open them properly. Consider Rozelle interchange or the metro city—I am still waiting for the target date for the opening of that, although I hear a whisper it might be soon. Should the people of Sydney not have four new metro lines to appreciate and travel on? Did those opposite also forget the multiple light rail lines we built? We built six new motorways—but those opposite would not travel on them because they do not believe in what we did. The list goes on. Paragraph (3) of the motion mentions the cost of living. Labor cuts to cost-of-living support include taking away the Active Kids vouchers, Creative Kids vouchers, First Lap vouchers, Back to School vouchers—I sound like a broken record with this, but I have to keep reinforcing it. Those opposite take with two hands during a cost-of-living crisis—and then take people's votes.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: And you suppressed their wages for 12 years.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Temporary Speaker, I would like to be able to speak without interruption, if you may give me that indulgence.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The member for Hawkesbury will be heard without interruption.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Thank you, Temporary Speaker. Prime Minister Albanese cannot manage interest rates and the Premier cannot manage a budget, which means the people of Penrith miss out. Ask the children of Penrith, who do not get to play sport or enjoy creative pursuits because of this Government. The people of Western Sydney most benefited from Active Kids vouchers. Former Premier Perrottet talked in his valedictory speech about when he was at a netball court at South Windsor. He spoke to a grandparent there—and I know this happened because I was with him at the time—who had a grand-daughter playing netball that day. She walked up to the former Premier said, "If we didn't have Active Kids vouchers, my grand-daughter could not be enjoying this game. She feels like a team member. She has a uniform. She's part of a team. She feels like a regular person there, rather than being shamed by standing and watching on the sideline."

Members opposite should talk to the parents of young children who do not get support to learn to swim—a basic, required skill that is part of the Australian way of life—because there are no more First Lap vouchers. Those vouchers are gone as a result of this Labor Government. As a Western Sydney girl, I know what it is like to prioritise what you spend your money on every week—and it was never, ever travelling on a toll road. Every week when I went grocery shopping I took a calculator with me to secretly add up everything I put in my trolley before I got to the checkout. Why? It was so I could remove anything I could not afford. I did not want to be humiliated if I did not have enough money to pay for my shopping. The shame of that was too much to bear, and it happened to me time and again. This Government is out of touch with reality. Members opposite assume everyone will benefit from toll relief, but there are so many who could never, ever afford to drive on a toll road. Those opposite have forgotten the forgotten people—pensioners, seniors, students, single parents and single-income families have all been forgotten by this Labor Government.

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:23): I support the motion moved by the member for Penrith. It is no secret that, thanks to the Liberals, Sydney has become the most tolled city in the world. The recent Independent Toll Review, initiated by this Government and conducted by Professor Allan Fels and Dr David Cousins, highlighted the abysmal reality of our current toll network. The report unpacks the full extent of the former Government's failures and its obsession with privatisation—or "asset recycling", as members opposite like to call it. The lack of a unified tolling system has resulted in complexity, inefficiency and downright unfairness. In fact, the review found that tolls were too high, that the tolling system was flawed and that it lacked transparency and flexibility.

The Liberal Party's pathetic oversight of public goods only benefits private interests. Instead of the money collected from tolls being used to fund more roads, it goes to the shareholders of a single corporation. Recent events have shown that those opposite cannot run their own party properly, so how can they be expected to run a government for the people of New South Wales? The simple answer is they cannot—and the people of western, north-western and south-western Sydney know it. Those people know the failures of the former Liberal-Nationals Government firsthand, as 17 out of the 20 most-tolled postcodes are in this region. "Tollmania" is hurting those who can least afford it. I know of constituents in my electorate of Riverstone who have to spend up to \$2,000 a month in toll fees. Amidst the cost-of-living crisis generated by concurrent State and Federal Liberal governments, the inequity of the toll system disproportionately affects Western Sydney.

The toll cap implemented by the Minns Labor Government to help with the cost of living resulted in 5,225 claims in my electorate of Riverstone in just the first round, which amounted to over \$1,517,071 going back into the pockets of hardworking residents of north-west Sydney. Why should those hardworking residents of Western Sydney have to pay the price? Why do they bear the brunt of this inequity, as they so often do with

matters across the board? The former Liberal-Nationals Government proved time and again that it is out of touch with those who are doing it the toughest in New South Wales. Tolls are just one example. Under the current scheme, tolls will cost motorists \$195 billion in nominal figures over the next 3½ decades. That is \$195 billion coming out of the pockets of people in New South Wales, which is on top of what they have already paid. It is a broken system, but a system we will fix.

We will take on the recommendations of the independent review by implementing a network-wide tolling system based on the declining distance model—a model that will reduce tolls for the majority of trips for the majority of drivers. The review states that benefits could start flowing to motorists by the middle of 2026. The review also found that the reduction of two-way tolling on harbour crossings was necessary to fund lower tolls on the remainder of the network. It recommends the establishment of a State-owned motorways entity called NSW Motorways to set and control prices with oversight from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal—all measures that were ignored by the previous Government. We are getting on with the job of fixing the unsatisfactory patchwork of tolls we have been left with. We are committed to our program of relief and reform, providing relief now in the form of a toll cap and working towards the complex task of reforming the toll network. We need to do this to provide equity for the people of western and north-western Sydney.

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (15:27): There is widespread agreement that we need to reform tolls. Australia's leading advocate for motorists, the NRMA, wants the system fixed, Western Sydney councils want it fixed, and the former Government eventually agreed that toll reform was needed. The Independent Toll Review not only found that this is needed but also demonstrated that it is possible—and that is our Government's position. Toll reform is possible. As reported by the Government on 4 June, Transurban and the seven other concession owners took a step closer to being part of the solution. Those owners co-signed a letter to the Independent Toll Review expressing their willingness to be part of the solution, with a desire to negotiate a new in-principle agreement by the end of this year. The Independent Toll Review found that Sydney's tolled motorway network is an expensive mess that benefits private investors and costs the hardworking drivers of Sydney. The review found that tolls were too high, that the tolling system is flawed and that it lacks transparency and flexibility.

The Government is currently considering the recommendations of the toll review and preparing its full response, which it will announce in the coming months. What we can say is that we are committed to taking back control of tolls in New South Wales. We believe network tolling is possible, and the review recommends this. The Government is open to negotiating with toll operators. Negotiation is the preferred approach. In the budget handed down by the Treasurer on 18 June 2024, the Government allocated \$16.6 million to "support tolling reform initiatives arising from the Independent Toll Review".

While the hard work on toll reform progresses, we are providing toll relief, with the \$60 weekly cap which now offers this crucial cost-of-living measure for up to 720,000 drivers. Many people in my electorate, including several of my children, are benefiting from that cost-of-living relief. The toll cap data reveals the suburbs of Baulkham Hills, Blacktown and Marsden Park need and receive the most toll relief. In my electorate, drivers in the suburbs of Bankstown and Revesby are receiving on average \$366 and \$219 in relief. But toll rebates will not be a quick fix; they will not be an easy fix. We cannot continue with a status quo that puts the financial interests of tolling operators above the people of New South Wales. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fix the tolling mess we inherited, end the cost-of-living nightmare and provide cost-of-living relief that will last for decades.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:30): I contribute to the great motion moved by the member for Penrith. Speaking of broken records, I have been in this place for almost a decade and if there is anything that riles communities in Western Sydney and beyond to the Blue Mountains, it is the issue of tolls. In June 2017 in this Parliament, the Liberal Government cut short a debate on an M4 toll petition, which had 10,000 signatures, about the impact of the outrageous \$2,200 annual toll it wanted to levy on commuters and the anger our communities felt about that. Its disgraceful policy of privatising roads punished commuters, many of whom do not have any other option but to drive to work each day and then home. No other issue has elicited such an angry response. Someone contacted my office and said, "The Liberals' privatisation agenda is absolutely disgraceful, and I'm usually a Liberal voter. This Government has never seen a road or a tunnel it didn't want to privatise and slap tolls on."

In the lead-up to the 2023 election, as the good member for Penrith and other members have mentioned, the issue that people stopped and talked to us about on the street, regardless of where they sat on the political spectrum, was the fact that tolls were out of control in New South Wales. That was a mess made by those opposite. They signed secret contracts. They privatised toll roads, and those deals continue to drive those record tolls. In my local Blue Mountains paper someone admitted that up until March 2023 they had always voted Liberal but would never vote for the Liberals again. They said, "The Liberals have been obsessed with their 'tollmania' policy. It is hurting the family budget."

This motion is about the positive impact that the Minns Government has had with toll rebates and providing positive relief for the residents of Western Sydney, the electorate of Penrith and beyond into my electorate of Blue Mountains. The Government has delivered on a commitment to introduce a rebate that eases the cost of living for many families. Those who live outside of the metropolitan area have to do a lot of travelling. One of my sons is a tradie and the other is a paramedic. The kind of work they do and the huge amount of travelling means the tolls stack up, and watching that was crippling. It is hilarious that the Opposition has one member only speaking to the motion, which is about the great effort the Minns Labor Government has taken to fulfil a commitment to ease the pressure on families and the cost of living through the toll rebate. I commend the great motion to the House. Well done, member for Penrith.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:34): I contribute unexpectedly to debate on the motion from the member for Penrith because usually an equal number of members from the Government and the Opposition speak to motions. For the third time this session, Opposition members have not bothered to turn up. A few months ago when the member for Blue Mountains brought to the House a motion about essential health workers Opposition members could not be bothered to turn up. Another important issue affecting—

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order: Has the member for Leppington sought leave to speak?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The member does not need to seek leave, but I ask that the Government Whip return to the leave of the motion.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I am happy to do that. I thank the member for Penrith for bringing this important motion to the House. As we have heard in all Government member contributions, tolls have a massive effect on the cost of living, especially in Western Sydney. The previous Government stands condemned for its dealings on the privatisation of roads. What about putting new tolls on old roads? Members may remember that one—the M5 East.

Ms Karen McKeown: And the M4.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: And the M4. I have never seen a road the Coalition did not want to toll. It was such an obsession that even the previous Premier coined the term "tollmania". Who can forget tollmania? The people of New South Wales can forget tollmania because this Government has ended it—tollmania is over. The Government has brought in the \$60 toll cap. My constituents in Leppington are very pleased. Similar to the experiences of other Government members, during my campaign, at pre-poll and on election day, dozens of voters who had voted Liberal their whole life told me they were voting for the Labor Party, Chris Minns and me because of the toll cap, including small business owners and families. The toll cap has made a massive difference to the way people in Western Sydney move around.

Yes, tolls have had a massive impact on families, but let us not forget the impact on businesses. That has been missed in this debate. In my electorate where the M5, the M7 and the Hume Highway all come together at Prestons, there is a large industrial precinct. A lot of logistics businesses, delivery businesses and primary manufacturers are there. Key to them being successful and thriving is their ability to deliver their goods all around Sydney. For most of them, within one or two kilometres from the facility, they are on either the M7 or the M5 and are getting pinged. The current toll regime brought in by the previous Government has been an anchor dragging on the economy in New South Wales. I thank the member for Penrith for bringing the motion to the House. I also thank the Opposition for not turning up and explaining its previous decrepit record to the people of New South Wales.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (15:38): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions of my parliamentary colleagues. I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her contribution. To answer the member's question, the Government has been very clear about the plan in place for toll reform. After the independent review process, we have put the toll cap in while we consider the findings of the review. We will have more to say on a proposal in the coming months. I thank the member for Riverstone for his contribution. The data shows that his constituents are severely impacted by tolls. I thank the member for East Hills for her contribution, the member for Blue Mountains for reminding us about the 2017 petition and the member for Leppington for his contribution commenting on the out-of-control tolls and on ending the tollmania. I thank all members for their contributions. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes44
Noes31
Majority..... 13

AYES

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

Hagarty, N (teller)
Hannan, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Kaliyanda, C
Kirby, W
Li, J
McDermott, H
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
O'Neill, M
Park, R

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

NOES

Amon, R
Anderson, K
Ayyad, T
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Crouch, A (teller)
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Henskens, A
Hodges, M

James, T
Kemp, M
Lane, J
McGirr, J
Moylan, B
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D

Singh, G
Sloane, K
Speakman, M
Taylor, M
Tuckerman, W
Ward, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Williamson, R (teller)
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Crakanthorp, T
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Minns, C

Thompson, T
Coure, M
Cross, M
Toole, P

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***COAL MINE SUBSIDENCE COMPENSATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024****WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL) BILL 2024****RICE MARKETING AMENDMENT BILL 2024****PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (TRANSPARENCY AND FIT AND PROPER PERSONS) BILL 2024****Assent**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Community Recognition Statements***POLICE ACADEMY GRADUATION**

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:48): I advise the House that tomorrow I will be attending yet another New South Wales police attestation in Goulburn. The numbers are again growing and growing. It is such a thrilling day to be there to see our newest recruits who by Monday will be in police stations around the State. I suspect that every member in this

House will have the great fortune of seeing one of our new recruits. I give a big shout-out to all of the teams who work at Goulburn and who so diligently train all of our police officers. I also thank the Commissioner of Police for her ongoing dedication to getting more police officers through the door and having more police on the ground in New South Wales. I am looking forward to hearing from all members about the wonderful work that the NSW Police Force is doing. I will report back to the House on our most recent and brightest recruits.

KU-RING-GAI POLICE AREA COMMAND AWARDS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:49): Every day our police officers put their personal safety at risk to keep our communities safe. I had the pleasure of attending the Ku-ring-gai and Hills police area commands awards ceremony, where many exemplary police officers and community heroes were recognised with special awards from the Police Force. Those officers have faced incredibly dangerous situations and put themselves in harm's way to save others. Some have also kept community members alive with CPR or attended confronting scenes, putting their personal safety at risk to protect our community. Some officers were presented with awards for their length of service to the Police Force and some were given awards for their diligent and ethical service, whilst others were awarded certificates of appreciation. Community heroes were also recognised at the ceremony with police area command certificates of appreciation for stepping in during dangerous situations. Those everyday citizens put themselves in unsafe situations in order to assist the police and community. I commend all award recipients and thank our local police for the great job that they do.

SYRIAC CATHOLIC CHURCH PARISH AND PASTORAL CENTRE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:50): I was honoured to attend and take part in laying the foundation stone for the new Syriac Catholic Church parish and pastoral centre in Kemps Creek in my electorate. The event, which took place on 8 July, was marked by the presence of church officials from across the community and the world, including Patriarch Mor Ignatius Youssef III Younan, who travelled all the way from Lebanon, and Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP, of the Archdiocese of Sydney. The ceremony is a crucial milestone for the Syriac community, which has been growing rapidly in the area. The new church and pastoral centre will serve the south-west Sydney community of more than 1,000 families. The church has been a refuge for many Syriac Catholics who fled persecution in Iraq and Syria. The establishment of this new centre aims to accommodate various religious and community activities, which were previously held in different locations due to the lack of a dedicated space. I congratulate Father Lenard Ina, who has championed this project from its inception. It symbolises not only the growth of the Syriac Catholic community but also their strength, resilience and integration into the broader Australian society.

HARDING MILLER EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:51): Harding Miller Education Foundation scholarships provide support to female students enrolled in an Australian public high school who demonstrate high academic potential and who are currently experiencing low socio-economic circumstances to complete their schooling years. Thanks to the Harding Miller Education Foundation, Ellyse Quinnell from Coolamon Central School has access to the resources to help her develop her academic capabilities. Ellyse's scholarship includes a high-quality laptop, four years of online IT support, high-speed internet, \$2,500 worth of online face-to-face tutoring, online homework help and prepaid expenses for her essential school needs. This comprehensive support is designed to ensure that she can focus on her studies. The Harding Miller Education Foundation has helped many students over the years. I encourage other female students looking for support to reach out. I wish Ellyse all the very best.

GRAHAM WILLIAMS

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:52): Today I honour Graham Williams, a dedicated member of the NSW Rural Fire Service who has served for an impressive 60 years since joining the Sussex brigade in 1964. At 81 Graham is the oldest and longest serving active member of the brigade. His dedication is evident by the numerous positions he has held, including captain and group 4 captain. Graham is committed to mentoring brigade officers and enjoys sharing his love for the brigade's history. Graham has played a vital role in developing brigade assets, especially the planning and construction of the Sussex station. Throughout the decades, Graham has encountered many close calls and responded to countless call-outs, including car accidents, a train derailment and many bushfires, including the Black Summer inferno of 2019-20. Graham takes immense pride in his time with the Rural Fire Service and finds great fulfillment in serving the community, believing that the challenges he has faced make it all worthwhile.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (15:53): The New South Wales local government elections on 14 September are well awaited in the Southern Highlands electorate of Wingecarribee, where, after three years of being under administration, residents will yet again have a local council consisting of members from their

community. Within my electorate of Wollondilly sit two local councils. In the north is Wollondilly Shire Council, covering areas such as Picton and Tahmoor. In the south is Wingecarribee Shire Council, with suburbs including Mittagong, Bowral and Burradoo. Wingecarribee has been under the administration of the experienced and capable administrator Viv May, who, along with the general manager, Lisa Miscamble, has worked hard to put the council in a good position ready to be guided to future successes with the newly elected council. I thank Mr May for his dedication to Wingecarribee over the past few years in a role which was filled with challenges. I wish all candidates well in the lead-up to the elections. I am pleased to witness the excitement within the communities as we look forward to welcoming newly elected, truly independent councillors to form councils that are inclusive and open to all.

MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:54): On Friday 2 August the social justice advocates of the Sapphire Coast welcomed Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF] to the Bega Valley shire to present in four local high schools followed by a public fundraising event. MSF sent two speakers to the schools, raising awareness about refugees worldwide and the work of MSF. The support of the principals and staff in organising the day was exceptional, with 400 students able to attend. The advocates were updated on the camps near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where nearly one million Rohingya people are contained, seven years after they fled a campaign of targeted violence. MSF teams in the camp delivered over 5,000 babies and tended to nearly 600,000 outpatients, with nearly 125,000 of them under five. That is the second time that the advocates have raised funds for the Rohingya. The advocates for the Sapphire Coast feel that Australia should take on a position of regional leaders, seeking durable solutions and calling for the legal status that the Rohingya deserve.

COMMUNITY SWIMMING GROUPS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:55): I recognise the contribution of the various and colourful community swimming groups in the east. Bondi has the Wombats on a Sunday, the Penguins on a Wednesday, the Boss Squad on a Wednesday and Saturday, the Salties on a Friday and Saturday, and the Peoples Biathlon wrapping up the week. They are uniquely different in their colours, names and workout choices, but they are all built on the same premise. They bring our community together, create important connections and promote physical and mental wellbeing on a weekly basis—and there is always time for coffee afterwards. Those groups are part of the foundation of our community. They hold it together and make it better.

WESTERN SYDNEY TOURISM TASKFORCE

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (15:56): Originally formed in 2017 as the South West Sydney Tourism Taskforce, the current Western Sydney Tourism Taskforce is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting tourism and attracting visitors to Western Sydney. Since its formation, the taskforce has worked cooperatively with members of the tourism industry and government to advocate for and showcase tourism-ready businesses in the region. I thank the chair and founder, Fazila Farhad, and board members Tom Wang, Michael Foulkes, Davy Nguyen, Belinda Thompson, Ben Atkins, Brent Hilbrink, Jake Burgess, Tony Chiefari and Christine Wang, who are actively advocating for the revitalisation of tourism in the region. As the taskforce broadens its reach, I look forward to seeing the impact it has on the growth of Western Sydney to propel it forward even more.

TRIBUTE TO REGINALD JOHN FERGUSON

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:57): I pay my respects to well-known Dubbo local and Australian radio industry identity Reginald Ferguson, who sadly passed away on 8 July. Reg joined the staff of 2DU in 1952 as an assistant accountant, before being appointed as an accountant and sports editor in 1954. He then went on to become company secretary of Western Broadcasters in 1956 and then station manager in January 1963. Over his time as a broadcaster, he called horse races and rugby league games on air and hosted the weekly program *Sports Review*. In 1973 Reg was appointed to the position of general manager, which he held until his retirement at the end of 2001. One of his proudest accomplishments was the establishment of Dubbo's first commercial FM radio station, ZOO FM, in 1997. Reg was a passionate advocate for the community. He was an inaugural and long-serving board member of Lourdes Hospital, chairman of the Walter T. Grant Senior Citizens Centre, and member of the Dubbo Ducks. He influenced many and will be missed. Vale, Reginald John Ferguson.

RICHMOND RIVER HIGH CAMPUS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:58): The saying is that every cloud has a silver lining. While Lismore has had more than enough clouds, the Richmond River High Campus of the Rivers Secondary College has a great silver lining story. The Richmond River High Campus suffered major inundation in the 2022 floods, and the school has been in temporary accommodation since then. When Granville Boys High School in Sydney heard about the plight of Richmond River High Campus, it reached out with an offer of support: Would Richmond River like to participate in a barbershop program? Granville Boys High School principal, Noel Dixon, along with

students and staff from the robotics club, travelled to Lismore to set up the barbershop. They provided all the equipment, from the two barbershop chairs down to the clippers and combs. Thanks to the program, students at Richmond River High Campus now have the opportunity for professional tuition in barbering skills that could lead to a career. Even principal Luke Woodward hops into the barber chair so the students can practise. Mr Woodward said that the school is always looking for unique and unusual opportunities for the students.

SARAH "SADIE" MURDOCH KING

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (15:59): Today I acknowledge the recent installation of a memorial plaque in Glebe, dedicated to the memory of Sarah Murdoch King, better known as Sadie. Sadie was a well-known member of the Glebe community for almost 80 years, until her death at age 100 in 2022. She was celebrated for her commitment to social justice and community service through her work as a public servant and a union representative and her many years as a justice of the peace. Sadie's favourite place was the bench at the corner of St Johns Road and Glebe Point Road, now locally known as "Sadie's Corner", outside the old post office. It is in this spot that she is memorialised today. Sadie's work left an indelible mark on the local area. The plaque serves as a fitting tribute to her legacy and ensures that her contributions will continue to inspire current and future members of our Glebe community.

MIL-PRA EXHIBITION AND ART PRIZE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:00): I recently had the pleasure of joining the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group for the thirty-second annual Mil-Pra exhibition and art prize at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. The annual prize is an opportunity to recognise and understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through artistic expression. I was proud to sponsor two awards centred around the theme of "Building Bridges" to highlight works that enabled greater understanding of First Nations culture, tradition and stories, and encourage meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The Youth Award went to Lili Farrell from Picnic Point High School for her piece *Turtle*. It featured the turtle as a totem for Darug clans and reflected the turtle as a common symbol of resilience and wisdom across many cultures. The Children's Award went to the Bradbury Preschool Wombats Group for their collaborative project *The Emu Egg Discovery Project: A Journey of Discovery*. The project featured a blend of elements, highlighting the importance of knowledge, language and the profound interconnection between nature, culture and historical practices. I offer my congratulations to all of the award winners.

NORTHMEAD MEN'S SHED

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (16:01): I acknowledge the Northmead Men's Shed, which does a terrific local community job and has been operating out of Northmead for many years. I recently caught up with the gentlemen at their workshop to check out their latest projects and their recent work. Men's sheds are important community groups that bring together local men into a shared communal space with a common goal of doing good for the community. Often with age, men can become lonely and marginalised, without a great support network. I commend the Northmead Men's Shed for offering a safe and welcoming space for local gentlemen to come together, share their hobbies and participate in social activities. I particularly recognise Geoff Holgate, Neil Reid and Owen Manson, as well as the other local men who make the Northmead Men's Shed such a fantastic place. I look forward to catching up with them again soon to see how all their projects are progressing.

CAREFLIGHT

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:02): I congratulate CareFlight on receiving a Community Building Partnership grant. The money will go towards funding equipment to assist with medical treatment whilst transporting patients. Operating out of Bankstown Airport, CareFlight manages a range of services to save lives, speed recovery and serve the community. Starting as a single-helicopter operation in 1986, CareFlight now flies specialist medical teams to critically ill and injured patients using its fleet of helicopters, aeroplanes and jets. CareFlight also operates a fleet of specially equipped and staffed patient transport vehicles to move patients between hospitals and aircraft. With a growing need for medical services like this and the increasing costs of aviation, it is a pleasure to be able to deliver this grant funding to such a worthy organisation. I thank Randal, flight nurse Orla and transport driver Michael for showing me around the operations room and hangar. I look forward to meeting up in the future and completing a ride-along on their fixed wing air patient transport service.

MANLY, WARRINGAH AND PITTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:03): Today I congratulate the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society, which is celebrating 100 years this month, making it the second oldest local historical society in New South Wales. Over the past century the society has researched, recorded and preserved the history of the northern beaches. During that time of continuous, unbroken activity, it has also collected an invaluable archive of over 15,000 documents. As part of the celebrations, the society has begun to work with

Northern Beaches Council to make thousands of digital archival records available to the public on council's online History Hub. Members of the society meet monthly in Curl Curl, produce a newsletter called the *Peninsula Historian*, and organise walks, history tours and regular talks. Members also share their rich knowledge of the northern beaches community by assisting the public with inquiries about local history. I thank all members of the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society for their dedication to conserving so many precious memories and records, and capturing the many cultural and environmental changes in our area over the past century. Here is to another 100 years.

KEMPS CREEK FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:04): On 8 July 2024 I had the honour and privilege of attending the foundation stone laying ceremony in Kemps Creek. This significant event was conducted in the presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Mor Ignatius Youssef III Younan and the Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP, the Archbishop of Sydney. Their presence, along with the blessings bestowed upon the occasion, underscored the deep spiritual importance of the ceremony. The gathering also included many other religious leaders from around the world and our local community, all coming together to witness and celebrate this momentous occasion. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Syriac Catholic Church of Sydney for the kind invitation to this memorable event. Its hospitality and the meticulous organisation of the ceremony were greatly appreciated. The foundation stone laying marks the establishment of a new place of worship and community, and symbolises hope and continuity for the faithful. This event was a profound reminder of the strength and unity within our spiritual communities.

RYDE BAND

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:05): I invite the House to join me in celebrating the Ryde Band, which has marked 140 years of enriching our community with music. Since it was founded in 1884, the Ryde Band has been at the heart of Ryde's cultural scene. What began as a marching brass band has grown into a lively concert ensemble, playing important roles in both local and national events, from the Sudan war in 1885 to King Edward VII's coronation in 1902. For 90 years, Ryde council has been a steadfast supporter of this treasured group, recognising the significant contributions it has made to our civic life. Whether it is Anzac Day, community concerts or the annual Granny Smith Festival, the band's performances have brought joy to so many of us. The Ryde Park band rotunda, built in 1934, stands as a lasting tribute to its legacy. As we look back on the band's remarkable journey, including its recent 140th anniversary concert, let us appreciate its unwavering dedication to bringing people together through music. The Ryde Band has always been a unifying force, strengthening community bonds and filling the lives of many in Ryde with harmony and pride.

RIVERSTONE COMMUNITY GROUP

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:06): Today I recognise the importance of resident activism and its ability to achieve positive outcomes for the community. Recently I met with a group of concerned seniors about the fee structure for their aqua classes at the Blacktown Leisure Centre in Stanhope Gardens. They told me the benefits of aqua classes, which keep them active and provide an outlet for socialising with fellow classgoers. The existing fee structure saw the aqua classes in the highest tier of membership, and it was making it difficult for many of the class attendees to continue their beloved activity. Following our meeting, I got in contact with Blacktown City Council to advocate for the aqua classes to be brought within the lower fee tiers. Thanks to these passionate seniors, we were able to secure lower fees so that the classes could remain accessible to those who need them most. In particular I thank Sarita Kalia, Julia Perkins, Pam Coulthart, Ms Shields, Maria Naylor and Debbie Sutherland for meeting with me to help achieve this fantastic outcome.

TRIBUTE TO GEOFFREY KIEHNE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:07): I pay tribute to the late Geoffrey Kiehne, who was a well-respected paramedic and SES leader of the Gilgandra community. Geoff joined NSW Ambulance in 1980, being assigned to the Armidale Ambulance Station. In 1987 he was appointed clinical educator in Gilgandra. His dedication to the community went beyond NSW Ambulance. Geoff was the local SES commander and served as a St John Ambulance officer for 30 years, with over 15,000 hours of volunteer service. With a career of over 43 years dedicated to helping people, Geoff was awarded multiple service medals, including receiving Commonwealth recognition, and was made an honorary life member of St John Ambulance. Geoff was a highly regarded member of the community and will be remembered for his true dedication to helping people. People like Geoff, who show passion and enthusiasm, are role models for future generations. He was also my friend. My thoughts are with his family at this time.

RUSE PUBLIC SCHOOL BREAKFAST CLUB

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:08): I am delighted to recognise Ruse Public School for its fantastic breakfast club initiative. Recently I was fortunate to experience firsthand the joy of the students having a hearty breakfast before school in the morning. The club is staffed by sponsors, volunteers, teachers and parents and serves breakfast three times a week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The program is supported by a number of local organisations, including Foodbank, Flegg Kehlet Wagner chartered accountants, the Dawn Therapeutic Services, Jim's Cleaning Ruse, Bunnings Campbelltown, Officeworks Campbelltown and Stylish Landscape Management, and families of Ruse Public School students. I thank the entire P&C community for their support of our students and their commitment to providing the best learning experience possible. I thank principal Paul McGillicuddy and all the amazing staff for their amazing work at a truly wonderful local school.

AUSTRALIAN SCOUT JAMBOREE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:09): Every four years, more than 10,000 scouts from across Australia and around the world join for an unforgettable 10-day camping experience at the Australian Jamboree. The adventure is jam-packed with incredible activities, new challenges and endless opportunities to make lifelong friendships. In January 2025, Oran Park Scout Group will be part of a contingent heading up to Maryborough in Queensland. The Oran Park scouts will join in this fabulous opportunity at the twenty-sixth Australian Jamboree. I commend the Oran Park Scout Group for their fundraising activities to support the group, including the monthly fundraising barbeque at the Cobbitty Markets. Jamboree aside, the joeys, cubs and scouts have had a lot happening recently. They have undertaken activities such as hiking, camping, first aid and morse code. The group will also host an upcoming district joey campfire. I wish the Oran Park Scout Group all the best for their upcoming activities.

TRIBUTE TO LIZ ASHARD

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:10): Liz Ashard will have a lasting impact on the Parramatta community. Liz lived in Parramatta for 40 years and raised her family there while pursuing a variety of careers, including in travel, business and radio and as a paralegal for New South Wales adoptions and a lecturer in business at the Australian Catholic University and Western Sydney University. Liz took a keen interest in politics and helped new and established political representatives if they met her high standards and aligned with her beliefs. She assisted with letterboxing, displayed signs and showed her support on socials.

[Interruption from gallery]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. It was a false alarm. The member for Blacktown is all right; he was just charging his phone. The member for Parramatta will have her time reinstated.

Ms DONNA DAVIS: Liz was involved in the sustainability and organic food movements. She was a friend of local heritage and an advocate for appropriate development. If that required attending council meetings, she did. Always ready to help, Liz adopted many stray cats over the years and was involved in animal welfare groups. A fierce advocate for women's rights, Liz would go above and beyond to support mothers and babies in her own home. She helped one young family adopt a child. Liz was involved in the Ghanaian community and helped establish the African association. She will be sorely missed by her family and friends. Vale, Liz.

WAMBERAL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:13): With great pride, I acknowledge and congratulate the dedicated surf lifesaving volunteers from the Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club who have recently been recognised 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 to protect or assist the community in times of emergency. Today I acknowledge Craig Adams, Ron Beresford, Bruce Gould and Stephen Naven for 15 years of unwavering commitment to our community. Their dedication to surf lifesaving has made a lasting impact, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of countless individuals who enjoy our beautiful beaches, especially Wamberal. 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 lifesaving movement and our community. I congratulate all of the Wamberal recipients on this remarkable accomplishment. We deeply appreciate their many years of service and thank them for the positive impact they continue to make in our community on the Central Coast.

BLACKTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:14): I congratulate the Blacktown City Netball Association [BCNA] on its fifty-seventh year of providing players with the opportunity to improve their health, build

camaraderie and respect, and further represent their region, State or Australia. The BCNA has many opportunities to participate for those who wish to play. It is supported by a large number of volunteers, coaches, umpires, managers, the canteen, registrars, committee members and executives. The BCNA welcomes everyone, regardless of their age, level of experience or ability. In 2024 there are 15 clubs and more than 2,100 players participating in the winter competition. We are proud of the six BCNA teams that went on to compete at the State titles. Four teams made it into the top six. The BCNA has three metro league teams and, since 2015, GWS Fury has been one of the 10 teams competing in the Netball NSW premier league competition. We appreciate all the dedicated and hardworking people at the BCNA, including president Dianne McKinnon and secretary Karen Szczerbanik.

JANINE GOULD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:15): One of the most endearing memories of any mum or dad is taking their child to swim lessons. My eldest child started lessons some 14 years ago when he was only a few months old. In Albury it is a rite of passage for many parents to take their child along to Gould Swim Academy. After 15 years of service at Gould Swim Academy, Janine Gould is stepping into a new chapter in life. Janine is one of the amazing people who have been part of Gould Swim Academy—so many beautiful people have worked there. Janine has been an absolute star and one of the key people at the academy. Visitors and students see her friendly smile when they attend. As Janine finishes her time at Gould Swim Academy, I thank her for all her work with parents and children over the 15 years. I wish her all the best as she takes her next steps and embarks on a new chapter in her life.

BANKSTOWN WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:16): Empowering women in our community is what makes our community such a great place to live. I congratulate the Bankstown Women's Health Centre staff on their inspiring work to assist women around the Bankstown electorate. Recently the centre took its support of local women a step further by offering its first training qualification, the Certificate IV in Disability Support course, in collaboration with Phoenix Institute of Training and Vital Training. Bankstown Women's Health Centre hopes that empowering women in the community to obtain certification in a much-needed field will help kickstart their careers. Due to the success of this course, the centre will now run its first in-house course, the Certificate III in Hospitality, which will provide a pathway for graduates to work in organisations such as restaurants, hotels, motels, clubs, pubs, cafes and coffee shops. I congratulate all the successful graduating women. They should be extremely proud. I thank the Bankstown Women's Health Centre staff for the amazing work they are doing to assist all women in the Bankstown community to have the best lives possible.

CATHERINE HAMLIN PARK

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:17): I acknowledge the completion of the first stage of the new Catherine Hamlin Park on Waterloo Road, Macquarie Park. The project is dedicated to the late Dr Catherine Hamlin, an influential Australian surgeon and esteemed Ryde resident. The park represents a significant addition to our community. When completed next year, the park will provide much-needed, high-quality open space and amenities for the businesses and workers in the Macquarie Park Innovation District. The creation of Catherine Hamlin Park is a testament to our local community's commitment to balancing housing, employment, innovation and infrastructure within this vital area. The city has been a strong advocate for green spaces, recognising their importance in supporting the wellbeing of our residents and workers. Dr Hamlin's legacy of service and care is beautifully reflected in this park, which will serve as a place of respite and recreation for many in our community. I acknowledge the work and leadership of City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown to deliver this project. I commend all involved for bringing this project to fruition. I extend my gratitude to the Ryde community for their support and patience during the park's construction.

BANKSTOWN-EAST HILLS HANDICAPPED ASSOCIATION OP SHOP

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:18): I sincerely thank the incredible volunteers from the treasured Bankstown-East Hills Handicapped Association [BEHHA] Op Shop. I have been blown away by the generosity of the time, energy and compassion they have dedicated to our local community over the past few decades. BEHHA is an organisation devoted to improving the quality of life for people with disability living in the East Hills and Bankstown area. The op shop raised vital funds to provide essential support and services. Sadly, last month marked the end of an era as the shop closed its doors for the final time. I thank Brian, Judy, Karen, Jenny, Thi, Shirley, Rhonda, Alouce and all the volunteers for their hard work in running the op shop for more than 30 years. These volunteers fostered a sense of belonging and community within the walls of the op shop. For countless visitors, it was much more than a place to find second-hand goods; it was a welcoming space where people could connect, share stories and share community.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:19): It is fantastic to join my parliamentary colleagues in the New South Wales Parliament this week in acknowledging the 110th anniversary of the amazing volunteer organisation, the Australian Red Cross. As a long-term blood donor who has made 56 donations, I know how important the Red Cross is to our community, not just by collecting blood through the Lifeblood project but also in the humanitarian support that it provides to communities across Australia, especially in New South Wales, at times of need. I thank the 5,500 Red Cross volunteers across New South Wales for all their volunteer time and their incredible spirit and sensitivity. They help others in times of most dire need. I also give a shout-out to the Red Cross Lifeblood project. After my recent donation, I received a message within 24 hours that my blood had already been delivered to Concord hospital. That fantastic initiative has been rolled out so that blood donors know, after making a donation, where our blood is going. I encourage all those who are able to give blood to do so when they can because it is a life-giving program.

ZEN TEA LOUNGE FOUNDATION

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:20): Today I recognise the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation, an organisation deeply committed to supporting women and children victims of domestic violence. Its efforts have transformed the lives of thousands of people, including those in my electorate. On 26 July 2024 I had the privilege of representing the Minister for Multiculturalism and attending the annual Solidarity Against Family Violence fundraising night organised by Zen Tea Lounge Foundation at our local Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. The event was profoundly moving, illuminated by a candlelit vigil paying tribute to the victims of domestic violence last year. Heartfelt stories shared by domestic violence survivors and inspiring ideas for tackling the issue were highlights of the evening. I also had the honour of presenting the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation's awards to recognise community members who have made an outstanding impact in combating domestic violence. I congratulate Amy Nguyen, Trish Pham and all the team at the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation, and thank them for their kind invitation.

MATTHEW DAWSON AND FAITH NATHAN

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:21): I commend Matthew Dawson of Killarney Vale and Faith Nathan of Berkeley Vale, who both represented The Entrance electorate at the Paris Olympics. Matthew, an Australian hockey player, recently made international headlines when he opted to amputate part of his finger to allow him to compete at the Olympics with the Kookaburras. The Kookaburras defeated Argentina, New Zealand and Ireland in the tournament, but defeats to defending champions Belgium and India meant they had to settle for third spot. Unfortunately, they were eliminated, suffering a loss of 2-0 to the Netherlands in their must-win quarterfinal on Monday morning. Faith began her journey with rugby sevens in 2017. She made her sevens debut during the 2019 tournament in Dubai and her Olympic debut in Tokyo in 2021, when Australia finished fifth. This year the rugby sevens team was heavily favoured to take home a medal, having made a strong start in the tournament, but unfortunately missed out on securing a bronze, going down 14-12 to the United States of America. I am sure the House will join me in congratulating our Olympians who represented Australia. I congratulate Faith and Matthew on representing The Entrance so well in Paris.

Private Members' Statements

RYDE ELECTORATE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:22): I recognise the remarkable achievements of athletes who live, work or train in the Ryde community and who represented Australia at the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics. Those outstanding individuals have excelled on the international stage and made significant contributions to the Ryde community. Their dedication, perseverance and sportsmanship have been an inspiration to all of us. That has even made its way to this Chamber throughout the course of this week. I particularly acknowledge Macquarie University's Rachael Gunn—or, as we all know by now, Raygun—who competed in breaking. She brought a fresh and dynamic sport to the global stage. Much has been said about Rachael, but I take the opportunity to thank her for representing our country and wish her every happiness and success as the post-Olympics hype settles and her life returns to normal. I congratulate her on her incredible representation.

I also acknowledge Emma Nedov, our accomplished gymnast, who has been a beacon of discipline and grace. Her journey through the competitive gymnastics world has served as a powerful example to young athletes in Ryde, showing them the rewards of dedication and hard work. Emma has also coached and mentored young gymnasts, passed on her knowledge and fostered the next generation of talent. I acknowledge Emma for her extraordinary representation. Se-Bom Lee and Olivia Wunsch both represented Australia in swimming. They have made waves not only in the pool but also in the local Ryde community. Se-Bom's achievements have inspired many local swimmers to push their limits. At the same time, Olivia's commitment to excellence has motivated

countless young athletes in Ryde to pursue their dreams with determination. Their involvement in community swimming programs has contributed significantly to the development of local talent and has made Ryde a real hub for swimming activity across Sydney and New South Wales.

Michelle Bromley competed in table tennis. She showed the importance of precision and focus in sport. Her success has brought attention to table tennis in Ryde and across the State, and encouraged greater participation in the sport. Michelle's efforts in promoting table tennis among young people have helped build a more active and engaged community. I acknowledge our community's rich table tennis history. There was an initiative by former member for Bennelong John Alexander to introduce table tennis tables to all the local schools in Ryde and Bennelong. I was a beneficiary of that. It is great to see people now representing our country in that sport. Hockey players Tim Brand and Lachlan Sharp have demonstrated the power of teamwork and strategy. Their success on the Olympic stage has not only brought pride to Ryde; it has also elevated the profile of hockey within our local sporting community. Their involvement in local hockey clubs has inspired many young athletes to take up the sport and has fostered a great sense of unity and purpose. The competitive hockey industry in Ryde has a rich history. It is amazing to see the pipeline of talent coming through.

Ameera Lee will compete in para-archery. She has shown incredible resilience and strength. Her journey to the Paralympics has been a source of inspiration for many in Ryde, particularly those living with disability. Her advocacy for inclusive sports has helped to create more opportunities for people with disability to participate in sporting activities and has made our community a more inclusive and supportive place. Madison de Rozario is a wheelchair racer and has been an outstanding role model for both athletes and non-athletes alike. Her achievements on the track have highlighted the importance of determination and perseverance. Madison's work in promoting adaptive sports in Ryde has profoundly impacted the community, encouraging more people to get involved in physical activity regardless of their ability. I note a small piece of trivia—Ryde also has a rich history in that sport, with the famous Louise Sauvage residing locally.

Peter Boukouvalas, who competed in archery, has demonstrated the importance of focus and precision. He has brought attention to archery in Ryde and will hopefully encourage many others to take up the wonderful sport. Peter's involvement in local archery clubs has been instrumental in developing young talent and promoting the sport within our community. James Turner, who represented Australia in rugby sevens, has shown incredible strength and determination to compete at the highest level of what can be a pretty tough sport. His achievements have brought pride to Ryde and inspired many young athletes to pursue rugby as a sport. James's involvement in local rugby programs has helped develop the next generation of players and strengthened the community's love of that sport.

All those athletes have represented Australia with distinction and given back to the Ryde community in countless ways. Their dedication to their sports and their commitment to fostering talent and promoting inclusivity have made a lasting impact on our community. We are incredibly proud of all their achievements and grateful for the inspiration they provide to us and future generations.

KANWAL LAND CONTAMINATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (16:27): I speak about a very concerning situation in the suburb of Kanwal in my electorate. A petrol station has leaking underground fuel tanks that have contaminated local properties. A plume of hydrocarbons has spread down the hill towards one of our local waterways, Porters Creek, and across the road, potentially affecting local residents. My real concern, other than that very serious issue, is the way the whole situation is being handled. Property owner Seaforth Securities owns the land at 70 Craigie Avenue, Kanwal. The service station, which is located at 68 Craigie Avenue, Kanwal, tried to sell its land. When prospective buyers did their due diligence checks they found out that it was contaminated. That is also when they discovered the service station had leaking fuel tanks.

Zoya Investments Pty Ltd owned 68 Craigie Avenue until 13 November 2023, when the company was transferred to RAS Kanwal Group Pty Ltd—a company with the same directors, shareholders and registered office as Zoya Investments. On 11 April 2024 Rizwan Rana and Satwinder Singh ceased to be directors of Zoya, and Sania Sania was appointed. All shares in Zoya transferred to Sania Sania. On 18 April 2024 Zoya declared no assets in an apparent attempt to avoid payment to its creditors after going into receivership. It owed \$8.45 million to Seaforth, the owner of the land next door, and \$4.5 million to the Australian Tax Office. It also avoided its responsibility to clean up the petrol station property. Seaforth first notified the Environment Protection Authority [EPA], Central Coast Council and Zoya in August 2017 of pollution that had been occurring since at least 2016 and continues.

Zoya failed to comply with the management order issued by the EPA in February 2020 and the clean-up notice issued on 7 October 2022. I will outline what has occurred since Zoya notified the EPA and council of its failure to comply. On 11 December 2018 the EPA declared all of the service station property and part of the Seaforth property as significantly contaminated land. On 6 December 2019 the EPA issued Seaforth a notice of approved voluntary proposal in respect of the property. A management order was issued to Zoya by the EPA on 21 February 2020. Zoya failed to comply with action D of the order by the required dates of April and June 2020. Despite the EPA extending the timeframe to September 2020, Zoya failed to comply, ignoring reminders and show cause letters from the EPA.

Zoya complied with action D of the management order by July 2022, 679 days late. During that time 3,000 litres of petroleum could have leaked from the underground storage tanks into the adjoining properties and environment. During those 679 days the EPA was impeded in carrying out its statutory responsibilities to investigate the contamination of the service station property and enforce remedial action in regard to the contamination and its spread offsite. On 16 September 2021 the EPA commenced proceedings against Zoya for failing to comply with the management order. Zoya was found guilty and fined \$180,000, plus a further daily penalty totalling \$140,000 for the offence period. On 7 October 2022 the EPA issued a clean-up notice to Zoya. Seaforth was unaware of what action, if any, had been taken by Zoya. This continued on and on.

Yesterday Seaforth met with the EPA to inform it that a rehabilitation plan had been submitted by Zoya, but there is serious doubt about whether that will occur given its history. The Rana Group is under fire from union officials who are concerned about the treatment of overseas-born petrol station workers. The group has service stations across the Hunter Valley and the Mid North Coast. These are not good people, but we cannot get them or shut down the service station. They just close down one company and move to another one, which is absolutely disgraceful. Residents in the area are suffering health issues. I want something to be done about this as soon as possible.

KEIRA ELECTORATE SPORTING TEAMS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:32): I am proud to inform the House of the outstanding achievements of 10 of our Illawarra Steelers representative players who were selected in the winning under-19 women's Sky Blues team that defeated the Maroons in an absolute thrashing, with a 46-4 victory. The under-19 women's Sky Blues team is made up of the best rising talent in rugby league. The State of Origin allows our junior athletes to showcase their talents on the big stage. I extend my congratulations to Indie Bostock, Maria Paseka, Evie McGrath, Kasey Reh, Chelsea Savill, Hope Millard, Charlotte Basham, Ella Koster, Bronte Wilson and Sienna Yeo for their selection in the side. I am also pleased to inform the House that Kasey Reh was not only captain of the mighty Blues but also player of the match for her outstanding individual performance.

I am equally proud to inform the House that the Northern Districts Butchers Cricket Club was awarded Club of the Year at the Cricket NSW Community Cricket Awards for the 2023-24 season and Community Club of the Year by Cricket Australia. These prestigious honours were awarded to the Woonona-based club for its continuous commitment to promoting the spirit of cricket beyond the game. The club has created an inclusive and welcoming environment, and it encourages participation for all ages, genders and backgrounds. Together with the Government, I was fortunate enough to contribute \$30,000 to the club as a part of a plan to improve sporting infrastructure in the northern suburbs of our region. The club is currently in the process of an extensive rebuild of the cricket training nets at Hollymount Park. I am always delighted to hear about the fantastic achievements in the Keira electorate. I will continue to support of all our local sporting teams, clubs, players and hardworking volunteers.

ROTARY PAUL HARRIS FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:35): I recognise two stalwarts of the community whose remarkable dedication and selfless contribution has helped make our city and region a better place. Martin Morris and Brian Schloeffel were honoured with the prestigious Paul Harris fellowship award by the Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie at its recent changeover event. The highest form of recognition a Rotary club can bestow is the Paul Harris Fellow. It is presented to a Rotarian or member of the community who has made an outstanding contribution to the community. The first recipient of the evening was all-round good guy and mate to many, Marty Morris. Marty, having attended many changeovers before, was completely blown away when he realised that he had been recognised.

Marty's award was presented in honour of not only his unofficial service to the club for more than 30 years as the partner of charter member Lorna Breeze but also his incredible contribution to the Dubbo Show Society. Marty's family's roots go deep into the Dubbo Showground—in fact, all the way back to his grandfather. It is widely acknowledged that, without the various branches of the Morris family tree, the Dubbo Show would not

have made it to its 150th birthday and beyond. Holding the position of president of the show society for five years from 2010 to 2015, Marty has been an active committee member for more than three decades. Throughout his lifetime, Marty has never missed a Dubbo Show, except during COVID. But, if you ask Marty, that does not count because there was no show—fair enough!

Every year, Marty devotes months of his time to ensure the Dubbo Show runs like clockwork by volunteering hours of work, which he fits around his own work commitments. That contribution is invaluable in the true sense of the word. Ask anyone involved with the show and they will say that it is impossible to put a price on what Marty saves the Dubbo Show Society annually. Marty looks after the maintenance, building, preparation and repairs of the pavilions and displays. He wrangles volunteers, oversees the set up and pack down, and it is rumoured that he even manages to find time to oversee the beverage quality control at Boardy's Bar—someone has to do it! In 2017 Marty was awarded the very prestigious Agricultural Societies Council of New South Wales Show Dedication Award and, more recently, the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award in 2023. I was delighted to be there with him and Lorna on that occasion. Well done to Marty. He deserves it.

The second Paul Harris Fellow recipient was Brian Schloeffel. Brian was invited to the event under the impression that he would receive a donation from Rotary Club of Dubbo Macquarie for his chosen cause, ovarian cancer research, which has become very important to Brian after losing his beautiful wife, Noela, to the disease. Little did Brian know that he was also in attendance as a guest of honour. Brian's contribution to the region of Dubbo is equally legendary, having dedicated more than half a century of his time to help keep his community safe through his efforts with the Rural Fire Service. Brian—or Schoey, as most know him—started with the RFS at Bunglegumbe in 1970. He has been there ever since, boots and all, including through some of the region's most challenging times of fire and flood.

Serving as captain and vice-captain over the many years of his service, Brian was instrumental in some of the major changes and improvements to the brigade. In 1990 Schoey helped the Burrabadine brigade make a significant decision to fund and purchase a small firefighting vehicle to act as a fast-response vehicle for the western extremity of the brigade area, and in 1993 he was instrumental in the construction of the Burrabadine brigade station. Some of the most memorable events Brian took part in include the Christmas Day fire of 1984 in Dubbo, the Blue Mountains fires of 1994 and the major fire in Goonoo Forest in 2007.

Even when fire was not the threat, Schoey was still there to help. He was a member of the team who went to Nyngan in 1990 to help strengthen the flood levee. After the levee broke, he and his crew spent days helping evacuate the residents of the town. Brian is still currently an active member of the RFS and is coming up to 55 years of service next year. He currently holds the position of deputy captain, which he has held since stepping back from the role of captain in 2013, after 25 straight years of leading his crew. Brian was recognised with life membership of the Rural Firefighters Service in 2011 and in 2013 was honoured with a Commissioner's Commendation for Service. It is said that a Paul Harris recipient goes above and beyond in serving our community through promoting change and understanding, and these two gentlemen have certainly done that. I congratulate Marty and Brian. What an incredible way to be recognised for the impact they have both made.

SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE PRIMARY PRODUCERS

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:40): There is no denying that we are experiencing climate change. In the Shoalhaven, on the South Coast, since the 2019-20 bushfires, we are now up to declared natural disaster number 15. We are topping the State. But there is a greater consequence of these natural disasters we are beginning to see to our primary producers, our dairy farmers and oyster farmers, who are so important to life on the South Coast. Since the fires, there have been 14 water-related natural disasters. What that means for dairy farmers is that their ground is not drying, so their cows are standing in water.

Normally with a flood, after two weeks they are back to business. The westerly wind comes and dries the land out, and they move on and keep going. What is happening is that we have had massive events and then small amounts of rain. With just one afternoon of rain, their paddocks can be flooded again. That means that the cows get mastitis, are unwell and produce up to 5,000 litres less milk a day. Then the milk quality gets tested. When the quality is down, they can be penalised by up to 37 per cent of their price per litre. Unlike other businesses, they cannot say, "I will put my coffee up 50 cents a cup." Their prices are fixed.

The water means that the grass and fodder are not growing on their property, so they are having to buy feed for all of their animals. They are having to pay exorbitant vet bills because the water along the riverbanks is attracting midges, which spread three-day fever, which has not been seen on the southern side of the Shoalhaven River for 50 years. One farmer lost 25 cows in one episode. It is absolutely devastating for farmers. The issue is compounded by the fact that they have to pay to create mounds on their properties to keep the cattle's feet dry. They have to spend money to bring in woodchips for the laneways where the cows walk to keep them dry, spending on infrastructure while their prices are going down. There is money for a natural disaster, but it has to

be in category C, which we have not seen since 2022. What we have seen in the last three months is three natural disasters with rain events in between, and the water table has actually risen on the banks of the Shoalhaven. So, like I said, with one afternoon of rain, all of their paddocks can be totally sodden.

It is not just the dairy farmers; it is also the oyster farmers. When we have a flood, it is seven to eight weeks before they are allowed to sell their oysters, but the acidic sulphate soil washing down the river is actually eating the shells of the oysters and killing them. So, besides not being able to sell their oysters, their oysters are dying. Twenty per cent of their stock is now over three years old because the consistent flooding has affected their growth rates. One farmer told me that from 19 October last year to 12 July this year they have been able to harvest for only 117 days out of 268. It has massive impacts on their cash flow and stocking density. The Government needs to start looking at how it can mitigate these issues for our farmers and what it can do in the reconstruction sense. I am pleased to say I will continue to advocate and work for a way forward with the Department of Primary Industries and the Reconstruction Authority. I want all the South Coast farmers—oyster farmers, dairy farmers or cattle farmers—to know that I am walking with them and looking forward to finding a way to a resolution.

YOUTH LEADING THE WORLD COMMUNITY FORUM

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:44): Last Sunday, 11 August, a wonderful group of 12- to 20-year-olds came together at the Coastal Environment Centre in Narrabeen for the 2024 Youth Leading the World Community Forum. I was so impressed by the presentations from our engaged, dynamic young people in northern Sydney, reporting back on projects developed during the Youth Leading the World Congress in July last year. Led by local organisation OzGreen, the Youth Leading the World Congress is an annual environmental sustainability congress that "enables young people to find their own voice and become active leaders in creating fairer futures". I give a special shout-out to Josh Farrant and Eshan Eliatamby and their Solution Seagrass project, and Erin Battle and her project, Reduce Pollution.

The forum on Sunday was all about positive action. Hope is the only way forward. Grievance culture is not a path to personal or collective wellbeing. Having said that, I often reflect on the unfairness of young people having to shoulder the responsibility of solving massive environmental problems they did not create. They have every right to be disappointed and angry. Mission Australia's 2022 youth survey, the largest survey of its kind in Australia, found that, for the majority of young people, concerns and negative emotions regarding the climate are significant, as climate change represents a realistic threat to their lives in the foreseeable future. From my conversations with young people, I know it is a burden many carry. During the July break, I went to Alaska. In a way, I was part of what is known as last chance tourism, where visitors flock to places that are changing so fast that we are the last generation to see them. For me, it was the retreating glaciers. Paige McClanahan writes about this phenomenon poignantly:

For thousands of years, humans have raced to be the first to scale a peak, cross a frontier, or document a new species or landscape.

Now, in some cases, we're racing to be the last.

I came home with a grizzly beard, so I was looking a bit more at one with nature, but the trip also strengthened my resolve to contribute, where I can, to meaningful reform on climate and biodiversity in New South Wales, to support and build political will, and to challenge the Government to lead or at least to implement its own election commitments. Two Labor election commitments I am watching closely are to stop excess land clearing and to fix the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, both within 18 months of coming to office. A few weeks ago, a number of my Independent crossbench colleagues and I wrote to the Premier, reminding him of this commitment. I am glad to see that the Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Offsets Scheme) Bill 2024 has been introduced this week. I hope that the Parliament can make it stronger.

New South Wales was once a world leader in biodiversity conservation and land management. However, since the Coalition overhauled the regulatory framework in 2016, land clearing has skyrocketed, with an average of 95,000 hectares being cleared each year. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly in 2016, many Labor MPs, including eight current Cabinet Ministers, made their dismay well known. Now that they have the opportunity to reform laws about native vegetation on private land, they absolutely should. On public land, the single biggest nature reform opportunity is comprehensively protecting native State forests. Having delved into this issue since it was raised with me by constituents during the election campaign, I completely reject the idea that this is a sustainable industry. Once we lose these mature trees, they are gone.

I was particularly struck by a presentation by Dr Steve Phillips during a Parliamentary Friends of Forests event last week. Steve is widely recognised as the leading koala expert in the State, a highly credentialed research scientist with 40 years of experience studying koalas. One of his slides showed the minimum diameter of sawlogs coming out of New South Wales State forests over time. In the 1970s the minimum commercial sawlog size being logged was 70 to 80 centimetres. In 2022-23 the minimum commercial sawlog in New South Wales is

20 to 30 centimetres. His words on the slide were, "Logging of State-owned native forests has been demonstrably unsustainable, both ecologically and economically."

In relation to the court recently finding Forestry Corporation guilty of breaching logging rules, to be honest, I am floored that the CEO has not been sacked over this, let alone the multiple other active criminal prosecutions and further 18 potential breaches that are under investigation. There is no way this level of illegal behaviour would be tolerated in a private company, or even in a local government context. I hope this sorry state of affairs provides an impetus for the New South Wales Government to act swiftly and decisively to protect our forests and we do more now for our environment. I again thank the youth leaders in my electorate, in particular, for reigniting my passion to use my time here effectively, keeping them and future generations front of mind. You guys rock.

Y NSW YOUTH PARLIAMENT PROGRAM

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:49): Youth leadership is the cornerstone of our future in New South Wales. We have seen that empowering young people leads to innovative solutions and a more engaged and motivated community. Fairfield, with its resilient youth population, has long been a source of untapped potential. That is why I am so proud that the Y NSW Youth Parliament program continues to provide an incredible platform for our young leaders, including our very own Anthony Ma, who represented Fairfield in 2024. The Y NSW Youth Parliament—now operating in New South Wales for over 20 years—is a transformative program that helps to shape the leaders of tomorrow. From 9 to 11 July this year, almost 70 dynamic young people stepped into the roles of parliamentarians in the Legislative Assembly. With them, they brought a youthful energy and innovative ideas to one of our State's most hallowed chambers.

This program enables high school students in years 10 to 12 to build confidence, whilst developing their leadership skills. By providing hands-on experience, this program is making a real difference. As a new member, I had the privilege of chairing a session last year and one of the question time sessions this year. Seeing these passionate young advocates was incredibly inspiring to me and reinforced not only the importance of programs like this but also the responsibility that we have as parliamentarians. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Y NSW for organising this invaluable program year after year. Special thanks to General Manager of Advocacy Policy and Relations Alexander Clark. His commitment to youth empowerment is admirable. I also thank the Youth Parliament team: Youth and Child Voice Manager Carlee Heise, Youth Parliament Coordinator Hamani Tanginoa and Youth Parliament Wellbeing Coordinator Hannah McLaughlin.

In the Youth Parliament leadership, I thank Princess Delany and Matthew Hayes—who I understand is in the gallery. I thank him for his attendance and everything that he does. The member for Blacktown told me that Matthew came to his aid and he expresses his thanks. I thank Marty Davies, Aled Stephens, Isabella Chen, Finlay Cassidy, Johnson Tang, Lian Sequeira, Joshua Shaw and Cindy. I say to all youth parliamentarians, including Anthony Ma from Fairfield, that their voices matter, their ideas are important and their passion is the driver for positive change in our community. I thank them for embracing this opportunity, but do not stop here; think big, have fun and go far. The future of New South Wales is in their capable hands.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): I agree that our youth members can go on to become very productive, inspirational leaders in this place. Congratulations.

WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:53): I address with concern the Minns Labor Government's reckless and flawed approach to education policy and funding. Our State's public schools are vital to our communities, providing not just education but the foundation for our children's futures. So many people in my electorate of Willoughby have chosen to make our community their home because of the quality of our local schools. Education is a big priority for my constituents. It is therefore nothing short of alarming that this Government has cut \$150 million—and no doubt more to come—from our State's public schools as a means of financing union demands. This is not merely a budgetary matter; it is an attack on the opportunities available to our young people—one that will reverberate through our communities for years to come.

The Minns Labor Government's decision to slash opportunity classes [OC] at Artarmon Public School is a particularly egregious example of this short-sighted approach. This Labor Government has cut OC places by half at Artarmon Public School, reducing the number of classes from four to two. For decades Artarmon Public School has been a beacon of academic excellence, with its OC classes providing an environment where our brightest students can thrive, challenged by the highest standards and academic rigour that define this program. To diminish these opportunities is to turn our backs on the very children who have the potential to achieve great things not only for themselves but also for us all.

The OC program at Artarmon is more than just a series of classes; it is a pillar of academic excellence that has enabled countless children to excel, to push beyond the boundaries of a standard education and to achieve

their full potential. Giving our children the best start in life must be a priority, yet under this Government it seems that priorities lie elsewhere. It is imperative that the Government invests in our education system and expands opportunities for all our children, rather than cutting resources from one community to benefit another. This Government has lost control of its budget and is now forced to cut essential elements of our education programs. These cuts directly impact everyday residents of our State and certainly those in my electorate, as I have outlined in the case of Artarmon.

Furthermore, I express my concern regarding the future of the Healthy Harold program, the Life Education program, which is an iconic school education initiative that has been a fixture of our schools since the 1970s. As a former national board member of Life Education, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact this program has had on children across our State. It is not just a program; it is a foundation stone for life, teaching our kids critical lessons about wellbeing, drug prevention and healthy living. It is nothing short of disgraceful that schools in New South Wales have been forced to end their association with the program due to State government funding cuts. The decision by the Minns Labor Government to stop centrally funding Healthy Harold has real consequences. The impact of these funding cuts is far reaching. Healthy Harold has been a trusted friend to students and a character who has helped them to navigate the complexities of health and wellbeing in a way that is both engaging and memorable. When in today's world kids need such a healthy choices program more than ever, Labor is making it less accessible.

This situation raises serious questions about the commitment of the Minns Labor Government to the holistic education of our children. While the Government may claim that teacher salary increases are the priority, it is clear that those increases have come at the cost of essential programs and other elements of education. Recently I spoke with a schoolteacher who told me they can no longer afford software subscriptions they have long held at their school. Furthermore, I have had extensive discussions with local P&C groups and I have heard firsthand the struggles associated with these budget cuts—fundraising accounts and hard-earned P&C funds being ripped away and school maintenance budgets reduced. This is both false economy and bad policy, and will have long-term consequences for the health and wellbeing of our students.

To be fair, I note that planning and funding is there for the commitment by the Coalition Government to build two more public schools in our community—one at St Leonards and one at Chatswood. Likewise, funds are allocated for essential upgrades to Northbridge Public School. These initiatives are indeed welcome and recognised. It was Education Week just last week and it is a shame therefore to have to reflect upon Labor's cuts to education and their effects upon our children when we owe it to our kids to provide them with the best possible start in life. This Government should be held accountable for its failure to do so. I will continue to advocate strongly for the educational opportunities that the kids of Willoughby deserve.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:58): Domestic and family violence [DFV] is a pervasive problem that has no boundaries. It transcends every demographic, impacts every member of a family and causes immeasurable harm to its victims. When violence permeates the walls of homes, it threatens the very essence of what makes us human, our feelings of safety, of love, of comfort and of belonging. From the devastating tragedies reported too late, to those still suffering in silence at home, the impacts of domestic and family violence are ricocheting across our community in Western Sydney. As the State member for Prospect, I emphasise the importance of this Parliament continuing its commitment to address family and domestic violence in New South Wales, particularly through continued support for our family and domestic violence services in Western Sydney. Organisations that provide support to those affected by family and domestic violence play a critical and crucial role in rebuilding those core aspects of an individual in a comprehensive, inclusive and accessible way.

For many people these services provide a lifeline and a vital connection to the outside world. Sadly, when individuals and their loved ones, such as children or parents, find themselves trapped in abusive relationships, they feel isolated, scared and exposed. Support services offer a safe haven, a place where survivors can seek refuge, counselling and legal services; access basic necessities and resources; and receive the emotional and practical support to rebuild their lives. They also provide safe and inclusive spaces to break the vacuum of isolation that goes hand in hand with domestic violence. Violence comes in many forms—physical, verbal, financial, social and spiritual. With all the ways violence can envelop a person's life, our DFV support services are vital to delivering community education.

A wide range of community programs are available across the Prospect electorate, helping members of our community to recognise signs of violence, establish boundary-setting and gain the tools to create healthy relationships. Especially in our diverse, multicultural Western Sydney community, it is important to support the delivery of these workshops in safe and cohesive spaces for people from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds. On 1 July 2024 coercive control became an offence in New South Wales—an imperative

reform. Coercive control was a known precursor in 97 per cent of domestic violence homicides between 2000 and 2018, but only one in five people can correctly identify the patterns of behaviour that comprise this form of abuse.

In the Prospect electorate we are extremely fortunate to have many DFV services with staff and volunteers who are passionate, dedicated and caring. These teams go above and beyond to provide critical, informed care when our community needs it most. I recognise Relationships Australia NSW in Blacktown and Settlement Services International in Fairfield for their tireless work to provide vital DFV services to individuals in Western Sydney, including access to marriage and family counselling, mental health services, family dispute resolution, group workshops, men's behavioural change programs, support for children, and culturally adapted programs for members of our CALD communities. Through those initiatives, Relationships Australia NSW and Settlement Services International provide a safe space for vulnerable individuals and their families. These organisations also seek to address three significant issues affecting family and domestic violence: prevention, early intervention and the breaking of intergenerational cycles of violence.

The Jesuit Refugee Service Australia, otherwise known as JRS, is another organisation that offers invaluable support to the Prospect electorate community. It provides critical support to women who are awaiting outcomes of protection visa applications and who are experiencing or have experienced family and domestic violence. The organisation's casework services, emergency relief assistance, access to food or material aid, and employment services provide crucial support. I thank the JRS team for its commitment to combating the vulnerability experienced by our migrant communities with these important services. I also acknowledge SAGE Community Services for its work in the Prospect community, and the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation, a grassroots organisation that does incredible work in our community. These support services are crucial to our community. I thank every carer and every person who works for them.

MEALS ON WHEELS TWEED

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:03): Today I praise the amazing support Meals on Wheels Tweed offers our local community. Next month I will attend the annual Meals on Wheels luncheon to honour its volunteers. All members know that without volunteers, many of our community groups could not survive. Meals on Wheels Tweed has been a part of the Tweed coast community since 1986, first commencing its service in the kitchens of concerned locals in Kingscliff. Now permanently based in Kingscliff, the service delivers from Tweed Heads to Pottsville, up to and including Terranora and Bilambil as well. Meals on Wheels Tweed aims to enhance people's wellness by providing nutritious and tasty meals, ensuring adequate nutritional intake and assisting people who use the service to maintain their independence to remain living comfortably and safely in their own home.

Over the past six months, 30,700 meals have been provided to clients, including 11,500 soups and desserts. Meals on offer include such beautiful things as coconut dahl with basmati rice, beef and bacon casserole and even a vegetarian parmy—but the best is yet to come. Desserts include double chocolate pudding, tropical pavlova—my favourite; it is to die for—and tiramisu. For many the service provides more than just a meal; it also offers an opportunity for social gatherings in a group environment or individually. Each Wednesday there is an outing for lunch and a men-only group get-together each month. Every Thursday there is a moderate exercise class with an exercise physiologist, designed to prevent falls. All of this is a means of keeping oldies connected with each other and the community to reduce loneliness.

This important local community-based organisation could not operate without the support of the local community. This support is highlighted by the dedication of its 83 volunteers. The Meals on Wheels Tweed team consists of current president Marj Goward, manager Chris Watt—who also holds the positions of president of NSW Meals on Wheels and vice-president of Meals on Wheels Australia—and six other team members. An active board of nine locals, who are all volunteers, also delivers meals and assists with social outings. Without Meals on Wheels, the impact on State-funded local hospitals would be enormous. The volunteers keep a watchful eye on all clients and report back with any concerns they may have about clients who have not been eating or are losing their sense of worth. This enables early intervention, where staff can arrange additional service providers or alert family before matters get worse.

I thoroughly look forward to the luncheon next month. I congratulate Meals on Wheels Tweed on its amazing work and the continued support it provides to our community. I note that I have delivered meals with them on many occasions. Normally they deliver 20 to 30 meals to various clients, but if I come along to help they have to cut that down to 15 because many of the people live on their own and all they want to do is sit down and have a bit of a yak! It is amazing. We are particularly encouraging the elderly or the seniors to live on their own and be independent. Occasionally I have to stack their fridges. Some clients will say, "We'd like to have fish on Monday, Geoffrey; we'll have the beef on Tuesday; we will have the dessert on this shelf" and things like that. I have a little bit of a joke, particularly with the ladies, that they should order more desserts. We all like our desserts.

Ms Karen McKeown: Sticky date.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Yes, sticky date. They say, "No, a moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips"—that old saying. I say, "No, you're still young and thin." They love that. It is an important service, with 83 volunteers who really run it. Without volunteers we could not do a lot of these things. I am 100 per cent for the Tweed and 100 per cent for Meals on Wheels.

EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:07): For decades the creeping advance of neoliberalism has steadily eroded the foundations of our public institutions. Under the guise of economic efficiency, this ideology has promoted the privatisation of public services, leading to a weakened public sector and the transfer of public wealth into private hands. The result is a dangerous pattern where profits are privatised while the public is left to shoulder the losses. One of the most glaring manifestations of this bankrupt ideology is the slavish reliance of governments on external consultants.

Under previous governments the use of consultants skyrocketed, with spending at the Federal government level surging from \$470 million in 2012-13 to nearly \$1.5 billion by 2021. Under the previous State Liberal-Nationals Government, spending on consultants rose by more than 50 per cent from 2011 to 2022, reaching, again, approximately \$1.5 billion in the 2020-21 financial year. Often these consultants, selling themselves as experts, act like mercenaries with no genuine stake in the results, charging exorbitant fees. Many from the big four—PwC, KPMG, EY and Deloitte—are brought in to give advice that is either blatantly obvious or out of touch with reality.

I was witness to this during my brief time as a public servant. Working in the IT space, I was all too often called in to clean up the mess caused by an expensive and unnecessary engagement with one of the big four. The recent PwC tax scandal is a stark reminder of the perverse outcomes that can arise when consultants are allowed to operate without adequate oversight. In that case, PwC leaked confidential government information to assist private clients in evading tax laws, an act that not only betrayed public trust but also highlighted the deep conflicts of interest that are inherent in the consulting industry.

In response to that and other issues, the New South Wales Legislative Council's Public Accountability and Works Committee recently handed down a report into the New South Wales Government's use of consulting services. The findings are alarming, revealing poor procurement practices, overreliance on the big four and significant strategic risks. The report shows that relying too much on consultants is weakening our public sector. By outsourcing key tasks, the Government is becoming too dependent on outside advice. The issue is made all the worse by consultant shopping, where agencies seek outside approval for decisions that could and should be made in house.

One of the key recommendations from the committee's report is recommendation 14, which suggests the New South Wales Government explore creating an in-house specialty consulting team. That aligns with a recent proposal made by the Australian Government and would dramatically reduce the Government's reliance on expensive and often useless external consultants. Over time, this in-house team would pay for itself by eliminating the need for high consultant fees and fixing inefficiencies in the public sector. Establishing an in-house consulting team would also rebuild vital public policy expertise that has been lost over the years, by attracting top talent from both the public and private sectors. Those sentiments echoed the view of the Public Service Association, which, in its submission to the committee's inquiry, also called for a rebuilding of the New South Wales public service.

The major shift across both the State and Federal government would send a clear message: The days of outsourcing core government functions to external consultants with questionable motives have come to an end. By strengthening the public sector, we can ensure that government decisions are better made, with transparency, accountability and a genuine commitment to the public interest. The committee's recommendations provide a clear path to a more efficient and transparent government. By investing in our public sector, we can reduce reliance on external consultants, ensure value for money and restore integrity in decision-making.

In its short time, the Minns Government has also made significant strides in improving the public service in this State. Chief among them are backing essential workers and strengthening integrity agencies. It has scrapped the public sector wage gap, ushering in pay increases for nurses, teachers and police officers. It has also boosted the funding of integrity agencies by an additional \$228.6 million. Those arrangements will ensure that the Audit Office, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission and the Ombudsman's Office remain adequately resourced to continue their work investigating, exposing and preventing corruption and maladministration. They will also ensure that the waste and inefficiency caused by the overuse of external consultants comes to an end and New South Wales can begin to reclaim and rebuild its vital public service.

PLASTIC WASTE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:12): I speak on an issue of great importance to my electorate: plastic waste. The electorate of Balmain sits within the beautiful Sydney Harbour, with the Balmain peninsula surrounded by the harbour, and large parts of Rozelle, Lilyfield, Annandale and Glebe enjoying waterfront access. The electorate's constituents care deeply about the environment, about handing over a liveable planet to their children and to future generations, and about reducing waste. It is predicted that by 2050 there is going to be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Governments across Australia and the world, particularly wealthier nations like ours, have an obligation to do everything they can to reduce as much plastic waste as possible.

I am grateful that in New South Wales we have the Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021, which gives the government a mechanism to phase out problematic single-use plastic. Positively, we finally have a container deposit scheme, which has been up and running for some years, that has been enthusiastically embraced by people across the State, with almost 12 billion drink containers collected and recycled. My community has been very motivated to take part in the scheme, and we were very disappointed to lose the container deposit machine at White Bay. We are desperate to get another machine in our community, particularly in Balmain. I have been working with the Inner West Council and TOMRA to find some suitable locations.

I have fond memories of moving to Perth as a kid and discovering that I could get money for collecting cans and bottles. It was amazing, and I think it was 5¢, which seems fairly generous. It was a great way for me to make some extra pocket money, and I think it was one of the first times that I really thought about what happened to rubbish like that after we had finished using it. It has been great to see lots of kids and community groups embracing the scheme in New South Wales, being able to raise funds for important local initiatives and teach the kids about being environmentally conscious.

I am so pleased that New South Wales has already banned some single-use plastics, but we know there is so much more work to do. The next tranche of plastics that are listed in the *NSW Plastics: Next Steps* plan need to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. I know my community is very frustrated that it is taking so long. One of the plastics on that list is the heavier weighted plastic bags. In places like the big supermarkets, they have just swapped out the lighter bags that have been banned for the thicker ones, which is missing the point of the original plastic bag ban and not addressing the problem. Arguably, they are potentially making the problem worse. The heavier plastic bags need to be phased out quickly. Another on the list to be phased out is helium balloons. Last week we debated my bill to ban the release of helium balloons instead of allowing up to 19 helium balloons to be released, which is currently the case in New South Wales.

Other States have already moved on this issue, with Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria having banned them already. The Northern Territory will do the same in 2025. The reason I am so passionate about this issue is because the impact of balloon releases on marine life is so significant. Balloons are the highest risk plastic debris item for seabirds; they are 32 times more likely to kill seabirds than if they ingested hard plastic. Although it makes up a much smaller percentage of the items that are ingested by seabirds, balloons are responsible for more than 40 per cent of deaths. That is a shocking figure, and it can be stopped quickly by banning balloon releases all together. I was very disappointed that the Government did not support the bill. I am keen to see the Government ban balloons as part of the next tranche of single-use plastics being phased out.

There are so many problematic single-use plastic items—cutlery, sauce containers, the list goes on—that we do not need and that should be banned. Other jurisdictions have shown leadership. We know that people can and will adapt. According to the New South Wales Government, over 90 per cent of people who responded to the consultation on the proposal to ban those further single-use plastics supported it. There is no time to waste; let us get on with it. People adapted quickly to the single-use plastic bans and behaviour changed a lot. With the collapse of REDCycle, it is more important than ever to have a solution to the soft plastics recycling crisis.

We do not want to lose the momentum of people getting used to separating out their single-use soft plastic packaging and diverting it from landfill; that is at least what we thought we were doing. It was incredibly disappointing to find out that the scheme collapsed. I know that my local schemes at Coles and Woolworths were overflowing with the collected bags. It is critical that we have a solution and put the onus back on the producers of this packaging to deal with what is being left at the other end. My community is passionate about the New South Wales Government getting on with tackling the scourge of plastic waste. I urge the Government to act quickly and make this a priority.

COST OF LIVING

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:17): I address a pressing issue that resonates deeply with many in our community: the cost of living. Many residents in East Hills are grappling with the challenges of rising expenses. Families are anxious about paying their rent, retirees are worried about the adequacy of their pensions

and single parents are working tirelessly to provide for their children. The pressures fuelling this crisis are multifaceted. Housing costs have surged, making it increasingly difficult for people to find and afford stable accommodation. Property prices and rental rates have risen sharply, pushing home ownership further out of reach for many and increasing the burden of rent for those already struggling. This crisis impacts on more than just financial stability; it affects overall quality of life.

Energy prices have also soared due to global market fluctuations and supply chain disruptions. The cost of electricity and gas has become a significant concern, forcing families to make tough decisions about their energy use. The harsh reality of choosing between heating their homes or affording other essentials is a dilemma that no-one should have to face. Healthcare costs are another area where many are feeling the pinch. The rising expense of medical services and medications means that, for some, accessing necessary care is becoming increasingly difficult. This issue affects not only the financial stability of households but also their health and quality of life. The cost of groceries has risen due to inflation and supply chain issues, making it harder for families to budget for food.

In response to these challenges, the Government is committed to providing meaningful support. The 2024-25 New South Wales budget included a raft of cost-of-living measures. The First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme offers vital concessions and exemptions from transfer duty for properties valued under \$1 million. For those purchasing newly built homes or building on new land, a \$10,000 grant is also available. These measures are designed to help more people achieve home ownership and secure stable housing. There is also private rental assistance to set up and maintain a tenancy through Rentstart and Rent Choice for eligible persons, including those escaping domestic violence.

The Government is addressing the rising cost of energy through expanded support programs. The Low Income Household Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate are providing up to \$350 per year. Additionally, the National Energy Bill Relief package provides a one-off payment of up to \$300 for eligible households. This reflects a collaborative effort between the Commonwealth and the New South Wales governments to ease the immediate financial pressure on families. The NSW Gas Rebate provides up to \$110 per year off the gas bills of certain Commonwealth concession card holders.

In health care, the \$188.8 million bulk-billing support initiative is helping to make medical care more affordable by capping the cost of GP visits. This aims to reduce the strain on our emergency services and ensure that everyone can access the health care they need without undue financial stress. The Government is also supporting families through programs like the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers, offering \$100 per year for each eligible school-aged child. This initiative ensures that children can engage in sports, arts and cultural activities without adding financial strain on families. Additionally, the \$60 weekly toll cap for eligible motorists helps reduce commuting costs, providing some relief to those who travel regularly for work or to other essential activities.

To support my community, I am hosting a cost-of-living hub later this month. We will bring together government and non-government services so that residents can access information and support to manage their bills and ease cost-of-living pressures. I acknowledge the incredible work being done by local organisations in our community. They play a vital role in supporting those in need by providing essential services, including food relief, housing support and mental health assistance as well as legal help, and many will be providing help at the cost-of-living hub later this month. We are all working together and taking a collective response to the cost-of-living crisis to make a tangible difference for our community.

LIVE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:21): For more than 40 years I have been involved in one way or another in the music festivals and events industry. As shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage, I have the great honour to advocate on behalf of an industry I have had a lifelong association with. For those involved in the industry, it is more of a passion and rarely do any make their fortune. It is a continued struggle. It was a bitter blow when COVID hit. The pandemic killed live music festivals and events, and the long haul back is still underway. That is why it is important that the Government does everything it can to bring live music festivals and events back into our venues and communities. I commend the Government for its work to bring change to New South Wales. Particularly around the vibrancy bill, I thank Minister Graham and Minister Harris for their collaboration to implement a suite of reforms that will have a positive impact on the industry.

There is more work to do. I meet regularly with the representatives of the industry. I note that an analysis done by the Night Time Industries Association in April 2024 found that opening a new venue in Sydney is costing more than \$29,000 in fees and charges for mandatory reports and approvals. A potential venue operator may face more than \$70,000 in rent and application fees before local and State government requirements are met and it can

finally open its doors. There is more that can be done to cut the red tape and make it easier for those who support the industry.

This week's announcement that the 2024 Bluesfest, an iconic festival in Byron Bay, would be the last is a stark reminder of the challenges that the events and festivals industry face. This year we have already lost Groovin the Moo and Splendour in the Grass, and the loss of Bluesfest is just another blow to the live music and festival scene. When a festival is cancelled, artists lose another chance to perform and we lose another chance to enjoy their craft. The loss of festivals has a negative knock-on effect on not only artists but also regional communities, who miss out on seeing those touring artists and performers.

There is more that can be done to save our festival scene, and I look forward to working with the Government on reforming the industry. Costs are rising and it is getting harder to hold an event or festival. There are significant fees and charges that have skyrocketed, including insurance for public liability. The Government's user-charges policy is adding hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of running a festival. Events promoters are finding it harder to make it work. The Government does offer exemptions under five categories: mega events, hallmark events, commemorative or ceremonial events, major cultural or sporting events, and minor cultural or sporting events.

The Tamworth Country Music Festival and the Forbes Parkes festival, being hallmark events, are two such festivals that benefit under those exemptions. I believe there is room to further expand the exemption policy to offer greater support to a more diverse range of festivals that are important to the cultural and recreational make-up and vibrancy of our State. This would give festivals operators confidence, knowing they will not be hit with a significant bill from the New South Wales Government. There are options available, and I encourage the Government to explore them. Significant challenges remain, regardless of changes to policy, but if providing exemptions under the user-pays policy is a measure that may save and help promote the industry, then the Government should make that change.

WESTERN SYDNEY HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:26): As a member of the Minns Government, I am acutely aware of the critical housing shortage facing New South Wales residents. I recognise the imperative to provide affordable housing options throughout Sydney. However, Western Sydney has done more than its fair share and cannot continue with unsupported urban sprawl. Indeed, the only reason I am standing before the House today is because of the failure of the previous Government to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the extraordinary population growth. The delivery of housing in the North West Growth Area, and in particular the electorate of Riverstone, has been nothing short of calamitous.

For 12 years the former Government presided over a population explosion in the Riverstone electorate without the schools, roads, hospitals or other infrastructure to support that growth. That is 12 years with nothing but population growth, turning the suburban dream into a nightmare. While the Liberal Opposition continues to play politics, I will continue to advocate for the needs of Riverstone. It is my responsibility to be the voice of my community. After years of broken promises by members opposite, the Minns Labor Government delivered the investment to build Rouse Hill Hospital. It funded and set about building eight new schools and upgrading existing schools that were struggling under the weight of new enrolments. It funded upgrades to Garfield Road East, Bandon Road and Richmond Road.

The rebalanced housing targets announced on 29 May 2024 aim to increase housing around established infrastructure, in places connected to work and transport, and in communities that already have the amenities to support the growth. This is not the case in the suburbs of Stanhope Gardens and Glenwood. The previous Government failed to lay the foundations. It starved the area of infrastructure, and this damage must be repaired before we consider the ambitious targets proposed for these two suburbs. The midpoint between these suburbs is quite literally the neck of the funnel for both Windsor Road and the metro. Currently, the other suburbs feeding into that funnel from the north have a combined population of roughly 160,000 residents; this is projected to grow to over 300,000 by 2041. I reiterate that my community will always be willing to do our fair share to address the housing crisis, but the failure of the former Liberal Government to deliver infrastructure to the growth area has crippled it.

Windsor Road moves like a glacier every day of the week because of the massive influx of residents from suburbs north of Kellyville station, who are forced to use their cars due to the disconnected nature of public transport options. For many residents, simply getting onto Windsor Road from connecting roads all the way from Stanhope to Box Hill can take in excess of 30 minutes. Roads like Newbury Avenue, Merriville Road, Sanctuary Drive, Schofields Road and every other feeder road to Boundary Road all push thousands of cars onto Windsor Road every day. The car park for the metro at Tallawong is now full by 7.15 a.m., largely filled by residents from Grantham Farm, Marsden Park, Box Hill and other areas of the Hawkesbury because of a lack of public transport

options in those areas that provide access to the metro. Rouse Hill station does not have any parking and the car park at Kellyville is typically full by 8.30 a.m. The metro itself is typically full by the time it leaves Kellyville station during peak hour, despite trains running every four minutes.

The addition of new schools is welcome. However, all but two of the public schools in my electorate are seriously over capacity. Some have more than double their intended intake numbers, because of a failure by members opposite to properly resource the growing number of families in the area. We also need more green space, sporting fields, community halls, libraries, pools, child care and social support. A failure to deliver employment zones has resulted in a lack of local employment opportunities, which means that approximately 80 per cent of workers leave my electorate daily to reach their places of employment. In less than 18 months the Minns Labor Government has started to make progress towards addressing those issues, but it will take time to fix the 12 years of neglect and the broken promises of the previous Liberal Government.

There are benefits to building housing near existing infrastructure, but existing infrastructure is the key point. Enough is enough. We have already taken our fair share. My community knows that I am a tireless advocate for their needs. I arranged a community forum on the proposal, which was attended by over 100 concerned residents. I secured an additional consultation session with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and an additional two weeks to the deadline for community feedback on the proposal. I refuse to play the politics that Liberal Opposition members continue to play. My commitment to the people of my electorate is that I will continue to work hard to clean up the previous Liberal Government's mess and deliver the best possible outcome for my community. To be clear, I have met with the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the planning Minister to convey my community's concerns that the uplift in Stanhope Gardens and Glenwood is unsustainable, at least until the damage done by those opposite has been rectified.

NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (17:31): On Wednesday I became aware that the Liberal Party head office did not submit nominations for endorsed Liberal Party candidates for the Northern Beaches Council at the upcoming local government elections in September. That will impact local democracy. Voters deserve a choice and an opportunity to consider voting for the Liberal Party or Liberal-minded candidates. In 2021 over 52,000 northern beaches residents voted for Liberal candidates more than any other grouping. My heart goes out to our hardworking Liberal councillors, candidates and volunteers who have already sacrificed so much. They have tirelessly served our community and are ready to keep going. I am gutted for them and our community, who will lose their strong representation on council. We are poorer without them.

I pay tribute to all candidates, particularly lead candidates Councillor Michael Gencher, Jonathan Malota, Councillor Karina Page, Councillor Georgia Ryburn and Councillor David Walton. I met Councillor Gencher, or Michael, on opposite sides of a polling place nearly three years ago. Despite initial wariness, our introduction grew to acquaintances, to council colleagues, to fellow Liberals and, most importantly, to good friends. His dedication to Pittwater, his dedication to his community, his commitment to standing by his convictions, his friendly demeanour and his deep love and commitment to his family inspire me. He stands up for those who need it. He should be proud of his efforts to help Kristy, Dan, Holly and Harry Rempt at 2kf Espresso, amongst many more wonderful achievements. Karina Page is a fierce, lifelong Liberal and true believer. When others would shirk or shy away from a fight for our values, she would run headlong into battle for shared convictions. I am in awe of her humility. The life experience she brings to the table has shaped her commonsense, real-world approach. She served two terms as a faithful servant on Manly council and just over a year on Northern Beaches Council. I thank her.

For six years it was an honour to stand shoulder to shoulder with David Walton. His measured, relentless focus on ensuring that our council was well managed helped to keep us on track. Under trying circumstances, he was a stable hand and a balanced influence. If I had a dollar for every time he said "good governance" or "director's duties" or referenced some random High Court case about governance, I would be a very wealthy man. Council and its audit and risk committee will struggle to fill the hole left from his absence. Dave completed the skill set that made a formidable Liberal team from 2017 to now. I am grateful to call him a friend.

Georgia Ryburn is everything the Liberal Party needs. A young mother, a professional, forward looking, intelligent, articulate, charismatic and engaging. She has served on council because she loves her community, but she can achieve anything she sets her mind to. In her first speech to council, I recall that she spoke about when the first Norfolk Island pines were planted along Manly Beach generations ago. No-one could have imagined their majesty today. In that sense, her time on council is simply the planting of saplings. In years to come, she will have achieved and will continue to achieve whatever she sets her mind to.

I had a ball with Stuart Sprott during our time on council. I have said before and I will say in this Chamber that he was truly the greatest councillor I had the privilege to work with. I have not worked with anyone with an

instinct like his for identifying and fixing issues. It was Stuart who identified the risks with the North Manly Bowling Club and saved us millions of dollars on a deal which ultimately fell over. It was Stuart who identified the absurdity of replacing 300,000 bins in our area without having a business case—he saved ratepayers \$6 million. It was Stuart who identified that we could get some money back for recycled containers collected from residents by our garbage collectors, generating millions of dollars of revenue. His legacy is far greater than he has been given credit for, and so I pay tribute to it tonight.

I am proud to call Craig Bullock a friend. I know that if he had been elected to council, he would have given so much. Jon Malota would have run an outstanding campaign, and we are all devastated that we could not be a part of it. I am bitterly disappointed that the Liberal Party has let those candidates down. They all deserve so much better than that. I know our councillors, candidates and volunteers will all be back in the future and, in the meantime, will each keep serving our community in their own special way. I encourage our volunteers not to give up hope. For 80 years, since being founded in Albury by Sir Robert Menzies, ours has been the party of timeless Liberal values.

HARRIS PARK

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:35): Harris Park is a thriving, dynamic and multicultural hub with a long history. It possesses an unmatched vibrancy that has grown over the past decade, but even more so since the official naming of the Little India in Harris Park precinct that encompasses Wigram Street, Marion Street and Station Street East. Historically, Harris Park has been home to migrants starting their lives in Australia. In 1791 emancipated convict James Ruse was bestowed the first land grant in the colony of New South Wales. Located on the land of the Burramattagal people, it encompassed a 30-acre area that became known as Experiment Farm. Two years later, in 1793, surgeon John Harris purchased Experiment Farm, which, in addition to a grant of 100 acres, made him the primary landowner of that region in Parramatta. It is now known as Harris Park in his memory.

Harris Park is home to three homesteads that are all listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register and are currently being considered for the National Heritage List: Experiment Farm, Elizabeth Farm and Hambleton Cottage. Little India in Harris Park is located within the Harris Park West Conservation Area. Just as we see today with transport oriented developments focusing development around both new and existing transport, the subdivision of Harris Park was in direct response to the construction of the railway line from Sydney to Blacktown, which was completed in 1860 and included a station at Harris Park. That brought vast changes to the area, which had been mainly farming land. The Harris Park West Conservation Area comprises many of the original small single-storey cottages and terrace houses built before 1895, with narrow lots and back lanes. It is considered the most consistent historical urban area in central Parramatta and contributes to the heritage value and character of the city.

There has been a consistent pattern of home ownership in Harris Park, largely by those who have fallen in love with the character of the homes while at the same time enjoying the convenient location. It is against that backdrop that we have seen Little India in Harris Park grow. The residential-zoned Wigram Street is still home to many residents, while also housing some of the most popular South Asian eateries in Australia. Marion Street and Station Street East offer authentic spices, chaat and jalebi along with beautiful sarees and South Asian groceries.

Prime Minister Modi's personal acknowledgment of Little India demonstrates that this cultural precinct has become an international destination that provides an exciting, authentic Indian experience. The Government supports this unique precinct and recognises its potential to become Sydney's epicentre of Indian food, fashion and music. The Government's vibrancy agenda is all about backing businesses to make the most of their public spaces and local character to draw more visitors and more life to their districts, day or night. Little India in Harris park has reached new heights in its retail offerings with the recent opening of global businesses Malabar Gold and Diamonds, and Nalli, putting that part of Parramatta well and truly on the map.

We need to work carefully to ensure that we maintain all the wonderful aspects of this area that add to its charm and historical significance. That will require good negotiation and great planning, and it is important to remember the elements that contribute to its charm. Yes, the food, the fashion and the festive feel of Little India in Harris Park are all critical to its success. But one of the most important elements to its charm is the streetscape—the heritage homes that simultaneously take us back to a point in time that, when filled with the aromas of star anise and mango lassi, add an incredibly unique element that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world. I encourage everyone to visit Little India in Harris Park, and everyone will fall in love with this quaint heritage quarter while seeking out the best biryani this side of the equator. Happy Indian Independence Day!

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CYBERBULLYING

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:40): As members, including Temporary Speaker Kemp, would know, adolescence can be a difficult time, to say the least. Teenagers are fragile. It is a time of great change, a time when they leave behind the magical realm of childhood and dip their feet into the harsh realities of the adult world. It is a time when they face the physical and emotional challenges of puberty, with the addition of raging hormones in full swing. Adolescence can also be when schoolyard and online bullying hits the hardest. Unfortunately, today's young people do not have the chance to leave their bullies behind in the playground. They bring them home with them, maintaining constant contact through social media. I have had reports of this exact scenario happening at Lake Macquarie based high schools.

A 2020 headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey found that 51 per cent, or one in two young Australians, had experienced cyberbullying. In 2021 a major study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that in 2019, 21 per cent of people aged between 15 and 19 had experienced cyberbullying in the past 12 months, while in 2020, 44 per cent of people aged 12 to 17 had at least one negative online experience in the past six months. This issue affects thousands of Lake Macquarie teens. According to the latest census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that number amounts to 13,344 young people aged between 10 and 14 years of age, or 6.2 per cent of the local government area's total population; and 12,340 young people aged between 15 and 19 years old, or 5.8 per cent of the local government area's total population.

I believe the threat posed by social media to those 25,600-odd constituents is real, not only in the form of cyberbullying—which is a very real and very serious problem—but also because social media sites can put children in direct contact with adults who have nefarious intentions towards them. Whether it be paedophiles, scammers or people looking to blackmail them, the dark depths of social media are no place for our young people to be swimming. Currently people as young as 13 years old can legitimately create accounts on social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat. Of course, many children aged under 13 also create profiles by lying about their date of birth.

Yesterday, in my capacity as the Speaker of the House, I received a petition signed by 113,000 people backing the 36 Months campaign. It was brought to this House by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Vacluse. Thirty-six months is the time between the ages of 13 and 16, and the campaign wants the age of access to social media platforms lifted to 16 years of age. As part of that delegation, Robb Evans also visited the New South Wales Parliament yesterday. Carrying a pink urn that held his teenage daughter's ashes, Robb shared his utterly devastating story with us. Robb's daughter, Liv, was just 15 years old when she took her own life after relentless bullying, both in the schoolyard and online. Robb told me Liv wanted to do something about online bullying and, sadly, now this is her only way to do that. It is a tragic and powerful message. The image of that man carrying the ashes of his young daughter in that pink urn into my office at Parliament House is not one I will ever forget.

We need to do more to protect our precious children and grandchildren. I think lifting the age of access to social media to 16 years of age is absolutely appropriate—and certainly an action that we should be exploring fully. To any and all young people who are suffering from online bullying, I extend my greatest sympathies and implore them to switch off from social media. Switch it off, shut it down and walk away from the nonsense. Take away bullies' power. To those guilty of bullying their young peers, I say they should grow up, cut it out and focus on improving themselves rather than trying to tear someone else down. Making someone else feel small will not make them any bigger. It is cruel, demeaning and unacceptable, and it could haunt them for the rest of their lives.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:45): The Gosford electorate is home to some of the most amazingly talented and committed volunteers, who provide diverse and wideranging support for many members of our Central Coast community. Our organisations are staffed by passionate and compassionate individuals who make our community a better place to live for so many. I sincerely thank Volunteering Central Coast and each and every one of our community volunteers, who go above and beyond to serve and provide purpose for so many other people around them. In a world where we face the growing challenge of loneliness and isolation, our local organisations provide an incredibly important way to connect, grow and thrive. Tonight in the New South Wales Parliament I particularly thank those community organisations in the Gosford electorate that have been recipients of a Community Building Partnership grant. Each and every one of those organisations does an amazing job. It is difficult for the panel to decide who should be eligible for a grant, but this year I congratulate the following organisations.

Umina Beach Men's Shed did an amazing job rebuilding its men's shed from scratch at a new location with the \$100,000 Community Building Partnership grant some years ago. This year it is spending \$8,600 on new equipment. I was delighted to visit the team at Umina Beach Men's Shed. They will be buying three new

woodworking lathes and accessories to teach woodworking to more senior men and to make items for the community to use. They do a great job. The Brisbane Water Cricket Club will be getting a new gazebo to keep the sun off its canteen area. It was also nice to sit beside Central Coast Council at the Peninsula Leisure Centre, a place where I have spent many hours training, knowing that the centre will be getting an upgrade to install a new electronic scoreboard. Lots of kids on their holiday camp joined in on the fun when I visited.

The Riding for the Disabled Association has already begun the \$17,500 worth of work to replace its horse shelters to make sure that its beautiful, gentle horses that are ridden by kids with disabilities have a nice place to stay when they are not at work. The Umina Tennis and Sporting Club will be resurfacing court 3. The \$19,000 investment will be great for the club's growing community. Parklands Community Preschool is investing nearly \$20,000 in redeveloping its outdoor area for exclusivity with a new children's cubbyhouse, where I know the kids will have lots of fun. I offer my congratulations to that community.

Gosford Community Men's Shed will be upgrading a lot of its internal equipment, rewiring and replacing its shed equipment. The amazing Gosford Netball Association has a fairly new facility at Adcock Park, but the kitchen was not ideal. So it got a nice upgrade to its kitchen with pie ovens, microwaves, fridges and other equipment that it needs to deliver food to its fantastic netballers across the Gosford electorate. The Peninsula Lighthouse will be expanding its counselling room. It provides a great service, especially to women and families escaping domestic violence. I congratulate Natasha on that investment of \$10,000.

Central Coast Football now has two defibrillators, one for McEvoy Oval and one for Bloodtree Oval, which are fully monitored and publicly accessible. They are the first of their kind on the Central Coast. I am sitting next to the member for The Entrance in the Chamber. I am sure that he will be asking for some of those great defibrillators in his electorate also. All you have to do is call a number and open it up. It is all automatic and gets the job done. I also congratulate the Umina Beach Public School P&C, which will be resurfacing its outdoor covered learning area with a much-loved new surface. Currently the kids play in a pretty grotty concrete area.

The Central Coast Junior Motorcycle Club requested a very timely vehicle for first aid. The club has done an amazing job. It had a significant incident recently, so that first aid vehicle will be an important delivery. The Peninsula Environment Group is building some internal storage cupboards—good on them. Volunteers with Marine Rescue were very happy to work with Bendigo Bank to get two engines for their primary rescue vehicle. I thank that team for all the work they do. I congratulate the Mooney-Cheero Progress Association on receiving security cameras for its river hub. The Ettalong P&C is renovating Araluen Cottage. Woy Woy Public School P&C is building an outside sensory learning play space for \$44,000. Woy Woy Tennis Club is upgrading its lighting system, which is a great outcome. Sailability is accessing a new floating boat docking ramp, which will make life much easier for the volunteers. I congratulate all the recipients and thank all the volunteers in the Gosford electorate for their great work.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:50): In the Vaucluse electorate we are lucky to have some of the best volunteer community organisations, sporting groups and P&Cs in the State. I might be a bit biased, but I am unashamedly proud of my community and the people who pour their hearts and souls into supporting our local organisations. They give up their spare time, expecting nothing in return but a thriving community. These volunteers work hard for their schools, clubs and places of worship. Hours of their spare time are spent preparing for events, filling in grant applications, advocating for improvements and raising much-needed funds. Over the past year I have worked with local community groups to help deliver \$350,000 in funding for infrastructure upgrades, new equipment and much-needed sporting supplies.

Twelve groups in our community have recently secured grant funding through the Community Building Partnership and Local Sport Grant Program. I give them a shout-out and highlight the benefits some of their projects will deliver for our local community. Bondi Public School is one of our beautiful beachside primary schools, with more than 500 students. The school will be supported with a \$100,000 Community Building Partnership grant to upgrade the outdoor toilet. This upgrade has been a long time coming. Bondi Public School P&C president Kate Fraser and the rest of the P&C deserve credit for their advocacy and work to secure funding for this project.

Central Synagogue is the largest synagogue in the Southern Hemisphere, welcoming thousands of worshippers each week. Recently I joined Rabbi Wolff and the shul's president, Mr Simon Klimt, to announce they had received \$50,000 to undertake repairs to their deteriorated roof, which is allowing water ingress and subsequent damage during rainfall. The past year has been incredibly difficult for our local Jewish community, and it is important to deliver this funding to support this place of worship. Uniting Early Learning North Bondi also received a grant of \$48,602 to upgrade the bathroom and art sink. The early years of childhood development could not be more important. Our early learning educators do amazing work to help care for and develop young

minds. It was wonderful to meet a number of the kids at the centre, where they put on an afternoon tea for me, with some delicious tea and cakes, to celebrate this much-needed funding.

The Greek Orthodox parish of St George Rose Bay received \$33,120 to assist the parish to build a new disabled access ramp, pathway, and associated landscape works. Double Bay Public School received \$30,000 to assist the school to fund lighting for its newly resurfaced sports court facilities. Emanuel Woollahra Preschool received \$25,000 for its outdoor deck area, creating a communal space for the preschool. Jewish House received \$10,085 to purchase energy-efficient refrigerators in six homeless housing units and nine new TV units, and to repair laundry doors. Double Bay Sailing Club received \$20,000 to assist the club to deliver the new rescue boat project and the women's regatta.

Easts Rugby received \$2,240 to purchase Galaxy jackets for the women's team players. Woollahra Sailing Club received \$14,090 for the purchase of a new Pacer sailing dinghy for aspiring grassroots sailors and to improve access to sailing on Sydney Harbour. Eastern Suburbs Dragon Boat Club received \$5,500 to assist the club to purchase a new sub-protection shelter and carbon fibre paddles. Woollahra Colleagues Rugby Club received \$6,420 to assist the club to purchase new training equipment. That is a lot of grants, but I hope there are more to come. I am looking forward to continuing to support our community organisations and the vital funding they need. I encourage sporting clubs, P&Cs, churches and community organisations to reach out if they are seeking funding, need a letter of support or just want to find out what grants might be available.

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:54): I recognise the importance of public interest disclosures. Last week marked Public Interest Disclosure Awareness Week. In an era when trust in politicians, government and institutions is low, robust processes and measures must be in place to ensure that any reports of wrongdoing are responded to quickly and appropriately. Many people in my community have approached me, especially during the past few months, about the ongoing saga at Liverpool City Council and how it is impacting their faith in political leaders. As per media reports, there have been widespread accusations of nepotism in hiring practices, potential maladministration and corruption that have caused members of the Liverpool community to lose faith and trust in the organisation and its leadership. *The Sydney Morning Herald* famously likened the intrigue, backstabbing and revolving door of CEOs at Liverpool City Council to the TV show *Game of Thrones*. That is not a flattering comparison that Liverpool should be known for.

Over the past 12 months I have been working hard to promote the potential within our community. With the Western Sydney airport project rapidly proceeding to the planned take-off of planes in late 2026 and the huge opportunity that the Liverpool Innovation Precinct brings, the community should have faith in local leadership to put the interests of our community front and centre. Instead, we have a local council that is apparently riven with conflicts of interest and personal vendettas. As per media reports, these very serious issues are causing distress among staff and impacting the council's ability to deliver for Liverpool. They must be urgently addressed. We must reflect on what has brought us to this place. Following a particularly nasty council meeting in April this year, when police were called to restore order, the Minister for Local Government launched an inquiry to investigate the apparent breakdown of relations between staff and the elected body.

It is important to consider the significance of public interest disclosures in righting the wrongs that people may encounter. It is important for public officials to speak up if they see serious wrongdoing, and that they know what to expect when they do. The importance of a speak-up culture for all public officials in New South Wales cannot be overstated. I commend the previous Government for strengthening the public interest regime and protections in place for whistleblowers. I am proud of this Labor Government for boosting funding to integrity agencies by \$228.6 million. As the saying goes, evil triumphs when good people do nothing. That applies absolutely to our democratic system. Our democracy is not just about conducting elections every three or four years; it is also about how we consistently hold our leaders to account. This can only be achieved with robust processes and well-resourced and independent bodies at arm's length from political interference.

Public interest disclosures have had a significant role in highlighting the issues at Liverpool City Council. In the days following the media reports of the shenanigans at council, I received calls and correspondence from former staff and others detailing their experiences within and with the organisation. I am horrified. I heard stories of sexual harassment. I also heard deeply concerning reports of bullying and intimidation against those who sought to raise issues within Liverpool City Council. Some of the people I heard from have struggled to work since and continue to grapple with their trauma. For them, public interest disclosures are the only way to raise the alarm to ensure that their experiences do not become the norm.

Our residents, the many capable staff that serve our community and those who wish for Liverpool to succeed and fulfil its potential, like I stridently do, deserve transparency and accountability. They deserve to know exactly how the organisation is and is not serving the best interests of the residents and ratepayers of Liverpool.

Public Interest Disclosures Awareness Week is a chance for us to discuss and learn more about how to report wrongdoing and how the Act works in practice to encourage and protect whistleblowers in the New South Wales public sector. The only way Liverpool City Council can do that is through a public inquiry and by offering public interest disclosure protections to the many staff and members of the community who need us to act.

GREYHOUND RACING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:59): Eight years ago this Parliament made a compassionate decision to end greyhound racing following repeated exposés of severe cruelty, but before the laws could even take effect they were overturned and, instead, we were promised that a new regulator would clean up the industry and eliminate suffering. We are now confronted with shocking revelations of cruelty again, and my constituents and the wider community want us to stop tinkering at the edges and once and for all put an end to that cruel industry. The recent handover document from the outgoing Greyhound Racing chief veterinary officer shows that nothing has changed since 2016 and nothing will ever change because the industry profits from cruelty.

During his time as chief veterinary officer for Greyhound Racing NSW, Dr Alex Brittan concluded that Greyhound Racing NSW inflated adoption rates, under-reported deaths, over-bred dogs and pushed dogs to race at dangerous levels. Dr Brittan found that the sheer number of dogs being bred and retired left little chance for them to be rehomed. He estimates that, every year, between 8,000 and 13,000 dogs leave the industry, entering kennels where they will spend the rest of their lives. He found the number of dogs being rehomed was exaggerated, with dogs being prepared for rehoming, such as being vaccinated and desexed, counted as "rehomed".

Dr Brittan showed that there were over three times the 970 deaths recorded by the Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission [GWIC], the body responsible for protecting greyhounds in the industry. That 970 figure is already a shockingly high number of greyhound deaths to stomach, but the fact that the true number has been hidden is cause for alarm. Dr Brittan describes industry participants failing to report deaths, in breach of their obligations. He describes a system that continually wipes dogs that cannot be accounted for through audits. He describes "ghost populations", where dogs "in training" for the racetrack do not need to be reported, even when they are past the racing age, leaving them unrecorded. One in five dogs under 5½ years old died for reasons like "snake bites" or for "unexplained" reasons—a rate the chief vet considered unusually high, yet there were no investigations to verify the causes.

Meanwhile, Dr Brittan described greyhound bodies and remains found in freezers and fire pits at vet premises that went unreported. He said euthanasia regularly occurs for injuries that can be fixed because owners do not want to pay for treatment. Dr Brittan revealed industry policies that push dogs to race too often and when it is too hot, causing severe stress, injuries and death. Trainers are paid to bring dogs to races and encouraged to race dogs that have no chance of winning or that are too exhausted. The dogs get only 30 seconds with a vet to assess whether they are fit to race. At racetracks Dr Brittan saw large numbers of greyhounds kept in appalling conditions, locked in rotten rusty cages with no attention. He saw nails ripped off of dogs from clawing at cage doors in deep distress.

Outside the tracks there is little oversight of kennelling, with only 6.5 per cent of the over 5,000 participants inspected by GWIC each year. Other welfare problems include dangerous tracks, poor diet, fraudulent use of prescription drugs and vaccines, illegal steroid use, lack of veterinary care and oversight, veterinary overbilling, substandard anaesthesia, euthanasia by shooting and widespread use of cruel practices of surgical artificial insemination. Meanwhile, the industry fights any gambling harm reforms. The Brittan report is gruesome and brutal; I urge all members to read it because greyhound racing operates under laws made by this Parliament. The 2016 special commission of inquiry asked this House to consider whether the greyhound racing industry had lost its social licence and whether it should be permitted to operate in the State. While we failed to do the right thing, leaving thousands of dogs to suffer year on year, we now have another opportunity to intervene and put things right.

It is clear that no push for best practice will ever eliminate cruelty because cruelty is profitable. Greyhound racing generates \$3.8 billion a year, yet it continues to skimp on basic welfare and to disregard the dogs it profits from. The Government has initiated a review into the allegations, but that review will be conducted by GWIC. Dr Brittan's report includes criticisms of the failures of GWIC and recommends that it should not investigate itself. Any investigation should be independent. Greyhound racing has no place in a modern and socially progressive society. It is cruel and it will remain cruel until it ends. I call on this House to end the suffering by ending that archaic industry.

DOONSIDE SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:04): I congratulate the Doonside Senior Citizens Club, which is celebrating its golden jubilee—50 years of supporting senior citizens and providing a wonderful venue to come

together to celebrate life and good friendships. The seniors movement in the Blacktown local government area began in the late 1960s, with some people indicating it started in the Blacktown RSL youth club hall with Percy Saunders and a wonderful couple, Ray and Nora. Doonside formed its club, called the Doonside Activity Club, which catered for the welfare of the aged and pensioners over 40 years of age. The club started in the Doonside Community Hall in 1974. Graham Sweeney was the founder and first president. He later became alderman on Blacktown Municipal Council. As part of his campaign, Graham said his "hopes and aspirations are for better facilities for the aged and children". In his first term on council from 1974 to 1977, he had land set aside for the future seniors hall.

The leadership team of husband and wife Ray and Ronnie Ross followed Graham, with Ronnie as the president and also the driver, picking up and dropping off many of the infirm members, and Ray as treasurer. During that time, John Aquilina was elected mayor in September 1977. He was the mayor when Blacktown changed from a municipality to a city in 1979. Together with the ward 4 councillors at the time, Jim Lynch and Charlie Bali, the Labor team delivered many innovative council buildings, including the new Doonside Senior Citizens Activities Centre in 1980.

The Doonside Seniors presidents following Ray and Ronnie Ross included June Leo and Jim Fraser, and the longest serving president of all was Martha Lynch. For about three decades Martha's leadership kept the club going. Following Martha was her daughter, Josephine. Currently it is led by another husband-and-wife team: president Steven Szmytko and his lovely wife, Lorgia. They have a wonderful team supporting them, including Sajana Nand, Pushpa Nand, Hyacinth Singh, Vijay Nand, Denzil and Lorraine D'Cruz, Clarita Castaneda and Lombarda. Special mention needs to go to Joe and Ann Buckman, who have provided care and support over the years to the seniors. Joe was the driver of the minibus, picking up and dropping off many of the seniors so they can attend the activities.

The Doonside Seniors team have had their challenges over the years. An occasional break-in or fire may have temporarily disappointed them, but their resilience soon had them back on track providing repairs to the centre and support for seniors. Over the years they have undertaken many activities such as board games, darts, indoor bowls, table tennis, bingo, linedancing and exercise—even with chairs. They raise money from activities such as at Doonside Festival where, over the years, they have had a stall with arts and crafts or knick-knack sales. The most popular activities are their bus tours to many destinations and their annual Christmas party.

Doonside Seniors was one of the most engaged groups that campaigned with me over many years for Doonside railway station upgrades. About 30 of them sat in the gallery in this Parliament when we had the petition debate to call on the then Government to "give Doonie a lift". Their advocacy strongly contributed to the then Government reversing its decision and upgrading the station. Doonside Seniors members boast an impressive list of achievers, including Blacktown City Senior Citizen of the Year award winners June Leo in 1994, Marie Jenson in 2008, Martha Lynch in 2009 and Ruth Nicholson in 2018; and Blacktown City Citizen of the Year for 2015, Sajana Nand. The goal is to make members feel welcome and engaged in social activities. After 50 successful years, Doonside Seniors continues to thrive and provide a wonderful centre of activity for our more mature residents who equally just want to have fun. I congratulate Doonside Seniors. I look forward to another 50 successful years.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:09): Tonight I advocate for an important issue that has been raised with me by several local constituents. I call on the Government and the Minister for Transport to reinstate the 439 bus service from Mortlake to the Sydney CBD. The 439 service provided essential bus access for many residents of Breakfast Point, Cabarita, Canada Bay and Mortlake to the city, with stops in Five Dock, Leichhardt and Camperdown, with a stop not far from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital along the way. The cancellation of the bus service has had a detrimental impact on our community and an even greater effect on already marginalised residents. According to the 2021 census, one in three residents of Breakfast Point is aged 60 or over. The elderly members of the community particularly rely heavily on public transport and, in many cases, driving is simply not an option. For those residents, public transport is not simply a means of getting from A to B; it is their primary method of visiting their family members, friends and loved ones. It is their access to health care and doctors appointments. It is their means of staying connected.

Residents of Concord, Breakfast Point, Mortlake and Cabarita have contacted my office, unable to make their doctors appointments due to the lack of public transport options in our community. That is simply unacceptable. I want to work with the Government to provide a suitable solution. Mortlake and Breakfast Point are peninsulas that, in recent years, have done the heavy lifting when it comes to housing density in the Canada Bay council area. Density and population growth have to be supported by infrastructure. Convenient bus routes are a vital form of public transport for peninsulas that have one road in and one road out and lack fast and efficient trains. The response from Transport for NSW is to mode shift, meaning to get off a bus and then get on

another. For someone living in Breakfast Point or Mortlake, or even Cabarita, to go down the road to Leichhardt in the middle of the day requires three buses. That shows that the system is not working.

Transport for NSW also tells us that people can catch a ferry. But right now, on a nice sunny day, or when there is a special event, it is impossible to get on a ferry because they fill up before they reach the later stops on the Parramatta River closer to the city. The Government is sending the beloved, fast, efficient and convenient RiverCat ferries to the scrap yard and replacing them with smaller ferries. In real terms, that is a loss of actual capacity on a route that already has patronage issues. I call on the Government to refurbish the RiverCats rather than decommission them altogether. The Government has done it with the Manly ferries. I do not see a rational reason why it cannot be done with those icons of the Parramatta River. I ask the Government to look at starting ferries further down the river, in line with patronage data, at Cabarita or Abbotsford, to give my community a chance to get on the ferry.

My office has started a community petition calling for the reinstatement of the 439 bus. It received hundreds of signatures literally overnight. That shows that we need to work for a solution and look at this decision again. I wrote to the Minister earlier this year about the 439 bus. At that time, I was advised that the Government had "no plans to reinstate the 439 bus service". I will not take no for an answer. I will represent my community and work with the Government on a solution. I quote a local Concord resident, Margaret, who often commutes to the city. She wrote to me and said, "Because the 439 is no longer available, I now have to drive to Burwood to catch a train or drive to the ferry." That exemplifies the situation of many residents who previously relied on the 439 bus. If they cannot catch a bus directly into the CBD, they are either driving to the city or driving to the station. They are not mode shifting. It is not an efficient solution, especially because the roads are already so congested.

In a growing city, we need to incentivise and make it enticing and convenient for people to catch public transport, not make it harder for them because some bureaucrat in the department says that getting three buses to travel less than 10 kilometres is a good idea on paper. Our community is growing. It is about common sense and amenity. All members want to make their communities better. I want to work with the Government for a suitable solution to reinstate the 439 service from Mortlake to the city.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:14): The Government shares the concerns of the member for Drummoyne and is willing to work with her to improve public transport in her area. I remind the member for Drummoyne and her constituents that the former Government privatised the metropolitan bus system. Contracts were signed with private operators, which constrains the Government's ability to act as freely as it would otherwise want. The member can be assured that the Government wants to improve public transport and undo the mess that it inherited from the former Government.

THE HILLS SHIRE ORANGE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (18:15): The Hills Shire Council's annual Orange Blossom Festival commences on 1 September 2024. Since the early eighteenth century, the Hills shire has been known as a major citrus producing region. The history of the region records that, when it came to naming the local festival, the festival planners used the inspiration of the first orange blossom each year. This year there are some wonderful events. Many of the events are the result of long hours by voluntary community groups. Some community groups spend many weeks, sometimes months, organising festival events. I acknowledge the Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Kenthurst, the Castle Hill Rotary Club, Soroptimist International The Hills, the Bonsai Society of Australia, the Friends of the Hills Library, Castle Hill BMX Club, Hills Community Aid, and Dr Brian Koo and the Western Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Those are some of the wonderful groups that have organised the festival's events.

On 1 September 2024 the Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club will commence the much-loved garden competition. The Hills Shire Council is known as the garden shire. The garden competition first commenced in 1959. This year there will be new categories of gardens, including small-lot gardens and environmentally friendly gardens. On 6 September 2024 the orange blossom bonsai display commences at the Harvey Lowe Pavilion. I attended the bonsai display last year. It contains many well-maintained and manicured bonsai plants and trees. The Friends of the Hills Library has organised a pop-up book sale for 7 September 2024. The pop-up book sale provides the opportunity for members of the community to donate pre-loved adult, children's and youth fiction books to be sold at the book sale.

On 7 September 2024 the Castle Hill BMX Club has organised a "come and try BMX day", which will be held at the Castle Hill BMX track at Fred Caterson Reserve. BMX racing is an all-inclusive, thrilling sport for every age group. There will also be experienced coaches there to assist the community to come and try BMX racing. On 7 September 2024 the Orange Blossom Festival night markets will take place. The night markets will commence at 3.00 p.m. and conclude at 9.00 p.m. The Hills Shire Council, in partnership with Aussie Night

Markets, hosts the night markets. Festival-goers will be able to enjoy wonderful cultural delights and enjoy free entertainment and activities.

The Hills Shire Council has also secured the award-winning global artist Emma Watkins. Emma, as some members might know, is Emma Wiggle or Emma Memma. Emma was a member of The Wiggles from 2010 to 2021, before creating her new character, Emma Memma. Emma will perform her fabulous fun show, which I am sure will be well attended by members of the community. Run for The Hills will again be held at the Bella Vista Farm. Run for The Hills is organised by the Castle Hill Rotary Club and will be held on Sunday 8 September. There will again be three courses. I have registered to participate in the intermediate course. The Kenthurst Fair and parade will be held on 8 September. The parade will commence at 10.30 a.m. The Rotary Club of Kenthurst organises the parade and fair each year. I thank the Rotary Club of Kenthurst for everything it does to support the Orange Blossom Festival.

The Orange Blossom Festival Annual Art Awards will also be held again this year. The art society hosts the events at Castle Hill. The events include adult's and children's art displays and awards. Soroptimist International will again hold its public speaking competition. The competition will be held on 21 September 2024 at the Glenhaven Community Centre. The Rouse Hill street parade will also be held again this year. Last year was the first parade. This year the parade will be held on 21 September at Rouse Hill Town Centre. One of the new events this year is Wisemans Ferry's "Taste of Wisemans". The event will celebrate the best food, wine and produce from local businesses in the rural regions of the Hills shire and along the Hawkesbury River. The Hills Shire Council describes Taste of Wisemans as a "foodie's heaven, with local producers, wineries, distilleries, seafood merchants and food vendors". There are many more events that will form part of this year's wonderful Orange Blossom Festival, which members of my own electorate and the wider Hills Shire Council community always enjoy. I encourage everyone to visit the Hills Shire Council local government area and enjoy some of the wonderful events during this year's magnificent Orange Blossom Festival.

COWRA BREAKOUT EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:20): It was an honour to participate in the commemoration events held on 4 August and 5 August marking the eightieth anniversary of the Cowra breakout, a pivotal moment in our history. Alongside Federal Member for Riverina Michael McCormack and Cowra Council Mayor Ruth Fagan, I welcomed Prime Minister Albanese, Governor of New South Wales Margaret Beazley, AC, KC, and Japanese Ambassador Kazuhiro Suzuki. Over two days we paid our respects to all those affected by the events of 5 August 1944, when 1,104 Japanese prisoners of war [POWs] attempted to escape. This tragic event resulted in the loss of 231 Japanese lives and four brave Australians.

Those four Australians—privates Benjamin Gower Hardy, Ralph Jones and Charles Henry Shepherd, and Lieutenant Harry Doncaster—were killed defending their posts during the breakout. Private Benjamin Gower Hardy and Private Ralph Jones were posthumously awarded the George Cross for their bravery. Private Charles Henry Shepherd, a builder's labourer from Young, demonstrated similar courage in confronting the escaping prisoners. Lieutenant Harry Doncaster tragically lost his life during the recapture efforts. Everyone who attended the commemorations felt it was a profound experience, recognising an event that shaped our local history and resonated deeply with the broader narrative of World War II.

The eightieth anniversary of the Cowra breakout was a solemn yet powerful occasion—a time for reflection, remembrance, and reconciliation. The main commemoration saw hundreds of community members, including our Cowra Youth Ambassadors, military personnel and cadets, standing side by side with a large Japanese delegation to remember this tragic event. It symbolised the strong relationship that has since developed between Australia and Japan, anchored in deep mutual respect and peace. Events included a wreath-laying ceremony attended by the Prime Minister. A peace bell ceremony was held on the same day, followed by a lantern parade featuring a lantern for each life lost during the breakout. It was particularly poignant as it made its way from Cowra's Japanese Garden to the POW campsite peace panels, led by a giant crane, a powerful symbol of hope and peace.

The local community's talent was on full display in various performances at the community event held at the POW campsite. These included a segment from the play *Intertwined*, a reading of Helen Carpenter's award-winning peace poem and a captivating performance by Japanese soprano Atsuko Arai, who was accompanied by Cowra's schoolchildren. Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AC, KC, Governor of New South Wales, was the esteemed guest at the official mayoral dinner, held at the beautifully decorated and recently renovated Cowra Showground Heritage Pavilion.

A particularly significant moment was the commemoration held at the POW campsite at 1.30 a.m., the exact time of the breakout 80 years ago. A few hours later, the main ceremony included a wreath-laying at the Australian and Japanese war cemeteries, featuring an Australian Federation Guard catafalque party and a Royal

Australian Air Force flyover of F-35A aircraft, symbolising the ongoing partnership between the RAAF and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force. The unity and shared respect displayed throughout these commemorations was profoundly moving. What could have been an event, some 80 years ago, that severed ties between Australia and Japan has, over time, become a foundation for a strong and enduring relationship.

The healing process, while not erasing the past, has allowed for a deeper understanding and a flourishing friendship between the people of Cowra and Japan. This healing was significantly strengthened in 1960, when the Japanese Government chose to repatriate the remains of its war dead from various parts of Australia to Cowra, establishing the only Japanese war cemetery outside Japan. Today part of the landscape has been transformed into the serene Cowra Japanese Garden, a place cherished by both the Cowra community and Japan. It is a testament to the reconciliation and peace nurtured over the past 80 years. I commend everyone involved for hosting a truly wonderful event that will never be forgotten.

COVID-19 GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:25): I speak in strong support of the COVID-19 Response Commission of Inquiry Bill 2024 introduced in the Federal Senate by Senator Matt Canavan. I congratulate Senator Canavan for his leadership on this critical issue and his desire to ensure Australian politicians, bureaucrats, media and all stakeholders learn from both the errors and the good that were experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic response. Tonight's speech is a continuation of my call for a thorough and all-encompassing inquiry. In June this year I called for a royal commission into the COVID-19 response.

Senator Canavan's bill would establish an independent inquiry, with the powers of a royal commission, into the actions, decisions and policies made during the COVID-19 pandemic. It would examine responses by the governments of the Commonwealth, States and Territories. We must ensure that the mistakes made during the pandemic are never repeated and that responses to such situations are balanced with individual rights and freedoms. To do this, we must analyse the COVID-19 pandemic response with full transparency. Only if given the powers proposed in this bill—rather than those of the Albanese Government's current inquiry into the COVID-19 pandemic, which excludes every action taken by States and Territories—can a full and transparent investigation into the COVID-19 response provide the answers and the truth.

If there is nothing to hide, there is no reason for State, Territory and Federal governments to not wholeheartedly support Senator Canavan's bill. We will be able to learn what different levels of government and agencies did wrong, what was done right and what can be improved on. If people could be subjected to the most extreme restrictions and deprivations of liberty at the hands of politicians and bureaucrats, the least those politicians and bureaucrats can do is be forced to answer some tough, but not less important, questions.

Since the beginning of government responses to the pandemic, it has been shown without a doubt that the COVID jabs have caused and continue to cause severe health impacts and deaths, proven by the payouts from the Federal COVID-19 Vaccine Claims Scheme. The closure of this scheme has now been extended to 30 September 2024. Forced lockdowns of small businesses and schools caused—and continue to cause—financial and mental harm. Government, bureaucrats, media and big pharma must be held accountable. Senator Canavan's bill is supported by his colleagues senators Alex Antic, Ralph Babet, Gerard Rennick, Malcolm Roberts and Matt O'Sullivan. Politicians across the political spectrum through all States and Territories, as well as the Federal Parliament, must support this bill and its intention to ensure that lessons are learnt so the Australian people can be better protected and guided through the next pandemic.

I have spoken consistently against the overreach of government and agencies and the deprivation of people's liberties in compelling them to take the COVID jabs, which have now been proven to have been rushed to market labelled "safe and effective"—when thousands are now suffering adverse events or have died—and were labelled a "vaccine" so they fell under emergency authorisation powers. If anyone doubts these claims, they should ask themselves why Pfizer wanted to keep all its documentation hidden for 75 years and the American courts had to force it to openly share its data.

It is not too late for others across the political spectrum to join with thousands of Australians calling for transparency, truth and accountability. We must admit and acknowledge our mistakes so that the detrimental effects are not repeated in the future. We are continuing to feel the effects of the pandemic response. The excessive printing of money while people were prevented from working, accessing superannuation for expenses that we now know was mostly for lifestyle spending, making it legal to trade whilst insolvent and other government decisions are still being felt now. The flood of money into our economy has direct consequences on and has contributed to the persistent inflation and rising interest rates we are all living under.

In a world that has always been subject to the threat of natural disasters, pandemics and war, there is no doubt that circumstances may arise in the future which may cause the government of the day to consider the

deprivation of our liberties once again. Such a response must be transparent, proportionate and balanced, and incorporate past lessons learnt. There is no better way to prepare for this possibility than for an inquiry like the one proposed. I will have a petition available on my social media platforms and website for people to sign in support of the bill. I call on Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his team, together with the Leader of the Opposition, Peter Dutton, and his team, to support Senator Canavan's COVID-19 Response Commission of Inquiry Bill 2024.

WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (18:30): I speak about infrastructure across the Winston Hills electorate, particularly the transport infrastructure that residents use to commute to and from work each day. The Winston Hills electorate is located between two key transport lines, with the heavy rail T1 line to the south and the M2 and M7 motorways to the north. Each of those links provides crucial access for commuters to travel to work and recreation activities. The train stations of Seven Hills, Toongabbie, Pendle Hill and Wentworthville are used daily by residents along the southern side of the electorate, where they can access Parramatta and the city in as little as 40 minutes at any given time. With a metro to the north and the construction of the new Sydney Metro West line to Westmead, it is easy to forget the importance of the heavy rail line for daily commuters who have used this infrastructure for many years.

To the north, residents of Glenwood and Kings Langley have the Sydney Metro North West line, which grants efficient travel to and from the city. That line has been a great success and is well utilised by the residents since opening in 2019. My office has been flooded with correspondence from local residents regarding the recent delay of the Sydney Metro line. In the lead up to the opening, I had great discussions with residents from Glenwood who were excited by the ability to travel more efficiently to the city without having to change at Chatswood. The decision to delay the opening has been met with anger and frustration by the community, who understand that this metro was designed by the former Government, funded by the former Government and built by the former Government. It is terribly disappointing that the current Government has failed to take the last step and open it.

Since that decision was made, my office has heard from a number of residents regarding the withdrawal and reduction of bus services in the north-west region. It was the plan to reduce and cut those services the day that the metro line opened. However, commuters have now found themselves with no Sydney Metro line and no bus services. I received an email from one resident regarding the cancellation of bus services, who said:

I have been catching this bus for nine and a half years. This bus has always been very well utilised during the morning and afternoon peak times. This bus route has now been cancelled due to the future opening (anyone's guess as to when that happens) of the Metro line to the city.

The constituent continued by stating:

Last week, the first week that the 602X service did not run, what a debacle. I got the 607X bus from Norbrik, and alighted at Barclay because from experience, Oakes interchange is too busy with long lines. The commuter line at Barclay was at least 40+ people long, enough to fill an empty bus.

That resulted in a work trip that now takes a minimum of 20 minutes longer for that commuter each day. I have heard a number of similar accounts from residents who have been impacted. By cutting bus services, yet failing to open the metro line, commuters in Sydney's north-west have been greatly impacted. Their travel times have increased and their options have been limited. Many have decided to work from home and avoid the inconvenience that has been caused. On that note, the Government's proposal to have tens of thousands of new residents along the corridor only adds further stress to the transport and roads network. The Kellyville and Bella Vista Transport Oriented Development proposal has created angst among residents, who are already feeling the effects of busy roads and limited transport options. One would assume that a proposal for higher density in the north-west corridor would be accompanied by infrastructure announcements, yet no certainty at this stage has been given.

While on the topic of infrastructure in the north-west corridor, it is important to mention the delay caused by those in Government regarding the Rouse Hill Hospital. Rouse Hill Hospital is quickly becoming a necessity for the north-west region and the growth in the new suburbs. A project that was scheduled to be delivered by the former Government in 2025 has been delayed by those opposite to 2029. That gives residents a cause for great concern. The previous Government's legacy on delivering upgrades to hospitals speaks for itself, with billion-dollar projects at Blacktown and Westmead. The challenge was handed to those in the Labor Government and, at their first opportunity, they chose to delay the new hospital at Rouse Hill by five years. It is clear that the residents of the north-west are being left behind. I continue to raise those matters on behalf of my community. I look forward to the Government taking the necessary action.

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

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration in Detail**Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in message of an earlier hour***No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2024-147F]**

Page 9, Schedule 1, proposed clause 18, line 34. Omit "clauses 2–6". Insert instead "certain provisions".

No. 2 GOVT No. 2 [c2024-147F]

Page 9, Schedule 1, proposed clause 18. Insert after line 38—

- (2) Clause 9 (3), definition of *relevant person*, paragraph (d) and clause 17 are repealed at the end of the day that is 2 years after the commencement of clause 17.
- (3) Despite subclause (2), a regulation made under this schedule and in force immediately before the repeal of clause 17 continues in force until clauses 2–6 are repealed.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:35): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The Government supports the two amendments moved in the other place. Amendment No. 1 amends the heading of the sunset provision at clause 18 of the bill. Amendment No. 2 amends the bill so that the regulation-making powers expire after two years. The first amendment is a minor consequential amendment to the heading of clause 18 to give effect to amendment No. 2. The second amendment proposes minor amendments to the bill to provide that the regulation-making powers at clause 17 and clause 9 (3) (d) are repealed two years after the bill commences and to ensure that any regulations made after the commencement of the bill but before the two-year period ends remain in force.

The amendments strike a sensible balance between providing flexibility and ensuring appropriate parliamentary oversight. After two years, Parliament will need to make any amendments to the schedule if required. The Government appreciates the bill proposes strong action that is necessary to address the serious allegations regarding the conduct of certain members of the union. The bill as currently drafted strikes a reasonable balance between not interfering with the important role of unions and ensuring that corruption and gross misconduct are addressed.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:37): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to the debate on the Legislative Council amendments to the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Bill 2024. The Greens support the amendments because they make the bill slightly less horrific. The amendments can fairly be referred to as a safety net that ensures a future Liberal New South Wales industrial relations Minister who may seek to further strengthen the administration scheme cannot undermine the interests of workers. I contribute to this debate with disappointment and disgust. The Greens express our serious concerns that the Parliament got to this point. For members who were not following what happened in the Federal Parliament, the Federal Senate was unable to progress a vote on the Federal Government's version of the bill. The Labor Federal Government was unable to deliver on its crackdown on unions and appoint an administrator to the CFMEU.

The New South Wales Labor Government is committed to continuing with this bill, despite telling the Parliament from the outset that the point of the bill was to ensure that New South Wales was aligned with Federal reform. That Federal reform has not passed through Federal Parliament this week. Sure, it may pass next week; indeed, it may never pass. But we are here now to pass legislation. I put on record my serious concerns. In relation to the amendments, we are talking specifically about the fact that we are providing a two-year sunset clause for some of the regulations to give protection from a future Liberal government in New South Wales. But I think it is pretty clear that we must also protect workers in this State from the current New South Wales Labor Government. I have a letter that was sent to the Premier on 19 July from the CFMEU NSW. I note that the letter states:

On the handling of matters by the NSW Government and the Labor Party the Premier leads, the CFMEU and its members feel nothing short of betrayal by this NSW Government that many elected to power.

Your call for an examination of CFMEU negotiated enterprise agreements suggesting that somehow they were procured illegally is a direct attack on the men and women who work tirelessly to build the badly needed infrastructure in New South Wales.

The letter goes on to say:

Despite these efforts you now seem hell-bent on trampling our members rights; rights to a strong union, rights to choose who their union leaders are, rights to negotiate decent wages and conditions and rights to decent standards of living.

It continues:

Labor Ministers of Parliament and Members of Parliament have attended and at times addressed rallies organised by the same CFMEU you now choose to malign without any due process, without any respect for the rule of law, without any respect for the right to the presumption of innocence.

Your government is based on hypocrisy and hype. You lead a political party that treats its affiliates and members with disdain.

It concludes by saying:

Your actions are a betrayal of the working class who put you in power. All working people in Australia will see through the ALP and its actions.

On 15 August the national branch of the Maritime Union of Australia and the national secretary of the CFMEU issued a public statement to members expressing their concerns:

This Government decision is an extension of the political objectives of its predecessor and their building and construction watchdog, the ABCC, which failed to explore the real issues of criminality and corruption that affect all of us in the industry through the use of untested allegations as a basis for an attack on our Union's right to effectively preserve workers' rights to equal access under law.

It goes on to say:

Our strength as genuine trade unionists is in our unity.

...

A forced administration through the terms of the legislation, devoid of any real consultation with actual construction workers and the forced isolation from their elected representatives, does nothing to improve the lives and safety of CFMEU members. In fact, it further entrenches the systemic imbalance of power between construction bosses and construction workers.

It concludes by saying:

This Bill is the thin edge of the wedge: what is stopping Governments from applying similar legislation to other industries outside construction?

The Greens put on record our complete opposition to the bill as it stands, and express our disgust and disappointment that we have reached this point.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

MONARO ELECTORATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (18:43): Council elections are coming up in a few weeks and I want to talk about two councils in the Monaro electorate. From the time I was first elected to Parliament I have had a policy of working with council mayors, no matter who they are or what party they come from. I do not criticise them publicly; instead, I talk to them privately to discuss any differences of opinion. I even managed to stick to that policy when Peter Cochran was the Mayor of Cooma. I will talk a little about the sorts of people that voters should be looking at putting onto their local councils in the elections that will be held over the next few weeks. In my experience, different types of people run for council. There are those who want to work in close cooperation with Federal and State members to get results for their communities, and there are those who think it is in their political interests to spend their time bagging other people and picking fights.

I suggest that the people who are about to vote in the elections for the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and the Snowy Monaro Regional Council look closely at the candidates before them and choose those who are willing to work cooperatively with me, as the State MP, and with Kristy McBain, the Federal MP. That is the way to get results for our communities. I do not begrudge anybody the opportunity to criticise the State Government or me and my performance if they have consistently raised issues with me and feel that there is a criticism to be made. It is their right to do that. But I will respond to people who say on social media that they have been lobbying me and not getting results when they have not actually turned up and spoken to me at any stage. I think I have a right to do that as well.

I highlight for those in Monaro who might see this contribution on my social media page that over the past few years I have developed a very good working relationship with the Mayor of Queanbeyan, Kenrick Winchester, and his team and our Labor team led by Bryce Wilson and Esma Livermore, who was the first Indigenous woman to be deputy mayor in our shire. I have also developed a good working relationship with the Mayor of Cooma, Chris Hanna, and his predecessor, Narelle Davis. I also mention Tanya Higgins and Lynda Summers, the Labor councillors on Snowy Monaro Regional Council. They are all running for re-election. As to the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, I am aware that a number of candidates are claiming the current council is responsible for rate increases and debt.

I point out that when my friend Frank Pangallo finished up as the Mayor of Queanbeyan-Palerang, the council held only around half a million dollars in debt. By the time Kenrick Winchester took over from Tim Overall, the non-current debt had reached \$142 million and the total debt was over \$150 million. That is the reason ratepayers have, unfortunately, seen increases in their rates. It is not smart for people in my electorate to believe those who tell them they can stop the rate increases that have been agreed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for both the Queanbeyan-Palerang and Snowy Monaro regional councils. It is an unfortunate fact of life that regional councils face tough financial times, and they need to address them in a responsible manner in order to keep delivering services to their communities.

I suggest to people watching this debate that of course they can expect me to endorse the Labor teams. They are the teams led Bryce Wilson, Esma Livermore and John Preston in Queanbeyan-Palerang, and by Tanya Higgins, Lynda Summers and Bill Walker in Snowy Monaro. I suggest those people might not tell voters that they will make everything rosy or miraculously reduce rates and increase services, but will make realistic commitments about what they can deliver. I would be delighted if Kenrick Winchester and his team were to lead another council in Queanbeyan-Palerang, working with Labor. Kenrick, Kristy McBain and I have a wonderful working relationship, which enables us to deliver for our communities. That relationship is very important but, believe it or not, it did not happen before. The previous State member did not talk to the Federal member and certainly did not talk to Mayor Kenrick Winchester. A return to those days would not be good, and I suggest people think about that when they cast their votes in the election.

NORTH SYDNEY BEARS

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:48): There is a sound that can be heard emanating from North Sydney and all across Australia. It is the loud and clear sound of the Bears roaring from North Sydney Oval because from 2027 the Bears will be back in the NRL as the eighteenth team. After 25 years and an immense amount of hard work, a historic joint venture has been announced with Western Australia and soon we will be able to cheer on the Western Bears. North Sydney Oval will always be the spiritual home of the Bears, and families always pack out the hill on the weekend to cheer on their favourite sporting team. After years of support, the dedicated fans have had their patience and persistence rewarded, and we will be able to cheer them on loudly and proudly as they rejoin the NRL competition. On Sunday I watched the Bears take on Newtown—but maybe Newtown took on the Bears because, although the boys played brilliantly, unfortunately they were not able to come away with the win. The community atmosphere at these games is always incredible.

Everyone takes to the field before the game and everyone takes to the field after the game. We all run around and kick a ball. My kids have the best time, and that is the essence of the Bears and our community involvement. When the team goes to the NRL, that spiritual home will always be with us and they will retain their community spirit and ethos. It has taken decades of tenacity, energy and commitment from the community for the Bears to rejoin the NRL. I acknowledge the incredible hard work of three key people at the Bears: Gareth Holmes, Greg Florimo and Daniel Dickson. I also mention all the players, club members and supporters who sit on the hill at North Sydney Oval and back the Bears week in and week out regardless of how we are performing. I cannot wait to support the Western Bears. I know that west is pretty far from North Sydney, but they will always be our team. Go the Bears!

In a couple of weeks we have an exciting event happening at North Sydney Oval: the AFL Women's opener. North Sydney Oval is the home of the Sydney Swans AFLW team and we are so excited that it is becoming the home of women's sport in Sydney. Plenty of red and white supporters will be there to cheer them on as they take play Collingwood on 30 August. I welcome my colleagues to join us. We love North Sydney Oval and we know that nobody loves Collingwood. On Saturday I joined the Mosman Whales for their Rugby's Ladies Day. I have been to this community event every year for probably the better part of a decade. It is such an enjoyable day out at Rawson Oval, complete with what I would call a gourmet lunch—Chargrill Charlie's from Mosman—drinks, live music and entry to an exclusive afterparty at the much-loved Buena. I admit that I have never been to the afterparty. I am not sure if I feel a bit too old for it now or if I have not yet reached my prime to join the other ladies at the Buena. Maybe next year.

It is an action-packed day of rugby and, most importantly, raising money for the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation. On Sunday tens of thousands of dollars were raised for the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation. The foundation has a special place in my heart and my community's heart. While it supports women all across Sydney, it had its genesis in my community, particularly with the Mater Hospital and the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. Its services have expanded more broadly now. Every year the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation is the beneficiary and partner of the Mosman Rugby's Ladies Day. It brings out the pink and blue socks and jerseys and makes sure it does everything it can to support women and men going through breast cancer. The foundation funds the vital work of breast cancer care nurses and also the research fellows who work to support women and men going through breast cancer.

The Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation directly invests in the quality, skill and talent of our medical professionals. That is a testament to how many lives of people experiencing breast cancer in 2024 are saved by medical outcomes. Raising funds is so important. I remind everyone that early detection is best. Anybody can get breast cancer self-check cards from the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation to make sure they check every month to improve quality of life and survival rates. Rawson Oval played host to a full fixture of games against Drummoyne, and the Whales put on a show by winning five out of six games. We have not had the best season so it was a great day for us to have such a good result with the ladies watching on. I acknowledge the committee of Mosman Rugby Club, which did so much work to hold the event. It does an incredible job. I thank Sam Walker, Luke Phillips, Tom Cocks, Matt Psaltis, Ben Hodgkinson and Bryn Pritchard. Go the Whales!

The SPEAKER: I thank all members, Clerks, attendants and Hansard for another successful week.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 18:53 until
Tuesday 17 September 2024 at 12:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

ST GEORGE AND SUTHERLAND MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I recognise the achievements of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation to support the transformative work of the researchers at St George and Sutherland Hospitals. The Foundation was established in 2007 with the aim of enriching healthcare of the community served by the two hospitals by supporting medical research that would attract the best staff and most advanced facilities. Since the Foundation began it has raised nearly \$9 million to fund vital medical research in areas such as infection, immunity and inflammation, critical care, cancer care, maternal and foetal health, geriatric health, mental health, and neuroscience. The Foundation recently launched a video with stories revealing the impact on individuals and families of neurodegenerative disorders such as Parkinson's disease and dementia and highlighting the opportunities as our population ages to provide hope and potentially life-saving advances through accelerating its research. It will soon announce the recipients of its 2024 research grants that will be available for teams to research neurodegenerative diseases and cancer. I wish CEO Pam Brown, staff, volunteer board members and research teams success as they continue their vital work.

LEVI'S PROJECT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I acknowledge the extraordinary work of Levi's Project, which was established by Caringbah couple Kathryn Wakelin and Ben Wheeler to fund world-leading research and clinical trials for kids with fatal brain cancer Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma or DIPG. Kathryn and Ben's son Levi was aged just 7 when he was diagnosed with DIPG in December 2017 and he tragically passed away just over a year later. Ben and Kathryn launched Levi's Project in 2019 in partnership with the Children's Cancer Institute and so far they have raised more than \$5.5 million for the cause. Levi's project has committed \$5.8 million to DIPG research, funding five research positions, game-changing research projects and clinical trials to give families hope. The lead of one of the recently launched clinical trials, Professor David Ziegler of Sydney Children's Hospital and the Children's Cancer Institute, said of Levi's Project's fundraising efforts: "Thanks to their support, we are one of the first places in the world to be able to offer this sort of treatment and give new options to help kids like Levi." Out of their own heartbreaking story, Kathryn and Ben are bringing hope to other families.

CELEBRATING WILTON TOWNSEND: A RISING STAR IN CROSS COUNTRY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—At just 15 years old, Wilton Townsend has achieved a truly remarkable milestone in his athletic career—he's been named to two prestigious NSW teams set to compete nationally in cross country. His journey began with his selection for the NSW Athletics team, where he will represent our state at the

2024 Australian Cross Country Championships in Tasmania. Recently, he qualified by finishing in the top five at the NSW Cross Championships in Nowra. His exceptional performance continued with his selection for the NSW All Schools team, competing at the School Sport Australia Cross Country Championships in Victoria. This year has been a testament to Wilton's resilience and dedication. After overcoming pneumonia during last year's championships, he drew inspiration from his running idols and is ready to shine on the national stage. His impressive performances, including gold medals in the 1500m and 800m, highlight his hard work and talent. Wilton's achievements also include setting new records at St Paul's College. As he prepares for these exciting challenges, let's celebrate his perseverance and bright future. Congratulations, Wilton! We are all incredibly proud of you.

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF LOVE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today I honour a truly remarkable love story—Hazel Dawn and Charles Edmund Rose, who are celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. Their journey together began when they were just 16, and their love has only grown deeper and more inspiring as they've journeyed into their nineties. Hazel and Edmund first crossed paths when Edmund started working with Hazel's father at the Pioneer Dairy Company near Wyong. From the start, Hazel's father saw something special in Edmund, appreciating his integrity and work ethic. Their love has weathered many seasons, from Edmund's service in the National Army to Hazel's health struggles. Yet, their bond remains unshaken. Married on July 31, 1954, at the Wyong Methodist Church, their life together has been a beautiful testament to enduring commitment and mutual support. Hazel and Edmund's story is a shining example of love's strength and resilience. Through triumphs and trials, their unwavering devotion has illuminated the lives of everyone around them. Congratulations on 70 wonderful years. Your love, built on trust and understanding, continues to inspire us all, and we cherish your enduring legacy of togetherness.

60 YEARS OF A TRUE HEALTHCARE HERO

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today, we honour Fay James, an exceptional healthcare professional, as she celebrates a remarkable milestone of 60 years in nursing this November. Fay's illustrious career began in 1964, where she started her training within the hospital system and later earned a graduate diploma from university. For 19 years, she has been a cherished member of Kempsey District Hospital and for the last 12 years, Fay has served as a patient Transport Nurse, ensuring safe and efficient transfers for patients between facilities within the district. Fay, your impact on the lives of countless patients and colleagues cannot be overstated. Your journey reflects a profound commitment to the values of nursing, blending technical skill with a deep sense of empathy. As we honour you today, we also celebrate the enduring legacy you have built, one that continues to elevate the standards of care in our community. Your work has not only shaped the way we approach patient care but has also set a benchmark for excellence in our profession. Congratulations on this monumental achievement, and may your future endeavours be as rewarding and impactful as your storied career.

DAVID HAYWARD

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I wish to pass my gratitude and congratulations to Orange's David Hayward, who on July 25 retired from a 43-year career with Orange City Council. David is one of Orange's unsung heroes, having worked on the city's parks and sportsgrounds since joining OCC more than four decades ago, carefully attending its parks and gardens, before moving to the upkeep of its many sportsgrounds. Aside from the hardship of working outdoors in Orange, including baking heat, or numbing cold, David has also overcome a major challenge of being unable to hear. Despite his deafness, David and his teammates have developed their own communication patterns which have enabled him to become a much-loved and highly-valued member of OCC's ground staff. I hear he is already missed by the team - his unique ability to feel the vibrations in machinery, and his mechanical skills, helped enormously with the upkeep of council plant. David has also built a sporting profile as one of Australia's premier deaf tenpin bowlers, having won nine world championships. He's looking forward to the 2025 Deaflympics, to be staged in Tokyo. I congratulate David on his career and wish him success in Tokyo.

PARKES CRAFT CORNER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate Parkes' Craft Corner on 50 years of arts and crafts fellowship. Over the half century, Craft Corner has enjoyed the stewardship of over one hundred members, been housed in three premises and held countless workshops to ensure the Parkes community has an outlet for its creativity. According to member Anne Wright, who has been there since the start, Craft Corner was born when members of a TAFE pottery class were discussing what to do with the items they were producing. Parkes Council helped, brokering a deal where the members could oversee the recently opened motor museum during weekdays, in exchange for an adjacent space. The space was quickly utilized – pottery, paintings and spun-wool articles soon joined by woodwork, leatherwork and a multitude of handicrafts, providing a tourism 'double' for motorists on the Newell Highway. Parkes Craft Corner has since moved twice from that first home and its

50th anniversary coincides with the official opening of new digs in Clarinda Street. With a welcoming atmosphere, fostering friendship, creativity and community, I expect it to pass many more significant milestones.

ROTARY CLUB OF PARKES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I extend my best wishes to the Rotary Club of Parkes, which is celebrating 85 years of community service. Since September 1, 1939, the Rotary Club of Parkes has backed its community, with its members a familiar site at events where they provide catering, labour and support. Through drought, flood, plague and other disasters, Rotarians have provided a solid foundation for services to be accessed while collaborating with other charities. In the last year alone, Parkes Rotarians have raised \$37,600 which is put back into Parkes and surrounding districts while also helping with overseas projects. At the forefront of its activities is the district management of the Driving Simulator Program for year 10 and 11 students, a program which shows young people the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs, alcohol and fatigue as well as the consequences of distractions like texting. Happy Harold, the Health Education Van, the Men's Health Education Rural Van and NAIDOC Week are some of its other initiatives. I salute members of the Rotary Club of Parkes for living up to their motto 'Service Above Self' for 85 years and wish them well for the next 85 years.

JAN KEMPE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to honour Jan Kempe, a long-time member of Diamond Beach Rural Fire Service who recently passed away. Jan joined DBRFS in 1998 as a basic firefighter and went on to earn qualifications including Advanced Firefighter, Village Firefighter, Crew Leader, and First Aid. In 2003, Jan was elected Secretary/Treasurer and Deputy Captain, roles she held for over 20 years. She was recognised by the Premier for her exceptional service during the 2001-2002 bushfire emergency and actively participated in the 2004 Black Head emergency. She continued to fight fires during the 2019-2020 crisis at the age of 80. Jan was awarded Life Membership of DBRFS in 2008 and received Long Service Medals. She was instrumental in DBRFS's recruitment, fundraising, and operations, often working 8 to 10-hour days on administrative tasks. In 2011, she received the 10-year Long Service Medal from NSW RFS and, in 2017, the Australian National Medal for Service. Jan was also honored as Hallidays Point Citizen of the Year and celebrated for 25 years of service. Jan will be missed and remembered for her extraordinary service.

KAITLIN PERRY

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Forster Aquatic Swim Club member, Kaitlin Perry who has been named in the Hunter Academy of Sport swimming program for 2024. Kaitlin is one of 17 swimmers to earn a place in the program. The Hunter Academy of Sport program assists select athletes to access quality holistic development opportunities delivered by professionals. The program runs from June-October with specialised skill sessions approximately once per month run by high performance coaching staff. Pool sessions are designed to complement the athlete's regular training environment, upskilling high performance attributes and best practice. The program will also include a six-week strength and conditioning gym program based in the Hunter. I congratulate Kaitlin on this well-deserved recognition, I look forward to seeing her continued success in the pool.

TUNCURRY BEACH BOWLING CLUB

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Tuncurry Beach Bowling Club for pledging \$100,000 to the Great Lakes Women's Shelter over the next four years. The Club launched this incredible support with a special fundraising Sports Luncheon event. The event, emceed by comedian Darren Sanders, featured a delicious two-course lunch, celebrity interviews, raffles, and auctions – raising over \$35,000 for the Great Lakes Women's Shelter. It was wonderful to see so many people coming together to support this important cause. I thank venue manager Terry Green and the Tuncurry Beach Bowling Club for pledging much needed funds to the Great Lakes Women's Shelter, which offers essential services to women and children in our community.

ENJOYING THE HUB OF TENNIS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Thanks to the hardworking and dedicated West Wyalong Tennis Club, enjoying a spot of tennis, a cold beverage, and a conversation in an enclosed area after the game has become much easier. It was a crisp morning on Friday, 19 July 2024, when I joined members of the West Wyalong Tennis Community for the opening of their newly renovated clubhouse. It was fantastic to stand alongside President Stuart Luelf, Mayor Brian Monaghan, Andrew Bartlett, past and present players, honorary life members, and patrons to open the facility and hear all about the rich and lasting history of this fantastic sport at the heart of the West Wyalong community. The persistence and can-do attitude of all affiliated with the Tennis Club have ensured that this facility came to fruition, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to this project. Your

support and dedication have made this dream a reality. The clubhouse will boost local engagement in tennis and provide a venue for regional competitions and community events. Congratulations again to all.

TRACTORS PULL CROWDS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Representing the seat of small communities, we are privileged to host unique events that set us apart, such as the thrilling and distinctive tractor-pulling events at various shows throughout the year. These remarkable tractor-pulling events are a testament to the dedication of the 63 volunteers, both men and women, who form the backbone of the South West Antique Engine Society, making these events possible. They draw their members from many towns and villages throughout the Cootamundra electorate, such as Temora, Tallimba, Ungarie, West Wyalong, Trungley Hall and neighbouring Burcher. Currently celebrating its 40th year, the South West Antique Engine Society held its foundation meeting in Temora on September 13, 1983, with 18 people present. The Club collects, restores and exhibits rare and antique engines, tractors and machinery to as near as possible to their colour and specifications. Tractor Pulls always draw big crowds to our country shows. They make for a great get-together where people can meet and compete against each other. The team has a jam-packed schedule ahead. With eight tractor-pulling events scheduled this year, there's plenty of excitement to look forward to.

GRENFELL'S FUTURE CHAMPIONS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Grenfell Public School students recently participated in their annual School Athletics Carnival. The students, displayed remarkable resilience, competing under challenging icy conditions across a variety of track and field events. The success of the day was a testament to the collaboration among the teachers and parents of Grenfell Public School, students from The Henry Lawson High School, and the dedicated volunteers from the P & C. Athletics Champions and Runners up trophies were awarded to: Payten D'Ombrian, Junior Girl Champion, Georgie Hazell - Runner Up. Jai Kohnen - Junior Boy Champion, Max Essex - Runner Up. Penny Martin - 11 Years Girl Champion, Aurora Lester - Runner Up. Patrick Heathcote - 11 Years Boy Champion, Ralieg Armstrong - Runner Up. Daisy Forde - Senior Girl Champion, Ava Baker - Runner Up Jake Cartman - Senior Boy Champion, Wyatt Bruce - Runner Up. Whilst competition was strong across both track and field the overall house winner was team Wood. Congratulations to all the participants and thank you to all volunteers who generously gave up their time to ensure our upcoming athletic champions enjoyed a successful day.

BRIN LIDDELL

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and commend Brin Liddell for his outstanding performance in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Brin commenced his sailing journey at the young age of 8 and, together with his sailing partner Rhiannan Brown, quickly and competitively rose through the junior ranks. Their unwavering dedication and refined skills culminated as the pair won the National Championships in the 2016 Sabot Class and the Nacra 15 Nationals in 2020. These achievements highlighted their synergy as a team and their capacity for sustained excellence in competition. The pandemic brought Brin and Rhiannan unprecedented challenges, however, also provided them with the opportunity to commit to training on Lake Macquarie. As a result, this year Brin and Rhiannan competed at the Paris Olympics where they secured 13th place in the mixed multihull event. This significant accomplishment reflects their training and commitment to the sport and resilience under pressure on an international stage. Congratulations, Brin, on this remarkable accomplishment. Both you and Rhiannan should be immensely proud. I look forward to seeing you both in the future Olympic Games.

COASTXP

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge CoastXP for being awarded Outstanding Visitor Experience at the 2024 Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards. The annual Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of local businesses in Lake Macquarie. These awards aim to highlight the innovative practices, exceptional services, and significant contributions that businesses make to the local economy and community. Driven by founder Dominic May's passion for marine adventure, CoastXP stands as a beacon of excellence in Lake Macquarie's tourism scene. CoastXP is renowned for their customised coastal and lake experiences, offering thrilling adventure boat tours, whale-watching excursions and guided bushwalks. Their commitment to authenticity is highlighted by partnerships with local experts in geology, Aboriginal heritage, and marine biology, ensuring every tour is enriched with accurate and culturally meaningful narratives. CoastXP is additionally a pioneer in sustainable tourism practices, receiving recognition for their eco-friendly initiatives, such as carbon offset programs and community engagement projects. Congratulations CoastXP and Dominic, you are truly a worthy recipient of the Outstanding Visitor Experience Award, and I look forward to seeing your continued excellence in Lake Macquarie tourism.

MATT HALL RACING

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Matt Hall Racing for being awarded the Highly Commended Award for Outstanding Visitor Experience at the 2024 Lake Mac Business Excellence Awards. Matt Hall Racing offers unparalleled aerobatic flights that attracts visitors to Lake Macquarie from across Australia and around the globe. Renowned for delivering exhilarating and awe-inspiring experiences, Matt Hall Racing aims to provide customers with some of the most breathtaking moments of their lives. Under the leadership of Matt Hall, Red Bull Air Race World Champion, and supported by a team of elite RAAF and aerobatic pilots, passengers experience a thrilling repertoire of epic stunts. These include barrel rolls, tumbling manoeuvres, and simulations reminiscent of the Red Bull Air Race, all performed at speeds exceeding 370km/h. With over 200 five-star reviews online, Matt Hall Racing stands as a testament to extraordinary adventure and precision in aerobatic aviation. Further cementing his influence, Matt Hall was honored as the 2024 Lake Mac Ambassador of the Year, showcasing his dedication to both aviation excellence and the local community. Congratulations Matt, you are a worthy recipient of this award and I look forward to your continued excellence in Lake Macquarie tourism.

INAUGURAL LAUNCH OF REFUGEE WEEK IN PARLIAMENT

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I had the privilege of hosting the Inaugural Launch of Refugee Week 2024 at the Parliament of NSW on the 20 of June 2024. This event was co-organised by the Australian South East Asian Network[ASEAN], Lao Community Advancement Co-op NSW and the Khmer Krom Cultural Centre of NSW. There was a joint Statement co-signed by 18 individuals and community representatives, and witnessed by many people including Craig Foster AM, Professor Sev Ozdowski AM, Jenny Leong MP, Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC and Dr Patricia Jenkins. The purpose of this event was to promote Australian values, unity, inclusion, compassion, social cohesion, and empowering Australians to exercise their democratic freedom. This was a wonderful initiative led by Sawathey Ek. The event brought together individuals, representatives, and leaders from a diverse array of cultural backgrounds. It also provided a platform for meaningful dialogues on the crucial importance of ongoing advocacy for human rights and inclusivity. Their commitment to promoting Australian values and fostering multiculturalism is commendable. It was an honour and privilege to have many community members, my Parliamentary colleagues and distinguished guests in attendance on this special event.

LAO AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On Friday the 24th of May 2024, I attended the Mother's Day Celebration organized by the Lao Australian Women's Association. It was a delightful occasion filled with warmth and camaraderie, honouring the incredible mothers within the community. The event was enhanced by the captivating display of wonderful food, music, and dance, creating an atmosphere filled with joy and cultural richness. As we celebrated Mother's Day, I was reminded of all the wonderful mothers out there. The love, sacrifice, and unwavering support are deeply cherished and valued. Mothers are the pillars of strength in our families and communities, and we recognise and honour their immeasurable contributions. It's essential to remember that our appreciation for mothers should extend far beyond the confines of May. Every day presents an opportunity to express gratitude and celebrate the profound impact that mothers have on our lives. Let us continue to cherish and uplift mothers, not just on Mother's Day, but each day, recognizing the invaluable role they play in shaping our world with love and compassion.

AUSVIET CHARITY FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING DINNER

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I recognise AusViet Charity Foundation [AVCF] for its outstanding contributions to both our local and international communities. Their motto is "Together we bring Hope and Health". With a mission to provide hope and improve health for disadvantaged ethnic minority communities and those in remote areas of Vietnam, in 2015, a group of passionate Australian medical professionals of Vietnamese descent with over 30 years of volunteering experience joined forces to form the organisation. The tireless efforts and commitment of AVCF have made a meaningful difference, enhancing the lives of many both locally and abroad. On 30 June 2024 I had the privilege of joining my local community in supporting AVCF's great cause at their fundraising dinner. It was inspiring to see the dedication and generosity of everyone involved. On behalf of our local community, I extend my gratitude to Dr Phuoc Vo and AusViet Charity Foundation and its remarkable team for their dedication and service.

2024 NORTHERN BEACHES' ENVIRONMENTAL ART AND DESIGN PRIZE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—On 1st August, the annual Northern Beaches' Environmental Art and Design Prize was held at the Manly Art Gallery & Museum. This is a powerful and provocative competition which showcases the innovation, technical ability and impressive talent of artists and designers from all backgrounds and age groups. The event is run as a national competition but provides those who live locally a great opportunity

to flex their creative muscles. The works submitted must explore common themes of the environment and sustainability, and are designed to encourage reflection, introspection and ultimately new ways of thinking about the environmental challenges confronting us. I congratulate the Northern Beaches Council for putting on yet another successful Northern Beaches Environmental Art and Design Prize and thank the Manly Art Gallery & Museum for opening its doors for the event. Finally, I congratulate this year's winners: Gaspare Moscone, for his haunting sculpture, Aletheia and Elliot Bastianon, for his minimalist but visually stimulating design, Oregon Chair.

SOUTHERN YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the fantastic and well-deserved awarding of the Service Excellence Award to Southern Youth and Family Services. The awards from the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies conference are designed to acknowledge, recognise, and celebrate standout performers be they an individual, program, agency or partnership who are delivering outstanding work and advancements in the community services field, as recognised by their peers, partners and clients. Out of a possible five award categories, Southern Youth and Family Services amazingly won three awards, including an Award for Service Excellence. This award was assessed on a pattern of exceptional service to achieve lasting and positive outcomes for disadvantaged individuals, families or communities in NSW. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I would like to congratulate all of those at Southern Youth and Family Services for their hard work. The award is well deserved.

INDIE BOSTOCK

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge Indie Bostock, a student at Warilla High School, for an amazing Rugby League season in 2024. Indie is a Stingrays of Shellharbour junior and represented NSW Country Under 19's when they defeated NSW City 26 to 18 on 19 May 2024. Indie was subsequently selected in the New South Wales Womens Under 19's team for their clash against Queensland at Leichhardt Oval on 20 June 2024. The Blues won the match 46 points to 4 with Indie scoring a magnificent solo try. The accolades for Indie's magnificent season continued in July 2024 when Indie was selected at Centre in the Australian Schoolgirls Rugby League team. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Indie and wish her the best of luck for her future Rugby League career.

KARRA-LEE NOLAN

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievements of Karra-Lee Nolan, a much loved and respected PDHPE teacher at Warilla High School, for being selected as the referee for the Under 19's State of Origin Rugby League Women's match at Leichhardt Oval on 20 June 2024. It was a magnificent free-flowing game, won convincingly by the Blues, that had supporters from both teams impressed with the fair officiating from Karra-Lee and her assistants. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I would like to congratulate Karra-Lee and wish her well in all her future refereeing endeavours.

BORDER OLYMPIANS AND PARALYMPIANS COMPETE IN PARIS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—It has been with immense pride that, I along with millions of Australians have watched the tremendous efforts of our athletes at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. I acknowledge the following: Albury basketball legend Lauren Jackson, preparing to return home with her fifth Olympic medal, after our Opals Basketball team claimed bronze. Mulwala shooter James Willett, who lined up at his third Olympics in the men's trap. And our two debutants - Albury's Jocelyn Bartram who made her Olympic debut as the goalkeeper for the Hockeyroos and Jindera's Fergus Hamilton in the men's four rowing event. As we now prepare to cheer on our Paralympians best wishes to Albury's Justin Godfrey, a para-triathlete who has been selected for his first Paralympic Games in Paris. We are all so proud of all of your achievements. Years of hard work and dedication in your respective sports have led you to reach the heights of the Olympic stage. Congratulations to one and all.

JAMES FALLON HIGH SCHOOL – GRACE ALEXANDER

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I extend my congratulations to Albury's James Fallon High School student Grace Alexander on receiving the Minister's Award for Student Excellence at the 2024 Public Education Awards. Grace was honoured for her outstanding academic achievements at a gala event on August 5th at Sydney's Town Hall. The recognition follows Grace's successful involvement in the Regional Pathways program offered by La Trobe University's Albury-Wodonga campus. The program plays a crucial role in supporting Year 12 students from James Fallon High School through their final year of study and the future, providing participants with fortnightly face-to-face workshops, focusing on study skills, literacy support, wellbeing, and careers/university pathways. Congratulations Grace, Principal Jennifer Parrett, and the entire James Fallon High School community for your commitment to educational excellence and student development programs.

NOD TO THREE DECADES OF HARD WORK - SPRAY BARN LAVINGTON

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Mark Lavery and the team at Spray Barn in Lavington, Albury for being named finalists in the 2024 Optus Albury Wodonga Business Awards in the Excellence in Agriculture category. For the past 30 years, Mark and his team have dedicated themselves to their business of weed spraying and agricultural machinery, demonstrating their expertise and commitment. It is wonderful to see their hard work and excellent customer service being recognised. Mark's future commitment to the industry is inspiring, as he plans to expand into the sale of automotive equipment, continuously striving to be the best they possibly can, in their field. Well done, Mark and the entire Spray Barn team!

ALIVE 90.5 COMMUNITY RADIO, BREKKY BY THE BOARD

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate this fantastic community radio station, Alive 90.5. Recently, on 20 July 2025, the board of directors hosted 'Brekky by the Board – Pancakes' at the stations Baulkham Hills studio. 'Brekky by the Board' provides the wonderful opportunity for the community to visit the studio, to meet the presenters, to meet the board or simply to just enjoy some wonderful pancakes. I visited the radio station and spoke with community members, presented and board members. Alive 90.5 was formed in 1980 and has been operating from Balcombe Heights Estate at Baulkham Hills since 1988. I thank Alive 90.5 chairman Andsley Dennis for some great pancakes and for guiding the station forward for the benefit of our community.

MOREE RSL REGIONAL MILITARY MUSEUM

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of the Executive Committee of the Moree RSL Regional Military Museum who had a 'soft launch' of the facility on 26 July, with the opening set down for later in the year. I congratulate the Executive Committee, Sub-branch President John Williams and executive members Darryl Brady and Eric Taylor for their contribution to making the museum a reality. Special thanks also to the volunteers at the museum, who have been dusting, polishing, displaying and cataloguing military memorabilia and artefacts, sourced locally and from around the region. I commend all involved with this very important initiative, for their foresight, hard work and dedication to the project. In doing so, providing the opportunity for the whole community to learn and enjoy the artifacts and memorabilia, which has significant meaning to the history of our region.

PREMIER'S MULTI-CULTURAL PRESPECTIVES PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Guyra Central School on their success at the Premier's Multi-cultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition held at Drummond Public School in Armidale recently. I congratulate each of the four students who proudly represented their school, with the Stage 2 representatives being Elsie Post and Shy-Shy Torrens, with Shy-Shy receiving a commendation from the judges for her outstanding performance. Of note were the Stage 3 representees, being Charlotte Auld and Rose Gordon, who delivered an impressive impromptu speech on "The News," with maturity and clarity. I commend all involved in this successful competition, with all the students demonstrating excellent public speaking skills, thorough speech preparation and practice prior to the event. Guyra Central School has provided an extremely valuable experience for their students and we wish all those who supported this event well for future endeavours.

RECOGNITION OF MICHELLE KNOTT

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Michelle Knott for being a finalist in the Business Development Success of the Year 2024 category, at the Women in Industry Awards held at Sydney recently. This event is a celebration of women, acknowledging their exceptional success through their invaluable leadership, innovation and commitment to their sector. I congratulate Michelle on this accomplishment and being recognised in the finals alongside global companies and other incredible women from across a broad cross section of industries. Michelle with husband Scott are co-owners and operators of the Brooklyn Quarry, located near Walcha. I commend Michelle for being a role model to other women and for the hard work and commitment to developing a successful career and importantly, for representing and shining a light on women in industry.

HEART HEALTH NSW LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise the 'exceptional service and commitment' of two outstanding volunteers from our local community. Jim McClellan and Reg Wilkinson have been awarded Heart Health NSW Life Memberships for their continued commitment and contribution to the wellbeing of cardiac patients within the Mid North Coast Local Health District. Over ten years ago, after Jim recovered from his heart event, he was encouraged to begin a walking group. Beginning with just eight members,

the group now averages 35 walkers. Jim is dedicated to the walking group, leading and encouraging them to exercise and improve their overall physical health and mental wellbeing. Jim has been committed and inspirational in this role. For almost twenty years, Reg has been a cornerstone of Heart Health NSW. He has supported those experiencing challenges in their recovery. Reg visits patients in the acute phase post-cardiac treatment two-to-three times a week. He also volunteers in the Cardiac Rehabilitation Unit once per week. Reg has also been instrumental in establishing a carers group within Heart Health NSW. Both men are incredibly generous and dedicated, and I thank them for the significant difference that they have made to the lives of so many.

SALTWATER FRESHWATER ART ALLIANCE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I congratulate students Gideon Marr-Grogan and Peyton McCrostie from St Joseph's Regional College Port Macquarie for being honoured with an invitation to showcase their art pieces through the Saltwater Freshwater Art Alliance. Gideon and Peyton are emerging Aboriginal artists and thanks to the cultural-based programs delivered by Saltwater Freshwater Art Alliance, both students have showcased their talents, adding to the rich and diverse Aboriginal culture on the Mid North Coast. "We're writing a new chapter for our culture, together" is the mission for Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance as they work to strengthen cultural identity for the 11,000 Aboriginal people they represent in the region. This year, Gideon's artwork featured on the tote bags sold through the Saltwater Freshwater website titled 'Pigface Artwork by Gideon.' The Saltwater Freshwater Kids tote design comes from the Pigface image taken from the Birpai banner that was created from the Marking Country Art Project. Peyton was invited to publish her artwork in the Children's Art Book Project, featuring among the creative and magical exploration of cultural stories by Aboriginal children across Worimi, Biripi/Birpai, Dunghutti, and Gumbaynggirr Country. I congratulate Gideon and Peyton for reaching new heights as young Aboriginal artists.

PMBH STROKE UNIT RECOGNISED

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise the Port Macquarie Base Hospital Stroke Unit, and allied health teams on receiving international recognition for meeting the highest standards in stroke treatment and care. The World Stroke Organisation Angels Award aims to optimise the standard of treatment in stroke centres worldwide and improve the outcomes for patients through global benchmarks of practice and care. Port Macquarie Base Hospital has achieved the Platinum Award, only the fifth hospital in Australia to achieve this status. Congratulations to Jenni Steel - Stroke Care Co-ordinator, Emily O'Rourke - Stroke Physiotherapist, Dr Matt Kinchington - Head of Medicine (Stroke Physician), Stephanie Barker - Stroke Clinical Nurse Co-ordinator, Dr Dawn Martin - Head of Emergency Medicine, Matt Hoffmann - Acting District Manager Allied Health, Elle Debrecey - Nurse Unit Manager 3D/Medical Assessment Unit and Acute Stroke Unit, Michelle Coad - Stroke Dietitian and Sam Degasso - Stroke Care Program Specialist Angel Initiative and Tahlia Collins from NSW Ambulance Service and all their respective team members. Stroke patients need an almost seamless coordination through all stages of care to reduce the risk of permanent disability and to optimise recovery. Thank you all for your continued care for our community.

LOCAL BUSINESS AWARD FINALISTS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—My congratulations to businesses and their owners and staff in the Badgerys Creek electorate who have been named as finalists in the 2024 Penrith City Local Business Awards. The Local Business Awards were established in 1985 and continue to provide the opportunity for community members to show their appreciation for outstanding providers of goods and services in our local area. The awards are well recognised and well respected with businesses being judged against specific criteria for their nominated category. Winners will be announced at a highly anticipated presentation evening in September and I wish all nominees the very best for the event. I commend the businesses for their excellence.

PENRITH PHYSICAL CULTURE CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—My congratulations to Penrith Physical Culture Club who celebrate their 30th birthday this year. Physical Culture, often referred to as Physie, is a dance & exercise sport for girls aged 3 years to ladies of any age. A key focus at Physie is on developing self-esteem, teaching body positivity, maintaining wellbeing in body and mind and having fun. I acknowledge Karen Allan and her sister Colleen Avery for their many years of commitment to Penrith Physie and to many girls and ladies who have benefited from their instruction, friendship, and guidance. Together they have built a very committed and competent team of teachers, and as a team, share their love and experience with the local community. Penrith Physie are proud to be a part of the BJP Association, which is the original style of Physical Culture, operating for over 130 years providing classes across Australia. With classes run out of Glenmore Park Youth and Community Centre, Kingswood High School & Nangamay Public School, Penrith Physie have 120 members across all age groups with classes held each week. I wish Penrith Physie all the best for the future.

SISTA SPEAK PROGRAM

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—My congratulations to the students at St Clair High School, Erskine Park High School, Clairgate Public School, Blackwell Public School, James Erskine Public School, and Banks Public School on completing the Sista Speak program recently. Sista Speak is a program for young Aboriginal girls that encourages self-respect, respect for others, resilience, developing positive relationships and life skills. A key focus is also on helping students to connect and be proud of their rich culture and traditions. I commend all the students for their commitment to undertaking this program and encourage them to utilise the skills and techniques they have learnt from the Sista Speak program as they continue through their school years and beyond.

CALVARY HEALTH CARE KOGARAH AUXILIARY

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate Calvary Health Care Kogarah Auxiliary for their hard work for our community. Kogarah Auxiliary is operated by a group of remarkable volunteers who throughout the year fundraise on behalf of Calvary Health Care Kogarah. These dedicated volunteers give up their time generously to raise funds for the hospital with the funds raised used to purchase items of comfort and care for patients of the Hospital, as well as much needed medical equipment. The Auxiliary's members are seen throughout the week manning "The Little Shop" located within the hospital foyer where they sell, lollies, jewellery, handmade, new, and preloved goods. They also run raffles, hold pop up stalls, Christmas markets and organise fundraising events. Kogarah Auxiliary recently donated over \$27000 in equipment and care items to the hospital. They have put their success down to the dedication and support of their wonderful volunteers who generously give up their time to support the Auxiliary, showcasing their unique and individual talents. I am honoured to be the Patron of the Calvary Health Care Kogarah Auxiliary and I feel very proud to be associated with this wonderful and dedicated group of people.

JOHN MCCARTIN WORLD ART AWARDS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I'd like to pay tribute to impressionist painter John McCartin who has again taken out top honours in the World Art Awards 2024. Mr McCartin has defended his titles of Best Landscape Painting and Best Still Life painting won last year by taking the titles again this year. Beyond that he has gone one better by taking out the Best Painting in Show prize for 2024. John's Entry an oil-on-linen still life piece called "Azaleas and Pomegranates" gained the highest score out of 50 different categories and thousands of entries from pop to portrait in style and was selected by the 20 international judges as the best in show. Azaleas and Pomegranates also won first place in Floral – Realism and his landscape "Tide's out Robin Hood Bay" also won first place in its category. In my community John exhibits in the Morpeth Art gallery where 34 of his works have been featured. Congratulations to John and Trevor Richards OAM and his team from the Morpeth Gallery for the incredible contribution you have made to art not just in Maitland, but across the world.

GRAHAM DARK OAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Graham Dark OAM on his Life Membership of the Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch). Over 40 years as a Labor Member, Graham Dark OAM has contributed to around 25 diverse community groups in leadership positions, including as a Councillor on Maitland City Council from 2000 to 2008. Graham has helped these groups manage major changes in volunteering over 40 years and even established a number of groups from scratch. Graham started at the Scout Association of Australia, as a Cub Scout Leader in 1982, before becoming President of Maitland District in 2006. Graham has been actively involved in several other community groups, particularly through volunteering as a Justice of the Peace, a Foundation and Charter Member of the West Maitland Centennial Lions Club, the Maitland & District Historical Society, Foundation Member of the Telarah Croquet Club, and his advocacy for Cancer patients. Living with cancer for over 30 years Graham has been an inspirational advocate and tirelessly fundraiser for the Leukaemia Foundation and Cancer Council. Graham's advocacy and community work lives the Australian Labor Party values. He is a true inspiration and mentor to the wider community. Congratulations Graham.

WILLIAM HOPKINS OAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to William (Bill) Hopkins OAM on recently being awarded Life Membership of the Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch). Bill's working life began on the railways and in 1967 he became a union official for the steel industry in Newcastle. As National Assistant Secretary for the Federated Ironworkers Association (Now the AWU), Bill negotiated major industrial disputes both at home and abroad. He made valuable contributions as a delegate to the

Australian Council of Trade Unions and was a trusted source of wise counsel to Prime Ministers and Premiers. Resolving major disputes is something Bill is very proud of, having been instrumental in improving relations between unions, government, and employers. Bill has continued to make contributions to our community and has steered the East Maitland Bowling club through expansions and acquisitions in a tireless effort to make his community better. Bill has always remembered where he came from and followed his father's advice of "No one is better than you and you are better than no one". He is now the President of the Fort Scratchley Historical Society. Congratulations Bill on this much deserved recognition.

ST LUKE'S SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—Although St Luke's in Liverpool is not the oldest Serbian Orthodox Church, it is one of the fastest growing congregations. This was very obvious when I recently attended a special mass at St Luke's, known as Sveti Luka in Serbian, being the feast day of St John the Baptist. The congregation was made up of young families, older people and everyone in between! Located on Flowerdale Road, St Luke's has been developed from a modest building to a grand marvel in our suburban streets. The beautiful bell tower and gorgeous iconography are typical of Serbian architecture, although I understand there is much more planned! It is fitting that Sveti Luka is known as the first iconographer of the Church. I was treated to a lovely morning tea courtesy of the congregation at St Luke's. The dishes reflected the fact it was a feast day – although I was offered a shot of plum brandy as is custom! Thank you to Father Aleksandar, Michael Andjelkovic, and the St Luke's community for welcoming me into the Church for mass and morning tea. I look forward to joining you for more occasions in the near future.

HINCHINBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL TOY SALE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—As all Members would know, the impact that student leadership and initiative can have is incredible. On that note, I congratulate Grace, Hannah, Tyrell, and Jake from Hinchinbrook Public School for successfully organising a second-hand toy sale within their school. The Hinchinbrook Leadership by the Cowpasture team raised over \$1000 through the sale, which will go towards Hinchinbrook's new school mural. The toy sale is a reflection of the community spirit of the Hinchinbrook community, who when called upon, donated so many toys that a second toy sale had to take place to sell the remainder of the items. Shout out to Caroline Mikhail for assisting the team with a balloon display, as well as the dedicated Hinchinbrook Public School P&C for providing badges for the whole school in recognition of the event. Grace, Hannah, Tyrell, and Jake's work should be commended. Leadership by the Cowpasture has elevated so many young leaders in our community, and I remember being so impressed with them when I visited their leadership development day earlier this year. I look forward to seeing the many future contributions they will make!

MENTAL HEALTH IN AFRICAN-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—Mental health ranks as one of the most critical health issues for African Australians in Sydney. Indeed, it ranks as significant concern for all Australians. I recently joined a number of community members to attend an online forum to highlight challenges and explore solutions for this complex issue. We heard insightful contributions from Associate Professor Olayide Ogunsiji of Western Sydney University, Dr Ayodele Olatunji from Nepean Hospital and the Ramsay Clinic, and Stephanie Robson from Lifeline, as they considered collaborative ways to respond to mental health issues in our African communities. As with many areas of our health, I know that culturally and linguistically diverse communities require culturally appropriate care when it comes to mental health. Such conversations are integral to developing appropriate solutions to complex, intersectional challenges. I thank Africa Health Australia [AHA] for hosting this event in collaboration with Lifeline Central Western NSW, and for their continuing support of the health needs of African Australians'.

LOUELLA, ELOISE AND HANNAH HUTCHISON - HILLSTON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise Hillston girls Louella (10) Eloise (7) and Hannah (4) Hutchison for their efforts in bringing their pony Scruffy to visit the residents of Lachlan Lodge aged care. The girls work hard to prepare Scruffy for her visits. Last December they dressed up as elves, with Louella playing Christmas carols on the piano. The girls sit with the residents while they brush Scruffy, feed her carrots and remember experiences with their own horses. The girls' mother, Belinda, recognises the importance of children interacting and learning from the elderly in the community and visit Lachlan Lodge and the MPS on a regular basis. Louella, Eloise and Hannah are to be commended for their kindness and effort in bringing a special experience to the seniors in their community, as well as the example they set for other young people.

PETER LUGSDIN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise Peter Lugsdin of Hay for his decades-long service to the NSW Rural Fire Service. Peter joined the Area D Brigade at the age of 16. He has held the role of Deputy Captain and elected Captain in 1991, a role he held for 12 years. Later, he joined the Hay Headquarters Brigade, becoming Group Captain in 2004. Peter served as a senior volunteer representative on the Bush Fire Management Committee, Liaison Committee and Senior Management Team. He has been deployed on multiple occasions, leading strike teams to Coffs Harbour and Tumut as well as many other areas across NSW. Peter is one of eight members of the NSW Rural Fire Service to receive the Australian Fire Service Medal which was instituted in 1988. This award recognises those who have rendered distinguished service as a member of the Australian Fire Service. He was included in the 2023 King's Birthday Honour list. Peter is to be commended for his long-standing commitment to the NSW Rural Fire Service..

PAT ZANDONA - GRIFFITH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise Pat Zandona for her tireless endeavours in organising and participating in Griffith's Shine A Light Community Walk, an event raising funds for the Lung Foundation. Pat herself is a lung cancer survivor and saw the need to promote awareness of lung conditions, including cancer. Knitting beanies and scarves for herself and her family while receiving treatment, Pat found Griffith did not have Red Cross knitting group, she rallied volunteers and now the group knit trauma teddies to support the children's ward at Griffith Base Hospital. They now knit blankets for the maternity ward and make financial donations to the hospital. In addition to this, Pat has led a local crochet group in making beautiful crochet hearts having a personalised tag attached with the name of a baby or child who needs to be remembered. Pat is to be commended for her exceptional care and service to her community.

BILL AND PAM CARALIS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—On behalf of the Tweed Electorate I would like to pay tribute to Bill and Pam Caralis who both sadly passed away within days of each other last month. Many would know Bill and Pam as the owners of Australia's largest privately-owned radio network, the Super Radio Network, comprising 42 stations across NSW and Queensland. Bill's story is a quintessential Australian success story, moving to Australia from Greece at the end of World War 2 and trying his hand at property development and retail ventures before beginning to build his radio empire in the 1980s. The Super Radio Network included Tweed's Radio 97 which afforded me many chats with Bill. He was a genuine bloke who told you as he saw it, and I, like so many others, appreciated this quality in Bill. With Pam by his side, Bill lived an impactful yet quiet life doing what he loved. The loss of Bill and Pam has left a void in the Caralis family that can never be filled. I offer my sincere condolences to John, Despina and George and the entire Super Radio Network family.

ROBERT QUIRK

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Tweed sugarcane stalwart Robert Quirk has been recognised on the global stage, at the BonSucro Global Week held recently in Mexico, awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for his commitment to the sustainability of the sugarcane industry. Robert has been growing sugarcane in the Tweed Valley for almost 60 years and has become a sought-after expert on sugarcane sustainability topics such as acid sulphate soil remediation, soil health, carbon accumulation in sugarcane, climate change, bio-char and plant stone accumulation in sugarcane. Robert advises and consults on sugarcane sustainability in Australia, Asia and Latin America and his research and peer-reviewed papers have led him to speaking engagements around the world. Congratulations to Robert on being awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award and thank you for all you do to improve and champion sustainability in the sugarcane industry.

JULIE LOWE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Tweed Citizen of the Year 2023 Julie Lowe continues to go above and beyond for the Tweed community. Not only is Julie the Deputy Captain of the Kingscliff Fire Station, she also runs her own disability support service, Full Circle Support. And last weekend Julie participated in the City2Surf to raise money and awareness for kids who are dealing with life-changing burns and other injuries. Julie has been collecting donations for Beat the Burn and undertook the City2Surf alongside the NSW Fire and Rescue Commissioner, Jeremy Fewtrell, and other firefighters from around NSW also supporting Beat the Burn to raise funds for The Burns Unit at the Children's Hospital at Westmead. Thank you to Julie for all you do for not only the Tweed community, but also those people who need support most. Your dedication and commitment are second to none and the Tweed is grateful for all you do for those around you.

MICHAEL BAUME CUP

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—The Michael Baume Cup is an annual tradition in the Willoughby electorate, bringing people together for a fun and competitive evening. Held at the Dougherty Community Centre, this event is organised by the Chatswood West Branch of the Willoughby SEC and features a trivia night where teams of eight compete for the coveted cup. The Michael Baume Cup exemplifies community-led activities that foster a strong sense of belonging and camaraderie among residents. This year's turnout was fantastic, with participants eager to showcase their knowledge and enjoy a night of friendly rivalry. The event highlights the vibrant community spirit in Willoughby, proving once again that when we come together, we create experiences that strengthen our connections. It was wonderful to see Michael Baume AO himself and his wife Toni there. Thank you to the event organisers.

NATIONAL TREE DAY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—To mark National Tree Day on Sunday 28 July, I had the pleasure of joining locals at Muston Park in Chatswood to plant some native tree species. Muston Park is a beautiful green space in Chatswood for locals to enjoy our abundant native plant and bird life. It provided the perfect setting for our local community to participate in National Tree Day and rejuvenate the Park's garden beds. I would like to thank Willoughby City Council and the Bushland Team who led this initiative. On the day, the Bushland Team helped participants to select the right native saplings to plant and provided the necessary tools and water. I thank Willoughby Mayor, Tanya Taylor, and General Manger, Hugh Phemister, for hosting this community-based action to nurture our environment. It was special for me and my son to plant a tree in the park where I played as a kid – the Rocket Park!

CHATSWOOD HIGH SCHOOL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY VISIT

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—On the 24th and 26th of July, I was delighted to host students from Chatswood High School for a tour of the NSW Parliament. Peter Tuziak did an outstanding job outlining this institution and its history and I was pleased to address the students on some of Willoughby's history and role here. Reflecting the quality of education at Chatswood High, I was impressed by the maturity and intellectual curiosity of the Year 10 Commerce students who visited on both days. It was an opportunity for them to inspect first-hand, the great institutions of our democracy that they had been learning about in their civics lessons. It is always inspiring to see young minds eager to learn about our democratic processes and how they can get involved in shaping the future of our community. I would like to thank the teachers and students for their questions and enthusiasm. By engaging our youth in the democratic process, we can all work together for a brighter future.

HAYLEY GOODRICK

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I am delighted to highlight the inspiring work of Hayley Goodrick, a Gangalidda woman and founder of Djaljala Aboriginal Education, who is expanding her cultural immersion sessions into more schools across the St George area. Hayley is making a significant impact by promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity in early childhood, primary and secondary education through interactive, hands-on experiences. Hayley's dedication to sharing her culture is transforming school communities. Her workshops, which include storytelling, music, dance, and art, allow Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike to connect deeply with Aboriginal traditions and the natural world around them. Her efforts not only empower Indigenous students by connecting them with their heritage but also foster respect and appreciation for Indigenous culture among all students. Hayley's passion and commitment to cultural education are vital in ensuring that these rich traditions continue to be celebrated and respected by future generations. Her work is a shining example of how we can build a more inclusive and understanding society.

ROBYN MCCARTHY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the extraordinary legacy of St George resident, Ms Robyn McCarthy. Ms McCarthy, a beloved dance instructor, devoted 65 years of her life to teaching at TK Dance Stars. Over these 65 years, the impact Robyn has made on the St George community is truly immeasurable. Through her dedication to the art of dance, she has positively affected the lives of countless children and families. Ms McCarthy's journey began as a pianist and accordionist at TK Dance Stars which was founded by her mother, Joy Turner, nearly a century ago. Robyn carried forward this legacy with grace and passion, becoming not only a teacher but a mentor and inspiration to the younger generation. Robyn's influence extended far beyond our local community, reaching across Australasia as an international teacher and examiner with the Australasian Dance Association. I wish to thank Robyn, and the whole McCarthy family, for their unwavering commitment to our community and for inspiring future generations to pursue their passions with the same dedication and heart as you did.

CASSIE BARTELS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I wish to recognise and commend Ms Cassie Bartels for her distinguished service and contributions to education in the St George area. Ms Bartels is the head of Vocational Education and Training and coordinator of External Pathways at Bethany College Hurstville. In recognition of Cassie's hard work and outstanding contributions, she was named Education Partner of the Year by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. The award signifies Ms Bartels continuous dedication and commitment to positively shaping the future of our kids. With her extensive background in hospitality and her passion for teaching, Cassie has transformed the VET programs at Bethany College, offering students invaluable real-life experience and practical skills. Her continuous dedication to guiding students through successful work placements and non-traditional career pathways has profoundly impacted their futures. Under her guidance, students not only gain impressive resume-building experience but also earn qualifications alongside their HSC, often leading to job offers even before graduation. I want to congratulate Ms Bartels on her remarkable achievements and thank her for her unwavering commitment to giving our children the best possible start in life.

AMIR SALEM

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to recognise a fantastic local member of our community, Mr Amir Salem. As President of the Australian Egyptian Forum Council, he has made significant contributions to our diverse, multicultural society here in New South Wales. As the Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I believe that our diversity is our strength. Mr Salem has been an advocate for diversity and harmony within Egyptian-Australian spheres through his service to community organisations and cultural groups. For this service, Mr Salem was awarded the Premier's Medal for Community Harmony last year, which I had the pleasure of presenting him. He also recently received an Order of Australia Medal [OAM] in 2021, for his work with migrants and refugees. Mr Salem's professional experience abroad has also helped to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue within New South Wales, promoting the interests of the local Egyptian community right here in Sydney. I look forward to working with Amir into the future and would like to thank him once again for his contributions to multiculturalism in New South Wales.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR KATE MOORE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate Emeritus Professor Kate Moore for her wonderful service to St George Hospital over the years, as well as the Australian medical field as a whole. Her list of achievements are notable, with a long history of service both within our community and across the State. Professor Moore started the pelvic floor unit at St George Hospital in 1992, which was the largest service of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and helped countless individuals. She has since gone on to lecture at the University of NSW, whilst also serving as Deputy Chairwoman of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, and also Deputy Chairwoman of the Medical Staff Council at St George Hospital. Researchers and professors like Professor Moore make such an enormous difference within our community. Her contributions to the medical field have not only advanced our understanding of various health conditions, but have also inspired countless students to pursue excellence in medicine. I would like to thank Professor Moore once again and wish her all the very best as she continues her research and undergraduate training.

JAMES FORRESTER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to thank and congratulate Mr James Forrester, who was recently recognised as a Rotarian of Long Standing. This took place at the Rotary Club of Hurstville's 72nd Annual Changeover Dinner. I truly believe that Mr Forrester is incredibly deserving of this honour, as he has dedicated much of his life to serving the community and those around him. He is an inspiration to many! James was responsible for setting up the Mulga Road Bookshop for the Rotary Club of Hurstville. This generates the majority of the clubs income and enables Rotary to provide financial support to various organisations in the local community. The Mulga Road Bookshop is continuing strong, and this year, has provided \$17,000 in donations for local organisations and charities. Further, Mr Forrester also established 'the Magic Show', which is an annual concert for people with disabilities. Any funds raised from tickets sold have been donated directly to St George Hospital, which in turn, has enabled them to purchase valuable equipment needed by the staff. Mr Forrester truly has had such an enormous impact and I would like to thank him once again.

TENTERFIELD ROTARY CLUB'S 78TH CHANGEOVER DINNER

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate Rotary Tenterfield's new President Yvonne Horn who has taken over the role from outgoing President Jacqueline Plaice. Past District Governor David Lee inducted Yvonne at the 78th changeover dinner. David presented Yvonne with club's charter, President's chain and pin, before Jacqueline and Yvonne exchanged banners. Jacqueline, who thanked the club for a successful year, gave a Vocational Service Award to Tenterfield Golf Club and announced that DTB Fabrications would also

be receiving one. Two new awards were bestowed – the Peter Chittick Community Award went to past president Ralph Manser and Rotarian of the Year went to Heather Goulding for her outstanding dedication to the club. Harry Bolton received a Paul Harris Fellowship Sapphire Award. Frances Overell was absent but will receive her Sapphire Award at a later date. I congratulate the Board for 2024-25 – President Yvonne Horn, Treasurer Jan Cross; Secretary/Club Insurance & Public Officer Karen Tapscott; Vice President Ralph Manser; Immediate Past President & PR Jacqueline Plaice; President Elect & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Frances Overell; Club Director Heather Goulding; Community Directors Bev McCullough & Kevin Rumble; Foundation Director Geoff Sullivan; Membership Director Lee Manser; Youth Director Stephanie Scott.

BONALBO MULTI-PURPOSE SERVICE'S WORKFORCE WINS STELLAR AWARD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I WISH to warmly congratulate Bonalbo Multi-Purpose Service's entire staff on collectively winning a Stellar Award from the Northern NSW Local Health District. Bonalbo MPS staff are such a tight and closely-knit team that they pitched in to nominate the whole workforce for this prestigious award. According to the Northern NSW Local Health District's Northern Exposure bulletin, it was a popular win. Veverly Villapando, Assistant in Nursing at Bonalbo and Casino, said in their application: "We, the team of Bonalbo, demonstrate care, compassion with residents and patients, giving our persona touch to all. "We always work together no matter the role, from RN, EN, AIN, activities officer, hotel services and administration. "Our residents loved that we just break out and start singing or dancing, giving them a floor show, creating a very happy family environment. Residents often comment on how much they enjoy the atmosphere here. "... The whole Bonalbo team works together to provide excellent, holistic patient care. We all work together as a great team." The highly-skilled team includes Veverly, Nancy Martin, Karen Kay, Sarah Wilkins, Carmen Harlock, Kirstie Julian, Alison Coppock, Marni Evenden, Rainee Lee, Cheryl Eaton and Colleen Mcqueen.

URBENVILLE MULTI-PURPOSE SERVICE STAFF CLOCK UP 155 YEARS OF NURSING

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Urbenville Multi-Purpose Service held a special morning tea on July 12, recognising three staff members' outstanding long service records. Registered Nurses Gail Card and Jean Ellevsen, and Enrolled Nurse Sherryl Mathieson, have enjoyed nursing careers of 50, 52 and 53 years respectively. According to the Northern NSW Local Health District's Northern Exposure bulletin, the trio was welcomed by colleagues with the late Tina Turner's rendition of 'Simply the Best'. Special guests were the NNSWLHD's Director of Nursing and Midwifery Katharine Duffy and Nurse Manager, Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Narelle Al-Manro. Katharine presented Gail, Jean and Sherryl with certificates and 50-year badges. Some Urbenville MPS aged care residents joined in, and Urbenville RN Leanne, currently on maternity leave, brought in her baby son Dylan. Northern Exposure commented: "With plans for retirement still a way off, Urbenville is very lucky to have three nurses with such a wealth of experience who find joy in their everyday nursing practice." After reading their career histories, I sincerely thank Gail Card RN, Jean Ellevsen RN and Sherryl Matheson EN for their professional and dedication in providing health care and personal support to countless grateful patients.

LORETA KOCOVSKA

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—Congratulations to Loreta Kocovska, Principal of Windang Public School, who was recently named Government Primary School Principal of the Year at the Australian Education Awards. Loreta was permanently appointed as the Principal of Windang Public School in May 2019. Since then she has overseen projects focused on providing a well-rounded quality education inside and outside the classroom for all students at the school. Over the last four years, Windang Public School has undergone a strategic transformation of its buildings and grounds to make the school a safe, engaging and inviting place to learn. Loreta has also helped to reinvigorate teacher professional development which is producing results with Year 3 rating above the national average in all 5 areas in the 2024 NAPLAN results. Windang Public was also awarded the NSW Department of Education Secretary's Award for School Achievement for the school's knowledge-rich curriculum at the 2024 Public Education Awards. Loreta has accomplished this whilst leading her school community through COVID-19 and surviving breast cancer. Congratulations Loreta, Windang Public is lucky to have you.

YAMBA LIONS CELEBRATE THEIR 50TH BIRTHDAY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—A big shout out to the executive team and committee members of the Yamba Lions Club who recently celebrated their 50th birthday with a celebration dinner at the Yamba Bowling Club. This momentous occasion was attended by over 40 members and their guests, quite the increase on last year's numbers which is great to see. During the past 50 years the Yamba Lions Club has donated thousands of dollars to local groups and community projects and has become an integral part of the community. With another of the Yamba Lions Club major functions, the Yamba Lions Arts & Crafts Fair coming up next month and to be held at the Yamba Bowling & Recreation Club, it is bound to be another big fundraising event

for the community. The annual event provides for a fun day out. I congratulate the Yamba Lions Club for all they have achieved thus far and wish them continued success in the future.

NAIDOC IN THE CLARENCE VALLEY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I recently attended a morning of very enjoyable and very special NAIDOC Day festivities in South Grafton, just one of the many functions held celebrating NAIDOC Week in the Clarence Valley. Communities came together to celebrate the culture through morning teas and luncheons with First Nations Elders and leaders, smoking ceremonies and flag raising ceremonies, interactive cultural events, and locally orchestrated sporting activities. A large crowd attended and thoroughly enjoyed this family fun day with loads of activities for everyone. Market and information stalls, arts and crafts, traditional music and dancing, games and sports all brought together the crowd who immersed themselves in the culture and history. I would like to congratulate the organisers of the NAIDOC events held in the Clarence Valley as they help to build connections, strength and togetherness in the community.

FORMER YAMBA CHEF – SCOTT WRIGHT – APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate former Yamba local Scott Wright on his achievement of being named Apprentice of the Year at the recent TAFE NSW Excellence awards. Scott's hospitality career started at a Yamba restaurant washing dishes before he secured an apprenticeship as a chef at the Yamba Bowling Club. He is now continuing his apprenticeship at the Blaxland Inn, at Pokolbin in the Hunter Valley. The twenty-one year old's commitment to his studies and strong work ethic has allowed him to grow his skills and confidence in the field. In addition to his TAFE apprentice of the year achievement, Scott was a finalist for the Clarence Valley Young Citizen of the Year award and a finalist in the Fonterra Proud to be a Chef program. Congratulations on your great accomplishments so far Scott, I'm sure there will be many more to come.

ASEAN FOUNDERS AWARD

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 20 June 2024 I was delighted to attend the launch of ASEAN Founder's Award by the Australian South East Asian Network. The ASEAN Founder's Award was established by Sawathey Ek to recognise voluntary advocacy initiatives by those from forgotten and vulnerable backgrounds. ASEAN Founder's Award promotes Australian values but also helps to recognise those individuals and organisations for their commitments to serving our democratic values by opening up platforms for diverse community groups, including young people to take part in initiatives that strengthen social cohesion through intercultural dialogue. I congratulate the following award recipients: Christina Mao, ASEAN Youth Ambassador from the Australian-Cambodian and Khmer communities Rox Molavin from the Australian-Filipino community Lao Community Advancement NSW Co-op Khmer Krom Cultural Centre of NSW Inc. Well done to all and thank you for the kind invitation to attend.

AUSTRALIAN PALESTINIAN CLUB

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 28 July I was delighted to attend the 50th anniversary of the Australian Palestinian Club at Guildford in my electorate. Over the past five decades, the Club has played a pivotal role in fostering community spirit, cultural exchange, and mutual support. Founded in 1974, the Club has been a beacon for the Palestinian community in NSW, providing a space where heritage is celebrated and the community's collective achievements are recognised. The Club's journey has been marked by dedication, resilience, and a deep sense of camaraderie, attributes that have made it a cornerstone of the community. Throughout the afternoon, guests enjoyed traditional Palestinian foods and light refreshments, culminating in a delightful serving of Knafeh from Nablus. Over the last ten months we have seen extreme hardship for the Australian Palestinian community. This celebration was testament to the unwavering support of individuals at an especially difficult time such as now; and the work they have done to support new arrivals from Gaza. I congratulate Michael Barjeel, John Tawil and the entire team for arranging an opportunity to celebrate the Australian Palestinian community's successes, honour their history, and toast to a future filled with continued growth and unity.

WENDY HOWARD - DUNGOG RFS LIFE MEMBER

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—Volunteering can have many rewards - from the satisfaction of a job well done to having contributed to your local community. As Wendy Howard recently discovered there is also acknowledgement for the length of time that you give an organisation. Dungog Brigade of the NSW Rural Fire Service has showed its appreciation for Wendy's volunteering by making her a Life Member. Wendy Howard joined the brigade in 1996 after having supported her husband, Group Captain Ken Howard, by doing the catering duties for the firefighters. Wendy has now provided 28 years of service to Dungog RFS. After almost three decades of responding to the community's calls for help, she no longer attends fire calls but Wendy keeps the brigade's Facebook page up to date and helps when she can. Thank you to the Dungog RFS Brigade for its acknowledgment of Wendy Howard's service as a volunteer firefighter. And, to Wendy, in addition to your Certificate of Life

Membership can I add my thanks on behalf of the Dungog community and the Upper Hunter Electorate for all your efforts to ensure the safety and protect of the public.

DREAMPATH RECRUITMENT - NSW MINERALS COUNCIL AWARD

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—Innovation is vital for success and a point proven by Dreampath Recruitment to be recognised in the 2024 NSW Minerals Council's Health, Safety, Environment, and Community Awards Dreampath won the Community Excellence Award for pre-employment training for Indigenous people. The company identified a lack of appropriate pre-employment training as a significant barrier for Indigenous people entering the mining industry. An immersive program was designed to address the barriers after consulting with community leaders, industry partners and regulatory bodies. It combines advanced simulator training with classroom theory, practical demonstrations and life skills coaching, equipping candidates with over 80 hours of accredited training. The program has already seen 25 of 50 candidates secure a Certificate III - Surface Extraction Traineeship. Dreampath is a partnership between the Indigenous-owned Blackrock Industries, of Muswellbrook and Protech Group. It is one of Australia's largest Indigenous-owned Labour Hire Businesses and Workforce Solutions providers with 20 offices Australia-wide. Dreampath thanked its partners including Thiess, Bengalla Mining, MACH Energy and Sedgman for their unwavering support. I also acknowledge company director, Steve Fordham, who continues to champion his dream and the challenge to "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

MUSWELLBROOK BUSINESS AWARDS 2024

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)—Congratulations to this year's winners of the Muswellbrook Business Awards presented before a packed auditorium at Muswellbrook RSL on Friday June 21st. Denman winery and tourist accommodation venue, Two Rivers Wines, presented with the Business of the Year and Excellence in Tourism awards. Adding to the recognition for the local wine and hospitality industry - Hollydene Estate and Vines Restaurant crowned with the award for Outstanding Business Presentation and/or Customer Service. Raine and Horne Muswellbrook won Outstanding New Member, Excellence in Retail presented to GIO Muswellbrook, LIVMEDIA recognised for Excellence in Professional Services, Supply First Aid received the Excellence in Education and Training Award and Muswellbrook Golf Club Greens Staff honoured with the Making Muswellbrook Award. Red Door Community Kitchen was presented with the Outstanding Not For Profit Community Organisation in recognition of 10 years feeding people in need. Good luck also to Muswellbrook's finalists in the Hunter Business Awards. Pretty Bangin Balloons progress winning the Excellence in Micro Business Award, TLE Muswellbrook for the Excellence in Small Business Award, DK Heavy Plant Services rewarded for Excellence in Large Business and Supply Solutions awarded for Group Excellence in Innovation.

SOUTHERN WATERS LEGAL AND SP SCREENS FUNDRAISING FOR THE FAMILY CO

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I recognise Shire business leaders Leona Bennett from Southern Waters Legal and Sarah Lamb of SP Screens who led efforts to raise \$48,000 for The Family Co for its wonderful work providing domestic and family violence support. The money was raised through a 'Women Supporting Women' networking event hosted by Leona and Sarah in June to foster relationships and networking for women in business while raising money for The Family Co. The 160 tickets for the event sold out weeks in advance and 100 businesses were involved in a range of ways including sponsorship, donations of auction items or food to share on the night. The Family Co was extremely grateful for the "immense dedication and generosity" of Leona and Sarah and were "blown away" by the fundraising efforts of these two business leaders and their teams saying "the funds will greatly enhance our ability to extend support to the families we support, including those effected by domestic and family violence". Congratulations to Leona Bennett and Sarah Lamb for getting behind the Family Co with such a generous donation to support families facing difficult times.

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—On Friday 9 August, the best of Australia's education system was celebrated at the seventh annual Australian Education Awards—and I am thrilled to report that the Charlestown electorate's own Hunter Sports High was named both Secondary School of the Year in the government schools division and Australian School of the Year! This recognition isn't surprising to those of us familiar with the work done by the amazing team of educators and administrators at Hunter Sports High. Under the leadership of principal Rachel Byrne, who was recognised as an excellence awardee in the School Principal of the Year – Government at the Awards, Hunter Sports High has gone from strength to strength. Award-winning, sector-leading and trailblazing programs have helped elevate students to new levels, while academic achievement and community engagement go hand-in-hand with the school's excellence in sport. I am so proud to see a school in my electorate of Charlestown undertake this important and ongoing work, and to have it recognised on such a

grand stage. Congratulations once again to Hunter Sports High on this wonderful achievement. Keep up the fantastic work.

NEWCASTLE NORTHSTARS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The mighty Newcastle Northstars are just one win away from the Australian Ice Hockey League grand final after a commanding 9-2 win over the Melbourne Mustangs at Hunter Ice Skating Stadium on Saturday, 10 August. It was my honour to drop the ceremonial puck—and once the game got underway, I saw the Northstars dominate the ice. Though the Mustangs took the first goal, the Northstars roared back, securing a 5-1 lead by the second stanza. Star forward Francis Drolet scored four goals, Wehebe Darge two more, with Shane Southwood, Kyler Matthews and Patrick Nadin taking one each. It was a great match and a lot of fun to watch. Despite the size of the win, the intensity of the game led to a few nailbiting moments. Congratulations to the Northstars. Their next match is on Saturday 24 August—after that, it's straight on to the grand finals. Here's to great wins for the Northstars!

CLR MARK DRURY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks and immense gratitude to Councillor Mark Drury for his 18 years on Inner West, and formerly Ashfield, Council. Over the years, Mark has championed countless projects in the Inner West including the Ashfield Civic Centre project, Ashfield Aquatic Centre, building the Greenway from the Cooks to Parramatta Rivers and increasing funding for essential public infrastructure. Mark's two great passions have been seeking to find a more just settlement with Indigenous Peoples and working to improve the water quality of the Parramatta River. Mark was a passionate advocate for the Voice and proud supporter of the Aboriginal Survival Memorial in Yeo Park. He has also served as the Chair of the Parramatta River Catchment Group since 2017. Mark leaves Inner West Council as it is on track to deliver a surplus for the people of the Inner West, something of which Mark is very proud. Thank you again Mark for your dedicated service to the people of the Inner West, and I wish you all the best in your next endeavours.

CLR ZOI TSARDOULIAS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I would like to say thank you to Clr Zoi Tsardoulis for her contributions to the Inner West Council over the past three years. Zoi continued her late husband, Emanuel Tsardoulis', legacy in 2021 when she was elected to Inner West Council. Since her election Zoi has worked tirelessly on many projects in the Inner West, including waste management, road repairs, and upgrading footpaths. However, Zoi's central passion has been working with early learning centres to ensure that all little ones in the Inner West get the best possible start to their education. Zoi credits the educational opportunities she had as a key driver in her passion for public services and has worked hard to make sure that early learning in the Inner West leaves no one behind. Zoi has been a passionate advocate for progressive issues, working hard on issues such as social justice, climate and renewables, multiculturalism and diversity, fair and transparent planning and arts and culture. Zoi is an incredible and inspiring Councillor and woman. Thank you Zoi, your contribution to the Inner West has been invaluable. I wish you all the best in the future.

VALE JACK PASSARIS OAM

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Jack Passaris OAM, well-loved and integral member of the Marrickville community. Jack was a former Deputy Mayor and Councillor of Marrickville Council, serving the community tirelessly for 19 years. Jack had an inextinguishable passion for helping others, serving as the Chair, and later Board Director, of Multicultural Care, an organisation dedicated to providing culturally sensitive care for older people in the multicultural community. Jack was also a Life Member of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, President of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Newtown for 46 years, and held various positions at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia Consolidated Trust and Foundation for Hellenic Studies UNSW. Jack's community contributions were recognised when he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2009, and in 2014 when he was awarded the Premier's Lifetime Multicultural Community Service Medal. Jack will be remembered as a passionate advocate for multiculturalism and someone who embodied the caring community spirit of the Inner West. Vale Jack Passaris OAM.

KELLY HANSEN

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I would like to wish a happy retirement to Kelly Hansen, former CEO of Nova for Women and Children, and thank her for her great service to the community through domestic violence advocacy. After an incredible 40+ years in the social services sector, including 23 years at Nova for Women and Children, Kelly Hansen retired as CEO at the end of June. Kelly's leadership, passion, and

dedication have been instrumental in the growth and success of Nova, passionately advocating for social justice, with a focus on gender inequality and poverty, particularly among older women. Kelly has also served as a board member of Homelessness NSW and was the founding Chairperson of the Newcastle Poverty Action Alliance. I congratulate and thank Kelly for her tireless advocacy for social justice, particularly in addressing gender inequality and poverty. You will be missed.

BULLS IN SCHOOLS - MACARTHUR FC SCHOOL HOLIDAY CLINICS

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—As the Macarthur Bulls 118th member, I was excited to visit a Bulls in Schools session during the school holidays. Bulls in schools is a football program offered to primary schools throughout the greater Macarthur region. The program is a fun and engaging program which encourages participation and skill development for children. Targeting years 3-6 with no cost to schools, the sessions are run by Macarthur FC community football coaches who have been trained and endorsed by the club to promote health and wellness in schools through football. Over 20,000 primary school children from across the region have participated in Bulls in Schools with 41% of participants came from a non-English speaking background, while 8% came from an indigenous background. I was happy to hear that sessions are booked out far in advance. Funding will continue for this great initiative through the Minns Labor Government's \$8 million election commitment for bulls in schools. It's always great to see election commitments come to fruition and proving their worth to the community.

ITALIAN CULTURE WEEK

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—On 18 July I visited Greenway Park Community Centre for Italian Culture Week. This wonderful event, brought to life by Marco Polo - The Italian School of Sydney, saw over 30 students alongside their parents and volunteers come together to make homemade pasta. Special mention to Maria Grazia Storniolo and her dedicated team for doing an incredible job organising the event. Marco Testa, one of the teachers, highlighted how important events like these are for young Italian-Australians. He spoke about the significance of not just learning the language, but also building a greater understanding of Italian culture. One of the great moments of the day was when Fortunato 'Lucky' Legato, a director of the Catholic Club of Liverpool, shared his personal story recalling his arrival in Australia in 1963 which fell on the same day. He expressed his joy in seeing the children embrace Italian traditions, a reminder of how important keeping cultural roots alive and passing them on to the next generation is. As I said on the day, "It is very important to understand where you come from, why you are here, and part of that is learning the language, culture, and food."

PAKISTAN MANGO AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—I was fortunate to attend the Pakistani Mango & Cultural Festival 2024 that took place at Fairfield Showground on 21 July. The festival celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan and one of Pakistan's most famous exports - the mango, with a variety of mangoes and mango based dishes on display and available for tasting and purchase. It was great to see the community come together to celebrate and experience traditional music and dance performances, handicrafts and food, showcasing the diverse cultural traditions of Pakistan. A special mention goes out to the Pakistan High Commission Australia, Pakistan Consulate General Sydney, stall holders, volunteers and sponsors on managing a well run event. A big thank you to High Commissioner for Pakistan in Australia, Mr. Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, for inviting me to celebrate. I look forward to the next year's festival.

COUNCILLOR PAULINE LOCKIE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—Thank you to Councillor Pauline Lockie for her leadership, determination, and compassion during her tenure on Inner-West Council. Councillor Lockie defined what it means to be a community-led independent councillor delivering fierce advocacy and results for her community. This includes her work with the WestConnex Action Group, launching the #RacismNotWelcomeHere campaign, getting safer speeds in local streets, working to minimise gambling harm, celebrating and supporting the LGBTIQ+ community, and bringing in the Council's first Gender Equity Strategy, and so much more and since she was first elected. Thank you Councillor Lockie for your service and the enduring impact your time on Council will have on the inner-west communities now and well into the future.

GLEBE ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Ms KOBİ SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I acknowledge the Glebe Assistance Partnership Program [GAPP] at St John's House, Glebe, celebrating 20 years of service to our community. The GAPP has been a lifeline in our community, providing a space where people can come to chat, share a cuppa, and receive assistance with food, budgeting, advocacy, and referrals to services elsewhere in the community. The dedication of the volunteers and staff at GAPP over the past 20 years has ensured that those facing hardship are met with compassion and practical support. The Program began under Reverend Geoff Broughton, and grew through the work of many

people, including Darcy Vaughan and Jaques Collins, Auntie Sharon Minniecon, Steven Brooks, Anne-Marie Boxall, Judith Murray, Dawn Baker, Andrew Husson, Angie Collier, Carol Young, Fiona Keirin, Grant Stewart, and John Minniecon. It continues today through the efforts of Minister Garry Lee-Linsay, manager Katrina Knight, community workers Larissa Minniecon, Deborah Young, Paul Knight, and volunteers Marion Flynn, Judith Kemp, Rosie Amis, Kelly Parkins, Eric & Carolyn Hattfield, Jackie Pitchforth, Emily Scarf, and Anne Tabuteau. Thank you all for your service to our community.

LOCAL AMBOS ON TV SHOW FOR 3 MONTHS

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 acknowledge Bankstown paramedics Fabian Perez and Sooaad Dahoud, who were recently recognised on TV for their inspirational services to the community. It is important to acknowledge the interaction between the community and paramedics to highlight the challenges in their day-to-day experiences in serving the community. These frontline workers work tirelessly to support those in need of medical care. Fabian Perez and Sooaad Dahoud are two local heroes and passionate professionals, enthusiastically coming forward, developing initiatives in helping people. Working in an area, like Bankstown where they have been providing their services to mostly speaking Arabic communities Fabian even learned some words from their language to better support the community. This also emphasises how important this is in relation to a multicultural society. It was a proud moment for the community to see these heroes on TV knowing the real-life experience that they have been engaged in, even encouraging people to come forward to join paramedics or other services that support the community. Congratulations to Fabian and Soaad of the Canterbury Bankstown Paramedics for their amazing work in helping the Bankstown community.

LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS – PANDORA JEWELLERY STORE

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 Pandora Bankstown on winning the 2024 Jewellery Store award in the Bankstown Local Business Awards. This is a well-deserved award as it shows the outstanding dedication, innovation, and service that Pandora consistently brings to our community. Pandora offers beautifully hand-finished jewellery in sterling silver, Pandora Rose, Pandora Shine and 14k gold. Designed to celebrate what you love, their collection of meaningful charms, bracelets, rings, necklaces and earrings are the perfect gift for yourself or for someone special. Founded in 1982 and headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark, Pandora is world-renowned for its hand-finished and contemporary jewellery. Pandora jewellery is made from the highest quality, ethically sourced, 14k gold, 18K gold-plated sterling silver, sterling silver and Pandora Rose metals, and every single stone is hand set by a dedicated and skilled team of craftsmen. In addition to iconic Pandora charms and bracelets, Pandora rings, earrings and necklaces are equally beautiful and versatile. Now Pandora has brought this amazing business to Bankstown and is doing an incredible job in making the Bankstown community feel special. Once again thank you and congratulations on your Local Business Award. It was much deserved.

MAYOR APPEAL TO AID CHILDREN IN PALESTINE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to acknowledge and support Mayor Bilal El-Hayek for encouraging the community to support the innocent children in Gaza. The children of Gaza are currently suffering from hunger and safety issues. This breaks my heart as no child should go through this terrible situation and environment. The Mayor's appeal to support the Children of Palestine Dinner will raise funds to assist UNICEF to deliver critical emergency supplies and humanitarian aid to thousands of children and families that are struggling during these ravages of war. UNICEF are providing food, bottled water, tents, blankets, hygiene kits and fuel to the people of Gaza. This situation on the ground in Gaza is critical and there is no end in sight to the bloodshed and destruction, with over 14,000 children killed and thousands more maimed and injured since October last year. This initiative is a good way for our Bankstown community to come together and raise funds for the critical humanitarian aid that is required as soon as possible. I wish Mayor El-Hayek and the team the best with organising this initiative to support the Palestinian children and families during this crisis.

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL 2024

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—What a vibrant and colourful musical atmosphere it was at the Cultural Connections Multicultural Festival in Wilton on the 15th of June. Organised by Wollondilly Shire Council the day was a huge success, with performances, music, dancing and food stalls transforming Hannaford Oval into a hub of cultural exchange. Organised by the Wollondilly Shire Council, the day was a resounding success, with performances, music, dancing, and food stalls creating a festive atmosphere. The centre stage was the heart of the festival, showcasing incredible performances that highlighted the rich cultural diversity of the community. MC Wendy White led the event with enthusiasm, and the Wollondilly Knights Senior AFL Club

match also happening on the day drew a large crowd to the Oval. I'd like to recognise the efforts of the hardworking team at Wollondilly Shire Council for their work orchestrating such a fantastic event. Thanks to all the wonderful performers and participants who shared their talents, making the Cultural Connections Multicultural Festival a joyous and memorable celebration of the many cultures that call Wollondilly home.

JARRAD INGRAM

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Along with year 11 students from Chevalier College, Southern Highlands Christian School, Frensham School, Bowral High School and Oxley College I attended the U Turn The Wheel event at Mittagong RSL, hosted by Moss Vale Rotary. This incredibly important road safety program educates young drivers on how to handle the challenges they face every day on our roads. The highlight of the event was the presentation by Southern Highlands resident Jarrad Ingram, who endured a major car accident as a young person. Jarred's powerful story of recovery and resilience demonstrating the importance of mindfulness while driving was not only moving, but full of invaluable advice that every young driver should hear. His dedication and determination, including years of rehabilitation, are evident in every aspect of his life from his work at Mittagong RSL and as a motivational speaker, to his role as a devoted husband and father to his young daughter. Jarrad's advice to "remain relaxed and never get behind the wheel when angry, sad, or fatigued" is a crucial reminder of the responsibility we all have on the road. Thank you, Jarrad, for sharing your journey and for being an inspiration for us all.

FATHER SEAN CULLEN'S 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Catholic priest Father Sean Cullen marked 40 years of priesthood on August 4th, a significant milestone in his lifelong service to faith and community. A resident of the Highlands for 22 years, Fr Sean has devoted himself to the Corpus Christi Parish, including St Thomas Aquinas in Bowral and St Michael's in Mittagong. The mass held on the day was packed with parishioners there to celebrate and acknowledge the role of the important community and religious leader. Fr Sean's dedication and generosity is an inspiration, and the positive impacts of his work is seen throughout the community, from his time starting out in Camden, Wollongong and Ingleburn, to the Southern Highlands that he has called home for over 2 decades. The celebratory mass was followed by a gathering at the Mittagong RSL attended by the Bishop of Wollongong, Brian Mascord and siblings of Fr Sean. His dedication is much celebrated among his parishioners who, along with his faith and humility, appreciate his dry sense of humour. Thank you Fr Sean for being a steady and reliable presence, and for all the good work that you do in the community.

ZOE KARIPIDIS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to a rising local football star player Zoe Karipidis from Woongarra for being awarded a scholarship to Perdue University, Indiana. The 19-year-old is currently positioned as a defender on the A-League Women Newcastle Jets. Zoe began her sporting journey in her junior football at Kanwal Warnervale Rovers Football Club until she was 12 years old, and then moved to one season at the Central Coast Mariners Academy, before moving to the Newcastle Jets Academy. Zoe was selected in the national schoolgirls team representing Warnervale School Mackillop Catholic College in the USA and was a part of the Under18 CommBank Matildas which where the AFF Champions in August. In 2023, Zoe was selected in the Young Matilda's squad for a training camp in Melbourne and followed by two matches with China aimed as preparation for AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup in Uzbekistan. On the Australian Youth National Team, Zoe is an all-state honouree, with 2 national titles, and was the 2023 Player of the Tournament. It is great to see Zoe achieving in her sporting career and I wish her all the best in the future.

SOPHIE GEORGAS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to Sophie Georgas from NeuroKind based in Wyong for being recognised in the Business Wyong Awards at Wyong Race Club to receive the Outstanding Employee award. Ms Georgas is a Provisional Psychologist who has been running neurodivergent specific groups for 5 years covering a range of topics, including mental health, self-expression, emotion regulation, social connection, and play skills. She is passionate about creating a safe space and inviting space for people to feel understood and validated in their unique experiences. At NeuroKind, the team are dedicated to empowering neurodivergence through a client-led, strengths-based therapeutic approach. Their neuroaffirming framework supports their clients in exploring and embracing their unique neurodivergent identity, fostering independence and self-determination. Well done to Sophie Georgas on this acknowledgement in the Business NSW Central Coast Awards.

TOUKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Toukley Neighbourhood Centre celebrated the opening of their new premises at 7 Summerside Street in Toukley with community members, groups, and services. The move has been a labour of love for people like Bronwyn Barnes, and community members like Michael Cross who has been a massive support. Matt Sonter and his daughter Inala opened the celebration with a smoking ceremony following Chris King and Bronwyn Evans sharing their words how everyone came together and contributed to creating a space for children, families, and young people to feel safe and supported. Federal Member Emma McBride and I joined volunteers and board members in cutting the red ribbon in front of the artwork Story of Toukley Neighbourhood Centre donated by Emma Peel. The artwork shows Toukley between the lake and the sea and near the trees. The centre of the painting represents the heart and soul of the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre showing helping hands and connection to community, bringing everyone together. Seeing the project from early beginnings with Bronwyn Barnes to the finished result is a great example of what a community can accomplish.

ST IVES NETBALL CLUB

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 17 August, I look forward to celebrating with the St Ives Netball Club at Canoon Road with a grant from the NSW Government's Local Sport Grant Program. The Club has been awarded \$6,515 for equipment to improve player game experience, especially those with colour vision deficiency, as well support for their low-cost uniform rental program for first-time players. This will help break down the barriers to participate in netball. I recognise St Ives Netball Club Committee, President Marc Gozzett, Vice Presidents Lisa Ashton and Melissa Costa, Secretary Bianca Achilles, Treasurer Kenneth Kok, and Registrar Devi Ramakrishnan for their tireless work and support of our community's current and future netball stars. The initiatives undertaken by St Ives Netball Club showcases the difference these grants make in our community by providing the opportunity for everyone to participate in sport. Local sport clubs are a vital part of our communities make up and I encourage everyone to support them.

ANNUAL LINDFIELD ART SHOW AND FAIR

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On 7 and 8 September 2024, I look forward to attending the annual Lindfield Art Show and Fair at the Holy Family Catholic Primary School in Lindfield. The Lindfield Art Show and Fair is an annual event that has taken place for 48 years. It was first held in 1976 when parents came together to support local fundraising efforts as the Holy Family Arts and Craft Show. The event has continued to evolve over time and, whilst the art, which highlights the work of artists from across Sydney and beyond remains the focus, the fair offers everything from books to cakes and handmade socks, jumpers or scarves. The Lindfield Art Show and Fair is organised each year by the Holy Family Parents and Friends Association, and I recognise and give thanks to President Olwyn Connolly and the dedicated team. I also recognise the wider Holy Family community – the parents, students and teachers that make our community a wonderful place to live and raise a family. I look forward to the annual Lindfield Art Show and Fair in 2024, and as we get closer to the 50-year milestone in 2026.

KILLARA GOLF CLUB: 125 YEARS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On 7 September 2024 I look forward to attending the Killara Golf Club [KGC] Founders' Day to celebrate the founding of the club 125 years ago. Since its 1899 foundation as the Lindfield Golf and Recreation Club and since becoming Killara Golf Club, KGC has become one of Sydney's most respected and popular golf clubs. I am proud to share a few historical facts. Firstly, it was the first club in Australia to own its land. Secondly, its magnificent clubhouse was built in 1933. Finally, KGC with Newcastle Golf Club has the oldest interclub competition in the world, that commenced in 1909. I recognise KGC President Stephen Healy, Vice President Karen Wood, Captain Tony Percival, Treasurer Doug Bain and Directors Patricia Biszewski, Alan Downie, Terry Little, Jo Setright, Michael Wilkins, and General Manager Josh Madden. I also recognise KGC Head Professional Greg Hohnen, whose employment with the club began as a 16-year-old in 1973. I am very proud to have Killara Golf Club as a part of our local community and celebrating 125 years!

MANLY EAGLES BASEBALL

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst)—Congratulations to the Manly Eagles Baseball U18s boys team, who this year claimed the Baseball NSW State League title. The team, finished 4 th place in the regular season, then went on to win all 3 finals games, and to be crowned the Baseball NSW State League champions. Four of the U18s players then went on to represent NSW and Australia. The club, based at Frenchs Forest, experienced further success with the mens 2 nd grade team claiming the Baseball NSW State League minor premiership, and the women's 2 nd grade making the Grand final. The on field success at the club has received a great community

following with an increase in crowd attendance at the home games with crowds of up to 400 people attending games. The club has also been building player performance over the last few years, and this has seen 11 Manly junior players committing to overseas colleges, to continue their academic and baseball careers. Best of luck with the approaching 24-25 season, I hope the club has a successful year ahead.

TEAM PEROSH MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to congratulate Team Perosh Mixed Martial Arts who is celebrating their 25th Anniversary. For a quarter of a century, Team Perosh MMA has been providing coaching and training services in Mixed Martial Arts and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu to our community. The school now welcomes classes for all skill levels ranging from beginners to competition classes, encouraging everyone to get active, have a go and pick up a love for the sport. I extend my sincerest congratulations to Founder and Head Coach Anthony Perosh on this terrific and significant milestone. To Anthony, I say that the success of your gym is a testament to your enthusiasm for the sport, your dedication to your students and your hard work, sacrifice and commitment to your business. Anthony has represented Australia at the highest levels of Mixed Martial Arts and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu including 15 wins in the UFC. His passion for MMA is evident in all aspects of Team Perosh's operations and I commend his efforts in promoting fitness. Congratulations Team Perosh on 25 years of serving our community, your level of service and commitment to sport is to be commended.

GIUSEPPINA VIRGONA

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—Today I rise to sincerely congratulate local resident Giuseppina Virgona on the occasion of her 100th birthday, which falls on Monday 19 August 2024. As Josie celebrates this significant milestone with family, friends, and loved ones, I hope her special day is filled with joy, love and laughter. I hope Josie reflects warmly on her extraordinary life and looks back fondly on a century of memories. On behalf of our local community, I sincerely wish Josie a very happy birthday. I look forward to meeting her on her birthday. I congratulate Josie on this wonderful occasion, she is an inspiration to us all. I wish Josie all the very best always.

TIMOTHY HAMILL

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge local resident Timothy Hamill who represented Australia as the Head Coach of the Aussie Sharks Water Polo Team at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The Sharks had a terrific result in Paris, placing second place in the preliminary rounds including a victory against Serbia, who were the defending Olympic Champions. The team proceeded through to the Quarter Finals, placing 8th overall, a wonderful achievement. Tim was promoted to head coach of the Aussie Sharks in October 2021 after a long and successful service in other coaching roles. Since then, Tim has led the team through some of their best years on the international stage including 11th and 10th places at the most recent World Championships. The success of the Sharks is a testament to Tim's dedication, commitment, and passion for the sport. I extend my sincerest congratulations to Tim. I want to thank him for his work, for representing our community proudly, and for guiding and leading the Sharks. I wish him all the best for the future.

SURFBOAT BREWING

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge Kim Hall and Terri Revell, the team behind the new Pittwater-based brewery, Surfboat Brewing. After the closure of the Narrabeen RSL, Kim and Terri felt driven to ensure to local community was still able to meet, connect and make memories. So, once a suitable location was secured, the pair founded Surfboat Brewing in Warriewood. The brewery is not just a vibrant venue for socialising and entertainment, but a place where our local community's traditions and heritage are continued and celebrated. From the decor and the beers on tap, to the café and restaurant, to colouring-in for kids, pool tables and darts, Surfboat Brewery has something for everyone. The beer is top notch too, formulated by head brewer – Terri's son – Simon Thomas. Simon is a primarily self-taught brewer, with heaps of experience thanks to his days making mead from honey harvested from his own bees. Thank you to Kim, Terri and the whole team for creating such a vibrant local hub for our community to enjoy. I can't wait to see Surfboat Brewing continue to grow and benefit locals.

AVALON BREWERY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge local micro-brewery legend, Brad Jacobsen. After spending sixteen years living and travelling abroad, Brad, along with his wife and kids, settled in Avalon Beach. In 2018, Brad began brewing premium craft beer, with a vision to create a truly local, communal place to gather in beautiful Avalon Beach Village. In 2023, Trust Tree's status as Avalon's local beer was made official, rebranding as Avalon Brewery. Locals love Avalon Brewery because they know who makes the brews, and they know only the essential ingredients are used, no unnecessary additives. Avalon Brewery makes beer for the people, better for the palate and better for the planet. Ever committed to our community's passions, Avalon Brewery

donates a portion of their sales to Seabin, a non-profit dedicated to keeping coastal areas like ours clean and pristine. Thank you to Brad and the team for creating such a phenomenal local hub for our community to enjoy. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Avalon Brewery is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

BRETT BABICI AND OLIVIA REES-EWEN - WHALE BEACH SLSC

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—Congratulations to Whale Beach Surf Life Saving Club on a successful 2023-23 season. Thank you to the 477 members who worked hard to foster a thriving club and keep our community safe. I particularly acknowledge incoming Club President, Brett Babici. Brett's commitment to keeping people safe in the water is exemplary, having served in various capacities at Whale Beach SLSC over the years, including as Competition Secretary, Boat Captain and on the Management Committee. Being President of one of our local surf clubs is a mammoth task, that requires countless hours of hard work and dedication. I acknowledge incoming Club Captain, Olivia Rees-Ewen. Olivia is a fantastic choice for Club Captain, her dedication over the years has been unwavering, having served Whale Beach SLSC in various capacities including as Social Media Officer, House Captain, First Aid Officer and on the Property Committee. Club Captain is a crucial role, that involves so much work organising patrols and volunteers. Brett and Olivia, thank you for putting your hand up to serve Whale Beach SLSC and our community, I wish you all the best in the year to come.

COUNCILLOR LUISE ELSING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—Thank you to Councillor Luise Elsing for her dedication to the Woollahra Community and leadership of so many important causes during her tenure on Woollahra Council. Councillor Elsing has always stood strong for her community, from fighting forced amalgamations, protecting heritage, supporting local businesses, backing the #RacismNotWelcomeHere campaign, and championing the LGBTIQA+ community, including securing Woollahra Council's support for the Marriage Equality campaign. Councillor Elsing's energy for community-led outcomes will be missed, but her work on council will have an enduring impact on the lives of the Woollahra Community now and into the future.

MARIST COLLEGE EASTWOOD ART COMPETITION WIN

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I rise to congratulate Marist College Eastwood on their recent artistic triumph, with senior student Zach Harm being awarded the People's Choice Senior Winner in the Staedtler Secondary Schools Artists Competition for 2024. Zach's work, titled "Holding Time," is a deeply personal piece that captures the generational impact of migration, symbolising the struggles and hopes of his family's journey from Fiji to Australia. Zach's achievement is a testament to his talent and dedication. It reflects the nurturing environment Marist College Eastwood provides, which continues to foster artistic excellence. Marist College Eastwood has long been a pillar of the Ryde community, consistently encouraging students to explore their creativity and contribute to the cultural fabric of our area. With 14 students currently completing their HSC in Visual Arts, the College's commitment to the arts remains strong, promising continued contributions to both the local and broader artistic communities. Please join me in congratulating Zach Harm and Marist College Eastwood for their outstanding contributions to the arts and for continuing to inspire our community.

KIDSPRESS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the extraordinary work of KidsXpress in Macquarie Park. This past Monday, I had the privilege of visiting their facility. I was both excited and grateful for the incredible dedication of their team, led by founder Margot Ward. Since opening their doors in 2006, KidsXpress has been a beacon of hope for vulnerable children in our community, providing transformative care through their innovative Expressive Therapy program. This program, which uniquely combines psychology with creative processes like art, music, play, and movement, has been internationally recognised as a best-practice early intervention method for children impacted by trauma. By harnessing the power of neuroplasticity, KidsXpress helps these children heal and grow, breaking cycles of trauma and giving them a better chance to reach their full potential. The contribution of KidsXpress to the Ryde community cannot be overstated. Their work not only supports the emotional well-being of our children but also strengthens the fabric of our community as a whole. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire KidsXpress team for their unwavering commitment to making Ryde and NSW a place where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

RYDE EISTEDDFOD HIGHLIGHTS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in celebrating the outstanding achievements at the Ryde Eisteddfod. This event, a cornerstone of our community, showcased the immense talent within Ryde. A highlight of the week was the remarkable performance by the Aurora Australis Choir, who were deservedly awarded the City of Ryde Choral Shield by Mayor Councillor Trenton Brown. The choir's all-women ensemble captivated the audience and set a high standard for choral music in our region. Additionally, Ryde Secondary

College earned the prestigious City of Ryde Edna Wilde Award, further demonstrating the exceptional calibre of our local schools. The Ryde Eisteddfod not only highlights artistic talent but also strengthens our community bonds. As the competition continues with speech, drama, orchestral performances, and school ensembles throughout the week, I encourage everyone to support these young artists. The dedication of participants and organisers alike reflects the vibrant cultural life in Ryde. It ensures that our community remains a nurturing ground for the arts. Their contributions have enriched Ryde, and I commend all involved for their hard work and creativity.

TWO DECADES OF THE BERRY MEN'S SHED

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today this Parliament recognises nearly 20 years since the foundation of the Berry Men's Shed. Opened in 2005, the Berry Men's Shed was the fifth to be established in NSW and have some 50 members. The Shed accepts any person male or female, skilled or unskilled and carry out a wide range of woodworking projects for individuals, community groups and businesses within the region with a complete range of woodworking equipment and tools. This Parliament acknowledges the most recent Life Members, Peter Johnstone, John Hudson and Tom Darby, John Brentnall, Chairman of the Berry Uniting Church, and Steve Ford, President of the Berry Men's Shed. I acknowledge the work carried out by other Shed Members in providing a service to the Berry community. The Shed continues to grow with new members joining and Members continue to undertake numerous jobs for customers as well as items for sale with the proceeds of which go towards a Scholarship Programme for local high schools in Nowra. Congratulations, Berry Men's Shed and thank you for your contributions to the Berry and Shoalhaven Community.

BERRY CAMELLIA AND FLORAL SHOW

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today this Parliament recognises the Berry Camellia and Floral Show who recently celebrated its sixtieth anniversary, a milestone that brought together both seasoned and novice entrants to this year's show. Drawing participants and visitors from Berry and Sydney, this year's showcased an impressive array of camellias and floral displays, reinforcing the strong camaraderie among the members and the broader community. In addition to the show, I acknowledge the Berry and District Garden Club who have made a huge effort in George Street Park to maintain and enhance this beloved green space, a beautiful retreat for locals and visitors and a testament to the Club's commitment to community beautification as the Club gears up for the Garden Festival in October. The festival is not only a celebration of horticulture but a crucial fundraiser with proceeds supporting charities in the Berry district and beautification projects in Berry. This Club is an absolute asset to the Community and I thank Stephen Buzacott, President, and also give a shout out to this month's Guest Speaker, Michelle Collinson, owner, the Shady Fig Flower Shop.

SHOALHAVEN WATER EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—The Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the ongoing excellence of Shoalhaven Water who recently undertook testing of sources of water for per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] in raw and drinking water and news the Shoalhaven community continues to enjoy safe and reliable potable (drinking) water. PFAS, in the Shoalhaven River (Bamarang Dam), Porters Creek Dam and Kangaroo Valley (Bendeela Pondage), revealed 'nil detectable' PFAS at all locations and similarly, tap water at Nowra, Milton and Kangaroo Valley all produced 'nil detectable' results for PFAS. I acknowledge Executive Manager, Rob Horner, and the hard work of Shoalhaven Water team who take the risk of PFAS contamination extremely seriously and are committed to continued testing and reporting results back to the community. Drinking water in the Shoalhaven is amongst the best tasting in NSW and the ACT, and Shoalhaven Water have a reputation for excellence, having taken out the top accolade in 2019 and 2022. We are lucky to have secure and pristine water sources in the Shoalhaven and an excellent team managing this asset. I acknowledge Shoalhaven Water's recent Open Day at the Nowra Wastewater Treatment Plant and Wastewater Operations Manager, Keira Whitford.

TONY KAY WAVERLEY COUNCIL

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to recognise Councillor Tony Kay for his incredible service to Waverley Council. Tony was first elected to Waverley Council in 2004, is former Chair of the Development Control, Traffic, and Environmental committees, and was Deputy Mayor for 5 years from 2012. Tony's achievements include helping return council to financial sustainability, pursuing better traffic and parking solutions for residents, supporting infrastructure renewal in our streets and parks, ensuring local village upgrades, and improving the effectiveness of council. Tony has demonstrated his leadership credentials, with his experience and results oriented commitment, proving to residents that even contentious issues can be resolved fairly and expediently with his assistance. Tony 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.

36TH JALSA SALANA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I was honored to speak at the 36th Jalsa Salana Annual Convention along with my fellow parliamentarians and representatives from across the country. It was a pleasure to address Australia's oldest and largest Muslim convention, with their message of peace salient in this time of crisis and turmoil. The convention had a simple theme: "Justice is the essence of establishing peace." Against the backdrop of widespread violence in our world, the Ahmadiyya Community continues to focus on the importance of attaining peace in our society and that justice is a key part of this. They are a beacon of peace in these trying times, as they grasp the importance of understanding and appreciation of each other's differences and similarities. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has a presence in 212 countries. This includes their humanitarian work via Humanity First Australia and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association. Humanity First assists our most vulnerable with food donations in Parramatta and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association has an active youth chapter in Parramatta thus demonstrating the many ways those involved in the support of our broader community. Thank you to the National President Imam I.H Kauser for your warm welcome

COMMUNITY HUBS AUSTRALIA

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I would like to congratulate Community Hubs Australia on their positive year so far with a very successful mid-year update. It's been a big six months for hubs, helping participants, many who are women with pre-school age children, to make vital connection points to early childhood education and settlement support while providing information that bridges the service gaps of local communities in need. Through the 26 hubs in NSW, they have engaged with 2,328 families, run 580 early childhood activities, and partnered with 120 local organizations to facilitate programs, offer counselling and support, and facilitated many other community activities. Parramatta West and Rydalmere Public Schools host our local community hubs and they do amazing work helping with Basic English classes and helping participants forge friendships and foster personal growth. These hubs are life-changing, creating lifelong connections for community members. Congratulations to CEO Bec Kotow.

ZEN TEA LOUNGE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Friday 2nd August, I was delighted to meet with volunteers and supporters from the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation and present them with a Community Building Partnership grant. The Zen Tea Lounge Foundation is a grassroots charity based in Smithfield, in our local Prospect Electorate. They operate numerous workshops and provide services tailored especially for marginalised individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse and disadvantaged communities. They empower those in our Western Sydney community who have been impacted by domestic violence, abuse and isolation. This year, Zen Tea Lounge successfully applied for a Community Building Partnership grant of \$59,064 to fund a Mobile Community Pantry bus, that will serve as a lifeline for disadvantaged communities, while also creating employment opportunities for survivors of domestic violence and individuals with disabilities. It was inspiring to join the Zen Tea Lounge family to celebrate their successful application, which will help them achieve their mission of supporting survivors and their families, building self-respect and restoring dignity in their lives. My thanks go out to Amy Nguyen, Founder, and all team members and volunteers at Zen Tea Lounge on serving as a wonderful beacon of hope for our local Prospect community.

SAGE COMMUNITY SERVICES – THE COTTAGE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to SAGE Community Services for the successful launch of their new building, The Cottage, on 11TH July 2024, Pendle Hill. Formerly operating as Parramatta/Holroyd Family Support, SAGE Community Services has responded to the needs of our Western Sydney community for over 35 years. Akin to their new name, SAGE provides a sense of calm to their clients, whilst celebrating the wisdom and diversity of our community. SAGE offers a safe haven, where survivors of domestic and family abuse can seek refuge, counselling, legal services and receive emotional and practical support to rebuild their lives. A warm and welcoming hub, The Cottage offers an accessible child and family therapeutic space, and purpose-built facilities including a childcare, kitchen, and IT area. By providing a free and meaningful space to access these essentials, SAGE are helping empower survivors to regain their agency. It was fantastic to welcome The Hon. Jodie Harrison, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to Prospect, to open The Cottage. I thank Executive Officer, Linda Marsonet and the dedicated team members and volunteers at SAGE Community Services for your ongoing compassion and care for our community.

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY LABOR CLUB

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday 16th July, I was pleased to join students and volunteers from the Western Sydney University Labor Club at the WSU Spring Fair, WSU Parramatta campus.

The WSU Labor Club is a great way for students of all disciplines to get together, discuss politics, work in student-led campaigns, and meet like-minded people. The club hosts fortnightly coffee caucus' where members get together to discuss the most recent political updates or get support from students studying a similar degree. Passionate about delivering for students, the Club includes great representation of students from our local Electorate of Prospect and across Western Sydney who study at WSU. The Club hosts a range of monthly events, from Politics in the Pub and Politics and Pool sessions, to special keynote speakers, movie screenings and even free dinners, helping Club members stay connected and well fed during semester. It provides a space where members can come together, take a break from their studies and spend some time with friends. My thanks go out to Pooja Zinzuwadia, President, Laine Fox, Vice President, and all students from WSU Labor Club for a great time at the WSU Spring Fair.

PORT STEPHENS AND AFFILIATED PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion)—The spirit of volunteering in Port Stephens is strong. An organisation that exemplifies that spirit is the Port Stephens and Affiliated Park Residents Association. The Association advocates for the rights of residents living in residential parks in Port Stephens. It's been led for many years now by President Trevor Sullivan alongside an executive of trusted warriors all well versed in the legislation and some of the opportunistic acts of unscrupulous park owners. For many years now, I've attended the Association's AGM to update them on any changes and to thank them for their service. Unfortunately, this year's AGM was the last for two longstanding, hardworking, caring committee members, Anne and Phillip Haslem. Anne and Phillip have been on the committee for over 17 years as Secretary and Treasurer. For almost 2 decades they've fought for the rights of others, giving security and peace of mind to many. On behalf of the NSW Government, I want to thank Anne and Phillip for their sacrifice and service. Personally, I thank them for their wise counsel and kindness, and wish them both a peaceful retirement from their volunteering.

CENTRAL COAST REBELS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—What a phenomenal achievement! A big shout out to the U14W1 Central Coast Rebels for their outstanding victory in the recent NSW Junior Premier League! Defeating Penrith 42-40 in such a close, nail-biting match truly showcases the grit, determination, and skill of this incredible team. This victory didn't just happen overnight. It is the result of months of dedication, hard work, and countless hours of practice. To the coaches, managers, and parents—your support and guidance have been invaluable in shaping these talented young athletes. Your commitment is as much a part of this win as every point scored on that court. A special congratulations goes to Molly Smith, who was named MVP of the match! Molly you have shown what it means to rise to the occasion when it matters most. To the entire Central Coast Rebels team, you've made us all proud. You've demonstrated not only your athleticism but also the power of teamwork and perseverance. Here's to many more victories in the future! Congratulations, Rebels!

CROOKWELL HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the Crookwell Hospital Auxiliary for their tireless dedication and support of the hospital. The members of the Crookwell Hospital Auxiliary have consistently organised successful fundraising events, including the Trivia Night in October 2023, a Bridal Parade Through the Ages in June, as well as popular street stalls and High Tea. Additionally, they have placed money boxes throughout local businesses to further support their efforts. Auxiliary President Mr. Greg Long proudly highlights the significant contributions made possible through the Auxiliary's efforts, such as the creation of the Serenity Garden, the acquisition of intravenous stands, powerlift recliner chairs, and monitoring screens. The Auxiliary is also mindful of the needs of patients during annual events like Christmas, providing small gifts on Christmas Eve, and collaborating with the Night Branch of the CWA to create care packages for patients. The ongoing commitment to raising funds for Crookwell Hospital and its patients is truly commendable. Their support extends beyond the hospital, fostering collaboration with local businesses and the community at large. I extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Long and all members of the Crookwell Hospital Auxiliary for their unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions to the community.

LILAC CITY BRASS BAND

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Mr. Andy Yule and the Lilac City Brass Band. With a deep-seated passion for music and a background from the Birmingham Conservatoire of Music, Mr. Yule has played a pivotal role in establishing community and school bands both across NSW and in the UK. His dedication has brought immense joy to countless musicians and enriched the broader community. Since relocating to Bungonia in 2023, Mr. Yule has been enthusiastic to reviving a long-standing tradition of civic bands in Goulburn, a tradition that dates back to the 1870s and 1880s. As a musical director proficient in euphonium, trombone, and tuba, he has successfully founded the Lilac City Brass Band in Goulburn Mulwaree.

Mr. Yule envisions the band performing at civic occasions in Belmore Park, further enriching local cultural life. The Lilac City Brass Band has grown to over fifteen members, reflecting a wonderful response and great support from individuals and groups within the community. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Yule for his passion in revitalising the civic band tradition in the Goulburn region and commend the success of the Lilac City Brass Band to date.

MR IAN MCMURDO

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognize Mr. Ian McMurdo. In 2010, Mr. McMurdo faced a major health challenge when he was diagnosed with stomach and oesophageal cancer. Throughout his treatment and appointments in Sydney, he received invaluable support from the State Branch of CanAssist. Grateful for this support, Mr. McMurdo established the Goulburn Branch of CanAssist in 2011. His efforts were met with phenomenal community support through fundraising activities and sponsorships. Mr. McMurdo's significant contributions were recognized in 2013 when he received Goulburn's Australia Day Citizen Award. A humble individual, he tirelessly raised funds and organised events, including the annual Goulburn Car and Motorcycle Show, which he started in 2015. With a keen interest in cars, Mr. McMurdo worked at Repco and Parlett's Garage, and he also restored his own VW. His passion for vehicles was just one aspect of his multifaceted contributions to our community. It is with great sincerity that I pay my respects to Mr. McMurdo, who passed away in July. His altruistic nature was an incredible gift, touching the lives of many in our community. Vale, Mr. Ian McMurdo. Your legacy of kindness and community spirit will always be remembered.

TERRIGAL SLSC

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—What an incredible moment of pride for the Terrigal Surf Lifesaving Club! We are bursting with excitement as we celebrate the remarkable achievements of our talented members who competed at the 2024 Australian Pool Rescue Championships. A special congratulations to Jett Green, Richard Green, Olivia Edwards, and Skye Hackshall for representing NSW on the national stage. Your hard work, dedication, and passion for lifeguarding and competition truly shine through. You've demonstrated the skills and teamwork that make our club so special, and we couldn't be prouder of your performance. We also want to recognize the outstanding success of Paul Lemmon, who set a new world record in the Super Lifesaver event! Paul, your incredible dedication and skill have pushed the boundaries of what's possible. Your achievement is an inspiration to us all. Let's not forget Troy and Rob, who also brought home an impressive haul of medals, along with their exceptional individual and team results. The Masters team's performance was nothing short of extraordinary. To all our Terrigal competitors, well done! Your commitment and excellence have made our club proud. Here's to many more achievements in the future! Congratulations to everyone!

COVE BAR AND GRILL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Cove Bar and Grill at Kareela for winning the Most Inclusive Employer at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Cove Bar and Grill is a community favourite located inside the Sharks at Kareela. The Cove Bar and Grill is renowned for its farm to plate style, sourcing ingredients as local and organic as possible. However, this award is about more than the cuisine and its incredible that the home of our local football club is so supportive of diversity in our local community through Cove Bar and Grill. This would not have been possible without the leadership of the team behind Cove Bar and Grill. I commend Owner and Director Gina Louloudakis, Head Chef Anita Lisson and Sharks at Kareela General Manager Justin Coulton for working to ensure that such a popular local establishment is also one of our most inclusive. Businesses like the Cove Bar and Grill at Kareela are an important part of our local community as a key provider of goods, services, and jobs. I again congratulate the team at Cove Bar and Grill on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards.

KIRRAWEE FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Kirrawee Family Medical Practice for winning the Most Outstanding Professional Medical Services category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Kirrawee Family Medical Practice is a family friendly General Practice with a mission to provide modern, quality evidence-based care. Since its establishment, Kirrawee Family Medical Practice has been at the heart of our local community with a keen focus on preventative health. This is evident not only in the way the team engages in consultations, but also through their social media updates which aim to keep their patients fit and well. I acknowledge the hardworking general practitioners at Kirrawee Family Medical Practice. I recognise small business owner and Chair of RACGP NSW & ACT Rebekah Hoffman and co-owner Dr Annalyse Crane, as well as doctors Ryan Barton, Georgia McMahon, Kate O'Neill, Suzette Grimm, Greta Sears, Jessica Jellins, Isabella Sukkar, Zoe Burns, Melanie Mapleson, Dar Gemma Urch, Dr Christopher Trimms, Sam Watson, Winne Chen, Amy-Roses McCorkindale, Jed Cameron, Kiran Jacob, Sasha Cooper, Ha Thanh Mun for their efforts. I again

congratulate the team at Kirrawee Family Medical Practice on their success at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards.

ASHTON MITCHELL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Ashton Mitchell of Oyster Bay on his recent success as a part of Australia's 2024 IberCup team in Portugal. The IberCup is one the world's largest International Youth Football competitions with over 7,000 players from clubs across 43 countries coming together to compete in the prestigious tournament. Ashton played as a midfielder for the Under 11 Australian Select Team B made up of some of the best young football players in the nation. The Under 11 Australia Team B successfully made it through to the playoffs, after losing just a single preliminary game. They went on to beat Canada in the quarter finals and went on to beat Brazil in the semifinals. Ashton scored three goals across the competition, including one in the must win final against Portugal which contributed to the team's 3 to 2 win and becoming Silver Champions of the competition. Stories like Ashton's are shining examples of the impact local community sport can have on young people's lives. I congratulate Ashton on his success at the 2024 IberCup in Portugal and extend my best wishes for the future.
