

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 24 September 2024

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Members

MEMBER FOR BEGA

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Bega a happy birthday. The member for Blue Mountains has been tasked with making it a very special day for him.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the Chamber a guest of the member for Blacktown, Stephen Bali Jr. I wonder whether he will follow in his father's footsteps, which is generally not a bad place to be as his father is well respected in this Chamber. I also welcome another guest of the member for Blacktown, Jolina Soliven. I welcome guests of the member for Prospect, new school captains from Greystanes High School Masinas, Amalija, Ezel and Dylan. I also welcome students from Tempe High School, who are participating in the parliamentary education program. I welcome everybody to the Chamber.

I met a number of visitors prior to the sitting today. I cannot welcome everybody specifically, but I give a special shout-out to Elaine Foulsham, who is sitting up in the bleachers. Members can see her wonderful artworks on display in the Fountain Court at the moment. It was lovely to meet her. She is being hosted at Parliament today by the member for Castle Hill. I also acknowledge attendees of the Introduction to the Legislative Assembly Public Sector Seminar, who are watching question time from the public gallery. I met them this morning. I hope that it has been a valuable and enjoyable experience for them—and hopefully they will still feel that way after question time. I also acknowledge a guest of the member for Leppington, Saurabh Jolly.

Bills

GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE AMENDMENT (INTEGRITY AGENCIES) BILL 2024

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Assent

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will answer questions today in the absence of the Attorney General; and the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport. The Minister for Transport will answer questions this week in the absence of the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

Question Time

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Who should be apologising to patients for today's mass strikes—him or the nurses?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I call the Minister for Health. Due to the nature of the question, some latitude will be extended to the Minister in giving his answer.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:08): For the benefit of those in the gallery, the Dixers usually come from members on this side of the Chamber, not the other side. We will get two in a row. I talk about today's industrial action and make it clear why it has occurred. For 12 years, under the former Coalition Government, there was a wages cap. That is a fact. The former finance Minister talked the other day about how proud he was of the wages cap and the fact that workers got 0 per cent during COVID. When there is a wages cap in one State and other jurisdictions around the country do not have a wages cap, the wages in those other jurisdictions increase far greater and faster than in the State with a cap. That is basic year 7 compounding.

The SPEAKER: The member for Badgerys Creek will come to order. The member will be called to order if she continues to interject.

Mr RYAN PARK: This Government has done a number of things in relation to investment in nurses. At the last election, the Nurses and Midwives' Association said very clearly that its big ask was around ratios. It was a 20-year-long campaign. This is the first Government in the State's history to embark on that reform. It comes at an investment of over \$1 billion—

Mr Mark Speakman: Mr Speaker—

Mr RYAN PARK: —and it will see well over 2,000 additional nurses and midwives come into the system.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. I understand the Leader of the Opposition might be rising on a point of order, even though he has not done so in the prescribed manner.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. Not once has the Minister expressed any empathy for patients. Not once has he uttered the word "patients".

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. He will resume his seat.

Mr RYAN PARK: I have an enormous amount of empathy for patients. This morning I rang the wife of a man who previously had brain cancer and who today had lung cancer surgery cancelled. Those opposite should not come into this House ever again saying that I do not care about patients. [*Time expired.*]

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:11): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier outline how the Minns Labor Government is creating stronger protections for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:12): That is an important question from the member for Coogee. They are confronting statistics to look at. Looking at the historic rate of the prevalence of domestic violence in our community, unfortunately there has been an increase in that rate in New South Wales. It is 3.4 per cent above the national average of just 3 per cent. In Victoria, the prevalence in the community is 2.1 per cent, which represents a 45 per cent reduction in the rates of domestic violence in that State. They are confronting statistics. I ask for the House's indulgence as I speak to them. We need to understand the context and the seriousness of the challenge that we face.

Sixty-three women have been victims of domestic violence related murder over the past five years. Fifteen women were victims of domestic violence related murder in the 12 months to June 2024, which is up from 13 the previous years. I am very aware, when repeating those statistics, that they do not give full gravity or meaning to the lives and the families of the women who have been lost as a result of those horrific crimes. I am pleased to say that the House, through legislation and the Government's initiatives, has taken action. It has reversed the onus for those facing serious domestic violence charges who are seeking bail in the community. Courts must now specifically consider the behaviour that they would regard as "red flags" when deciding on bail or remand for a serious offender or, in fact, any offender in the criminal justice system.

The Government has expanded the number of categories where prosecutors can challenge a bail decision in the New South Wales Supreme Court and has introduced electronic monitoring for those facing serious domestic violence offences that do get bail. Finally, the Government is making changes to bail courts across New South Wales to ensure that judges and magistrates, not registrars, make decisions about who gets bail in those circumstances. They are comprehensive and necessary changes, but it does not end there. The New South Wales Government allocated over \$5 billion in the last budget for more than 8,000 social housing dwellings across the State to lift the amount of public housing in the State. Fifty per cent of those dwellings will be for victim-survivors of domestic violence. I announce further changes for New South Wales in relation to the

prevalence of domestic violence in the community and the Government's actions in response to it. [*Extension of time*]

There will be new offences for repeated and serious breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders. Currently, offences for the breach of an ADVO carry a maximum of two years imprisonment or a \$5,500 fine. The Government will increase that to three years imprisonment or an \$11,000 fine. Persistent breach offences will apply where a person knowingly contravenes the apprehended violence order three or more times within a 28-day period. That goes some way, but not all the way, to addressing a persistent criticism of the AVO register in New South Wales—which is that it is a piece of paper that can be easily ignored by the person who is the subject of it. The Government is also introducing serious domestic abuse prevention orders, which will provide a positive obligation for an individual who is charged or is facing charges of domestic violence. That may be that they need to register if they are on a dating website or have entered into a new relationship. Orders can apply for up to five years, and there is a five-year penalty or \$33,000 fine for breaches.

Finally, and this is particularly important given the changing nature of technology in the community, the Government is updating the definition of "stalking" to include people using GPS trackers to find former partners or intimate partners who were the subject of abuse or violence at the hands of an intimate partner. We need to make change. There is a recognition in New South Wales that the rate of domestic violence is too high, too prevalent and too destructive within the community. The Government is hopeful that those changes and others like them will save lives in the community.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (12:17): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. How many times in the past three months has the Premier joined the Minister when negotiating with the Nurses and Midwives' Association?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:17): The Premier sits two seats up from me in this place. Members opposite are entitled to ask him a question. I assure the people of New South Wales that they are very fortunate to have a Premier who cares deeply about essential workers. That is why last year he and the Treasurer removed the wages cap—a cap that those opposite implemented and quite clearly, judging by comments made during the budget estimates period, will be bringing back. As a result of the Premier's and the Treasurer's commitment to essential workers, those workers got the largest pay increase in over a decade.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: It goes to direct relevance. The question was very short. The question was: How many times in the past three months has the Premier joined the Minister when negotiating with the association?

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I recognise that the Minister is making some general comments but he will be directly relevant to the question.

Mr RYAN PARK: In terms of my negotiations with the union, let me be clear on a couple of things.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: One minute members opposite say that we should not negotiate at all or do a deal because they cannot stand unions and then the next minute they come into the Chamber on a day of industrial action and ask, "Where's the deal?" I do not know. Which one do we pick?

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The Premier will come to order. The member for Dubbo will come to order.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order relates to direct relevance. The Minister is flouting your ruling, Mr Speaker. How many times has the Minister met with the association and the Premier in the past three months?

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I remind the Minister that he must be directly relevant to the question.

Mr RYAN PARK: I will be clear. We are negotiating regularly with the Nurses and Midwives' Association. I will not put up with the crocodile tears of members opposite making out as if they support working men and women—

Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Minister—

Mr RYAN PARK: —when they are hell-bent on bringing back the wages cap that caused the suppression of wages for over a decade.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will heed the Presiding Officer. The member for Drummoyne sought the call before the end of the answer.

Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua: I seek an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: To save time, I will not grant an extension.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:20): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on how the new curriculum, delivered by the Minns Labor Government, will ensure that New South Wales students receive the best possible education?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:21): I thank the member for Bega for that very important question and wish him a happy birthday. I am happy to report to him that, in his electorate of Bega, teacher vacancies at the beginning of term 3 were down 21 per cent. That is a good birthday present for the member for Bega. In the gallery I acknowledge students from Tempe, Greystanes and Engadine. I was at Engadine High School recently to open the new school hall. I hope the students are loving it. It took a while to be built under the previous Government, so I was happy to open it recently. The students from Engadine are cheering in the gallery. They can come to the Chamber every week.

I am pleased to report to the House where the Government is up to on significant curriculum reform for the students of New South Wales. It is important. Making sure that teachers have an expert evidence-based curriculum to deliver to students is critical to improving student outcomes, as well as getting a teacher in every classroom, which we have been talking about ad nauseam for years. The success of that curriculum depends on the experts driving its delivery. I give credit to the former Government for inquiring into the previous curriculum and reforming it. The previous Government announced curriculum reform but, like everything it did in education, totally stuffed up its delivery.

It is no mean feat to get public sector education advocates as well as Catholic and independent education advocates all on the same page for something, but they all agreed that the delivery timeline under the previous Government was too fast. We slowed it down so that teachers can get used to and familiarised with the new curriculum before it is rolled out in 2027. I remind the House—and particularly the former Minister, who keeps getting quite confused about this—that schools can choose to roll out the new curriculum before 2027. I am happy to say that, in the past few months, we have released 24 new syllabuses, from K to year 6, years 7 to 10 and years 11 and 12. The new syllabuses contain clear and explicit content. They are rich in knowledge and content, and are evidence based, age appropriate and coherent. They are designed to be taught explicitly in classrooms so that we can improve the educational outcomes for our children. *[Extension of time]*

As a result of these curriculums, every student will receive the world-class education that they deserve because every teacher will now finally be armed with consistent and clear syllabuses so that children have a clear understanding of the learning that they are entitled to and that they should be participating in through these clear, coherent, concise and explicit knowledge-rich syllabuses. These syllabuses will be taught in every classroom, mandated from 2027. As I said, teachers and schools can start from next year. We have released PDHPE, creative arts, human society and its environment [HSIE], and science and technology. Maths and English are already in classrooms. I have spoken a lot about this and I have seen it in classrooms—it is working amazingly well. The way we are teaching maths and English now is based on the science of how our young people learn, including explicit teaching and phonics education for reading. It works. In the years ahead, we will see that start to make a difference in outcomes for our kids and their future achievements.

For HSIE there will be mandatory civics and citizenship content to make sure that, for instance, an 11-year-old will know how to submit a nomination on time. That is a good outcome from the syllabus. For the first time in history there will be mandatory teaching of the experience of Indigenous Australians during colonisation and mandatory teaching of the Holocaust. The Jewish Board of Deputies said that that was a landmark moment in the syllabus, and I am proud that we have achieved it. The new world-class curriculum will ensure that teachers are supported to provide the best education for our young people, with explicit content that is knowledge rich. I cannot wait to see it rolled out in every classroom and for our students to reap the benefits.

CENTRAL WEST WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:26): My question is directed to the Premier. Floods devastated towns across the Central West in 2022, causing unprecedented damage. We are grateful for the support that the Premier's Government has provided thus far; however, critical water assets across the Central West were destroyed and remain ineligible for current funding, leaving affected councils to foot the bill to the tune of tens of millions of dollars. The previous Government committed \$145 million in funding to repair critical water assets damaged in the Northern Rivers floods. Will the Premier consider equity of critical water asset funding for the flood-impacted councils in the Central West?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:27): I thank the member for his question. It is a serious question, and a matter that we are looking at very closely. Members would be aware that, along with the Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, the member for Lismore, the Government committed, with the Commonwealth Government, \$100 million in repair funding and reconstruction works for the Central West. That funding was critically important. It went towards building critical infrastructure like roads as well as retrofitting houses, ensuring that the council could work with the New South Wales Government to learn the lessons from the Northern Rivers floods so that towns like Cabonne could be up on their feet sooner.

The member has raised this matter with me previously. It may be little understood but, under the agreement that the State has struck with the Commonwealth, rateable assets—infrastructure that the local council can earn a return on, particularly infrastructure like water infrastructure—are not eligible under the Federal-State arrangements for money for reconstruction works. That seems to me to be ridiculous, primarily because small regional councils are never going to be able to generate enough revenue to cover the costs of building that up-front capital and are going to need help.

The Commonwealth Government's approach, in particular to major natural disasters in North Queensland, was to create the Commonwealth \$10 billion flood and cyclone reinsurance pool because councils, businesses and residents were not able to access insurance, particularly in tropical Queensland. Increasingly, that is drifting its way down the Australian coast into New South Wales, and is becoming a major issue. The deeper pockets of the Commonwealth Government, and the New South Wales Government looking closely at the particular issue, is important at the moment when we consider how those towns will not be able to grow or cope with the existing population without that critical water infrastructure.

I will take the question on notice and report back to the member. In effect, this is critical infrastructure that has fallen through the gap. This is part of us learning from natural disasters. This House, this Government and future governments will have to grapple with major challenges that come from more frequent and devastating natural disasters in the years ahead, and this is one policy area we will have to address. I also give a big shout-out to students from Engadine High School, who are in the gallery. This morning I got a text message on the family WhatsApp. My brother-in-law, Mr Carlon, teaches at Engadine. I give a big shout-out to Mr Carlon. Hopefully I have embarrassed him!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:30): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services in his capacity representing the Minister for Energy. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is making it easier for households and businesses to access energy-saving technologies like solar, batteries and energy efficiency upgrades that will help reduce energy bills and ease the cost-of-living pressures?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:31): I thank the member for Auburn, whose community will very much benefit from this initiative. On behalf of the Minister for Energy, I am pleased to update the House on the launch of the Government's new NSW Consumer Energy Strategy, powering people and communities. This strategy lays out our plan to supercharge the energy transition by helping households and small businesses in a number of ways, including reducing their power bills, increasing energy efficiency and, at the same time, contributing to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. We are putting households and small businesses at the centre of this work, and we are backing it with a \$290 million investment.

Energy bills are one of the largest costs for households. Particularly these days, when people are struggling with the cost of living, the value that this important program brings to people cannot be underestimated. Communities are excited by this transition. Indeed, Australian households are the world's best in terms of taking up rooftop solar. This plan also builds on that success. We are looking at introducing ways of enabling further technologies such as using heat pump water systems, batteries and electric vehicles, as well as energy efficiency measures. Energy efficiency means that people do not need to use as much energy, and therefore they do not need

to pay as much for energy. It also helps the grid at large. If we can have more solar systems on rooftops that feed into the grid, people will be less reliant on grids. Ultimately it will mean we do not have to build additional infrastructure, which will cost money, because that will be paid.

The comprehensive plan lays out over 50 different actions and covers everything from setting the first targets across Australia for solar and batteries, as well as incentivising ways to make it cheaper for everyone access those technologies. The strategy takes those great technologies to the next step, which is about making them accessible for every single person so that it is not something that only some can afford. People who rely the most on cost-saving efficiencies are often the ones who have not had the opportunity to resource the technology. This Government has a strong sense of social consciousness. It does so much in addressing many areas of need. We have announced a \$240 million Home Energy Saver program and we are collaborating with stakeholders to design the program because we want their input to get it done right. We have also announced subsidies of \$3,000 for home batteries. *[Extension of time]*

These initiatives are all about making sure that we set the vision for the framework. We are also working with community groups to make sure that we can get them onboard to undertake an education program to support people. I have previously said that the former Government laid out a plan for utility scale renewables, and we have given members opposite that recognition. Indeed, there was bipartisan support for some amendments when the renewable energy zones were introduced. We need to keep building on that plan to ensure that our households and small businesses can benefit. That means support for apartment residents to access solar, subsidies for batteries, support for social housing residents and funding for measures like electrical inspections. That is what is in the strategy.

What do we see from the Coalition? The Federal Coalition has a bold plan to increase energy by using the most expensive form: nuclear. Yesterday there was a flurry of excitement because apparently we were going to get more detail about the reactors being built in Lithgow and the Hunter Valley. I do not know if the local members have any more information, but we certainly would like a bit more from Peter Dutton. He still will not tell us how much it will cost. That is probably because it will shatter the last bit of economic credibility that the Coalition may have. We have an independent report that suggests that the hike in bills will be \$665. Judging by the reactions of members opposite, they are obviously not supporting renewables in that form. They want to see the nuclear part. I refer to an old colleague of ours, Matt Kean, who said, "We can't afford to wait 20 years. It will be hugely expensive for taxpayers, and it will also be hugely expensive for electricity consumers." I like what he said; I think he was bang on the money. The New South Wales Government has an ambitious vision for our energy transition, and our Consumer Energy Strategy lays out the plan, in contrast to the magic pudding that is being proposed by the Federal Coalition.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:36): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier finally front up and talk today to the nurses protesting outside?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Canterbury initiated an exchange to which Opposition members responded as expected. The question is clear. I am confident that the Premier is capable of answering it.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:37): The Government does not have an agreement with the Nurses and Midwives' Association.

[A Government member interjected.]

We do not. It is asking for 15 per cent in one year. The New South Wales Government said, "We do not have the budget that would reach that. It would cost over \$3 billion over the forward estimates." The day after we sign that agreement, I would fully expect police, paramedics, corrections officers and teachers would say, "We want the same deal." I can understand that. We are all in agreement that—and this is fundamental across the New South Wales economy—because the wages cap was in place for 12 years, the previous Government implemented a deliberate policy of wage suppression. The Nurses and Midwives' Association, for understandable reasons, has said to the Government, "We want you to make that up in a single year." We cannot do it. We are not in a position to do it. That does not mean there is nothing on the table. It means that we have worked with the Nurses and Midwives' Association—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Mr Speaker, can you stop the clock?

The SPEAKER: I will not be directed to stop the clock. The Premier will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

Mr Mark Speakman: It is a deliberate attempt to make you relevant.

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order?

Mr Mark Speakman: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. It is a specific question: Will the Premier look the nurses outside in the eye and tell them what is going on?

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Premier will continue his answer.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: This is a deliberate attempt to wind down the clock to reduce the ability of the Government to explain its point of view. Members opposite do it all the time. I want to make it clear that the truth of the matter is the previous Government had a wages policy in place in New South Wales for 12 years that included a wages cap. During the pandemic, it decided that, rather than a 2.5 per cent wage deal, the number would be a 0 per cent increase. Now nurses say, "We want you to make that up because that is a very serious situation for us", and we have said that we need to be in a position to work as the Government—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Mark Speakman: It is the same point of order, which I understand you have not ruled on, Mr Speaker. My point of order relates to direct relevance. Will the Premier go out and address the nurses who are protesting?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has been generally in accord with the question. It is almost impossible for me to rule on direct relevance due to the nature of the question. I do not uphold the point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Before I run out of time, I make the point that, over the past 18 months when the Government has sat down with unions and struck agreements, we have been deliberately smashed by the Opposition.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: They have said, "How dare you sit down and lift the wages cap?" In fact, the shadow Minister for Health said, "They're going to make a major impact on your life. It is because of the choices that they made—the choices they made to get rid of the public sector wages cap." That is from the shadow Minister for Health: Bring back the wages cap. So, yes, we will have to take criticism from New South Wales nurses. We accept that. But the idea that those opposite can march into the Chamber and criticise the Government is ridiculous.

The SPEAKER: The member for Goulburn will remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Goulburn left the Chamber at 12:40.]

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

NSW POLICE FORCE BLULINK PLATFORM

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:40): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister advise the House on how the NSW Police Force's cutting-edge BluLink technology is helping keep our community safe?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:41): I thank the member for The Entrance for his question. As members would know, PoliceLink is based at Tuggerah in the member's electorate. I know that he has been there on a number of occasions. This new technology will make such a difference to those workers. They are forever grateful. I thank the member for The Entrance for being such a wonderful local member for them in particular. BluLink is a breakthrough in New South Wales police emergency responses. It is a platform that is radically strengthening the capabilities of our police. So often community members are the eyes and ears of our first responders. This cutting-edge technology gives police instant access to unfolding emergencies, putting dispatchers at the centre of an incident as it happens and allowing police to respond more quickly and efficiently than ever before.

I was thrilled to stand next to Assistant Commissioner Stacey Maloney for the official statewide launch of BluLink last month. For those who are not familiar with the technology, I will run them through it. When someone calls 000, the 000 dispatchers can send a link directly to their phone to request information. That information can

include GPS coordinates to pinpoint the exact location of the caller; livestream footage of an unfolding emergency; the capability to upload photos and videos both at the time of the event and after it, which can be used to help police triage an incident and collect evidence; a text message tool which can be used in lieu of voice calls in certain situations, for instance, when talking out loud might be quite risky; and the capability for police to gather live witness statements.

That information allows police to know exactly what they are dealing with in real time. It is invaluable in triaging incidents and means police can deploy exactly the resources that are required to a specific incident. The technology can be used at the time of the incident or afterwards, giving police even more capability to investigate crime and ultimately do what the people of New South Wales want them to do: keep our community safe. On average police receive more than 1,500 emergency calls for assistance every day. That equates to almost 600,000 a year. Technology has many applications in nearly every part of our lives these days, but when it is deployed in brilliant and imaginative ways like BluLink, it is groundbreaking. *[Extension of time]*

BluLink is an immensely powerful tool to help police respond to emergencies with maximum speed and efficiency. The official launch followed a 12-month trial across some metropolitan and regional commands. It was incredibly successful. I will give members examples of what it was used for. Officers used BluLink after the Bondi Junction stabbing attack in April to swiftly collect CCTV footage, saving many hours of police time and resources. On another occasion, a man who was cross-country skiing at Mount Tate called 000 after losing his skis. He was stranded with no shelter. A BluLink location request was sent directly to his phone. The rescue crew dispatched to the exact location of the skier and he was safely extracted from that very dangerous situation. It has also been used to locate and rescue multiple lost bushwalkers.

BluLink is empowering our NSW Police Force—which, of course, we all know is already the best police force in the world—to be even better. This critical life-saving tool means that the public will get the best available help in emergency situations. It will help solve crimes and resolve unfolding crimes or emergencies quicker than previously possible in many instances. Once again, the NSW Police Force is world leading in using this technology. The Government happily supports it and is only too willing to do so. I applaud the New South Wales police for this clever, powerful deployment of technology in the interests of keeping the community of New South Wales safe.

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:46): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier rule out further health job cuts like the 114 jobs, including health and nurse managers, being axed in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:46): There will be a net increase in health workers under the New South Wales Government, and the New South Wales budget reveals that. This is very important in the context of our industrial dispute with the nurses' association. The previous Government recruited 1,100 nurses during COVID and supplied no funding for them—none, not a dollar, not one cent. One of the first decisions of the New South Wales Government after winning the election in March was to make those positions permanent. The second request from the nurses' association was to introduce ratios and safe staffing levels. We did that. We thought that was important. They said repeatedly—and we believe them—that it was a key measure when it comes to retention of essential workers in our health system. It was implemented. It is not cheap. It is a billion dollars over four years, but we regard it as money well spent if it means more nurses in our public hospital system.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have also offered 40 per cent more than the previous Government offered in relation to a wage deal.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will cease speaking. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Vaucluse rises on a point of order.

Ms Kellie Sloane: The Premier cannot hear over the voices of the nurses outside.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Vaucluse to order for the first time. There is no point of order. The member will resume her seat.

Mr Paul Scully: Are you going to go out and tell them you're bringing back the wages cap?

The SPEAKER: She might. I remind the member for Vaucluse that she is on one call to order. The member will be removed from the Chamber if she takes a similar point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Part of our responsibility is to slay the idea of the wages cap that was in place for a decade and suppressed wages for essential workers. This dispute comes down to a simple but obviously

fundamental disagreement: The nurses' association wants to make up the lost wages over a decade in a single year. That costs an enormous amount of money—more than \$3 billion. That is more than the Government can afford in the circumstances.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: A second point of order.

The SPEAKER: I draw the Premier's attention to the standing orders.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Is this going to be another frivolous point of order?

The SPEAKER: I do not know until I have heard it. When the Premier stops arguing with me, I will hear from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Alister Henskens: The point of order is direct relevance. The question is about the 114 jobs that are being axed by the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat immediately. The Premier has been directly relevant, and he was directly relevant from the beginning of his answer. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: This is important information. A member of Parliament had this to say about the Government's approach to negotiating with unions:

Labor was so beholden to its union paymasters that Labor members did not have the stomach to introduce a wages cap.

Who said that? Kellie Sloane! Sorry, so back to 2½ per cent. That will fix it!

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Ms Kellie Sloane: The Premier must refer to me as the member for Vacluse.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Vacluse said that. Of course the member for Vacluse said that; she says one thing in Blacktown and something else in Vacluse. This is a fundamental point: We have to engage with the Nurses and Midwives' Association. We acknowledge that there are very angry nurses outside Parliament House with whom we are trying to reach an agreement. But the idea that we would take criticism from the New South Wales Opposition because we did not reintroduce a wages cap—

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Do not forget that—

The SPEAKER: Premier—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —rather than introducing a 2½ per cent wages cap, the former Government introduced a 0 per cent wages cap! That is what it came down to.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the Premier to order for the first time. I must be able to apply the standing orders. The member for Kogarah must understand that he is the Premier, not the Presiding Officer. I call the member for Tamworth.

Mr Kevin Anderson: The Premier must direct his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: That point of order was not helpful.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: Standing Order 131 prohibits members from taking vexatious points of order. Four points of order taken by Opposition members were deliberately disruptive. Opposition members should be removed from the Chamber during question time if they continue to take vexatious points of order.

The SPEAKER: I will determine whether points of order are vexatious. The point of order from the Leader of the House was not helpful. I do not believe the points of order taken by Opposition members were vexatious. However, I warn members of the Opposition that if they take a vexatious point of order, I will have them removed from the Chamber. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member of Parliament went on to say, "Labor today is going to cut a whole lot of stuff that's going to impact your life. It is because of the choices that they made—the choices they made to get rid of the public sector wages cap." Who said that? It was the member for Vacluse—again!

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I have pages of quotes. According to the member for Vacluse, the solution to this industrial dispute is, "Cut them. Reduce it to zero. That will solve it!"

HEALTH SERVICES

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is helping to relieve pressure on emergency departments?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:52): Members on both sides of the House and people in the gallery would agree that at the moment there is significant pressure on our emergency departments. Recently *The Daily Telegraph* released data about GPs and GP access. That data highlighted three things that all members who represent our communities would know, and I think any community member could tell us this: First, at the moment it is difficult to access a GP in a timely manner; secondly, it is even more difficult to access a bulk-billing GP; and, thirdly, if one does access a GP, the gap that one pays is getting larger. Those three issues remain a significant concern for the Government and the health system.

All members of this House would agree that when we have challenges accessing primary care and GPs, particularly when managing chronic conditions, the likelihood of the frequency of people visiting our emergency departments will increase. That is the problem we are dealing with right now. I have made it clear to the Commonwealth that, while I acknowledge its efforts to increase bulk-billing, the reality is that it must do more. We cannot have a health system where people think the only avenue for after-hours care is the emergency department. For the first time, this State Government is investing in an area that is traditionally the responsibility of the Commonwealth.

I will go through what the New South Wales Government is doing to try to open up those pathways and take pressure off our emergency departments. We are investing record levels in urgent care services. I have spoken to many members of Parliament on both sides of the Chamber about this. They are working in my community. They do not have a silver bullet, but they are working. The Government is investing record amounts in virtual services, particularly virtualKIDS, to enable parents to get access to paediatric healthcare advice after hours, without having to take their children to an emergency department. We are expanding scope of practice for our pharmacists to enable them to deal with some conditions after hours when people might not be able to access a GP and so they do not have to go to an emergency department. [*Extension of time*]

The Government is investing more in an initiative called Hospital in the Home, which is all about keeping people within their home or residential aged-care facility and avoiding the hospital for treatment. We are making investments in geriatric outreach services. Geriatricians go from the hospital, into a person's residential aged-care setting or private home and carry out the health care that that person needs so that that person does not have to go to an emergency department or hospital. That is important because when older people go into a hospital, the chance of getting hospital-acquired infections increases and the chance of falls because of confusion increases as well. We are trying to keep those people in their home or residential aged-care facility. While the Government is investing record amounts in areas that are traditionally not the responsibility of the State, the Commonwealth must do its bit as well.

If all members are honest with themselves and with their community, they would admit that at the moment accessing a GP is a challenge, accessing a bulk-billing GP is hard and, at a time when people are feeling the pinch and families are doing it tough, those who can access a GP are paying a larger amount for it each time. They are resorting to our emergency departments as quasi-medical centres. That is not good for them, their families, the healthcare workers in those facilities or the system. The Government will continue to invest record amounts in opening up alternative pathways to emergency departments, but the Commonwealth must do its bit as well.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:57): My question is directed to the Premier. As the Premier can hear, the nurses outside the Parliament of New South Wales are calling for him to live up to his promise. His name is on the signs outside right now, and nurses want him to front up. Will the Premier meet with them today?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:58): There is no magic formula for resolving this dispute. The truth is that the Government cannot make up for a decade in lost wages in a single year. That is the truth. Negotiations have continued—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Of course, the Government has met with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association again and again to talk about ratios, safe staffing levels, COVID nurses that were cut by the former Government, removing the wages cap in New South Wales and establishing the independent Industrial Court of New South Wales. The matter that we have agreed upon is a rejection of the 2.5 per cent wage cap in New South Wales.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Dugald Saunders: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The question was very simple. Nurses are calling for action. Does the Premier have the spine to confront them today?

The SPEAKER: The nature of the question is such that I will give the Premier a lot of leeway in answering it.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Why?

The SPEAKER: I am the Presiding Officer and that is the way I interpret the standing orders. It is not a straight yes or no answer. As much as the member for Coffs Harbour would like it to be, it is not. I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier will continue his answer.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: There was a 2.5 per cent wages cap. During the COVID emergency, months before inflation hit record highs in the New South Wales economy, the previous Government decided to reduce that increase, not to 2.5 but to zero. Since we have been in office, each and every time we have negotiated with unions across the public sector, we have been criticised by the Opposition. We have to give it to the member for Vacluse. At least she is on the record as saying that she wants the wages cap back. We have to give to it the shadow Treasurer. He said, "We want the wages cap back."

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have to give it to the Leader of the Opposition, who said, "We want the wages cap back." But we have not heard from the NSW Nationals.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat.

Mr Dugald Saunders: My point of order is not taken under Standing Order 129. It is taken under Standing Order 59, tedious repetition. We have heard the same thing. The question was, "Would you meet with them?"

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is an attempt to soak up time. At the end of the day, I was furious about this economic model to wind down 2.5 per cent to 0 per cent during the pandemic. During estimates, I had an opportunity to speak to the shadow Treasurer, who is, presumably, the brains trust of economic matters.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I said that we think our approach of engaging with the unions and the trade union movement is better than the predecessor Government's.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: And who could forget that during COVID, when they did not have a 2.5 per cent wages cap, they wound it all the way back to zero?

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Myall Lakes to order for the second time. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Mr Tudehope said, "Yes." I said, "Was that a good decision?" He said that was, "A very good decision." Zero—a very good decision! The disagreement between the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Government is real. I am not pretending otherwise. We have suggested that we go to the independent Industrial Court with the wages cap removed for it to be determined. The chief judge at the Industrial Court said to pay them in the interim. It has been rejected by the union, but it has not been rejected by the Government.

EMERALD CLASS FERRIES

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (13:01): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on why the overseas-built *Fairlight* ferry is currently sitting in dry dock? What is being done to ensure procurement mistakes made by the previous Government are not repeated?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (13:01): We do not have long enough, but I thank the member for Parramatta for her question because she is a great advocate for public transport and especially Australian-built ferries.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I can confirm that the *Fairlight* will be in dry dock at Balmain for the next 10 weeks. This is why: When the *Fairlight* and her Emerald sister vessels, *Balmoral* and *Clontarf*, were purchased by the former Liberal Government from overseas, they had the following defects and failures: cracked fuel tanks, steering failures, leaks in the hull, damaged rudders, shattering windows, and emergency doors that could not be opened. There was even an instance of catastrophic engine failure. So the *Fairlight* is undergoing a complete overhaul and refit. It is the third ferry to go through this process, because these off-the-shelf, overseas-bought ferries were not fit for our harbour's conditions.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms JO HAYLEN: They needed to be restored and rectified. That is exactly what we are doing. This list of defects is an absolutely damning indictment of the experiment that the overseas-obsessed former Government ran by buying things only from overseas. Remember they arrived at our shores on the same ship as the River class ferries, which were riddled with asbestos.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Let us not forget that, under the leadership of members opposite, we had cancellations of ferry services up and the satisfaction of passengers was down. The overseas-made ferries members opposite purchased spent more time in the dry dock than actually carrying passengers. So it is very clear we need a different approach. One of the first things we did in government was purchase seven new Australian-built and Australian-designed ferries for Parramatta River. Passengers are loving these new ferries. We have the *Frances Bodkin* and the *John Nutt* in service, and the *Isobel Bennett* is to make her journey to Sydney very soon. This approach, of building ferries locally and building them for the conditions, needs to be applied across our entire ferry fleet.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Today I report that Transport for NSW has begun a process for the next generation of Freshwater class ferries. These iconic ferries will be replaced by a Freshwater-like ferry that will be locally made, supporting local jobs, and be fit for purpose. We know it is an incredibly popular ferry run, particularly in summer.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: We need these vessels to have the double-level boarding like the current ones so that we can unload a thousand or so passengers in just four minutes when we face those big queues down the Corso or into Circular Quay when summer hits. [*Extension of time*]

We know also that these vessels need to be able to cross the harbour and cope with those big swells. We will take an approach that says, "Let's build to the conditions. Let's support local jobs. Let's get a product that actually works for the taxpayers and the passengers of New South Wales." Just like in the 1980s, when the diesel Freshwater ferries replaced the steamers like the *South Steyne*, we will bring the next evolution of Freshwaters, and they will be zero-emission vessels. We are absolutely committed to reducing our emissions across the transport network, including our ferries. These ferries will also be slightly shorter so that we can service them in the government-owned shipyard at Balmain rather than being subject to the navy and trying to get into Garden Island.

All round, this is a good-news story for passengers and for local businesses, as well as the taxpayers of New South Wales. I think members on this side of the House should be incredibly proud that we are putting passengers and local jobs first. I know that members on the northern beaches are focused on talking to constituents right now because there is a diminishing number of Liberals from the northern beaches. They can tell their constituents that the good news is that the current Government has improved the service on the Manly run and brought it on to the Opal network, increased the number of services and lifted patronage. The good news is we have a plan for the future. We will not be making the same mistakes the former Government made. We will be building ferries locally. We want to restore confidence in all of our transport services so that people can catch public transport more often.

The SPEAKER: I farewell our students. I hope they have had a wonderful day.

LOCKHART CHILDCARE SERVICES

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:07): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. The families of Lockhart have been left in the difficult position of having no professional childcare service in town since the closure of their only provider in May this year. Will the Minister update the House on the actions taken by the Government to support the delivery of a new childcare service to Lockhart?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (13:07): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for all the work he does in his communities and for this important question about how we are addressing gaps in the delivery of early childhood education and care, particularly in under-served regional areas such as the Lockhart area, as the member has mentioned. I am really pleased to say that we are making good progress on a solution for the community of Lockhart. Since learning that Lockhart's only long day care service would close in May, the Department of Education has been hard at work with the local council to find a lasting solution for these families, who have been left without local child care.

The department is supporting the council to establish a new long day care service on the site of the Lockhart Central School library, which will work as an interim solution until a permanent site is found. The council already has approval to run a care service outside of school hours on the library site, and the Early Childhood regulator is working with the council on the requirements to convert this to a long day care centre. Department officers have visited the site and are providing support regarding the work to be done to upgrade the service to meet these national legal requirements. A builder has been engaged to start work on the progress.

I hope the member for Wagga Wagga is pleased with that progress. The Government is committed to working with the community to restore critical childcare services. The department will continue to support the council to help ensure it has what it needs to open a much-needed long day care service for the people of Lockhart. The creative and locally tailored response in Lockhart is what people can expect from this Government. We know all too well that the children who most need early learning are, unfortunately, the ones who are missing out. The Government is working with other communities across the State on local solutions that address local needs. We are focused on exploring better models of early childhood education and care to deliver greater equity in early learning for all children in New South Wales.

The Government's plan to deliver 100 new public preschools in this term of government is a big investment in children and families. It is a huge point of difference from the Coalition, which promised a lot but delivered little to nothing in this space during 12 years in government. The Opposition promised 500 new preschools on the eve of the election but delivered only one—without even building it—by splitting the School of the Air in two. This Government is delivering tangible results: 100 new public preschools co-located with public primary schools. We are partnering with local government and the non-government sector. Lockhart is a good example of where we have partnered with local government to come up with a creative solution. *[Extension of time]*

A strong early childhood is the key that unlocks the door of opportunity for young people everywhere in New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government is committed to unlocking that door of opportunity and improving access for all communities. It is vital for the families living in Lockhart. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for advocating for them and working with the Government to come to a solution. We are not quite there, but we are working towards that solution. Early childhood education and care can mean the difference between a parent being able to work or not and a student getting a great foundational start to their learning. All the work that we do in primary schools and secondary schools starts in early childhood education. It should be a top priority for all governments. It is a top priority for this Government. I inform the House, the member for Wagga Wagga and his community that it is exactly what the Minns Labor Government is committed to delivering.

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is removing red tape on Sydney's night-life by scrapping the five-kilometre rule for club sign-ins?

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) (13:12): I thank the member for Granville for her question and applaud her for her strong advocacy for cutting red tape to forge a more inclusive and vibrant night-time economy in Western Sydney in particular. It is time to cut the red tape that has been strangling a more thriving hospitality industry. In November last year I introduced the first tranche of vibrancy laws under the Minns Labor Government. Those laws made outdoor dining easier.

We enacted a more streamlined sound regulation system; we expanded special entertainment precincts in our suburbs, towns and cities; we increased incentives for live music and performance venues, offering extended trading hours and an 80 per cent liquor licence fee reduction; and we made it easier to activate venues, streets and outdoor areas for festivals and special events.

The vibrancy reforms are reducing unnecessary regulation, increasing our night-time economy offering for communities across the State and putting Sydney and New South Wales back on the tourist map as a vibrant night-time destination. Under the next tranche of vibrancy laws, we are shining the spotlight on antiquated, outdated regulations that prevent people from going out to enjoy their local clubs. The Government has announced a proposal to scrap the five-kilometre rule for clubs across New South Wales. The rule was removed during COVID to allow people living within the five-kilometre area to attend their local clubs without becoming members. It did not make very much difference, but the law came back into effect. Now we are making sure it is gone forever. Under current legislation, a resident living within five kilometres of their local club must sign up as a member and typically pay a membership fee, demonstrate membership of a similar club elsewhere, or attend as the guest of an existing member.

When a person turns up at their local club for a meal and a drink, a night out, their local committee meeting, or to catch some live entertainment, they have to say whether they live within five kilometres of the club and, if they do, sign up or wait for a member to sign them in. That rule is outdated and we need to consign it to history. It is true that clubs exist to provide services to members. Clubs are an important part of the social fabric of New South Wales, but we need to make sure that, wherever possible, we are getting rid of red tape and allowing people to go about their business with the least amount of interruption. I have spoken at length with ClubsNSW CEO Rebecca Riant, and she and her organisation's members are fully supportive of this change—indeed, they have long advocated for it. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Kevin Anderson: Yes, they have.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Opposition members say they were going to do it, but this Government is doing it. They talk about it, and we get on and actually make it happen. That is the difference. It is really important that people still become members of their local clubs. Clubs have a lot to offer. There are lots of perks. Members can get discounts on meals and drinks; enter into prize draws; use their membership for gaming; and enjoy member-only access to the full range of facilities, including gyms and other recreational amenities. People will still want to join their local clubs, but this change gives people a choice.

Rebecca Riant is very committed to the idea—and she and I spoke about this for a long time—that any legislation that makes it more difficult to visit and enjoy clubs is not in the interest of the industry or our communities. She wants people to become members of their local clubs so they can enjoy all of the other wonderful benefits that being a club member delivers, not because legislation requires them to. Government members are leaving no stone unturned. We want people to go out, have fun and enjoy themselves. Government members are pro-vibrancy and pro-community. We want to get rid of all the barriers. We want to get rid of antiquated rules and put in place sensible ones that allow businesses to get on with their jobs, people to go out to enjoy themselves and, most of all, keep our community safe. Government members do not just talk about things; we actually do things. Opposition members can keep talking while Government members get it done.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr STEVE WHAN: By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked by the member for Dubbo during question time on 19 September 2024.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Mr STEVE WHAN: By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked by the member for Kiama during question time on 19 September 2024.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 19/58*, dated 24 September 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Documents***INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER****Reports**

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: In accordance with clause 7 of the resolution establishing an Independent Complaints Officer agreed to by the House on 29 March 2022, I table the report of the Independent Complaints Officer of the New South Wales Parliament to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and the Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics Committee for the period 1 June 2024 to 31 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), order of the day (for bills) No. 3, Electricity Infrastructure Investment Amendment (Renewable Energy Sector Plan) Bill 2024, has lapsed and general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1746 to 1807 have lapsed.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Bills***CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 17 September 2024.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:31): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. It is important to acknowledge at the beginning that domestic violence is a scourge on our society. Governments of all persuasions need to take all necessary steps to prevent it and provide victims with appropriate support. In that regard, the Opposition supports the Government's initiatives within the bill, but there are a couple of matters that require addressing. The current penalty for the breach of an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] is two years imprisonment, a \$5,500 fine or both. The bill will introduce two more serious offences. The first offence, under new section 14 (1A), being a breach of an ADVO with intent to cause physical or mental harm, will have a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment, an \$11,000 fine or both.

The second new offence, under new section 14 (1C), being a persistent breach of an ADVO, will have a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$16,500 fine or both. It is desirable, as the Government has done, to recognise different severities of offence and to penalise them accordingly with the increased maximum penalties. The Opposition supports those measures. They are encouraging and good developments. The second major reform is the creation of serious domestic abuse prevention orders. Those prevention orders follow on from the serious crime prevention orders that the Coalition introduced in 2016. At the time, there was commentary and concern that they somehow offended the rule of law. Those orders are made by a court when parties have due process to make submissions on whether it is appropriate to make the orders and to make submissions on the form of the orders. The same goes for the serious domestic abuse prevention orders. I have never understood the argument about how their structure somehow offends the rule of law, and I am certainly not suggesting that the provisions proposed in the bill offend the rule of law at all.

The features of the serious domestic abuse prevention orders created by the bill are that they will apply where a person is over the age of 18 years, has convictions or charges of a serious nature within the past 10 years and where there are reasonable grounds to believe that an order would protect the former, current or potential partners of a person from domestic abuse. As I have indicated, the orders will be tailored by the courts. They can contain a number of different matters, all directed towards applying to high-risk offenders and protecting victims. The maximum penalty for a breach of a serious domestic abuse prevention order will be five years imprisonment, a \$33,000 fine or both. The making of an order will have immediate impacts on licences under the Firearms Act 1996 and the Weapons Prohibition Act 1998, similar to the making of an ADVO, which is also appropriate. The bill also introduces an expanded definition of stalking under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence)

Act 2007 to include electronic monitoring or tracking of a person's activities, communications or movements. Again, that is a modernisation of the definition of stalking and is most appropriate.

One matter of concern, however, is that the bill does not have a definite commencement date. Previously, when bills have been passed by the Minns Government without a definite commencement date, the Government has been very slow to commence their operation. The Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024, which was passed in June and provides for important matters like electronic monitoring and registrars not deciding bail matters, has not commenced operation yet. The Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) and Other Legislation Amendment (Knife Crime) Act 2024, which was also passed in June this year and which was known as Jack's law, has not commenced operation yet. The Opposition is so concerned with the delays in the commencement of operation of the Government's legislation related to law and order that it will move an amendment to the bill to require it to commence on or before 1 December 2024.

I point out a few other matters as to why the Opposition is concerned about the bill. Equally as bad as the Jack's law bill not having commenced is the fact that in budget estimates on 30 August 2024, before Portfolio Committee No. 5 - Justice and Communities, the following evidence was given. On page 62 of the transcript, in response to a question asking when Jack's law would commence, Mr Peter Thurtell said:

I can't tell you that exactly. What I can tell you is if we are commencing a trial in December or November—whenever it is—then I'm not going to turn around and say that we'll be fully operational by January. However, I would suggest in the second half of 2025 it is more realistic that we have much more capability.

That is clear evidence to the Parliament, as recorded by Hansard, that Jack's law will not be fully operational until the second half of next year. We were told that all was okay with the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024 and that it was comprehensive. However, this bill directly impacts on domestic violence matters and those June bail amendments in two ways. Firstly, the bill allows for an accused person not to be before a magistrate physically so that audiovisual links can be used for remote bail hearings. Secondly, the bill requires that, if electronic monitoring is ordered, the accused may not leave custody until the electronic monitor is fitted. Those are commonsense amendments, but the question is why were they not included in the original bill when it was introduced to the Parliament?

It is of great concern that magistrates are not yet making all bail decisions. There is still no clear timeline for when those measures will be implemented and magistrates, not registrars, will be deciding bail. It is not as if we have not tried to assist the Government on those matters. We introduced a bail bill that identified that bail decisions should be taken away from registrars in remote local courts and given exclusively to magistrates, over audiovisual links if necessary. When the Government did not include a provision of that kind in its bail bill, the Opposition raised the issue in question time. On 16 May 2024 the member for Miranda said:

My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The Minister's joint media release on Tuesday said that new bail laws would "ensure weekend bail decisions are made by magistrates". But this has been quietly left out of the bill and the second reading speech. Does the Minister support this omission?

The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault answered:

I thank the member for Miranda for her question and for her colours today, recognising that today is the day to wear orange for the SES. I appreciate the work emergency services do. What a great Minister we have. Turning to the question, I point out to the member for Miranda that there is no need to put that into legislation.

The Speaker then called the Leader of The Nationals and the Premier to order. The Minister continued:

We are absolutely committed to doing that. We do not need legislation to do it and we are working through those issues. The Attorney General has the lead on that. I totally back in what has already been said in that media release and in this place. I have no doubt whatsoever about the fact that in this place we are going to keep women and children safe and hold perpetrators to account.

But the reality is that the bail bill passed in June did not do what the Minister informed the House it would do. In fact, the bill before the House now introduces two provisions to do what the Minister said had already been covered off in the earlier bill. Clearly, that was not just a matter of administration and it did require legislation. That is part of a series of missteps. For example, in 12 months there has not been one prosecution under the Government's 2023 knife crime law that doubled penalties for knife crime—the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Bill 2023, which is not Jack's law from this year—in which the new maximum penalty could have been imposed. That is because all of the prosecutions were commenced in the Local Court, under the old maximum penalty, and not in the District Court, where the new maximum penalty could have been imposed.

The Attorney General in budget estimates and in repeated press releases stated that this legislation sends an important message. But what is the message that is being sent if the new legislation is never used in a practical sense? The Opposition most sincerely wants our community, particularly women, to be better protected from domestic violence. But our State needs a government that is serious about implementing its legislation. Unfortunately, I have been able to draw the attention of the House to a number of instances where matters of law

and order have not been implemented in a timely fashion by this Government. We need the bill and the measures contained within it to be implemented appropriately and with reasonable expedition. Accordingly, we will support the bill but we will move an amendment to ensure that those changes commence on or before 1 December 2024.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (14:45): I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Earlier this year, when I delivered a ministerial statement in the Chamber on this Government's efforts to address domestic, family and sexual violence, I spoke of the devastating and indelible impact of that violence, particularly when it reaches a horrific peak when a woman is killed by a current or former intimate partner. That is felt first and foremost by victim-survivors but it is also felt by their families, their friends and the broader community. I spoke of the grief, the rage, the horror and the understandable frustration—frustration that I am sure every member in this place, above politics, shares—felt towards the seemingly intractable nature of this issue.

We know how stubbornly prevalent domestic violence has remained in our society. We have all seen the statistics—after the age of 18, one in four women and one in eight men have experienced violence from an intimate partner or family member. We have seen the harrowing accounting from the Domestic Violence Death Review Team that one-third of the homicides in this State between 2000 and 2022 were domestic violence related. We have heard the testimonies of victim-survivors—the firsthand accounts of lived experience. In the face of that frustration and those deeply troubling statistics, the temptation to rush through half-baked and ill-considered reforms is incredibly strong. I said earlier this year that we cannot afford to give in to that temptation and that we need to take the time to get reforms right. In that light, I am pleased to speak in support of the bill.

The bill is a considered step forward in strengthening our State's systemic responses to domestic and family violence and is a signal of our support of victim-survivors. In May, when I spoke about this Government's emergency package, I said that this State needed more and that we needed different. We need more funding for services and more funding for workers but, crucially, different approaches to the prevention of domestic and family violence. That is what the bill delivers. It provides important legislative tools so that we can mitigate the dangers posed by high-risk domestic and family violence perpetrators. It allows us to tailor responses so that we can better hold perpetrators to account. Most importantly, it allows us to better meet the needs of victim-survivors.

In that light, I emphasise the bill's amendment to the definition of "stalking" under section 8 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. The proposed definition makes it clear that monitoring or tracking a person's activities, communications or movements could constitute stalking whether or not the alleged perpetrator contacts or approaches the victim. That amendment brings the statutory definition of stalking closer in line with the lived experiences of victim-survivors in the increasingly online twenty-first century. With that amendment, technology-facilitated tracking and monitoring may also form the basis for an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO]. As it stands, the maximum penalty for breaching an apprehended violence order [AVO] stands at two years imprisonment, a fine of 50 penalty units, or both. The bill introduces two new aggravated breach offences, carrying higher maximum penalties that are aimed at discouraging and punishing serious breaches which indicate a high risk of potential harm to the protected person.

The offences proposed by the bill will apply only to breaches of an apprehended domestic violence order, reflecting the legislation's effort to specifically target high-risk domestic violence offenders: first, an intentional breach offence for serious or harmful breaches of an ADVO's order; and, second, a persistent breach offence for repeated breaches of an ADVO over a short period of time, reflecting an offender's disregard for the conditions placed on them by the order and, indeed, for the safety of the protected person. In the case of an intentional breach, the accused must have knowingly contravened a prohibition or restriction in an ADVO made against them, and must have intended to cause or have known that their conduct was likely to cause physical or mental harm to the protected person, or cause the protected person to fear for the safety of themselves or others. There is no requirement to prove that the harm or fear was actually caused.

The maximum penalty set out in the bill is three years imprisonment, 100 penalty units, or both. In the case of a persistent breach, the accused must have knowingly contravened an ADVO and have done so on two or more other occasions in the preceding 28 days. The maximum penalty is five years imprisonment, 150 penalty units, or both. I welcome these reforms of the apprehended violence order scheme. It is a clear sign to perpetrators that this Government takes the safety of protected persons very seriously. In that vein, I turn my attention to the proposed introduction of a serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme.

A serious crime prevention order is currently one of the most powerful tools in the State's legal arsenal to prevent or disrupt involvement in organised crime or terrorism. Serious crime prevention orders have been handed down against alleged members of underworld groups, such as the Brothers 4 Life gang and the Rebels motorcycle gang. The proposed scheme builds on the serious crime prevention order framework to target serious or serial domestic violence perpetrators. Under the provisions of the bill the order can be sought against a person who is

over the age of 18 years and who, within the past 10 years, has been convicted of two or more domestic violence offences, applying to any domestic relationship, with maximum penalties of seven years imprisonment or more; or has been involved in serious domestic abuse activity.

An order may be sought by the Commissioner of Police or the Director of Public Prosecutions. To grant such an order, the court must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an order would protect relatives of the offender, former, current or, importantly, potential intimate partners of the offender or, indeed, anyone who has a domestic relationship with that partner by preventing abuse. This marks a difference from an AVO or ADVO, which is targeted towards specific persons. The application for an order will be heard in the Local Court if the offender has been convicted of at least two domestic violence offences, or in the Supreme Court if the grounds for seeking the order is serious domestic abuse activity. "Serious domestic abuse activity" is defined as where a person has been charged with an offence that is a "serious domestic violence offence", which is to say an offence under part 3 of the Crimes Act committed against a relative or intimate partner and which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years or more, regardless of whether that person has been tried, acquitted or convicted, including where a conviction is quashed or set aside.

A serious domestic abuse prevention order may impose any condition the court satisfied is reasonable and appropriate in preventing the offender from engaging in domestic abuse. This may include but is not limited to restrictions or prohibitions, such as on the use of social media and dating apps, or the purchase and use of tracking devices. It may also include requirements to notify authorities about a change of circumstances, such as a new residential address or the start of an intimate partner relationship; requirements to report to a police station at certain times; and the imposition of electronic monitoring conditions. The orders may be imposed for a maximum duration of five years, though there is no barrier to making consecutive serious domestic abuse prevention orders, and the order may be appealed, varied or revoked. Contravening the directions of an order would carry a maximum penalty in line with the contravention of a serious crime prevention order, which is five years imprisonment, 300 penalty units or both.

I can certainly think of no stronger signal of how this Government approaches the seriousness of domestic and family violence offences. I told this place that the emergency package did not represent the culmination of this Government's efforts to address domestic and family violence. I said that the package was the first step on a long journey and that there would be many more steps to come. This bill is one of those steps. As the Attorney General said in his second reading speech, "There will always be work to be done to guard against domestic and family violence." There are no easy solutions. There is no simple fix. There is only progress—progress towards a society where victim-survivors never have to live in fear in their own homes; progress towards a society where everyone has the ability to leave a bad situation if they need to; and progress towards a society where domestic and family violence is a thing of the past.

I will not stop working to achieve that progress. The Attorney General will not stop working towards it, this Government will not stop working towards it, and I know with absolute certainty that the many thousands of courageous and tireless advocates and practitioners will not stop working towards it. I thank them for their hard work, for the bravery they show every day in telling their stories and for driving change. There is certainly more work to do, and this Government will do that work. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (14:55): I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill is important, and it is important that the New South Wales Government produces a workable solution to the scourge that is domestic violence in our communities. While I support the bill and the intent behind the bill, I must detail that while this bill fixes problems with the Government's earlier domestic violence legislation, passed in June this year, it may explain why the Government has failed to implement bail decisions by magistrates or electronic monitoring for perpetrators on bail.

In New South Wales alone, approximately 2,500 domestic violence incidents are reported to police every month. However, the issue is not limited to the reporting of incidents because, shockingly, according to Domestic Violence NSW [DVNSW], those numbers likely represent only 40 per cent of actual incidents, due to under-reporting. These are not just statistics; a report of domestic violence is often the last cry for help from women—our mothers, daughters, sisters and friends. In the Goulburn electorate women contact my office as a last resort, or their friends or family call my office because they desperately want to help women in those situations.

I have been told stories from local women that include ongoing harassment from perpetrators, despite police intervention, women experiencing threats that are worded just so that it does not breach court orders, and even examples of perpetrators who will stand just metres away from an area of an apprehended violence order [AVO] or commandeer public areas such as an entry to a grocery store or car park at a child's soccer game. I have been told personal stories of fear of not knowing where a perpetrator is and without means for authorities to find

out the information. Women will flee their homes with just the clothes on their back. These are a few brief reasons that I fully support any measure that seeks to enhance protections for those suffering from domestic abuse. However, it is crucial that the Opposition scrutinises these proposals to ensure that they are not just symbolic gestures but are meaningful and workable changes that will generally enhance the safety and security of those who are at risk.

The bill introduces two new aggravated offences for breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVO], carrying increased penalties aimed at deterring and punishing those who flagrantly disregard court orders. Specifically, the bill proposes increasing the current maximum penalty for breaching an ADVO to two years in prison, or a \$5,500 fine, with a new offence under new section 14 (1A) for breaching ADVOs with the intent to cause harm, which will carry a maximum penalty of three years in prison, a fine of up to \$11,000, or both. It also introduces a new offence under new section 14 (1C) for the persistent breach of an ADVO, targeting individuals who show a repeat pattern of violating these orders with a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a fine of up to \$16,500, or both.

These are significant penalties. On the surface, they appear to be a strong step forward in protecting victims of domestic violence. However, the reality is far more complicated and less encouraging. Both of the new offences are classified as table 2 offences under the Criminal Procedure Act. That means they will typically be tried summarily in the Local Court unless the prosecution elects to proceed by way of indictment to the District Court. The practical effect of the classification is that the maximum penalty a Local Court can impose is only two years in prison, regardless of the higher penalties legislated. That means that unless prosecutors actively choose to escalate such cases to the District Court, the Government's higher penalties will be effectively false.

We need to only look at the Government's track record to see the flaws in that approach. Take the knife crime laws passed in June 2023, which also promised higher penalties for certain offences. In the year since, not a single case has been prosecuted under the more severe provisions because they, too, require the same decision to proceed. It demonstrates a pattern of introducing tougher penalties on paper without the necessary follow-through to ensure that they are applied in practice. If the Government is serious about using higher penalties as a deterrent, it must ensure that the cases are consistently escalated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Otherwise, the measures will remain nothing more than hollow promises and headlines.

The bill also introduces a new civil protection order scheme for serious domestic abuse prevention orders modelled on serious crime prevention orders. The measure allows the courts to impose a range of conditions to prevent future domestic violence abuse, including requiring positive actions from the individual subject to the order. It is a more flexible and forward-looking approach compared to ADVOs, which are a reactive focus on preventing specific actions against known individuals. The proposed scheme could potentially offer greater protection by targeting persons who are at high risk of committing domestic abuse even if they have not been convicted of an offence.

However, I must raise the real and significant concerns about the breadth and application of the scheme. Under the proposed legislation, a serious domestic abuse prevention order can be made not only where there have been relevant convictions in the past seven years but also where there have been charges that did not result in a conviction or even where the accused has been acquitted. That broad application risks imposing severe restrictions on individuals based on unproven allegations. We must be vigilant in ensuring that it does not lead to injustices or the criminalisation of individuals without sufficient evidence.

Moreover, while the orders are designed to protect current, former and potential partners or family members from future domestic abuse, they also raise questions about enforcement. For the orders to be effective, the police must have adequate resources to monitor compliance and respond swiftly to any breaches. Without the necessary resourcing, the scheme could become another well-intentioned but underfunded initiative that fails to deliver real safety for those at risk. It is also worth noting that breaches of serious domestic abuse protection orders will carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison or \$33,000, or both. But, once again, it is a table 1 offence, meaning that, unless the prosecution elects otherwise, any breach will be tried in the Local Court, where the maximum penalty is just two years. It is yet another example of the Government promising tough penalties that may not ever be realised in practice.

The proposed legislation is also supposed to address issues with the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024, passed just a few months ago. The earlier Act introduced important measures such as electronic monitoring for those granted bail and the requirement that bail decisions in domestic violence cases be made by magistrates. However, none of the measures have been implemented yet. The Government has cited the need for training and education as reasons for the delay, but it is now clear that the delays were due to flaws in the legislation itself. The new amendments are meant to fix those problems, but we are still left wondering why the issues were not identified and addressed from the outset.

It is deeply troubling that, despite the urgency of those reforms, we have no clear timeline for when they will be implemented. Victims of domestic violence cannot afford to wait while the Government works out the kinks in its legislation. We need protections in place now, not at some unspecified future date. We have to ask ourselves whether the Government is truly committed to making its laws operational. We have seen time and again that legislation is passed with much fanfare but then left to languish without being brought into effect. We need to only look at Jack's law, passed in June, which still has not commenced. The same is true for the domestic violence bail laws passed earlier this year. It is not enough to simply pass legislation; the Government must be held accountable for ensuring that laws are implemented and enforced.

The bill is a step in the right direction, but it is only the beginning. If we are to truly protect women and families from the devastating impact of domestic violence, we must ensure that laws are not just words on paper but are fully implemented and enforced. We must provide the police and the courts with the resources they need to hold perpetrators accountable and to keep victims safe. We must remain vigilant in our oversight of those measures to ensure that they are delivering the protections that have been promised. I support the bill because members in this House cannot afford to do nothing in the face of a crisis. That is what our nation is facing and our constituents are demanding serious action. I urge the Government to follow through and implement these laws without delay. Anything less would be unacceptable and a betrayal of the people of New South Wales.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:05): I speak in favour of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Members of this House would know that I am a strong advocate around issues of family and domestic violence and that I have been for over 12 years now. Not a week goes past when I do not have one, two or three victims come to my electorate office to see me—from not only my electorate but also neighbouring and other electorates. I give a shout-out to the electorate office [EO] staff who deal with family and domestic violence matters within our offices. It is not easy to listen to those stories, given the magnitude of perpetrators and their relentlessness in perpetrating such crimes. I also give a shout-out to the people in my office—Dionne Garcia, Jack Rankin and Rob Cummins—who always stand by me when we are dealing with these issues. I again give a shout-out to every EO across New South Wales because I know they are not easy stories to listen to. But we must act.

The bill marks the next step in our Government's continued commitment to addressing the scourge of domestic and family violence in New South Wales. It strengthens our legislative framework to better protect victim-survivors, hold perpetrators accountable and ensure that our laws are responsive to the evolving nature of those crimes. The bill seeks to enhance protections for those at risk of family and domestic violence and to ensure that the most dangerous offenders are effectively managed. It builds upon prior reforms such as the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024. The bill focuses on strengthening responses to high-risk domestic violence perpetrators and repeat offenders to address the ongoing risks to victim-survivors.

At the core of the bill are amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 introducing two new aggravated offences for breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders, or ADVOs. The new offences are vital to addressing the persistent and intentional violations of ADVOs. The first offence is knowingly contravening an ADVO, which will apply where the breach is intended to cause harm or instil fear. It is punishable by up to three years imprisonment or a fine of \$11,000. The second offence is persistent breach of an ADVO. It targets repeated breaches within a short time frame, signalling escalating dangerous behaviour. If an individual contravenes an ADVO three or more times within a 28-day period, they will face up to five years imprisonment or a \$16,500 fine.

The penalties reflect the increased risk to victim-survivors posed by individuals who repeatedly ignore the protections of ADVOs. I note the Premier's words calling those perpetrators cowards. That is appropriate because that is exactly what they are: cowards. Additionally, the bill introduces serious domestic abuse prevention orders. Modelled on the laws addressing organised crime, those civil orders allow courts to impose strict conditions on high-risk offenders—those convicted of multiple domestic violence offences or involved in serious abuse. That will enable targeted intervention, including requirements imposed by the court, such as the requirement to inform police of any dating profiles that the person may create or use.

In today's digital age, the methods of domestic abuse have evolved and our laws must keep pace. The bill modernises the definition of "stalking" to explicitly cover technology-facilitated tracking and monitoring. By expanding the definition, the legislation acknowledges the growing use of GPS trackers, spyware and online surveillance to harass and control victims, ensuring that these tactics are criminalised under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. The bill also addresses a significant issue faced by many victim-survivors seeking to protect themselves and their children from abusers. We cannot forget the children. We have victims and we have children, and in my view they must be separated. Children face their own trauma in instances of family and domestic violence, and that should be treated as a separate issue specific to young children. If a mother

is not well or is not coping, then her children will not either, and that will become a generational problem. Members know that.

Current laws around changing a child's name can unintentionally place victims at risk by requiring the involvement of the other parent. The bill will amend the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to allow a sole parent with court-granted responsibility to change their child's name without further legal action, ensuring a safer and more streamlined process. I am dealing with a victim-survivor at the moment who had to change her whole identity, including her name, her date of birth and her parents' names—everything was changed. She can no longer have contact with her adult children because of what she went through. I would like to see those processes streamlined and made easier. Victim-survivors constantly tell me that our systems do not always work, and many of those doors are shut before they receive the help they need. As the member for Goulburn said in her contribution, there is much more to do. I hope we can do as much as we possibly can in the shortest possible time.

The bill clarifies provisions around electronic monitoring for individuals granted bail for serious domestic violence offences, and prevents registrars from making bail decisions. To me, one of the most outstanding legislative amendments we have made is ensuring that registrars cannot make those decisions. Those offenders must not be released until their monitoring device is properly fitted, preventing gaps in enforcement and ensuring that victim-survivors are protected during this critical period. Recently a domestic violence survivor came to me for assistance, fearful for her safety. She had to change her name and was forced to change location on a number of occasions due to the constant fear of the perpetrator finding her. That is one of many cases in my electorate.

I give a shout-out to the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre, the first of its kind in the world. Former health Minister Brad Hazzard provided a \$50,000 grant to create a business case to build the first trauma recovery centre not just in New South Wales or Australia but in the world. From that business case, we established a committee attended by professors from the University of Sydney, victim-survivors and the chair of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. The business case took 18 months to create. From there, we secured Federal and State money to build the first trauma recovery centre. I do not see that centre as a pilot; I see it as a blueprint. I would like to see trauma recovery centres in all of our communities. Just as we have libraries, I would like to see trauma recovery centres as normal government buildings. That would send a strong message to the community about how governments deal with family and domestic violence.

We must take more significant steps towards a safer New South Wales. I am proud of the Minns Labor Government not only for getting on with the job of raising awareness about family and domestic violence but also for acting on combating family and domestic violence. The reforms introduced in the bill, alongside ongoing stakeholder consultation, reflect the gravity of domestic violence and the urgent need to address it head-on. These laws are tough but necessary. Together we must ensure that New South Wales leads the way in protecting vulnerable individuals and families. I commend the bill to the House. I urge members to ensure its swift passage through Parliament so we can continue to strengthen the protections for those who most need it.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:14): I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Every member in this place knows that domestic and family violence remains a serious and pervasive issue in New South Wales, as it does across all of Australia. It is a hidden epidemic that leaves lasting physical and emotional scars, and devastates lives. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, women are more than three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner. In New South Wales there are around 2,500 reports of domestic violence to police every month, but this likely only represents about 40 per cent of actual crime levels due to under-reporting, according to the NSW Council of Social Services. The bill seeks to strengthen our existing laws by closing gaps in the legal framework, providing greater protections to victims and enhancing the tools available to law enforcement and the courts.

The bill introduces two new aggregated offences for certain breaches of an apprehended violence order, or ADVO. This will include a new offence of knowingly breaching an ADVO with intent to cause harm or fear, and a new offence for repeated breaches of an ADVO. The bill will also introduce a serious domestic abuse prevention order for the worst alleged offenders, modelled on laws used for notorious gangsters and organised crime. This will apply where a person is over the age of 18 years, has a conviction or charges within the past 10 years of a serious nature, and there are reasonable grounds to believe an order would protect current, former or potential partners from domestic abuse. The making of a serious domestic abuse prevention order would have an immediate impact on licences under the firearms and weapons prohibition Acts.

I note that the bill seeks to modernise the definition of "stalking" and that it will be amended to more clearly cover technology-facilitated tracking or monitoring conduct. We know that stalking is a prevalent component of domestic and family violence. It is insidious, and often victims do not even realise they are being stalked through technology at the time of it occurring. This is one of the areas where coercive control can be incredibly powerful. It prevents people from seeking help, particularly women, and it prevents people from accessing support services.

I will recognise the services in my own community that have advocated for these changes. I will also talk about some of the ways in which they support women to access help. I am conscious of the fact that a lot of the ways we support women to access help are secretive because women must be secretive when they are trying to free themselves from oppressive relationships. They exist in a state of fear.

The riskiest time for a woman experiencing violence, even if it is emotional or psychological abuse, is when they try to leave a relationship and find safety and freedom. That risk is incredibly heightened. That is often when we see it escalate to physical violence, and particularly homicide or the death of women. Some of my local organisations have initiated different types of activities to ensure that women can seek help. It might be that they have installed computers and phone lines in regular community environments so that women who are victims of domestic violence can access the internet on safe browsers or phone lines to make calls to support services, to plan their exit, to organise support services for their children, or even to connect with their families and tell them about the violence they have experienced. Those types of services are crucial.

The challenge for us is ensuring that not too many people know about the support services so that they become unsafe for the people trying to access them, but also that they are well known enough that the people who need the support services know they exist. I give a shout-out to the Daisy Centre in particular. Mary's House is a community-initiated refuge in my community. It takes women and families—so women with children—into its refuge. A number of years after forming the refuge, Mary's House founded the Daisy Centre, which is a non-residential centre and organisation that helps women planning an escape from these environments and women who have already achieved that escape. There is access to support services and connections, counselling, community, fellowship, group sessions and support. The centre provides people with support to fill out application forms for grants and housing. They can connect with people who can donate furnishings, whitegoods et cetera. They are an amazing organisation that is housed in Neutral Bay and services the lower North Shore.

I recently met again with police at the local area command in my electorate. Their feedback is that domestic violence is a daily issue for them. Sadly, the long-serving police officers have a lot of on-the-ground experience. The newer police officers are finding that it is becoming a bigger part of their training. But, particularly with the introduction of coercive control legislation, a lot more training and support needs to be given to our police as they go out into the field to try to keep people safe and ensure that the community understands the illegality of coercive control and the measures people can take to find safety and freedom from those pervasive situations.

Our police constantly tell us that domestic violence is the most prevalent issue in our community. It is insidious, often hidden and, more often than not, not physical violence in my community. Oppressive psychological control, financial control in particular, the threat of children having to be taken out of schools or of losing the family home, and the social shame and stigma associated with some of the threats made by partners to try to control and retain people in relationships are the kinds of things that the Daisy Centre and our police deal with on a daily basis. We need to ensure that they are appropriately resourced, trained and educated so that any time a victim seeks help—in that one moment when they have the safety to do so—the person answering their phone call or the person at the police station counter is perfectly well equipped to support them on their journey to safety.

The bill makes a number of changes to improve the legislation for people, particularly women, in New South Wales, but we in this place know that there is so much more for us to do and that domestic and family violence is a societal issue. It is about the values we live and demonstrate every single day. It is about respect and the value we put on another person's life, autonomy, liberty and right to freely use their capabilities and opportunities to live life to the fullest. That starts from a young age. I note today's announcement about supporting young boys throughout their education. Instilling a culture of respect that expects every individual in our society has autonomy and liberty and the right to live safely and freely is not culturally prevalent across our community. We need to keep working on this. There is a lot more to do.

We talk a lot about the horrible statistics of murdered women. More than 60 women were murdered just last year. To date this year the number is well over 40. Whether from Destroy the Joint or the women's homicide project, there is a number of different counts of how many women have been murdered by intimate partners or former intimate partners this year. We need to end those homicides. It is an epidemic across Australia. Beyond ending the homicides, we need to save the lives of the many tens of thousands of women eking out an existence day by day in an environment of oppression, violence and abuse.

There are a few challenges with the bill. The Opposition is concerned that the bill does not have a definite commencement date, just like the other bills that were passed in June. We have spoken about Jack's law and our concern about ensuring that legislation starts to impact our community as quickly as humanly possible. We would like to see a commencement date in the bill. We know that we need to have all parties in this place working hand in glove to ensure we address the scourge of domestic and family violence. It is a crime that demands a strong response from the law and from us as legislators. We believe that everyone has the right to be safe in their own

home, and we in this place have a moral obligation to ensure we do everything we can. I welcome the bill and look forward to more in the future.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:24): I briefly contribute to debate in support of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill seeks to improve legislative responses to domestic and family violence. As highlighted by the most recent report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, between 2000 and 2022 nearly a third of homicide cases in New South Wales related to domestic violence. Under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, there are two kinds of apprehended violence orders, which may impose exclusions or restrictions on a person for the protection of other people. They include prohibitions on threatening, assaulting, stalking or intimidating the protected person. They implement restrictions on where the subject of an apprehended violence order can go and on how they can contact the protected person. If the parties involved have a domestic relationship, the order is an apprehended domestic violence order. In other cases, it will be an apprehended personal violence order.

The bill makes amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to introduce two new offences that capture particularly serious forms of breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders and will specifically target high-risk domestic violence offenders. The first of those offences relates to apprehended domestic violence orders that have been breached with intent. There are two elements to the offence. Firstly, it requires that a person knowingly contravened a prohibition or restriction in an apprehended domestic violence order made against them. The second requirement is that the person against whom the order was made intended to cause the protected person physical or mental harm or to fear for their or another person's safety. The maximum penalty for the intentional breach offence is three years in prison or 100 penalty units, which is equivalent to \$11,000, or both.

The second offence relates to persistent breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders. There are three requirements for the offence. The first requirement is that a person knowingly contravened a restriction or prohibition in an apprehended domestic violence order made against them. The second requirement is that that person knowingly breached the terms of the order on two or more other occasions over the prior 28-day period. The third requirement is that a reasonable person would consider that the conduct of the person was likely, in all the circumstances, to cause the protected person mental or physical harm or to fear for their safety or the safety of another person. The maximum penalty for the persistent breach offence is five years in prison or 150 penalty units, which is the equivalent of \$16,500, or both.

The bill lists both offences under the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. That means that the new offences will be dealt with summarily in the Local Court unless the prosecutor elects to have them dealt with on indictment in the District Court. The bill also clarifies that the standard breach offence is a statutory alternative to the intentional breach offence and that both the standard and intentional breach offences are statutory alternatives to the persistent breach offence. The bill will list these offences under the Crimes Act 1900, which applies to all other offences. It will extend criminal liability to conduct that occurs partially or wholly outside of New South Wales, where it has an effect within New South Wales. The bill will allow serious domestic abuse prevention orders, otherwise known as abuse prevention orders, to be made by the appropriate court on application by the Commissioner of Police or the Director of Public Prosecutions if the court is satisfied of three criteria.

The first criterion requires that abuse prevention orders may only be sought against a person who is over 18 years of age. The second criterion requires that the court must be satisfied that the person is eligible for a prevention order based on either convictions or charges occurring within the last 10 years when the person was 16 years of age or over. The third criterion for an abuse prevention order to be sought is that there are reasonable grounds to believe that making an order would protect former, current or potential intimate partners of the person or that it would protect people who that intimate partner has a domestic relationship with.

The bill also amends the Firearms Act 1996 and the Weapons Prohibition Act 1998 to ensure the making of an abuse prevention order has the same effect as a final apprehended violence order [AVO], including the automatic revocation of a firearms licence or prohibited weapons permit. The duration of an abuse prevention order is determined by the court, with a maximum duration of five years. The bill clarifies that proceedings related to abuse prevention orders are civil proceedings except if they relate to the breaches of such orders when they are considered criminal proceedings. Under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, the existing powers to vary parenting orders for apprehended violence orders will be extended to the abuse prevention order scheme.

The bill clarifies the definition of "stalking" to explicitly encompass the monitoring or tracking of a person's activities, communications or movements. Under the bill, technology-facilitated tracking or monitoring conduct will be captured in three ways. First, the conduct will be covered by an existing offence of stalking and intimidation. Second, if a court is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that a person has reasonable grounds to believe that the offender will engage in conduct that stalks the person, technology-facilitated tracking or

monitoring will be able to form the basis for an apprehended violence order. Third, the amendment will expand the mandatory prohibitions to be part of every apprehended violence order.

The bill will also allow the electronic service of a provisional AVO. This is important as an individual cannot be found guilty of breaching an AVO if it has not been served in accordance with the Act. The bill also provides clarity to the service requirements that apply when provisional AVOs are converted into interim or final AVOs. The amendments made in this bill are extensive and extremely important to the safety of those affected by domestic violence. They serve to better impose restrictions on people who have been charged with domestic violence offences and create new offences where appropriate. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:32): I make a brief contribution to the debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I support the bill and commend the Government for introducing it to the House. The bill is part of a suite of reforms that the Government has introduced following the death of Molly Ticehurst, a Forbes mother who lived in my electorate. Mayor Phyllis Miller, OAM, of Forbes Shire Council is currently in my office, watching this contribution. I say g'day to Phyllis. A lot of reform has occurred as a result of Molly's tragic passing, which shocked the local community and the State, and had ripple effects right across Australia in response to domestic violence.

I am glad there have been a number of changes to strengthen the legislation around domestic violence, including around bail laws, the wearing of ankle bracelets or monitoring devices, registrars no longer being able to determine bail applications and reversing the onus for domestic violence perpetrators. Earlier today, we heard the Premier talk about those changes in question time. This new bill complements and adds to some of the changes that have been made since Molly's passing and in response to public commentary over the past few months. I am glad to see this legislation on foot.

There are, in essence, three main changes in this legislation. The first is the new offence for repeated and serious breaches by a perpetrator who has been charged with three or more contraventions of an apprehended domestic violence order in a 28-day period, which will be punishable by up to five years imprisonment or a fine of \$16,500. The second change is the serious abuse prevention orders. The third change is the modernisation of the definition of "stalking", which I will talk about today. In the past I have raised the issue of stalking in formal representations on behalf of a constituent who came to see me. About 12 months ago I wrote to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault about the issue of tracking devices and the consideration of legislative reform or policy around the use of tracking devices as a form of stalking, harassment and intimidation in domestic violence cases.

A tracking device can be installed onto a car covertly, without the knowledge of the owner or the potential victim. A perpetrator is able to monitor their whereabouts quite easily. These tracking devices can be purchased on the internet. There is a remedy where people can have their vehicles scanned to see if there is a tracking device located on the vehicle. I raised that issue in formal representations about 12 months ago on behalf of a constituent who had a similar thing happen to her. I am glad the definition of stalking is going to be modernised to encapsulate tracking because with advancements in technology, these devices are becoming more and more problematic. Legislation needs to keep up with the times to address these issues.

A person only needs to go to any local court across this State on any given day to see the prevalence of domestic violence in our communities. It does not matter whether it is in Bourke or Burwood. There are many, many domestic violence-related matters in every local court every day. It is prevalent. For many years Orange has had twice the State average number of reported domestic violence offences. I do not know why, but it has been the case for many years. It is an issue that affects my community. The first core and cluster emergency crisis facility was built in Orange a number of years ago. I give credit to the previous Government and the Minister at the time for delivering the funding for that Housing Plus project and the emergency crisis facility. Today I spoke to the CEO of that facility, which is 100 per cent occupied almost all of the time. There is an ever-increasing demand for emergency and crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence situations across our State. As I said, the Central West is not immune to that.

Earlier this year there was some legislation that dealt with coercive control, which I certainly supported as well. This bill updates the legislation to amend the definition of stalking. It brings it into the modern day category of what is really happening in the community. Men—it is usually men—are using this type of activity to track and monitor the whereabouts and movements of their female partners or ex-partners to see where they are going and how long they are staying. That is stalking and should be taken into account by the court. This legislation will enable that. I note that the Coalition has indicated it will move an amendment to the bill. I will not be supporting that amendment. I believe it sets an unreasonable time frame for the Act to commence, being 1 December 2024. That would not be sufficient time for police or for the judiciary to be trained appropriately or given the resources or for the software to be upgraded to cater for the new offences. I will not be supporting the foreshadowed Coalition amendment. I support the bill and commend it to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:39): I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Fifty-nine is the seventeenth prime number. It is the number of cents that a working woman earned to a man's dollar in 1963. It is the last second in any given minute, and it is the current number of women killed at the hands of perpetrators of violence in Australia this year—59. My heart breaks reading that number. It breaks for the 59 vibrant souls taken too soon and for the 59 families left aching over the terrible loss. It breaks because I recall that only three months ago, on 5 June, I stood in this place debating an important and successful bill, the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024. I stood in this Chamber and recognised the 32 women who at that point this year had been tragically killed in Australia at the hands of perpetrators of domestic violence. In less than three months, that number has doubled.

The Government has undertaken urgent and multifaceted action, but the growth in the number of lives lost reflects just how much more there is to do to combat the horrific problem. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, and member for Prospect, I support the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill is another key measure the Government is taking to strengthen legislative frameworks in response to high-risk domestic violence offenders to reduce the unacceptable risk of violence and better protect our New South Wales community. Domestic and family violence is one of the most troubling social issues we face today. In Australia, one woman is killed every nine days by her current or former partner. One in three Australian women will experience physical violence. I have three daughters, so it is very sobering as a father to think at least one of my daughters will be a victim of such a crime. One in four Australian women will experience emotional violence and one in five will experience sexual violence.

The estimated economic cost of violence against women in Australia stands at \$26 billion annually—and they are the reported figures; it is probably double that. As members consider the bill, we remember all the victims, survivors and their families suffering as a result of domestic, family and sexual violence, and we acknowledge those trapped in cycles of domestic terrorism in their homes. They are not alone; we hear them and we support them. Through this suite of reforms, the Government is reshaping how New South Wales handles domestic abuse to improve community safety, prevent repeated instances of violence and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. I now address the amendments in the bill. A stand-out among the reforms is the introduction of tougher penalties for repeated and intentional breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs]. Schedule 1 [4] to the bill sets out two new aggravated offences to target high-risk domestic violence offences.

Amending the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, the new offences impose higher penalties for breaching an ADVO with intent to cause harm or fear, or for persistently breaching an ADVO. The ADVO scheme is a key legislative tool in the fight against domestic and family violence. In the 12 months to March 2024, over 39,000 ADVOs were made. New section 14 (1A) creates the offence of breach of an ADVO with intent. To satisfy this offence, a person must knowingly contravene a prohibition or restriction in an ADVO made against them and do so with intent to cause physical or mental harm to the protected person, or for the protected person to fear for their safety or the safety of another. The offence recognises that breaching a court order with the intent to harm someone or make them scared is extremely serious and dangerous conduct. If someone knowingly breaches an ADVO with intent, they could face up to three years in prison and an \$11,000 fine, sending a strong message to domestic violence perpetrators that ADVOs are not to be trifled with.

New section 14 (1C) creates a second offence to deal with persistent breaches of an ADVO. The first two elements of the offence require a person to knowingly contravene an ADVO against them two or more times within a 28-day period. The third element applies the reasonable person test. It requires that a reasonable person must consider that conduct which contravened the order would be likely to cause the protected person physical or mental harm, or fear for their safety or the safety of another. It is important to note that the reasonable person test applies to breaches collectively. That ensures individual breaches are considered in the context of the overall course of conduct. Victims of domestic abuse face difficult choices and are often prohibited from accessing police support. The test removes barriers to the offence applying when a protected person reports multiple breaches that have occurred. Persistent breaches of an ADVO carry a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, \$16,500 or both, making it the most serious ADVO offence to date.

Rapid and ongoing breaches of an ADVO comprise a course of abusive conduct that represents a heightened risk. The Australian Institute of Criminology recorded 112 incidents of intimate partner homicide between June 2000 and July 2018. Coercive controlling behaviour featured in all but one case, and that continues today. Last year, 49 per cent of female homicide victims were murdered by an intimate partner. Previously police looked at domestic violence assaults on an individual basis; they did not look at the collective. They did not see the whole process and strategy of abuse that was occurring. Now they have to look at the entire picture and see the whole ambit of what is happening, not just individual assaults. When breaches happen again and again in quick succession, it is a sign that things are escalating, and fast. The offence implements a targeted approach to intervene in escalating violence before it becomes lethal.

I turn now to schedule 1 [17] to the bill, which creates the serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme. Abuse prevention orders [APOs] are modelled on the serious crime prevention orders under the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act 2016. The reform reflects the Government's determination to treat domestic abuse as seriously as organised crime. Put simply, domestic violence is an organised and premeditated crime against an individual or a family. The cowards who perpetrate domestic violence think the Government by virtue of these provisions is treating them like the worst criminals in the State, and they are right. The Government is doing that intentionally. Criminal laws hold up a mirror, reflecting the standards of conduct we accept in our society, and we do not accept domestic violence and abuse.

Under new section 87B (1), APOs can be made on application by the Commissioner of Police or the Director of Public Prosecutions if the court is satisfied of the following criteria: the person whom the order is sought against is over 18 years old; the person is eligible for a prevention order on the basis of either convictions or charges occurring within the past 10 years; and there are reasonable grounds to believe making the order would protect former, current or potential intimate partners, or family members of the person, by preventing them engaging in domestic abuse. [*Extension of time*]

The threshold for an APO balances whether the person has had two or more convictions for domestic violence offences with a maximum penalty of seven years or more. That future-focused approach is the pillar of the reform, targeting high-risk domestic violence offenders by the risk that they pose to the community at large. An APO gives courts the power to impose positive obligations on individuals who continue to pose a risk to the community. For example, an APO could require offenders to notify authorities of a change of address, a new relationship or a new dating profile. The provisions have intentionally been drafted to remain open-ended to allow those orders to be tailored to specific behavioural patterns exhibited by a high-risk offender.

I now address the final key reform in detail. Schedule 1, item [3] amends the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to clarify the definition of "stalking". Stalking will explicitly include the monitoring of a person's activities by technology. That amendment responds to the findings of the New South Wales Crime Commission in its 2024 report entitled *Project Hakea: Criminal use of tracking and other surveillance devices in NSW* on the frequent use of tracking devices by perpetrators. In the twenty-first century stalking takes many forms, from GPS tracking, online activity monitoring or using apps to keep tabs on a person's movements. The bill equips the law to recognise these acts as stalking and allows appropriate responses.

This year the NSW Police Force received one domestic violence-related call every four minutes—so from the time I stood up to speak in this Chamber to now, there have been at least four calls to police about domestic violence. The Western Sydney community needs these reforms. The Prospect electorate is a thriving mecca of culture and multiculturalism. We are fortunate to live harmoniously and share wonderful traditions. However, we must recognise that many members of our culturally and linguistically diverse community are more vulnerable to domestic abuse due to language barriers, immigration restrictions, financial control and cultural pressures. With these reforms we are drawing a firm line in the sand on the standard of acceptable conduct in all domestic partnerships.

Domestic and family violence is a multifaceted problem. It is a tangled web that permeates every corner of our State's community. These reforms are part of an important effort that the Government is making with our counterparts in other Australian governments to deal with this issue, as a nation and in a holistic manner. Leaving an abusive domestic relationship is no easy feat. Joseph Briggs, a deputy public defender with Legal Aid Queensland, in his 2020 article entitled "'Rape Myths' and a 'reasonable belief' of consent *R v Lazarus* [2017] NSWCCA 279" recognised that leaving is the time that poses the greatest risk to victims of domestic violence. Victim-survivors make the bravest move of their lives when they decide to leave an abusive partnership.

If we do not equip our justice agencies and our law enforcement with tools to better protect victims of domestic violence, we leave those victims vulnerable to re-exposure at the most dangerous point. In the Supreme Court of Victoria case of *R v Mulhall* [2012] VSC 471, Justice King affirmed, "The law will do all it can to protect women from violent domestic partners." As lawmakers in this House, we must do all that we can. The bill sends a clear message: We will prosecute cowardly, criminal acts of domestic abuse to the full extent of the law. We will continue to work with those with lived experience to implement meaningful support and protection for victim-survivors and their families. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:54): On behalf of The Greens, I speak in support of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. We believe it is positive and sensible. Indeed, it was made clear in our party room this morning by our spokesperson in the other place, Ms Abigail Boyd, MLC, that she could not find anything in the bill that was problematic for us. That does not always happen. While we welcome the tightening up of laws that could prevent and reduce these heinous crimes—mostly against women—it is the pointy end, and we know that. It is very much the pointy end.

The services in community—the women's advisory services, domestic violence support services and, indeed, we argue, the police—need to have adequate training and support. We also need interagency approaches and education. It was pleasing to hear from the education Minister before the coercive control laws came into effect; she talked about consent education in schools. We need all those things and a whole raft of new policy direction for our public schools. All of that is the prevention side. We absolutely cannot drop the ball on that. We can have incredibly strident laws, but these particular offenders seem to have no regard whatsoever for the rule of law. So as we escalate the law—the penalties and the consequences—and widen criminal law, it gives me pause to consider what that tells us. As someone interested in the philosophy of law, I think it tells us that we are at the wrong end. It cannot be a piecemeal approach. We cannot talk about services in community in a piecemeal manner. We need to map the whole lot.

We need to go hard on accountability for any NGO or community group that is offering support. But we need the recurrent funding, and we need to know what is out there. I give a shout-out to all of the advocates in the Ballina electorate. I will not name them all because there are a lot. Our community absolutely says no to domestic and personal violence. We welcome these laws. I do not propose to go through the black-letter law in great detail, except to say that we understand that there are two new aggravated offences. I am particularly interested in the civil protection order scheme. While we do not really support that approach to criminal law, we think it is actually sensible in this area because recently we have tragically seen a very wide circle of horror violence and revenge enacted on people around, often, the woman, including friends and extended family members. So although I am not a big fan of charging someone before they have done something, in this area of heinous crimes that has not served us very well because these offenders are hell-bent on what they are planning to do.

I also put on record that The Greens are interested to see how the courts will consider the domestic abuse prevention order scheme and its threshold. The threshold for convictions is that the person must have had at least two convictions for domestic violence offences, with a maximum penalty of seven years or more that includes coercive control, reckless grievous bodily harm and strangulation. The threshold will be where a person has been charged, regardless of whether the person has been tried, acquitted or convicted. That is something that we will be following in terms of law reform. As the member for Orange indicated, we know some of the backstory behind the tragic murder of Molly Ticehurst. She was being supported by the Staying Home Leaving Violence program and, unfortunately, that program failed her.

I was pleased to hear Government members talking about the need to believe women. A woman who has a violent partner knows in every part of her body when things are escalating. The police struggle at times with what they are confronted with. Attending domestic violence calls is complex. That program failed her. She indicated that her partner was on the loose and out to get her. Unfortunately, in the time that it took to get extra security, she was murdered. It is important that we do not lose sight of how long the laws will take to come into effect. We need to make sure that we support the police, domestic violence abuse support services and women in the community so that they are aware of the laws and understand how they work. It is not easy to digest the information or for women to understand their rights.

As local members, we are the ones who will be supporting members of our communities. We also need to understand how the orders can be made. The message is that persistent breaches and plans to hurt women and others in the community simply will not be tolerated. I also share the appreciation of the member for Orange at the teasing out of the definition of "stalking". Its modernisation is incredibly welcome. Family members have told me about the online dating scene. So many young women are giving out their phone numbers without realising how easy it is for someone to identify them and then stalk them. They are strangers, let alone someone in their life who is using those sophisticated methods of technology to track them and hunt them down. The Greens also welcome the provisions around changing a child's name and the serving of AVOs. Domestic Violence NSW and all of the key stakeholders are supportive of the legislation.

There were concerns, which I share in principle, raised by legal groups about prevention order schemes, but the context is very clear around the severity of the statistics. The statistics are awful, considering that the loss of one life cannot be measured at all. When we hear the statistics, it gives us great pause. These incredibly concerning times require this level of response. The Greens support the bill.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:02): I speak in support of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which introduces amendments that strengthen the legislative response to high-risk domestic violence offenders. The bill follows and builds on the legislative reforms introduced by the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024, which focused on the bail framework in the context of domestic and family violence matters. The reforms target the management of and response to high-risk perpetrators and repeat offenders to address ongoing safety risks to victim-survivors. The bill amends the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to introduce an offence that will apply if a person knowingly contravenes an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] with intent to cause fear or harm

to the protected person. It will also introduce an offence that will apply if a person knowingly contravenes an ADVO three or more times within a 28-day period.

Importantly, the bill establishes a new civil order scheme that will allow the appropriate court, on application, to make a serious domestic abuse prevention order. That will enable conditions and restrictions to be imposed on individuals who are convicted of two or more domestic violence offences that have a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment or more, or who are involved in serious domestic abuse activity, in certain circumstances. The bill also amends the definition of "stalking" to more clearly cover technology-facilitated tracking or monitoring conduct. That is important given the fact that technology is on the rise and the ability to track what perpetrators are doing is becoming more difficult as technology evolves. Increasing protections assists not only victim-survivors but also the community that supports victim-survivors.

The changes introduced by the bill are the next step in the ongoing reform of domestic violence legislation. By strengthening domestic violence legislation, we improve the ability of organisations supporting my electorate, such as Zen Tea Lounge Foundation, SSI and Bonnie Support Services, to perform their invaluable work in helping survivors. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:05): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Several months ago, when talking about addressing the scourge of domestic violence in New South Wales, I stood in this Chamber and said that it is an issue that can no longer be ignored. Yet again today, sadly, we heard the shameful statistics of how many lives have been taken at the hands of a current or former partner. Those people were family members, loved ones and friends. On 9 May the Coalition introduced the Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024. Less than one week later, on 15 May, the Government introduced its own bill. It was very similar to the Coalition's bill, which the Government opposed, which delayed the passage of the legislation by almost one month. We are now here again with more legislation.

The Opposition does not oppose the legislation, but there is no tangible step being taken in this place to take action. The Opposition calls on the Government to commit to a commencement date for the changes introduced by the bill. There has been a lot of talk but no action seen on the ground at this point. Considering the lack of urgency, it is not hard to understand why women across New South Wales are feeling overwhelmed, angry and fed up. The women whom I have spoken to lately tell me that they are still overcome by a strong sense of helplessness and fear. That is no way to live your life. They need to know that they will be better protected, and it needs to happen now.

Front of mind for regional communities is the senseless death of Molly Ticehurst and the death of two-year-old Rowan, who was killed in Lismore. Molly should not have died, and little Rowan should not have died either. Their deaths were preventable, and they cannot be in vain. Following those tragedies, things came to a head. There was an outpouring of grief and protests on the streets. Our communities have already told us that enough is enough, so what is the hold-up? It is a similar scenario when it comes to the delayed rollout of Jack's law. In the three months since the passing of that legislation, which gives police the power to use metal detection wands, there has been no action to make the laws operational. The procurement process for the equipment is yet to begin, no training has taken place and we do not even know what type of wands will be fit for purpose or how many will be needed.

Our communities are living in fear and being left at risk, yet the Government is not doing what it needs to do to give police the resources they need to conduct those operations as soon as possible. There is a pattern here: The Minns Government introduces legislation with no plan or time frame to actually implement it. Each day that Jack's law is delayed is another day that we fail to protect the people we represent. Each day that domestic violence laws are delayed is another day that we fail to protect the people we represent. It is simply not good enough. As with the wanding powers, it is also not clear how some of the changes in the bill will be resourced. That is of particular concern in regional areas, where half of domestic violence-related deaths in Australia have occurred. In New South Wales, the crime rate for domestic violence was 65 per cent higher in the regions than in Greater Sydney, with Walgett and Broken Hill among the worst-affected areas.

There are questions around how some of the measures will work in rural and remote areas that do not have extensive police resources. Again, that needs to be looked at. The bill, as we have heard, includes the creation of serious domestic abuse prevention orders to apply when a person of 18 years has a serious conviction or charges within the past 10 years and there are reasonable grounds to believe an order would protect a former, current or potential partner from domestic abuse. It is not clear how this will be resourced. If it is not heavily resourced by police, whom we are already short of in regional areas, then how effective can it be? I hope it will work. I encourage the Government to work with us and other regionally based MPs to have those conversations. Each community in regional New South Wales is slightly different. What might work in one regional area or in a metro area may not be the right solution for another.

The bill today fixes some of the issues that we saw in the earlier domestic violence legislation, which is a start. But there is more work to do. Above all, when it comes to domestic violence, our women and children cannot afford to wait. There is a willingness from all sides of politics to do something. We are sick of saying we need to do it now. This was delayed in May and then in June and, since then, nothing has changed. Let me be clear: We will work with the Government to put stronger protections in place as soon as possible. The Government now needs to come to the table to commit to a commencement date. As the father of two daughters, my hope is that we make changes as quickly as possible to allow them and all women to feel safe in their own communities and homes. It is up to us to come together and make that happen. Our partners, daughters, sisters and mums are counting on us. We need to do better, and change cannot continue to wait.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:10): I contribute to debate in support of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. It is a shame that the member for Dubbo has left the Chamber because some of the comments that he made about delays are very disappointing. In the 18 months since our Minns Labor Government was elected, yes, we have continued to see rates of family and domestic violence increase across New South Wales and Australia, but it is not a new phenomenon. We mourn the women and children who have lost their lives due to violence and we stand with victim-survivors and all people impacted by domestic and family violence. Of course, it does not suit anybody and it does not help anyone to politicise issues like family and domestic violence.

After coming to government last year, one of the first things this Government delivered was increased funding for women's health centres across New South Wales. Members may wonder how that impacts family and domestic violence. The centre in Parramatta is explicitly focused on family and domestic violence and has been for every year that it has been in operation. While other women's health centres across New South Wales provide a range of services, the centre in Parramatta, from the day it began operating decades ago, has been focused on family and domestic violence because, sadly, this has been an issue in our communities for too long. Our Government made the first commitment in decades of real funding for those health centres. That funding has been received and organisations are benefitting from it.

In Parramatta, Salwa, who manages the Cumberland Women's Health Centre, does not have to answer the phone and do the admin because she has the funding to resource an admin position for the centre. She now has additional caseworkers so that she can not only address their case load but also provide for others in the community where the need is great. For members to say that nothing has been done really grates because I know that that was one of the first things that our Government did, and it has made an enormous difference to the lives of people in the Parramatta and Cumberland local government areas, not to mention the rest of New South Wales where other women's health centres are located. We are focused on making changes. All members understand that legislation is not easy. It cannot be formulated quickly or without consideration, otherwise errors will be made. No member wants to make amendments to the amendments they have already introduced. That is why it is important to get this legislation right the first time around.

In this year's budget, our Minns Labor Government included the \$230 million emergency domestic violence package over four years to enhance support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors and expand programs to reduce the rate of violence against women and children. In 2023 there were 36,072 incidents of domestic violence-related assault and 19 domestic violence-related murders of women and children in New South Wales alone. Over the past 10 years there have been 199 domestic violence-related murders of women and children in New South Wales. That is not a new phenomenon. It is also estimated that around one in four Australian women have experienced some form of violence committed by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. We know that domestic and family violence has devastating and long-term impacts on victim-survivors, their families and the broader community. We can and must do more.

I have heard many members say that they have daughters at home. I do not have daughters; I have sons. But my responsibility as a parent is like that of many and all across New South Wales and Australia, and that is to ensure that we as parents also play a role in ensuring that the younger generation of future men knows what acceptable behaviour is and how to respect people of all genders in our community. It is only when we have those hard and difficult conversations with young people, right through the stages of growing up, that our communities will benefit from having a greater understanding of respectful and acceptable behaviour. It is only then that we will start to see changes. We can legislate and legislate, and that is what we are doing today, but it takes more than just legislation; it takes a community to make those changes and see those behaviours altered within our society.

As a Government, we can and must do more. We always must. As a Government, we are committed to taking meaningful action to prevent domestic violence across our State. The bill introduces amendments that strengthen the legislative response to high-risk domestic violence offenders and makes other amendments to improve responses to domestic and family violence. The amendments follow the Government's legislative reforms introduced by the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024. While the amendment

Act was largely focused on the bail framework in the context of domestic and family violence matters, this second phase of reforms targets the management of and response to high-risk perpetrators and repeat offenders to address ongoing safety risks to victim-survivors and the community. These reforms include strengthening the penalties for repeated and serious breaches of an apprehended domestic violence order, introducing serious domestic abuse prevention orders, modernising the definition of stalking, and making it easier and safer to change a child's name. As the Women's Safety Commissioner, Dr Hannah Tonkin, said:

The community has called for wide-ranging action to address the shocking rates of domestic and family violence, including measures to prevent violence as well as stronger accountability for perpetrators.

These reforms prioritise the safety of women and children and send a clear message that domestic and family violence will not be tolerated.

Family and domestic violence does not discriminate by age, faith, culture, language, socio-economic status or suburb. In Western Sydney we are home to the largest asylum seeker and refugee women population in Australia. Sadly, domestic and family violence is a serious problem in our suburbs. We know that victim-survivors on temporary visas are particularly vulnerable and face systemic barriers when fleeing domestic violence. Those barriers include but may not be limited to social isolation, restricted work rights, limited access to social security or Medicare and language barriers.

The New South Wales Government is targeting support for victim-survivors from multicultural backgrounds through establishing the Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety, which was launched in Fairfield in April this year. It was actually launched in Parramatta because of a flooding issue in Fairfield that day, but it will operate in Fairfield for the benefit of those communities across New South Wales. This service is delivered by Settlement Services International, and it provides specialist culturally responsive support to migrant and refugee women and children at risk of violence across our State. It is initiatives like this, coupled with the justice system reforms, with tougher bail tests and/or electronic monitoring requirements for people charged with serious domestic and family violence offences that will see change. It is only when we bring all these pieces together that we will see the change in our communities, provide the support that our communities need and address the treatment of those perpetrators to prevent them from offending again and again. [*Extension of time*]

That is why the bill is so significant. The amendments in the bill follow the Government's legislative reforms. Our Government has undertaken targeted confidential consultation with government agencies, legal stakeholders and representatives from the domestic and family violence sector so that we can be assured that the amendments are focused to make the right changes to address the issues that we face in our community. These are important amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:21): I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill makes amendments to satisfy the Government's promises of reforming the law to strengthen the domestic violence laws in this State. All members of this House support strengthening and enhancing legislative responses to combat the scourge of domestic violence. We have all witnessed far too many incidences of domestic and family violence in our society. It is without doubt that most of the incidences of domestic violence in our society have been perpetrated by males against females.

Any form of domestic and family violence in our society is to be condemned. Time and time again, this House amends legislation to strengthen society's responses to domestic violence, and yet violence is still occurring in our society. We can all hope for one day when the message will finally get across that violence in domestic and family violence settings—indeed, any form of violence—is not acceptable and will never be acceptable. It was only on Saturday that I attended the launch of the Rotary District 9685 initiative, titled "Say NO to domestic and family violence and YES to respectful relationships." As part of the launch, along with many members of my community in Castle Hill, I signed a pledge to say no to domestic and family violence and yes to respectful relationships. Many people attended the launch, and many people spoke about domestic violence and about the need for us to do all that we can to remove it from our society.

Domestic violence is a serious issue for our society and impacts many families. In 2021-22 an estimated 1.5 per cent of Australian women aged 18 years and over experienced violence by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months. It is estimated that one in four women and one in eight men in Australia have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. The NSW Council of Social Service suggests that the statistics under-report the incidence of domestic violence. It is said that the number of reports represents only about 40 per cent of the actual crime levels. I think that all members of our society would agree that those statistics are shocking, and it is hoped that the strengthening of the law through this bill, which we will pass today in this Parliament, will further deter those persons who are would-be offenders from continuing to commit domestic violence offences.

I now look at the bill. In essence, the bill has several purposes. I intend to consider some of the amendments and the reforms contained in the bill. The first reform is that the bill introduces additional offences under new sections 14 (1A) and 14 (1C) of the Act. The new offence under new section 14 (1A) is to provide for an additional offence where the offender breaches an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] in circumstances where the offender knowingly contravenes a prohibition or restriction specified in the order with the intent of causing physical or mental harm, or causing fear of the protected person for their safety or the safety of another person. The penalty provision for the new offence is imprisonment of three years or 100 penalty units. As a former police prosecutor and a former lawyer, I consider the amendment contained in new section 14 (1A) to be a sensible amendment. It will add to the armoury of the police as well as the deterrence element against offending.

The new offence under new section 14 (1C) concerns situations where the offender knowingly contravenes a prohibition or restriction specified in an order on at least two occasions within 28 days immediately before the contravention. The provisions set out in the new section specify that the new offence must be in respect of the same protected person, the same protected order or an apprehended domestic violence order arising from the same application. The maximum penalty for that offence is imprisonment for five years or 150 penalty units. Again, I think that is a sensible provision, which will add to the deterrent factor and hopefully go a long way to protect those vulnerable persons who are subject to abhorrent behaviour by those people who commit offences.

The second reform is to introduce the serious domestic violence prevention scheme. The bill introduces a new part 10A under the heading "Serious domestic violence prevention orders". The reform set out within new part 10A inserts new sections 87A to 87H. The offence provision is set out within new section 87E. The offence is tailored to high-risk offenders and provides for a contravention of a serious domestic violence abuse prevention order by providing for a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment or 300 penalty units. In my view, any amendments which strengthen the legislative armoury to combat domestic and personal violence is important. The third reform modernises the definition of "stalking" to include electronic monitoring or tracking of a person's activities, communications or movements. Each of those reforms mentioned are important, and it is hoped that the reforms will act as deterrents to the commission of further domestic and family violence offences.

In leading the Opposition's response to the bill, the shadow Attorney General has correctly pointed out that the bill does not have a definite commencement date. I note that an amendment will be proposed by the shadow Attorney General. The absence of a definite commencement date is similar to two bills that were passed in June. I refer specifically to the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024 and the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) and Other Legislation Amendment (Knife Crime) Act 2024, otherwise known as Jack's law. To date, those pieces of legislation have not yet commenced, and the Government has not provided a clear timeline for the commencement of the earlier legislation. The Opposition hopes that those earlier pieces of legislation are implemented swiftly to protect members of our society.

Our community deserves to know that laws aimed to protect members of our community are not only correct but are also implemented swiftly to protect our society. The Opposition supports the bill as it is clear that we must do all that we can to deter those who are of a mind to commit any form of domestic and family violence. As members of this House, we must do all we can to protect victims and to deter criminal offending. It is important that we work cooperatively in the interests of society to combat criminal offending, particularly relating to domestic and family violence. I look forward to the implementation of this bill, and it is hoped that the earlier bills are commenced in a timely manner. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:29): Counting Dead Women Australia counts every known death due to violence against women in Australia and I acknowledge the work of researchers who report on those heartbreaking and very sobering statistics. Forty-eight—that is how many women have died this year in Australia due to violence. The Convener of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team and NSW State Coroner, Magistrate Teresa O'Sullivan, noted in the 2021-23 eighth report of the review team that:

... its publication comes at a pivotal juncture, as the national conversation coalesces on the pervasive issue of domestic violence homicide and gender-based violence more broadly.

Since the Team's establishment in 2010 there has been a gradual decline in domestic violence homicides in NSW. More recently, however, this downward trend has stalled, and a number of recent cases have drawn into sharp focus the unacceptably high rates of domestic violence homicide, and in particular the deaths of women, that persist nationwide. The sharp rise in the number of women killed across Australia has seen a groundswell of community-led advocacy demanding urgent action to prevent men's violence against women.

The Opposition supports the bill but we will be moving an amendment for consideration by the House—a sensible amendment that provides some certainty for the sector that changes will actually happen. The Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 introduces two new more serious offences. Proposed section 14 (1A) makes it an offence to breach an apprehended domestic violence order with intent—that is, to knowingly breach an ADVO with the intention to cause physical or mental harm, with a maximum

penalty of three years imprisonment, a \$11,000 fine or both. The bill also introduces proposed section 14 (1C), which makes the persistent breach of an ADVO an offence, with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$16,500 fine, or both.

The other major reform is the creation of serious domestic abuse prevention orders, which will apply where a person over 18 years of age has a conviction or charges within the past 10 years of a serious nature, and there are reasonable grounds to believe an order would protect former, current or potential partners from domestic abuse. The orders are tailored to high-risk offenders with a breach incurring a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$33,000 fine, or both. The bill also introduces an expanded definition of "stalking" under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act to include electronic monitoring or the tracking of a person's activities, communications or movements.

While the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 introduces a new civil protection order scheme for serious domestic abuse, increases penalties for two types of ADVOS and tightens the definition of "stalking", the Attorney General needs to respond to ongoing questions about the commencement of the legislation. Following the tragic death of Molly Ticehurst, who was failed by both the justice system and the supports she should have rightly expected, the Liberals and The Nationals immediately called for bail reforms to expand the use of electronic monitoring devices to serious domestic violence charges, to expand the grounds for staying the granting of bail for serious personal violence charges, and to remove the power for registrars to determine bail for serious personal violence charges where bail is opposed, given the widespread audiovisual capacity across our courthouses enabling magistrates to make orders from centralised locations if necessary.

The Government did not support that bill, resulting in weeks of delay for those essential reforms to take effect. When the Government did finally bring its own bill to Parliament, we were pleased that it adopted the Opposition's proposals and reforms. In relation to those changes, and despite repeated questioning during budget estimates, a line-up of Ministers could not tell us when magistrates would start to hear domestic violence bail applications nor when electronic monitoring would commence. When the Attorney General was asked about the implementation of domestic violence electronic monitoring, after much dithering, he said:

Yes. It's my legislation. It's the Minister for Corrections and Corrections for the implementation of electronic monitoring.

But when the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault was asked who was responsible for the implementation of the law, she replied, "The Attorney General is." Further, police commissioner Karen Webb was also asked in budget estimates about electronic monitoring, and she responded that the responsibility for the initiative was Corrections. Just as we are no closer to understanding which Minister is responsible for electronic monitoring, we also have no idea when it will commence. Similarly, the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) and Other Legislation Amendment (Knife Crime) Act 2024 has also not yet commenced. While both I and the sector welcome those changes, we seek some clarity from the Attorney General on the date of implementation.

I acknowledge Domestic Violence NSW and thank it again for the invitation to join its members at the conference held last week—a significant gathering marking 50 years since the first women's refuge was established in Glebe. Elsie Women's Refuge changed the landscape for women and children facing domestic and family violence. It was a symbolic moment when Anne Summers, Jennifer Dakers, Carole Baker, Margaret Power, Lina Clayton and Bessie Guthrie claimed the two vacant houses and opened the doors to women and children, ensuring they had a safe and secure space. Little did those determined and forthright feminists in 1974 know that they were making history and that their actions on that day would save thousands of lives in the future. Anne Summers wrote in her book *Ducks on the Pond*:

It is not always obvious at the time that history is being made ... It was one of those rare moments when the right idea leads to an important social change.

I know that all members in this House join me in honouring those pioneering women. We thank them for paving the way to creating a safer future for all women and children.

I also take the opportunity to applaud the work of my local service provider, Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Service. Liberty continues to provide an incredible array of support services for women and children impacted by domestic violence in our local community. I am really privileged to work with Liberty to enhance those services at every opportunity. Its work has not gone unnoticed. At the regional business awards held on Friday night, I was delighted to be in the crowd to applaud loudly as it was presented with the top accolade for Outstanding Community Organisation. That, of course, follows the many celebrations that followed the 2023 Business Awards, when Liberty was announced the winner of the Employer of Choice – Under 20 Employees category and was a State finalist in the Outstanding Community Organisation and in the Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion categories.

As mentioned, the Opposition will not oppose the bill. We welcome any changes that will ensure that women and children are safe and that this State is free from domestic violence homicide and gender-based violence. However, each time the murder of another woman as a result of domestic and family violence is reported, we are reminded that there is still much more work to be done. As shadow Minister, I am committed to continuing to work alongside the sector, listening to the experiences of service providers, listening to victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and, importantly, ensuring that, when laws are passed in this Parliament, they are responsive, effective and implemented in a timely manner.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:36): I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Domestic violence is a scourge—we have heard that from a number of speakers. We need to provide all the necessary supports to victims. Currently, the maximum penalties for breach of an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] are two years in prison, a \$5,500 fine, or both. The bill introduces two new more serious offences. The first new offence, under proposed section 14 (1A), is breach of an ADVO with intent—that is, knowingly breaching an ADVO with intention to cause physical or mental harm, with a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment, a \$11,000 fine, or both. The second new offence, under proposed section 14 (1C), is the persistent breach of an ADVO, with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$16,500 fine, or both.

The other major reform is the creation of serious domestic abuse prevention orders, which will apply where a person over 18 years of age has a conviction or charges within the past 10 years of a serious nature, and there are reasonable grounds to believe an order would protect former, current or potential partners from domestic abuse. The orders are tailored to high-risk offenders with a breach incurring a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$33,000 fine, or both. Making an order will also have an immediate impact on licences under the firearms and weapons prohibition Act. The bill also introduces an expanded definition of "stalking" under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act to include electronic monitoring or the tracking of a person's activities, communications or movements. As we have heard from Opposition speakers, the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024, which provides for electronic monitoring and removes the power of registrars to decide bail, still has not commenced. Jack's law relating to knife crime has also not commenced.

I will talk about some personal experiences in this area. I have been fortunate to go out with our local police. From time to time I have attended from 6.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I have been to a number of domestic violence cases at 2.00 a.m., 3.00 a.m. or even 4.00 a.m. On one particular occasion I attended an incident with police officers in which the victim was suffering from severe facial lacerations and bruises, and there was blood on the floor. A three-year-old child had supposedly fallen out of a cot and cracked its skull, and there was blood there too. The offender was obviously affected by drugs or alcohol. We transported that woman to the local hospital. I went in the ambulance with her and the young child.

I must admit that I grew up in a fairly stable family and had not experienced this before. Halfway to hospital, which was only 15 minutes away, the victim tried to tell me that it was probably her fault, that her partner did not mean it and that he had done it before but that it was okay because he looked after them. I was a horrified by that situation. At times I work an ambulance shift with the paramedics, so I have been to fatal car accidents and I have witnessed domestic violence. Believe it or not, in the great area of Tweed, there are 40-odd houses that have been blacklisted by the ambulance. Basically, paramedics will not attend the scene until the police are present. That means there is a long history of physical violence and attacks on ambulance officers. However, we have done some good things. I have seen some good things from the former Government and even this Government.

I have been in this place for a while. I was here when apprehended violence orders, or AVOs, were not transferable between States. If an AVO was issued in Tweed Heads, one could walk across the road and it was not enforceable. Obviously offenders used that to their advantage to harass and attack victims across the road. AVOs are now transferable, which is good. I have led a few inquiries. One change that stuck in my mind was when footage from vest cameras on police officers became permissible in courts. Previously they were not permissible and we had to seek a victim's permission to show the footage in court. Nowadays we do not have to seek that permission, and the footage is shown in court. That change resulted in a 40 per cent increase in offenders pleading guilty because defence lawyers would say, "The magistrate is going to see this, so you can't plead innocent to what happened."

Those are horrendous scenes. I encourage members on both sides of the House, if they get the opportunity, to go out with the police or paramedics and see for themselves. We have a safe haven centre in Tweed. Unfortunately my area has a dubious record. In the past eight years we have had more cases of drink driving per head of population than anywhere else in the State of New South Wales. The majority were mid- to high-range offences, and the majority of cases were by locals. Unfortunately, after living through floods, alcohol has

contributed greatly to these issues. But I must pay credit where credit is due, and I note the Attorney General is in the Chamber. There was a case of domestic violence where, unfortunately, the female victim was murdered by her partner or former partner. That was a very sad case.

Obviously the partner or former partner was convicted of murder, and he is in jail. But the sad point was—and this is where the Attorney General's department really helped us out—the young lass, in her dying days, said she wanted to be buried with her mother in Ballina, but she had no money and she had no siblings or family members. I approached the Attorney General's office for support and they managed to provide enough funds out of the victim's compensation area to allow us to do that. The rest of the community is deeply indebted to the Attorney General and his office for doing that. The police and ambulance do a fabulous job, and we have safe havens. We have lots of different groups providing safe havens. But there is a culture out there.

I have often thought about this. It is up to the whole community to recognise this problem. No one group will solve this problem on its own. We are not going to solve it here by passing laws, creating penalties or funding the other groups out there. We all need to stand up and say, "This is wrong and this should be stopped." The behaviour of certain people in the community is unacceptable. It is time to shine a spotlight on them and say, "Enough is enough. You cannot do this anymore." I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:45): I make a short contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I acknowledge the contribution made by the member for Tweed, particularly about border issues. In that regard I note the member for Monaro is also in the Chamber. Part of the reason that I seek to make a contribution is specifically about the impact of living in a border region as we attempt to combat domestic violence. The member for Tweed said that there was a time when apprehended violence orders, or AVOs, were not transferable across State borders. That is just one aspect of the particular challenges that are faced by border communities as we seek to address the scourge that is domestic violence, and that has prompted me to contribute to debate.

Before I touch on that issue, I will briefly outline what the bill sets out to do. The bill introduces two significant pieces of reform. The first reform creates new, more serious offences, particularly at new section 14 (1A) for breaches of an apprehended domestic violence order with intent, and at new section 14 (1C) for persistent breaches of an ADVO. The second major reform is the creation of serious domestic abuse prevention orders. I acknowledge the Attorney General, who is in the Chamber, and thank him for introducing the bill to the House. I mentioned the scourge of domestic violence and the nuanced issues related to domestic violence for people who live in border areas. In his second reading speech the Attorney General said:

... the bill introduces two new aggravated offences for breaching ADVOs with higher maximum penalties to make sure that our criminal law can better differentiate between breaches and recognise that some are more serious.

He went on to say:

These offences are modelled in part on comparable offences in Victoria under its Family Violence Protection Act 2008.

One positive to living on a border is that we have an opportunity to look over the river, so to speak, to see what is happening in other jurisdictions. It is incumbent on us, in this federated nation, to look to other States and Territories to see what can be done to meet the challenges presented by domestic violence. We must introduce legislation and reforms in our State to combat domestic violence. That was one aspect that I wanted to bring to the attention of the House. The other aspect that I wanted to raise was mentioned by the Attorney General in his second reading, and it is about ADVOs. He said:

... section 10C of the Crimes Act 1900, which applies to all criminal offences, will also apply to these offences.

He went on to say:

This provision extends criminal liability to conduct occurring outside New South Wales that has a geographical nexus with New South Wales. This includes where an offence is committed wholly or partly in New South Wales, or where the offence is committed wholly outside New South Wales but has an effect in New South Wales.

Again I acknowledge that, because it is an important aspect of law which means if the offence occurs outside of our State, it can be taken account of in our State and in our criminal law. The Attorney General says that this is particularly relevant to the offence relating to persistent breaches, which deals with a course of conduct over a period. We need to acknowledge that those offences can occur outside of this State and take note of them as part of our assessment when it comes to the criminal law in this State. I touched on those couple of elements in particular as being part of the flavour of being from a border region. Briefly I draw to the House's attention that an improvement from this reform is that apprehended violence orders will be able to be served electronically. That is an important amendment. It means that they can be served much more readily, not requiring in-person attendance.

Before I conclude my remarks, I again call out the scourge of domestic violence. Almost a third of homicides in New South Wales between 2000 and 2022 were related to domestic violence. I acknowledge those in the Albury electorate who do good work in supporting victim-survivors of domestic violence and who combat the scourge of domestic violence, such as, in particular, Di Glover at Yes Unlimited and Marge Nichol at the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing, and even people I have had the privilege to work with over the journey, such as Diane Small, who is retired from Albury City Council but was a passionate advocate for the need to increase awareness of domestic violence and led an advertising campaign I was involved in several years ago.

People like Diane Small, Di Glover and Marge Nichol are those who truly do make a difference in our community, alongside the investments that governments can make. In that regard, I single out the \$484.3 million investment in October 2021 to establish new women's refuges in New South Wales. We are very fortunate in that Albury is one of the sites selected for a Core and Cluster women's refuge. The member for Blue Mountains too is a passionate advocate, and we share advocacy in that regard for our communities. Those women's refuges are an important step forward for our community in Albury, as is the men's behaviour change program we were able to get to our community during the height of the COVID pandemic.

I will continue to advocate for continued funding for that because, as the member for Tweed said, we need to change behaviours and culture. Penalties are one thing but, at the end of the day, we must work hard to make sure that we change behaviours. As I commend the bill to the House, I echo the member for Tweed. As he said, we have to change culture and behaviour. We all take a stand to say this is wrong and that it should be stopped. I thank the Attorney General for bringing this bill, and I commend it to the House.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:52): I contribute briefly to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. It is an important bill, but we need to make sure that bills introduced are enacted in a timely manner to actually ensure that we have the enforcement and protection that is needed for those victims in our communities. When you look at the lives that are lost at the hands of a partner, it is nothing short of shameful. I will make it very clear: There is no place for domestic and personal violence in society. There is no place for this type of behaviour in New South Wales or Australia.

It is totally unacceptable. All sides of politics need to work together to stamp out this insidious crime. These forms of violence inflict profound physical and psychological harm on individuals and families. We have seen far too many cases where women have been killed in this State. This cannot go on. Everyone deserves to live free from fear and harm, yet many individuals, primarily women and children, experience violence in their own homes. It is a betrayal of trust that disrupts not only the victims' lives but also the lives of those living around them, including friends, family, colleagues and the wider community. It leads to long-term psychological issues, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, which can persist long after the abuse has ended.

In New South Wales the statistics are alarming. The State is in the midst of a domestic violence epidemic. We should do everything we can to fix this broken system because we need to protect vulnerable victims. I have read stories of victims who have lost their lives at 91 years old and at 11 months old. We have all heard the story of Molly Ticehurst, who was killed at the hands of a male partner only this year. She was a mum and a local childcare worker. It sent a shockwave of grief through not only the town of Forbes but also the Central West. On average a woman is killed in Australia every nine days. Rates of domestic violence in the Central West of New South Wales are three times higher than the State's average. So it is important that, looking at those statistics and that data, we provide the necessary support into those communities to ensure that we deal with domestic violence.

Women are living in a state of fear. What kind of world do we live in where women are worried to go for a run on their own, to be out after dark or scared in their own homes? Our police officers receive around 140,000 calls a year, around 400 a day, with 60 per cent of police time spent on responding to domestic violence-related incidents. The prevalence of domestic violence highlights a critical public health issue. Police officers should not have to deliver death messages or have a repeat of the situation time after time. Support systems and networks should not work against each other. They need to work together to ensure that the victims, those who are most vulnerable in our communities, are receiving the support they need.

We should protect victims and prosecute the worst offenders. According to the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, thousands of domestic violence incidents are reported each year, but many go unreported. This indicates a systemic issue that requires immediate attention and action. Additionally, domestic violence impacts our healthcare and legal services. It is important that community programs are aimed at education and awareness because they are vital for challenging those terrible, harmful stereotypes we have seen in the past. Furthermore, the impacts of violence extend beyond the immediate victims. Children who witness domestic violence are at an increased risk of developing emotional and behavioural problems. They may internalise the belief that violence is a normal way to handle conflict, perpetuating a cycle of abuse into future generations. Breaking this cycle is crucial for not only the victims but also the health and safety of our future generations.

The legal framework in New South Wales has made significant strides, and I acknowledge the Attorney General for bringing the bill to the House. It is an attempt to address domestic violence. It includes the introduction of stricter laws and support services for victims. However, enforcement and community awareness remain absolutely critical. As a society, we all collectively need to condemn violence in all its forms and support initiatives that empower victims and hold perpetrators accountable. There is absolutely no place for domestic or personal violence in New South Wales or any society. It is a profound violation of human rights that causes extensive harm to individuals and communities. We all have a part to play to ensure that individuals can live without fear and thrive in safe environments.

All members in this place—whatever side of politics we sit on—have a responsibility to ensure that we stamp out this behaviour and change the culture. That is how we will make changes in our State. I encourage the Attorney General to agree to the foreshadowed amendment, which gives us some start dates. The people of this State do not want only fancy headlines and announcements; they want laws and changes to be acted upon. That is why the Opposition will move an amendment to include a start date for not only this bill but also legislation such as Jack's law, which will ensure we get knives off our streets so our communities can continue to live safely without fear that these weapons are in the hands of people who should not be carrying them. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It being 5.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Public Interest Debate

COST OF LIVING AND ENERGY PRICES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Supports more reliable, affordable and renewable energy to reduce energy prices for New South Wales homes and businesses.
- (2) Condemns the Liberal-Nationals' privatisation of New South Wales's electricity system.
- (3) Supports the additional \$100 million that the New South Wales Government is investing in energy rebates to assist households with the cost of living.

The Minns Labor Government is taking action to reduce the cost-of-living pressures faced by the people of New South Wales and address the cost of electricity bills. That is why the Government is implementing Labor's energy plan. It is increasing the supply of low-cost renewable energy in the system so that New South Wales households and businesses have access to the reliable energy they need. In the meantime, this year the Government is investing an additional \$100 million to boost a range of energy rebates to support households with their bills. This financial year the Government is providing a total of \$435 million to give rebates on energy bills to support eligible families, seniors, low-income households and those living with medical conditions. Those rebates are on top of the \$300 energy relief payment provided by the Albanese Labor Government.

Labor's energy plan stands in stark contrast to the record of Opposition members. While Government members want to build new renewable energy projects, Opposition members are obsessed with flogging them off. The Liberal Party and The Nationals are the parties of privatisation. The previous Coalition Government privatised three of New South Wales's network businesses and six coal-fired power stations in only four years. In fact, the previous Government sold at least \$72 billion in public assets across New South Wales and handed up the largest debt in our State's history, on track for a record \$187 billion when Labor came to government. Government members know that keeping public assets in the hands of the public is good for the budget. But the previous Government gave away the shop.

Just before it finally committed to a renewable energy policy, the Coalition flogged off many of the companies that are most critical to achieve an orderly transition of our electricity system. That made the energy transition in New South Wales much harder. But the Labor Government is getting on with the job of delivering more affordable energy for the people of New South Wales. We are actually implementing the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, not just talking about it. In New South Wales, 35 per cent of our energy is already powered by renewables, almost half of the 12 gigawatts of renewable generation we seek by 2030 is locked in, and a quarter of the long duration storage target has been secured. The Government has partnered with the Commonwealth to support more large-scale renewable energy projects and increase the ambition of the road map.

It has established the Energy Security Corporation, which will invest \$1 billion in critical storage and reliability projects, because a reliable energy system is essential to keep the lights on and avoid price hikes. The Government has just released the new *NSW Consumer Energy Strategy - Powering our people and communities*, which lays out a plan to supercharge the energy transition by helping households and small businesses reduce

their power bills, increase energy efficiency and contribute to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. The Government is putting households and small businesses at the centre of this work and backing it with \$290 million. Energy bills are one of the largest costs for households. I cannot overstate the importance of this work for mums and dads, renters and those living alone. The strategy lays out the pathway for people to use less energy and pay less to heat or cool their homes and run their appliances by taking up energy-saving technologies, including rooftop solar, household batteries, heat pumps and energy efficiency measures.

These upgrades help everyone. The more we install at a household level, the less large-scale infrastructure we need to build. That means lower costs for all. We know that increasing the supply of renewable energy takes time. We know also that New South Wales families are doing it tough right now. That is why the Government is investing \$435 million this financial year to help ease the cost of electricity bills, including a boost of \$100 million to increase the value of energy bill rebates to assist households with the cost of living. The Low Income Household Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate will now deliver \$350 per year, a \$65 increase from last year. The Family Energy Rebate and the Seniors Energy Rebate will now deliver \$250 per year, a \$70 increase from last year. The NSW Gas Rebate provides up to \$110 per year off gas bills. The Life Support Energy Rebate will increase by 22 per cent for each piece of equipment for people who need to use approved energy-intensive life support equipment at home. A few of those constituents who live in my electorate of Blue Mountains are very pleased.

Those increases come on top of the Commonwealth energy bill relief of \$300 for every household and \$325 for small businesses, which this Government is helping to deliver. Labor's plan is to support more renewable energy—the lowest cost form of energy—to replace our ageing coal-fired power stations, and place families, renters, seniors and small business owners at the centre of its efforts. Whether it is helping someone put solar on their roof, buy a home battery, charge their electric vehicle to reduce petrol costs or increase their energy rebate, this Government has the backs of the people of New South Wales.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:07): I make a contribution to the public interest debate. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting instead:

- (2) Notes the Minns Labor Government has bungled the rollout of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.
- (3) Notes the ongoing industrial action from the Electrical Trades Union [ETU] is delaying the delivery of significant energy infrastructure like the Snowy Hydro Gas Power Station.
- (4) Calls on the Premier and Minister for Industrial Relations to step up, invoke section 424 of the Fair Work Act and put an end to the ETU's industrial chaos.

We are once again debating another ill-conceived public interest debate motion. Last week we talked about the transport oriented development zones, while the member for Riverstone went white in the background. It is good that he is back in the Chamber today, ready to talk about energy and the cost of living—two issues that people want answers on from this Government. The political reality is that the more time goes by, the less people want to hear about what this Government has to say about the previous one.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Clerk will stop the clock while I hear the point of order from the member for Leppington.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: My point of order relates to the amendment moved by the member for Manly and whether it is relevant to the substantive motion. If it is, I believe it contradicts the motion and creates a direct negative.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I believe the amendment is related to the original motion, but I will consult the Clerk and think about it very carefully. I thank the member for Leppington for bringing the matter to my attention.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: All people hear are excuses when what they want are answers to their pressing issues on the cost of living and energy. But there is no vision or agenda. This is a mediocre government paralysed by mediocrity, but it does have its energy rebates. I refer members to an investigation done by *The Daily Telegraph* into energy rebates around Australia. It looked at every State and Territory and found:

The most egregious example identified in our investigation is in NSW, where an energy rebate worth up to \$250 annually went to just 11 per cent of eligible households.

That means about 400,000 families qualify for support in this State and about 45,000 of them received it last year. Let us hope history does not repeat itself when it comes to energy rebates. Then Labor has its battery program, which for all intents and purposes is a good program. But, curiously, I note that it was announced the day after the Government revealed that it was going to keep Australia's largest coal-fired power station burning into the future. It has to get out there and say something.

Within days of this program being announced, the Smart Energy Council had to call a crisis meeting of 150 of its members because there was zero industry consultation. The result of that bumbled and hastily announced program is that solar businesses are against the wall. The public interest debate raises the issue of renewable energy. Why on earth would the Government raise renewable energy? Since becoming the Opposition, the Coalition has worked constructively and collaboratively with the Government and has supported legislation. I am reminded of the comments of the former shadow Minister for Energy in the lead-up to the last election. He said:

Our policy development will reflect our desire to build on the Roadmap and accelerate delivery.

...

Labor's chief concern is that, after more than two years, the Coalition's Roadmap appears to have stagnated.

I have news for the Government: On its watch, last year New South Wales had the largest gap between its 2030 emissions reduction goals and the present pace of the renewables rollout. In addition to that, New South Wales is one of the worst States for renewable energy approvals in the entire country. The reason that only 11 per cent of eligible households received that energy rebate, that the battery program led to a crisis meeting of the Smart Energy Council and that New South Wales is one of the worst States for renewable energy planning approvals is not privatisation. It is this New South Wales Labor Government at work. It is an unimaginative government drowning in promises that it is unable to keep, with commitments it cannot deliver and plans it cannot implement.

Finally, when it comes to the cost of living and supporting small businesses across the State, businesses in New South Wales pay well above the national average in payroll tax—in fact, \$2,688 in payroll tax per staff member. The previous Coalition Government raised the payroll tax threshold to \$1.2 million in 2021. We supported calls to raise the threshold for small businesses—not big, small—in this State to \$1.3 million and drop the rate below 5 per cent. But those calls fell on the deaf ears of Mookhey and Minns because, as I said, this is an unimaginative government drowning in promises that it cannot keep, commitments it cannot deliver and plans it simply cannot implement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Before I call the member for Riverstone, I have consulted with the Clerk and I believe the reference in the Opposition amendment to the Electrical Trades Union is a little far removed from the discussion on energy privatisation. I suggest that the Opposition rewrite the amendment and move it later in the debate. I am trying to be fair, but the amendment is a bit of a stretch.

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:14): I contribute to the public interest debate and support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Blue Mountains. This Labor Government is committed to delivering affordable energy to families, affordable renewable energy for those finding it difficult to pay their energy bills. As the State's existing coal-fired power stations are retiring within the next 15 years, the need to secure a new basis of economic prosperity as we shift away from existing forms of energy is imperative. That is a job made even more difficult because of the privatisation agenda of the electricity system by the Opposition. Only a Labor Government is committed to a truly holistic target. The Government will prioritise cheaper energy to provide relief for families, as well as cleaner energy, which is the only way forward.

The Government's pursuit of abundant renewable energy will become the economic base of our great State. It will be foundational in a more diversified economy for New South Wales, and it starts with replacing our ageing coal-fired stations, which is well underway. The Government's commitment is clear to the people of New South Wales. The State has the technology, and we know what we need to build, how much we need and where we need it. Most importantly, we are already doing it. Thirty-five per cent of our energy is already powered by renewables. A quarter of the long duration storage target has also been secured, with more coming through our planning system. The Government is committed not only to consumers but also to workers. Cheaper power will be key to revitalising the New South Wales manufacturing sector. Lower electricity costs incentivise firms to produce in New South Wales, creating secure local employment for communities across the State. That extends to small businesses, which will spend less on power bills and more on employing people.

Across the board, Labor's charge on lowering energy costs will power the New South Wales economy, reducing the cost of living, bolstering employment, driving local business and creating new export opportunities. Let us not forget about the communities that will be central to the State's shift. The Government knows the transition does not come without a cost to landowners and regional communities. That is why the Government has boosted compensation and is delivering additional benefits to fund the communities residing within renewable energy zones. The Government knows that its plan is a long-term one. It knows that residents are facing the burdens of cost-of-living pressures now. That is why it is investing \$435 million dollars this financial year in energy bill relief. Labor is committed to delivering cheaper and cleaner energy.

In the transition, the Government is delivering relief to those who need it now. That is in stark contrast to Liberal Party members opposite and their privatisation love affair. The people of Riverstone know that firsthand. My community is struggling to pay the bills because of the decisions made by those opposite in selling off critical

public assets for a quick penny. One need only look at the impact that living in the most tolled city on the planet is having on the residents of Western Sydney. Every time a public asset is sold to private enterprises, profit always comes before people. Privatisation leads to poorer service delivery for the people of New South Wales. Despite that, those opposite privatised three network businesses and six coal-fired power stations in just four years. They are responsible for making the transition harder. They are responsible for the exorbitant costs that consumers and businesses alike are facing.

Where Labor sees service delivery, the Coalition sees a way to fund its poor economic management. Regardless of whether we are looking at roads, buses or health care, the Liberals have never seen a public asset they did not want to sell. I reaffirm my support for the motion. As vice-president of the North West Business Chamber, I have seen a 300 per cent increase in those needing emergency support because of economic pressures, which are largely because of the decisions made by the previous Government through its obsession with selling off the silverware of the State. In stark contrast to that, we are committed to supporting the people of New South Wales who are finding it tough now with targeted energy bill relief. We are moving towards renewable energy; we are moving towards an energy system that will establish this great State not only now but into the future. We have a plan, and we will deliver.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:19): I thank the member for Blue Mountains for bringing to the House this public interest debate. We on this side are excited that we get to live through a world with a Labor government at both the State and Federal level and we get to keep hearing people carping on about the problems of the people sitting on this side of the House in delivering outcomes for the people of New South Wales and Australia. I say to members that there is a cost-of-living crisis. It is not just a speech that the member for Riverstone can read out which someone else has written for him. There is a legitimate cost-of-living crisis happening across this State and this country. The member for Riverstone should be aware that he has a slim margin—a much slimmer one than mine—so maybe he should think about that before he gets arrogant and obnoxious about sitting in Government every day.

Mr Steve Whan: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for North Shore will resume her seat. The member for Monaro rises on a point of order.

Mr Steve Whan: Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask that the member for North Shore be instructed to stop using words like "arrogant and obnoxious". The member should withdraw those reflections on other people. She often comes into this Chamber with a glass jaw. The member should stop flinging those words around.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I ask the member for North Shore to withdraw the words. She will return to the leave of the motion.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I withdraw those words if the member for Riverstone is upset by them. I note that they are not considered unparliamentary language. They are used in this place every day; being a newer member, he may not be aware of that. If I have offended him, I deeply apologise for doing so. But we should all be cautious about being arrogant or obnoxious in this place with the presumption that we will be returned every single time. The people of New South Wales make that decision, not the people sitting on the Government benches.

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

Ms FELICITY WILSON: The people of New South Wales are suffering every day under the weight of this oppressive Labor Government. Those opposite have been in power for 18 months and they have still failed to deliver anything to improve the lives of the people across this State. The Federal Labor Government has been in power for 2½ years. People say, "It's not easy under Albanese." I do not have an excellent rhyming phrase but it is pretty damn hard under the Albanese Government when people across this country are suffering every day under the failed energy policies and failed cost-of-living policies of Federal and New South Wales Labor. I will not be lectured by the member for Riverstone in his pre-prepared speech, which someone in the Minister's office has handed to him, who pretends that he has a comprehension of the challenges faced by people in the real world who are struggling to pay their electricity bills.

It is Labor Government members who have failed to deliver outcomes for the people of New South Wales. They may like to talk about how they are in government, but they do not act like it. They do not take responsibility for being in government. They do not actually pass legislation that will achieve outcomes for them in government. They do not set the policies that will achieve outcomes for the people of New South Wales. All they do is condemn, complain and make excuses. When the Liberal-Nationals were in government, we had an extensive and bipartisan approach to energy reform. The Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap was supported—

Mr Steve Whan: You just didn't get it done.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: You were not a member of Parliament then, so maybe you should not comment. We were perfectly capable of taking a cross-partisan approach—

Ms Maryanne Stuart: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for North Shore will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order by the member for Heathcote.

Ms Maryanne Stuart: I ask that the member for North Shore direct her comments through the Chair and not speak directly to Government members.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Government members will listen to the member for North Shore in silence and not take the bait. The member will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: The member for Heathcote is correct, and I thank her for the reminder. I am glad that she has read the standing orders. Madam Deputy Speaker, I will address my comments through the Chair. The issue is that a number of Labor members do not seem to realise they are in government. I remember when Labor was in government last time, and the people of New South Wales have certainly not forgotten when those opposite were in government last time. It is rank hypocrisy for the Labor Party to come in here and complain about Liberals and Nationals privatising assets. Madam Deputy Speaker will remember that, at the last minute before the 2011 election, Labor prorogued the Parliament to force through the gentraders transactions and initiated the electricity privatisations that started the challenges the people of New South Wales are now facing. Labor members may be smug, but the cost-of-living crisis and energy prices crisis started when Labor privatised the gentraders in New South Wales. Labor is in government at both levels and still refuses to take responsibility to deal with this crisis for the people of New South Wales and Australia.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:24): I mirror the motion of the member for Blue Mountains asking that the House supports more reliable, affordable and renewable energy to reduce energy prices for New South Wales homes and businesses; condemns the Liberal-Nationals Government privatisation of New South Wales's electricity system; and supports the additional \$100 million that the New South Wales Government is investing in energy rebates to assist households with the cost of living. If we want to talk about arrogance in this place, I suggest that that is demonstrated when a member of the debating team leaves before the debate is finished.

Last week the member for Blue Mountains and I were at a well-attended event. It was the Minister's launch of the New South Wales Consumer Energy Strategy. That event was well attended because industry, the business sector and the wider community acknowledge that that Minns Labor Government strategy lays out practical ways to supercharge the energy transition across New South Wales by helping households and small businesses to reduce their power bills, increase energy efficiency and contribute to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. We are putting households and small businesses at the centre of this work and backing them in with a \$290 million investment. The plan looks at ways of enabling further technology, such as using heat pump water systems, batteries and electric vehicles, as well as energy efficiency measures.

Since my household invested in a heat pump water system and a battery, I have not been able to get my husband off the monitoring app. He is constantly checking to see the flow of energy, the bits of power going from our solar panels to the battery and then to the grid. Our Government is making it possible for even more households to have the same enjoyment that my husband has. They can also have this great investment and make these incredible savings. Across New South Wales, a typical house could save \$2,000 a year, on average, and reduce 1,100 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions with energy-saving technologies. The plan has 50 clear actions that are focused on a holistic approach. The strategy is about harnessing community enthusiasm and providing cost-of-living relief. We know that is not what the other guys were focused on. No siree. The previous Liberal Government privatised three network businesses and six coal-fired power stations in just four years.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Yes siree.

Ms DONNA DAVIS: I am so glad those opposite have not fallen asleep. Just before finally committing to a renewable energy policy, the Coalition flogged off many of the companies that are most critical to achieving an orderly transition of our electricity system. That has made the energy transition in New South Wales much harder. Other States like Queensland own their coal-fired power stations and have control overall when they exit the system. But New South Wales does not have the levers that other States have because the Liberals sold off those assets. Thanks to those on the other side, our State fell behind.

Luckily for the people of the State, our Minns Labor Government is focused with laser-like vision—just like Minister Park—and is taking action. The Government is working to increase the supply of renewable energy. It takes time. In the meantime, we know that New South Wales families are doing it tough, so we are taking action

and investing \$435 million this financial year to help ease the cost of electricity bills. Because, yes, we do live in Western Sydney. We do understand the experiences that people are facing with their cost-of-living pressures. We do have members who live across regional New South Wales.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Tamworth and the member from Dubbo will listen to the member for Parramatta in silence.

Ms DONNA DAVIS: Members of the Labor Minns Government live in the regions, Western Sydney and across Greater Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter. They understand what people are going through. We are including a boost of \$100 million to increase the value of energy bill rebates to assist households with the cost of living. The Low Income Household Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate will now deliver \$350 a year, which is a \$65 increase on last year, for low-income households. The Government has a plan to support more renewable energy and put people at the heart of its decisions. As the member for Blue Mountains said, whether it is putting solar on roofs, buying a home battery, charging a car or increasing energy rebates, the Government has got the backs of the people of New South Wales.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:29): Today we have again heard about Labor's "energy plan". Right off the bat, I say it sounds more like a flop than a plan. The Opposition has revised its amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting instead:

- (2) Notes the Minns Labor Government has bungled the rollout of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone and is putting pressure on affordable energy delivery in New South Wales and the cost of living.
- (3) Notes the ongoing industrial action from the Electrical Trades Union is impacting the delivery of energy across New South Wales and impacting the cost of living.

It is hypocritical of those opposite to point the finger at the Coalition when the Labor Government is failing in every way when it comes to energy in this State. The power problems in New South Wales extend well beyond the threat of blackouts. In fact, this mob is reneging on its responsibility when it comes to renewables. The Government has completely bungled the rollout. If one wants proof of that, they can visit any regional community. It is all well and good for the member for Parramatta to talk about it, but nothing is impacting her. Any regional community—not so much Riverstone, but maybe the Blue Mountains—will tell you that consultation has gone out the window and that there has clearly not been enough. I have seen that firsthand in my electorate with the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone [REZ].

When people do not know what is going on and have not been taken on the journey, it creates angst. It is abundantly clear that we cannot keep going down the path that we are on because of this mob. We need to change direction and listen to the people who are living and working in those regions, such as the councils. There are currently 12.5 gigawatts of generation in planning—some of it in the build stage—for the Central-West Orana REZ. That is four times the original plan and double what the aspirational target is. If I break that down, it is like jumping on the metro tomorrow morning and fitting 400 people into a carriage that is designed for 100 people. Everyone would be severely cramped and stressed. There is no control over what is happening in the carriage. When the train breaks down—which is inevitable—what happens then? That is the problem. When I ask the Government where things are up to, I cannot get a straight answer, which paints a concerning picture of exactly where it is heading.

If we combine all the renewable energy projects, add in the impact of transmission lines and then add the accommodation and other requirements, we start to get a feeling of the cumulative impact that is being felt in regional communities. It is pushing regional communities to breaking point. When talking about the capacity of the REZ growing, we are talking about a lot more land. As I said, it is already at four times the original plan. Let us think about what that means for people in regional areas. Regional residents are the ones who are currently being forced into this. It is being forced on them. It seems that we are no closer to solving the supply issue hanging over the State. There is significant responsibility for this at the Federal level as well. As part of his final report, former Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner Andrew Dyer was blunt in his assessment of the current renewables pathway. He said that random renewables development had to stop, and an orderly and transparent pipeline of viable projects is required—orderly, transparent and viable.

I could not agree more. A new commissioner has just been announced, and I look forward to catching up with Tony Mahar to talk about this subject in the near future to see where he thinks the Federal Government, which is also Labor, can get on board and help accelerate things in the right way rather than the wrong way. We know that renewable energy has a role to play and that it is an important part of the energy mix, but we also know that this mob is not capable. The Government needs to take control, not take credit for something that it has not delivered yet. The residents of New South Wales need reliable, affordable energy solutions, and that is on the Government. Those opposite must stop looking backwards and pointing the finger about something that they are

now in control of. They have the ability to do something. We need to see that happen before there is irreversible damage to regional areas with very little to show for it.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:34): I speak in support of the motion. I refer in particular to the impacts of privatisation on local communities and the experience in my electorate of Wagga Wagga. I am of course talking about Transgrid's HumeLink project, an alarming example of how a privatised monopoly provider can run roughshod over communities. It is a project without a shred of competition, because the Parliament privatised a monopoly provider and then set it to work under a regulator that was at arm's length from the Government in a system that is so opaque and difficult to understand that it makes bitcoin look like *Play School*. At a time when we faced our greatest challenge in moving to renewable energy to save the planet, when we needed the best in electricity transmission for our distributed electricity production—the solar factories and the wind towers—what did we get? We got a regulatory system so complex that it would drive anyone mad to understand it; a system geared to providing the cheapest product, not the best; and a system without any regard for social licence.

That is what privatisation meant. In the case of Transgrid, the regulations were set up to make sure that the infrastructure was not gold plated. There were many discussions about how we cannot gold plate the infrastructure. For this project, the plating is not even tin. At a time when the State needed the best infrastructure, it got the cheapest. The cheapest option for the project is to overhead the powerlines, which means building huge towers and mile upon mile of overhead cables, which will march their way through farmland whether owners approve of it or not. Properties and lifestyles will be scarred by the enormous towers and transmission lines, and it will have an effect that will continue for generations. If quality, not simply the cheapest cost, was the priority, we could have undergrounded the powerlines and we would have a modern transmission system that, in the long run, is more effective, efficient and saves money. Under a privatised, complex, opaque system, where government lost control of the process, the State has ended up with the cheapest product it can get.

Social licence was not even part of the regulations in those days. One can see that in the way the community consultation took place on the project. Communities and landowners were treated appallingly. We were able to correct that, but not before it had taken a significant mental toll on the community. Thankfully, there has now been an acknowledgement that social licence matters. Even so, the system is broken. We talk about social licence and the regulator now admits that it will consider it. I reflect on the discussion around community benefits. There is a decision now to consider social licence and, therefore, the regulator can approve expenditure on community benefits. The regulator tells me that it cannot simply acknowledge community benefits; it has to wait for Transgrid to put a proposal forward on the community benefits, at which point the regulator can then approve it. For the community to get the benefits as part of the social licence, we have an unelected, privatised monopoly going to an unelected regulator.

Where is the community in that? Where is the Government in that? It is absolutely nowhere. There have been motions from both Houses of this Parliament to increase community benefits for those communities. To this point, the motions have gone unacknowledged and have essentially been ignored. For all intents and purposes, it looks like we have outsourced government, and that is a shame on this Parliament. The fact of the matter is that there are renewable energy zones in place. Those renewable energy zones were established partly as a result of the fact that the previous Government realised that it had lost control of supervision of the transmission infrastructure. Today members have made the point that those renewable energy zones are not working well. But the communities around those renewable energy zones have had more input and say than the people affected by the HumeLink project. Imagine that situation. The HumeLink project is an example of what happens as a result of thoughtless privatisation. It has been a curse to the community I represent and it is a dud deal for the State.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:39): By leave: On behalf of The Greens I contribute to the public interest debate to support the motion on energy privatisation and the cost of living moved by the member for Blue Mountains. I offer absolute recognition of and support for the first part of the motion, which calls for the House to support more reliable, affordable and renewable energy to reduce energy prices for New South Wales homes and businesses. I put on record that The Greens recognise that it is not okay that we endured over a decade of a Liberal-Nationals Government that privatised every State asset that it possibly could—

Mr Matt Cross: Asset recycling.

Ms JENNY LEONG: —and spun it as asset recycling. After being re-elected, it is not enough for the New South Wales Labor Government to say that it is committed to no more privatisation. After so many assets have been privatised, it is not enough to say, "No more will be privatised under this Labor Government." The Greens put a challenge to the New South Wales Labor Government: If it is genuinely committed to the idea of affordable, sustainable, renewable and quality—to take the member for Wagga Wagga's point—energy delivery for the people of New South Wales, it should open a conversation about reversing the privatisation agenda that was delivered under the previous Government.

The Parliament needs to recognise that the only way it can have full control over the delivery of energy in our communities that is renewable, affordable and meets community needs is to have it in public hands. As the member for Wagga Wagga pointed out, the moment essential public infrastructure and assets are privatised is the moment the community loses control and the profit motive of private providers and corporations drives the agenda over and above environmental and community impact and cost. Future generations will pay for the climate disaster and economic inequality that will result from a failure to reverse the privatisation agenda of the former Coalition Government. That is not a new conversation, as the member for North Shore mentioned.

I refer now to the legacy and commitment of the late Greens upper House member John Kaye, who had an incredible agenda to outline the massive risks that privatisation would pose to our transition to a renewable energy future. The sale of the poles and wires and the dark days of the old New South Wales Labor Government going down the dangerous path of privatisation opened up this State to what Opposition members would call asset recycling and what we would call privatisation hell, and also made it harder for this State to transition to a renewable energy future. Once we outsource and privatise essential energy assets, the ability to transition and respond to climate action demands and renewable energy demands is limited as a result of the need to interact and negotiate with the private sector.

I appreciate that there is a cost-of-living crisis, and we have heard members talk about the impacts of the crisis on their communities. But let me be clear. If we ask any person in New South Wales about the biggest impact of the cost-of-living crisis on their weekly household budget, they will say that their largest weekly expense is housing, not energy. Yet New South Wales Labor is refusing to entertain the idea of an immediate rent freeze and Federal Labor is refusing to entertain the idea of a mortgage interest rate cut. If New South Wales Labor and Federal Labor want to deliver for the people of New South Wales, then they will start looking at the cost of housing as the real and biggest financial pressure on everyone that lives in this State.

Mr MATT CROSS: I seek leave to contribute to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:45): In reply: I acknowledge all members who made contributions to the public interest debate. The member for Manly said that support via rebates is not going to the people who need it, but I say that he should go out and tell people about the relief that is available, stop the politicking and actually help his constituents. The member for Riverstone reminded us of the ramifications of the former Coalition Government's sale of public assets. I thank the member for North Shore for a very interesting contribution of elitist claptrap. The member had the gall to talk about arrogance and hypocrisy and to give us a history lesson. We must not forget that this is the member who could not remember where she lived during preselection. The member for Parramatta spoke about the energy rebates and the assistance that our Government is providing communities. The member for Dubbo is on record talking about the importance of the renewable energy zones in supporting jobs and driving investment right across our region and saying that they are going to unlock so much opportunity. You have been involved in pushing this, Dugald Saunders, and you should know that the transition is well underway.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Adam Crouch: Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask you to remind the member for Blue Mountains that she must refer to members in this place by their electorate and not by their name.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I thank the member for Terrigal.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: The member for Dubbo knows that the transition is well underway. Our Government has a great track record of giving credit where it is due. We are happy to give that to the Opposition, as we have done in the past. The Opposition had Labor's support, and now the Labor Government is delivering and implementing the ideas. Opposition members criticised the uptake of rebates. We give no thanks to them for confusing the rebates they left us with: six rebates with different application pathways. The Opposition has no clear energy policy. One minute it supports renewables; the next, nuclear. I acknowledge the member for Wagga Wagga, who reminded us of the impact of privatisation on our communities. We should never forget that. The member for Newtown reminded us of the years of asset recycling spin and, going to paragraph (1) of this important motion, the critical need for our communities to have reliable and affordable energy. The energy rebates will help to achieve that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Blue Mountains has moved a motion, to which the member for Dubbo has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes29
 Noes48
 Majority.....19

AYES

Anderson, K
 Ayyad, T
 Cooke, S
 Cross, M
 Crouch, A (teller)
 Davies, T
 Di Pasqua, S
 Griffin, J
 Henskens, A
 Hodges, M

James, T
 Kemp, M
 Lane, J
 Moylan, B
 Petinos, E
 Provest, G
 Roberts, A
 Saunders, D
 Singh, G
 Sloane, K

Speakman, M
 Taylor, M
 Thompson, T
 Toole, P
 Tuckerman, W
 Ward, G
 Williams, L
 Williamson, R (teller)
 Wilson, F

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Clancy, J
 Coure, M
 Layzell, D
 Preston, R
 Williams, R

Quinnell, S
 Kamper, S
 Minns, C
 Hoenig, R
 Aitchison, J

Amendment negatived.

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

The House divided.

Ayes48
 Noes29
 Majority.....19

AYES

Atalla, E
 Bali, S
 Barr, C
 Butler, L
 Car, P
 Catley, Y
 Chanthivong, A
 Cotsis, S

Hagarty, N (teller)
 Hannan, J
 Harris, D
 Harrison, J
 Haylen, J
 Holland, M
 Kaliyanda, C
 Kirby, W

Piper, G
 Regan, M
 Saffin, J (teller)
 Saliba, D
 Scully, P
 Shetty, K
 Smith, T
 Stuart, M

AYES

Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dalton, H
Davis, D
Dib, J
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Greenwich, A

Leong, J
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
O'Neill, M
Park, R

Tesch, L
Vo, T
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S
Wilkinson, K

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayyad, T
Cooke, S
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Griffin, J
Henskens, A
Hodges, M

James, T
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Moylan, B
Petinos, E
Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Singh, G
Sloane, K

Speakman, M
Taylor, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Ward, G
Williams, L
Williamson, R (teller)
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Aitchison, J
Hoenig, R
Kamper, S
Minns, C
Quinnell, S

Williams, R
Clancy, J
Coure, M
Preston, R
Layzell, D

Motion agreed to.

Bills

**CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
BILL 2024**

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:02): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I acknowledge those who have spoken in debate about domestic violence and who represent electorates across New South Wales, including the members from this side of the Chamber: the shadow Attorney General and member for Wahroonga, the member for Goulburn, the member for North Shore, the member for Dubbo, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Tweed, the member for Albury and the member for Bathurst—and, of course, myself. It is interesting that we have all said similar things—namely, that domestic violence is an intolerable, disgusting scourge on our society across the length and breadth of New South Wales.

The Opposition supports the bill. The shadow Attorney General and member for Wahroonga has a very sensible amendment, which seeks to require the bill to commence on or before 1 December 2024. As articulated by so many members on this side of the Chamber, it is great to see legislation that will bring in tougher laws, but the community needs assurance that it will commence in a timely fashion. I note the Attorney General is in the Chamber. He has done an outstanding job with this piece of legislation. I commend him for that. We all agree that we have to do more to send a very clear message to those gutless perpetrators that their appalling behaviour will not be tolerated. That was summed up by the member for Tweed, who, like me, has spent time with his local police force. He has seen firsthand the damage that domestic violence does not just to the immediate victim but also to the wider family unit, where it continues.

The numbers are truly scary. As we heard, in Australia around every nine days a woman is killed in a domestic violence incident by someone who is supposed to be a loved one. That is a blight on the behaviour of

men who think that they can conduct themselves in that way and that it is somehow acceptable. It is not. I have attended many domestic violence forums on the Central Coast—when in government and now in opposition. Our community is absolutely disgusted at the behaviour of those perpetrators. They need to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. We need to make it very clear to them that what they are doing is totally unacceptable and abhorrent to everybody else in the wider community.

The bill introduces two new more serious offences. The first new offence, under new section 14 (1A), is the breach of an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] with intent—that is, to knowingly breach the ADVO with the intention to cause physical or mental harm, with a maximum penalty of three years in prison, a \$11,000 fine or both. The second new offence, under new section 14 (1C), is the persistent breach of an ADVO, with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$16,500 fine or both. But as we have heard in this place time and again—it is like a broken record—the perpetrators keep reoffending. It is totally disgusting to all of us that they think they have a right to behave that way. I am pleased that the new offences are being added and the Opposition fully supports them.

The second major reform is the creation of serious domestic abuse prevention orders, which apply where a person over 18 years of age has a conviction or charges within the past 10 years of a serious nature, and there are reasonable grounds to believe that an order would protect former, current or potential partners from domestic abuse. Sadly, there is a cycle and a pattern of behaviour with those offenders. In a lot of cases, it stems from an abusive home life when they were children, which they think they can carry into relationships when they become adults. This is a good reform. The orders will be tailored to high-risk offenders. Time and again, high-risk offenders have been able to skirt around the law, putting victims and their families at risk. In addition, a breach of those orders carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$33,000 fine or both. The making of an order also has an immediate impact on licences under the Firearms Act and the Weapons Prohibition Act. Those are very sensible amendments to protect victims and victims' families from that insidious and disgusting behaviour.

Like the member for Tweed, I have spoken in this place multiple times about the time I spent with the Brisbane Water police command. I thank the incredible men and women of the Brisbane Water command, who every day have to face the aftermath or the impact of that sort of vile behaviour. On the night I spent with them, I was shocked and staggered at the number of calls that were coming into the police station that potentially stemmed from or involved a domestic violence incident. Let me be clear. It is great to have a community that steps up and reports domestic violence incidents. When we were kids—although I note there are some members in the Chamber who are much younger than me—if people were fighting at home, people did not want to get involved. They said, "What's happening next door is not our business." It is great to have seen a change in attitude.

The Central Coast has done a great job with its zero-tolerance approach to abusive behaviour. We have seen a rise in reporting of domestic violence and aggravated assault around domestic violence. I have seen that time and time again. That was made evident to me when I was out on patrol with the police. Many people called in to report potential incidents happening with their neighbours. That goes to show that our community is stepping up and saying, "We will not tolerate this sort of behaviour anywhere," whether it be the Central Coast, Maroubra or anywhere else in New South Wales. That is a good thing. I commend the Attorney General for his work on the bill. It is a good addition to the suite of measures that were implemented by the former Government.

There are many organisations on the Central Coast and around New South Wales that are fighting the tide on this issue and supporting family members, loved ones and victims of this insidious crime. I thank all of those organisations for the great work they do every single day. But we still have to push for the change in attitude where it pervades in our society. Young men—and women in smaller numbers—must be aware of the fact that that behaviour will not be tolerated. Significant penalties are now being enforced as part of a suite of measures. That sends a very clear message that family and domestic violence will not be tolerated under any circumstances. I acknowledge the members on both sides of the House who contributed to the debate. All of our communities face these challenges on a daily basis. We have heard the same stories repeated. Sadly, it tends to culminate in the death of an innocent victim at the hands of someone they thought they could love and trust.

Members of this place have had to talk all too often about people in their community who have lost their lives to this disgusting behaviour. Again, I acknowledge all the contributions that have been made to debate on this bill. I thank the Attorney General for adding to the suite of penalties and fines that can be imposed on potential perpetrators of domestic violence. The Parliament must continue to send that very clear message to those people. One of the most chilling experiences I have had was when I sat in a room with a group of perpetrators at one of our clubs on the Central Coast. They felt no remorse or contrition for what they had done.

A question that was put to one of the perpetrators was, "Would you do this behaviour at work?" He said, "Absolutely not. I would get caught." His attitude was that it was perfectly okay to conduct abuse in his relationship, even though he would never think about taking that behaviour to the workplace. We still have to deal

with that sort of mindset, which is difficult. We must send a very clear message from every member of the Chamber, on all sides of politics, that we have no tolerance for these disgusting, gutless and cowardly crimes. I commend the bill to the House, and I commend the amendments that will be moved by the member for Wahroonga at the consideration in detail stage.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (18:09): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on this important bill, in particular members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Charlestown, Goulburn, Shellharbour, North Shore, Mount Druitt, Orange, Prospect, Ballina, Fairfield, Dubbo, Parramatta, Castle Hill, Port Macquarie, Tweed, Albury, Bathurst and Terrigal—who just made an excellent contribution. I will briefly address some of the matters raised during debate on the bill. I note the member for Wahroonga and other members of the Opposition spoke at length about the commencement date of the bill and other important aspects of the legislation introduced by the Government. Government members understand the desire to move quickly and with urgency to combat an issue as challenging and pressing as domestic and family violence.

I do not think any member could question our bona fides in this regard, particularly given how quickly we responded to the horrific incidents of domestic violence earlier this year. We moved swiftly and with very strong and decisive measures to respond to that, and we continue to do so with the suite of measures that are inherent in the bill. However, the desire for speed must be balanced against the need for time to make sure we implement these reforms effectively. The bill was to commence on proclamation to enable necessary implementation activities to take place. That was recognised by the Legislation Review Committee in the *Legislation Review Digest No. 19/58*. In particular, the NSW Police Force requires time to ensure that all of its systems and officers are ready to implement these reforms. If police cannot effectively implement the reforms on the ground, the legislation will fail.

This implementation work is critical because the NSW Police Force is responsible for enforcing apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs] and investigating breach offences. It will be the primary agency applying for the new serious domestic abuse prevention orders introduced by the bill. In fact, through the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and others, the police primarily requested that the scheme be put into legislative effect. That is what the Government is doing. In addition to that, other agencies, including the courts, also require time to ensure the necessary systems and processes are in place before the reforms commence, and so that training and education can be delivered. A delayed commencement is also important for our agencies to continue to work with the experts in the domestic and family violence sector to ensure that these reforms can be implemented effectively.

Time to carefully implement laws responding to domestic and family violence should come as no surprise to any member in this place. We saw that with the coercive control reform, which had an extended implementation period of up to 19 months because of its complexity and novelty. Labor supported that while in opposition. In the same way, the reforms in this bill, such as the serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme, represent significant reforms that are complex, novel and need time to get right. Forcing reforms to commence before our agencies are ready would be irresponsible and a recipe for failure. We heard that victims cannot afford to wait, but let us be clear: Victims deserve reforms that are implemented effectively.

However, in light of concerns raised by members—I note that my office has spoken to upper House and lower House crossbench members particularly today—the Government will be moving an amendment to provide greater certainty about the commencement of some of the measures in the bill. The member for Wahroonga stated that the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2024 has not commenced. That is not correct. The majority of that Act commenced on 1 July 2024. Parts of that Act that have commenced relate to the expansion of the show cause test and stays, requiring bail decision-makers to consider domestic abuse risk factors in the unacceptable risk test at section 18 of the Bail Act and the views of victims and family members, and improving the process for prosecutions relating to tracking devices.

The parts of the bill that have not commenced relate to real and valid operational requirements. Work on those has been progressed as a priority and is well underway. The member for Wahroonga also questioned why the amendments in the bill are necessary. Up until now it was common for registrars to make bail decisions, particularly in regional areas that are not serviced every day by a sitting magistrate. The Government has committed funding for six new magistrates to be appointed to the Local Court. However, the Government does not expect those magistrates to be able to sit in all of the regional areas of New South Wales that have previously been serviced by registrars. Instead, the Government anticipates there will be increased use of audiovisual links [AVL] in bail matters, particularly in regional and remote areas, to hub or metropolitan centres.

Currently the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998 requires that, in certain proceedings, including in first appearance bail matters, the accused must appear in person in court unless an exception applies, the parties consent or the court otherwise directs. New amendments to section 5BA of the Act create a new

exception to allow an accused person to appear in first appearance bail proceedings by AVL in circumstances where a magistrate is not available at the court at which the accused would otherwise physically appear.

The member for Goulburn suggested that the higher penalties available under the aggravated offences for breach of an ADVO are ineffective because they are table 2 offences, which are to be heard in the Local Court unless the prosecution elects otherwise. I make three points in this regard. First, the existing standard ADVO breach offence is a summary offence, so the option to try breaches on indictment is not currently available. This reform provides that further option, which means that the most serious forms of breach can be tried in the higher courts and the full penalty will be available. Second, this comment fails to recognise that a difference in the maximum penalty is always relevant for sentencing, even in the Local Court. At common law, the maximum penalty is an important consideration for sentencing. For example, in the High Court case of *Markarian v The Queen*, the court stated:

... careful attention to maximum penalties will almost always be required, first because the legislature has legislated for them; secondly, because they invite comparison between the worst possible case and the case before the court at the time; and thirdly, because in that regard they do provide, taken and balanced with all of the other relevant factors, a yardstick.

This means that a higher maximum penalty for an offence is a relevant factor in assessing the objective seriousness of the criminal conduct in question. Third, the majority of indictable criminal offences are table offences, which reflects the importance of the justice system operating efficiently. Tabling offences is important to ensuring that criminal charges can be heard in an appropriate court, having regard to the severity of the charge. While the maximum penalty for any offence reflects Parliament's view of the objective seriousness of the offence, individual charges under those offences will invariably reflect different degrees of severity. Inclusion of these new offences as table 2 offences is not unusual, nor is it inappropriate.

The member for Goulburn also raised concerns that serious domestic abuse orders may be sought against some individuals who have been charged but not been convicted of domestic violence offences. This issue was also noted by the Legislation Review Committee in *Legislation Review Digest No. 19/58*. The serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme is targeted towards very high-risk domestic and family violence offenders, which includes people who have been charged with a serious domestic violence offence, irrespective of whether they have been convicted. I note that this element of the bill reflects the existing scheme of serious crime prevention orders that respond to serious organised crime. Under section 5 (1) (b) (ii) of the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act 2016, these orders can be made even when a person has not been charged with or convicted of a serious criminal offence. The serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme is more focused on requiring at least a charge, which is an adaptation suitable for the domestic and family violence context.

Contact with the criminal justice system for serious domestic violence offences, which must carry a maximum penalty of at least 14 years imprisonment, is indicative of significant potential risk. It is important to also remember that there are other safeguards and thresholds before an order can be made. Most importantly, the court must be satisfied there are reasonable grounds to believe the making of the order would protect family members or former or current intimate partners, and persons in a domestic relationship with those partners, by preventing the person from engaging in domestic abuse. Additionally, if the ground relied on for an application for a serious domestic abuse prevention order is that the person has been involved in serious domestic abuse activity for which the person has not been convicted of a serious domestic violence offence by reason of an acquittal or a conviction being quashed or set aside, the application must include information on the offence in respect of which the person was acquitted or the conviction was quashed or set aside, the court in which that decision was made, and the date on which that decision was made.

The member for Ballina raised that the response to domestic and family violence needs to be more than legislation, and the Government agrees with that. As noted by my colleague the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Government has also been working hard across our service systems, including a \$245.6 million package to improve the response to domestic and family violence through primary prevention, early intervention and crisis response measures. This funding has gone towards a range of interventions, focused on proactive measures to prevent violence and offending.

Before I conclude, I will address outstanding matters raised by the Legislation Review Committee in *Legislation Review Digest No. 19/58*. First, the committee noted the serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme abrogates the hearsay rule. I note that while hearsay evidence may be admitted under proposed section 87B (7), this is appropriately balanced with procedural protections, under paragraph (a), that the court is satisfied that the evidence is from a reliable source and is relevant and of probative value and, under paragraph (b), that the person against whom the order is sought to be made has been notified of, and served with a copy of, the evidence before its admission.

Second, the committee noted that the requirement for an electronic monitoring device to be fitted prior to release on bail may impact personal rights and liberties. The bill requires that an accused person be fitted with an

electronic monitoring device before being released from custody. This is entirely reasonable and necessary to give effect to the intended policy purpose of the legislation, which is the protection of alleged victims of domestic violence. An accused person will be kept in custody for the time it takes Corrective Services NSW to fit them with a device. The exact time that takes will depend on a number of factors, including whether a person is granted conditional bail outside ordinary business hours and whether there are appropriate devices available at the location where they are held.

The operational detail for the use of electronic monitoring, including the process and time frames for fitting the device, will be contained in regulations and other standard operating procedures. Those are currently being finalised. In any event, the committee recognised that section 42 of the Bail Act 2013 already deals with situations in which a person is detained in custody after being granted bail, and therefore it did not refer this matter to Parliament. The section provides that a person who has custody of an accused person granted bail must cause a court to be given notice that the accused person is still in custody because a bail condition has not been complied with. The notice must be given before the expiry of eight days after the person was received into custody. The accused person's legal representative could then make an application to vary their client's bail conditions.

Combatting domestic and family violence is a key priority of this Government. This bill is one part of the Government's multifaceted approach, providing our law enforcement agencies and justice system with more tools targeted to managing high-risk domestic violence offenders and holding them to account. As I said in my second reading speech, there is no single solution or miracle fix that we can easily implement to cure this social ill. Domestic and family violence groups and survivors often make the point to this Government that there is no magic fix to this very complex problem in our society.

Responding to domestic and family violence requires sustained effort from a number of different angles, both legislative and non-legislative. Our legislative efforts are complemented by significant investment in services and new initiatives across primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, and healing. We are also working closely with the other States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government on nationally coordinated efforts to bolster the already robust responses in place in New South Wales. The bill is just the next step in the reform journey, not the end. I look forward to continuing to work closely and constructively with our frontline agencies, the domestic and family violence sector and all members of this and the other place to continue those efforts. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Michael Daley and Mr Alister Henskens.

Consideration in Detail

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (18:29): I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-170A:

No. 1 Commencement

Page 2, clause 2, line 6. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

This Act commences as follows—

- (a) for the following provisions—on 1 December 2024 or on an earlier day or days to be appointed by proclamation—
 - (i) Schedule 1[3],
 - (ii) Schedule 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4,
- (b) otherwise—on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation.

The Government is continuing to take urgent and significant action to combat domestic and family violence in New South Wales through the introduction of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill was to commence on proclamation for two reasons, as I explained in my second reading speech. Some of the changes contained in the bill, such as the serious domestic abuse prevention order scheme, are novel and break new ground in New South Wales. We want to make sure we are doing this right. The implementation work that will be completed during that period is not an optional extra; it is absolutely foundational. I went through that in some detail in my speech in reply.

Court and police IT systems need to be updated, including to develop entirely new pathways to accommodate some of the reforms. Extensive testing will need to occur to make sure all the relevant systems are interoperable and integrated, so matters do not fall between the cracks. Standard operating procedures and internal policies will need to be carefully scrutinised, and frameworks must be developed to identify the relevant high-risk offenders. Again, this is foundational work to make sure the reforms are effective. Last, but certainly not least, training and education are absolutely critical. We heard that clear message from the experts in the domestic and family violence sector, who I have had the pleasure of speaking with on multiple occasions about these reforms. Once again, I thank them for their expertise and the cooperation and good will they bring to this common endeavour.

Training and education are crucial because of the challenging and often nuanced nature of domestic and family violence, and the very difficult situations that our police and courts are responding to in such matters. We know how urgent it is to respond to domestic and family violence, and we are committed to commencing the new provisions as swiftly as possible. But the actions that government agencies need to take are not "nice to haves"; they are necessary, and failing to provide the time for that work will set up these reforms for failure.

The Government has heard members asking for a degree of certainty about the commencement dates of some of the measures in the bill. I am pleased to move this amendment, which provides for a commencement date of 1 December 2024, or earlier by proclamation, for a number provisions in the bill. The first provision is the updated definition of stalking to better capture technology-facilitated tracking or monitoring conduct. The second provision is the amendment to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to allow sole parents with appropriate family court orders to change their child's name. The third provision is the amendment to clarify that when a person has been granted bail and is subject to electronic monitoring under provisions introduced in the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024, they must not be released from custody until an electronic monitoring device has been fitted.

The fourth provision is the amendment that supports the implementation of the bail reforms contained in the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act 2024. That provision ensures that bail decisions are made by magistrates or judges by providing an exception to the requirement for an accused person to appear physically in first-appearance bail matters when a magistrate is not physically present at the location at which the accused would otherwise appear, and to enable audiovisual link access to a magistrate in another location. That provision supports the implementation of the policy to remove registrars as bail decision-makers. The remainder of the amendments proposed in the bill will commence by proclamation as soon as possible.

It is crucial that we get the implementation of these significant reforms right, and that is what we propose to do. For the elucidation of members of both Houses, I moved this amendment in this place tonight because my office has been in discussions with members of both Houses and it is simpler to provide certainty in the Legislative Assembly than it is to defeat the Opposition's amendment, which we do not agree with, and then have this discussion again in the other place. That is sensible. I thank all members for their feedback, which we have taken on board.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:34): I welcome the amendment moved by the Attorney General insofar as the bill will not have an open-ended commencement date for the four changes that the Attorney General identified. Instead, there will be a sunset date of 1 December 2024 by which they must commence. This amendment was provided to the Opposition only recently, before the public interest debate was put up on the system. The Attorney General has not addressed why schedule 1 [4]—which creates new offences for more serious breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders and increases penalties for certain, more serious conducts in breach of apprehended domestic violence orders—cannot commence immediately. He has not addressed why it requires the kind of logistical implementation that he identified is required for the serious domestic abuse prevention orders, which I accept is a newer regime. In respect of the Supreme Court, that regime has already been in place for some time for serious crime prevention orders and should not be as large of an implementation task as the Attorney General suggests.

The Opposition will agree to these amendments because of time constraints. However, I foreshadow that the Opposition will move an amendment in the upper House to include a sunset clause date of 1 March 2025 for the other provisions. It is important that there is some urgency for the implementation of the apprehended domestic violence order amendments. Everyone seems to agree that matters of domestic and family violence and these reforms are important. The Opposition believes it is unacceptable that the implementation timelines for those provisions are so open-ended. I am happy to discuss this matter with the Attorney General outside the Chamber or he may wish to respond now. It is really important that there is a finality to the implementation so that there is clarity and it is not open-ended. It is important that the implementation steps reflect the urgency and importance of the matters involved. We urge the Government to put a sunset date of 1 March 2025 on the proclamation of the other provisions so the changes contained in the bill get implemented and become law in this State.

The CHAIR: The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-170A be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): As Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-164 is in conflict with Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-170A, the Opposition amendment lapses. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended be agreed to.

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

Third Reading

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (CERTIFICATION) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 September 2024.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:40): On behalf of the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Scott Farlow, in the other place, I lead for the Opposition in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Certification) Bill 2024. The bill is a necessary step in ensuring that critical planning and certification powers are permanently reintroduced for the effective management of our most sensitive and important natural and urban areas. The bill will provide certainty in the provisions for certification in harbour and alpine areas, and we welcome its introduction.

The bill permanently reintroduces powers for essential specialist building certification services that were inadvertently removed by amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 [EP&A Act] in 2018. That oversight was temporarily reinstated via savings and transitional provisions in the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Savings, Transitional and Other Provisions) Regulation 2017, which end on 1 December 2024. The bill seeks to make important provisions permanent within the EP&A Act, ensuring that development in those areas continues to be properly regulated and certified, without disruption.

Specialist building certification services are essential to manage the land and waters in the alpine region and Sydney Harbour. The bill will allow those services to continue unimpeded by re-establishing a permanent pathway for them in the Act. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces outlined the provisions of the legislation in great detail in his second reading speech. To save the time of House, I will not repeat the Minister's explanation. The Coalition recognises the important role of certifiers in the building industry. Certifiers are essential for maintaining the safety, quality and compliance of buildings and developments. Certifiers ensure that construction projects meet all legal and regulatory standards, which protects public safety and promotes sustainable growth.

The Coalition is very appreciative of the Association of Australian Certifiers for its feedback on the legislation, which helped inform the Opposition's position. The Opposition also thanks Gino Mandarino from the planning Minister's office for his consultation on the legislation, and the team at the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure who oversee development in the ski resort areas. In conclusion, the Coalition supports this straightforward bill to tidy up previous temporary arrangements and provide certainty moving forward, particularly in alpine and harbour areas in our State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:43): I speak in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Certification) Bill 2024. I thank the Minister, who is currently in the Chamber, for his work in bringing the bill to the House. The bill aims to reinstate powers for Transport for NSW, Newcastle Port Corporation and the port operators of the three ports to undertake certification work under part 6 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 [EP&A Act] in certain circumstances. Those powers are needed for Transport for NSW and the port operators of the Port of Newcastle, the Port of Botany Bay, and Port Kembla to issue certificates that are essential to fulfilling their ongoing service delivery functions. Like the removal of the certification powers of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, this was an inadvertent and unforeseen consequence of the 2018 reforms to the EP&A Act. That outcome was identified after the redefinition was passed but before it commenced, so savings provisions were put in place to retain those powers until a permanent solution could be established.

I support the bill's retention of powers for Transport for NSW to provide certification services. Those certification services relate only to issuing subdivision certificates and are required for development carried out by or on behalf of Transport for NSW or for which Transport for NSW grants development consent.

Transport for NSW manages over 2,000 wetland leases and acts as the consent authority for unincorporated marine areas such as Sydney Harbour. In those unincorporated marine areas, there is no local council that can undertake certification work, so Transport for NSW must issue the subdivision certificates. A subdivision certificate is required to enable the final procedural step of registering the lease with NSW Land Registry Services. Without that step, there is no way to put the lease into effect.

The further subdivision activity that is the subject of the bill is typically undertaken in the usual course of a port operator's land management functions. That may include activities such as facilitating domestic or commercial leases, disposing of or transferring land, or providing for separate use or occupation of specific areas via subdivision. In such circumstances, those authorities already have the power to carry out the subdivision under part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Issuing a subdivision certificate is a procedural step to enable the registration with NSW Land Registry Services of subdivisions or leases that have already been permitted to proceed under other powers.

The bill will make sure that a smooth administrative process can continue for Transport for NSW and the operators of the three ports. Without the bill, the expiry of savings provisions in December will mean that approved subdivisions cannot proceed because the responsible authorities would lack the legal ability to progress them to NSW Land Registry Services. Instead, the bill will correct the error in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 that necessitated the savings provisions in the first place, allowing certification work to continue.

It is important to note that the amendment also makes sure that the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has oversight of the issuance of any certificates under this power. Within 21 days of issuing a subdivision certificate, the person issuing the certificate must notify the planning secretary, in writing, that the certificate has been issued. That is a minor administrative addition to the process which will make sure that principles of good governance and information sharing are met. The planning secretary can stay informed of matters relevant to them.

The bill will provide an opportunity for robust data collection, which will assist in later reviews of these powers. In that way, the bill enshrines ongoing good governance in New South Wales. As the Minister stated in his second reading speech, with this bill, the Government is putting the power for Transport for NSW and other port operators to undertake certification services back into the Act where they ought to be so that those authorities can get on with the job. Ultimately, the beneficiaries of the continued availability of those certification services will be the people of New South Wales who utilise them. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:48): My contribution to debate in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Certification) Bill 2024 will be brief. The bill is an essential measure to ensure that the critical work of building certification continues uninterrupted in some of the most important areas of our State. It permanently reinstates the powers for specialised building certification services, which were inadvertently removed by amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act in 2018. These services have been maintained temporarily through savings and transitional provisions, but today the Minns Government is proposing a permanent solution. This bill refers to some of the most cherished places in New South Wales, including our alpine region and Sydney Harbour. These areas represent unique challenges, from environmental preservation to land and water use control.

Without a clear and permanent legal pathway for specialist building certification services, we risk undermining the governance and development of these vital areas. This bill seeks to correct an oversight in the 2018 amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, which mistakenly removed the authority for these services to operate. The alpine region of New South Wales, for instance, is an iconic part of our State that presents distinct challenges when it comes to land use and development. After the tragic Thredbo landslide of 1998, independent recommendations ensured that the planning Minister would serve as the sole consent authority for all development matters in this sensitive area. This responsibility includes a range of building certification functions that are typically the responsibility of local councils in other parts of the State.

For over two decades, a specialist team from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has overseen development in the ski resort areas, ensuring that they are constructed in compliance with the relevant building and planning frameworks. This bill ensures that such important functions can continue unimpeded. Responsibility for Sydney Harbour and the State's three major ports—Port Botany, Newcastle and Port Kembla—resides with Transport for NSW, the Port Authority, and port operators that are responsible for issuing certificates that control how these areas are leased and managed. These waterways are not just a source of natural beauty; they are vital hubs for commerce, trade and tourism. By ensuring proper certification, we are safeguarding not only the environment but also the economic prosperity of our State.

Schedule 1, item [2] will amend the definition of "certifier" in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to include the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for developments where the Minister is the consent authority. This ensures that the Minister's delegates can undertake all necessary certification work, whether it be something minor like a driveway or something more complex like a ski lift. Schedule 2, item [2.1] will amend the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 to clarify that the Minister and delegates do not fall under the registration framework for private certifiers. This is a practical exemption that maintains the status quo and recognises the expertise within the department. It also highlights the distinct role that government bodies play in managing developments in specialised areas.

Schedule 2, item [2.2] amends the regulations to prescribe Transport for NSW, the Newcastle Port Corporation and other port operators as responsible for issuing subdivision certificates in relation to the subdivisions carried out by or on behalf of these authorities. Such subdivisions are integral to the ongoing management of our ports and waterways, and this amendment ensures that they can be completed seamlessly. This is particularly crucial for Sydney Harbour, which is managed by Transport for NSW, because it is outside of any local government area. Another significant provision is schedule 1 item [7], which retroactively validates four occupation certificates issued by the Minister's delegates between 2020 and 2023. These certificates may have been impacted by limitations in drafting of the temporary savings provisions that the bill now seeks to replace permanently. Schedule 1, item [5] reinstates the power to regulate fees for building information certificates, which is a vital tool for local councils to manage unauthorised works. This crucial oversight needs correction to ensure that councils can properly govern unauthorised developments.

The bill ensures that the lessons learned from past tragedies are not forgotten and that our Government continues to exercise responsible stewardship over our most vulnerable and vital areas. The continued prosperity of Sydney Harbour and our major ports depends on the ability to manage development and land use with precision and expertise. The bill guarantees that these critical functions are permanently enshrined in law, providing long-term certainty for developers, environmental managers and the broader public. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Certification) Bill 2024 is not just about fixing a legislative oversight. It is about ensuring the long-term sustainability of some of the most important areas in our State. Whether it is the pristine snow-capped mountains of the alpine region or the bustling waterways of Sydney Harbour, this bill safeguards our future. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:55): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Certification) Bill 2024. I particularly thank the member for Manly; the member for Blacktown, and Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces; and the member for Mount Druitt. Members have highlighted how the bill will make sure that essential certification services can continue to be provided in the alpine region, provide for subdivision certificates essential to land and lease management functions in key waterway areas to continue to be issued, and support ongoing oversight of planning system fees by allowing building information certificate fees to be regulated again.

The bill sensibly addresses existing deficiencies in the Act and allows essential services to continue. This is a straightforward fix to inadvertent issues in the operation of the Act, and nothing more. Simply put, the bill provides administrative corrections that preserve the status quo and permanently settles transitional and savings provisions that will soon expire. It will enable the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, ports authorities and Transport for NSW to continue to exercise certification functions. It will reinstate the State's ability to regulate building information certificate fees. It will also validate certificates that may have been issued invalidly due to the unintended limitations in the drafting of the temporary savings provisions. The changes provide ongoing certainty for a number of planning authorities. Without these changes, a core component of the State planning system would become unworkable in the most important areas in the State. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

MUSIC FESTIVALS AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 September 2024.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:57): I speak in support of the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. My two children have spoken to me at length about the vast difference in the music festival scene in New South Wales compared with other States and other countries. My son recently returned from the United Kingdom and was blown away by the music festival culture there. The UK is the home of mega festivals like Glastonbury, the Leeds Festival and the Reading Festival, and they attract hundreds of thousands of people. We have many talented artists in New South Wales and Australia who need festivals and a regulatory environment that promotes their work.

I recently spoke to Ben Tillman, owner and director of Yours and Owls Festival, a music festival and venue booking company; Farmer and the Owl record label; and FO PAS Publishing Company. Yours and Owls cultivates emerging artists in Wollongong and from across New South Wales, both through its headline Yours and Owls Festival as well as the various gigs it organises at venues across the State. Ben spoke to me about the difficulties he faced with the previous Government's Music Festivals Act. The Act meant that festival organisers had to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for police presence on top of significant insurance fees, making festivals nearly untenable in this State.

The former Liberal-Nationals Government destroyed the music scene in New South Wales under the guise of protecting festivalgoers. The Minns Labor Government is yet again cleaning up the mess of the former Government, taking an evidence-based approach to reigniting music festivals in New South Wales. In 2024, Liquor and Gaming NSW undertook a statutory review of the Act to assess its relevance and effectiveness. The review confirmed that the policy objectives remain valid and that safety standards have improved. However, it also highlighted areas of duplication and the need to focus more sharply on health-related issues in festival management.

The bill addresses these findings by making key reforms, starting with the introduction of a health and medical plan, which replaces the previous requirement for a safety management plan. The health and medical plan will allow festival organisers to concentrate on implementing health-focused strategies to mitigate risks and respond to medical emergencies. Crucially, the health and medical plans must align with the guidelines published by NSW Health, which will ensure that festival organisers are prioritising the wellbeing of attendees by adhering to expert advice on medical protocols and emergency response measures.

Under those reforms, all festivals will be required to prepare a health and medical plan. However, only festivals with higher risk profiles will need to formally consult NSW Health and have their plans agreed upon. That distinction ensures that health standards remain a priority without imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens on lower risk events. Importantly, although the focus has shifted to health, the NSW Police Force will still have an active role in ensuring public safety. If necessary, they will be able to propose conditions but only for festivals required to consult NSW Health. Festival organisers will have the right to review and provide feedback on any proposed conditions before they are imposed, which will maintain a fair and transparent process.

The bill also addresses a significant concern raised by stakeholders: the "subject festival" designation. Under the current system, festivals deemed "subject" by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority faced a higher regulatory burden. The label has unfairly stigmatised certain festivals, damaging their reputations, reducing ticket sales, and affecting sponsorship and investment opportunities. By removing the "subject festival" designation, we lift that undue burden and acknowledge the considerable safety improvements made since the introduction of the Act. Additionally, the removal of the label will help avoid the inflated insurance premiums that have often been imposed on festivals simply because they were automatically deemed higher risk. The change will introduce a more balanced and modern approach to determining which festivals require enhanced health and safety measures. By removing the outdated label, we create a more fair and practical framework for festival organisers.

Just today I was talking to year 10 students from Engadine High School who want events to go to. Let's get the show on the road. The Government is committed to ensuring that health and safety standards at music festivals meet the high expectations of festivalgoers, their families and the broader community. The bill strengthens that commitment by refining the regulatory framework to better support festival organisers while continuing to safeguard attendees. No parent should have to fear for their child's safety while enjoying live music. The reforms ensure that music festivals across New South Wales will not only be safe but also provide the necessary infrastructure to respond effectively to any medical emergency. Festivalgoers will have the confidence that they are in a secure environment where their wellbeing is the highest priority. With these changes, we are fostering a culture of responsibility and collaboration between government agencies and festival organisers. It is a critical step towards ensuring that our thriving music festival scene continues to flourish in a safe and responsible manner. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:03): Music festivals have long been a big part of the State's cultural life. Music festivals across New South Wales provide massive economic injections to tourism, hospitality

and local businesses. Importantly, music festivals provide memorable experiences for those attending. They have the opportunity to see and dance to their favourite act with crowds of like-minded people, discover new acts, meet new people, socialise and have fun. For local musicians, music festivals provide essential exposure to build a fan base, including among artists with high profiles. People of all ages in my electorate attend music festivals. The Mardi Gras afterparty has long been one of my favourites. People travel across the city and State for music festivals.

Despite the attraction of music festivals, they are struggling from growing pressures, including skyrocketing overheads, especially public liability insurance, as well as freight and security. At the same time, the cost-of-living crisis is affecting the traditional music festival audience of young people, limiting the ability of festival organisers to pass rising costs on to audiences. Festivals are also suffering from a new environment of uncertainty. In the last five years, large floods and fires across the State have created logistical nightmares for festivals, and the pandemic resulted in mass cancellations. With audiences having less disposable income, they are reducing their discretionary spending, attending fewer festivals and buying tickets later. Slower sales increase the uncertainty for events, and more festivals in the State have been cancelling their events. This year, Bluesfest, Splendour in the Grass, Groovin the Moo and ValleyWays cancelled events due to rising costs and slowing sales.

Music festivals are suffering a huge economic loss. Before the pandemic, more than 3.2 million people attended a live music event in New South Wales annually and the industry was worth \$600 million. However, an even greater loss comes from the social impact of losing music festivals. Emerging Australian artists have fewer opportunities to showcase their work and build a name for themselves. We also do not want a new generation of young people to never have the unique social experience and connection that comes from attending a music festival. I strongly welcome the bill, which will improve certainty for music festivals. It is part of a package that includes financial assistance to reduce risks and increase viability. The regime for music festivals introduced in 2019 under the former Coalition Government went too far in increasing obligations, red tape and costs, particularly through user-pay police presence.

At the time, I raised concerns that it would impact on music festival viability at a time when inner-city music venues were being impacted by 1.30 a.m. lockouts. I thank the new Government for prioritising cultural life and the late-night economy. I particularly welcome the new focus on festival safety on health-related matters through new health and medical plans, options for internal reviews and appeal pathways over user-pay charges. A large part of safety at music festivals centres on drug use. More reform is needed to keep people safe. The 2019 New South Wales coronial inquest into deaths at music festivals recommended reframing priorities from reducing drug use to reducing drug death. The coroner supported drug checking and monitoring, and changing the way festivals are policed, finding that young people will consume higher doses of drugs if they fear they will get caught carrying them by police, putting them at greater risk of overdose.

Currently drug detection dogs are a big feature of most music festivals. Young people are being subjected to invasive strip searches just because they might be carrying a small quantity of illicit drugs for personal use. Redfern Legal Centre has commenced a class action lawsuit against unlawful stripsearches, including at music festivals. The stories coming out are disturbing and show that current practices are not safe, have lifelong impacts on affected individuals and affect the enjoyment of festivals. They are not harm minimisation practices and need to be addressed if we are to have a safe music festival industry.

I hope the Drug Summit provides an opportunity for reform. The bill shows that the House is committed to a thriving music festivals industry and supporting festivals to navigate current challenges. I thank the Music Festivals Association for working so well with the Government to get the reforms through, especially managing director Mitch Wilson, who was recently elected to the City of Sydney council. I am looking forward to working with him, as we all are. We all love Mitch. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:08): I make a brief contribution in support of the Government's Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. I thank the Minister and the department staff for their hard work on it. Live music is crucial for New South Wales. It is not just about entertainment; it is also about supporting a wide range of talented people and energising our communities. Music is woven into the very fabric of our State's culture and economy. Our State's vibrant calendar is filled with major music festivals such as Bluesfest, Listen Out, Laneway, Yours and Owls, and the Tamworth Country Music Festival. Those festivals, alongside others like Strawberry Fields, Harbourlife, and Wingham Music Festival, play a key role in fostering a rich live music culture. They provide invaluable opportunities for music lovers to gather and enjoy live performances, and allow artists to connect with new fans, hone their craft and plan future tours.

The Government envisions New South Wales as a vibrant hub for arts and culture, reflecting our diverse community. That vision is supported by the New South Wales Government's significant commitment to invest \$103 million over the next four years into the contemporary and live music sector. The live music sector is a cornerstone of the New South Wales economy. It enhances the liveability of Sydney and numerous other iconic

music cities and towns across the State. It also contributes to Sydney's and New South Wales's appeal as destinations for domestic and international tourists. The New South Wales Government aims to reactivate its 24-hour economy and revive the live music and entertainment sectors, which were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recently, however, the music festival scene has faced tough times. Many festivals have had to postpone, cancel or rethink their events due to significant increases in operational costs and other broader economic impacts. That struggle is not unique to New South Wales; it reflects a broader trend, with many festivals across Europe, the United Kingdom and North America also experiencing cancellations and postponements. However, due to the regulatory framework and higher costs of doing business, those impacts are felt particularly hard in New South Wales. The industry has also witnessed a shift in consumer behaviour since the pandemic, including changes in patron ticket purchasing behaviour and going out behaviour, which is yet to stabilise.

The Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024 is a vital step towards ensuring that our live music, culture and creative industries continue to thrive and grow. The bill aims to simplify the rules for festival organisers, making it easier for them to host events in New South Wales and reducing the likelihood of festivals postponing, cancelling or bypassing the State altogether. The bill achieves that by creating a more supportive regulatory environment for music festivals to thrive. The Government heard from the festival industry that the label of "subject festival" under the regulatory framework imposes a high reputational burden on festivals.

The bill removes the high-risk or "subject festival" label from the regulatory framework and removes the requirement for subject festivals to prepare a safety management plan. Under the new framework, all festivals will now be required to prepare a health and medical plan. To reduce the administrative burden placed on the sector, only certain festivals with a higher health risk will require formal agreement of the contents of a health and medical plan by NSW Health. All other festivals that do not represent a higher health risk will not require formal agreement of their health and medical plan from NSW Health.

The bill introduces several key changes to the regulatory framework. The review of the Act found that safety practices have markedly improved at festivals since its introduction. Festival organisers identified NSW Health as the main factor influencing the industry's progress, specifically the advice, education and support provided to organisers. The bill ensures that engagement continues. To achieve a more streamlined regulatory framework that focuses on health and medical matters, and support by NSW Health, the bill replaces the safety management plan with a health and medical plan. The bill outlines that festival organisers will then engage directly with NSW Health on developing and approving the plan.

In addition, the NSW Police Force is already able to provide input to ensure safety at festivals via development application and liquor licence processes. However, to address any unforeseen gaps in the new framework, the bill also introduces a mechanism for the NSW Police Force to recommend conditions. Those conditions can form part of the liquor licence or as part of a law enforcement and safety matters schedule to an agreed health and medical plan. NSW Health will not be required to agree to the contents of the schedule. That streamlined approach will ensure that the health and medical improvements made in the sector will continue, and that festivals will continue to be operated safely in New South Wales.

The bill also makes several updates to the framework to create a more supportive regulatory environment for music festivals. Festival organisers will now be able to appeal the decision that they are required to have an agreed health and medical plan to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. That is intended to make the process fairer. The bill achieves that by inserting new section 5A into the Act. New section 5A provides that an appeal may be lodged on the grounds that a music festival does not require an agreed health and medical plan because the festival organiser is of the view that sufficient controls have been put in place to mitigate and manage health risks at the event.

The bill also addresses how minors are handled at festivals. It ensures festival organisers can host all-aged events without unnecessary restrictions if there are proper controls in place to manage alcohol-related risks. The bill also inserts an exclusion and defence to an offence for breaching an unaccompanied minor licence condition in certain circumstances. For example, a person cannot breach an unaccompanied minor condition if the minor is unaccompanied because they attended restroom facilities. It is also now a defence to an offence of breaching an unaccompanied minor condition on a liquor licence related to a music festival if the licensee made reasonable efforts to ensure minors were accompanied. An example of that is where, despite the licensee's reasonable efforts, a minor is unintentionally separated from their responsible adult at a music festival because of a moving crowd at the festival. I thank the Minister and his team once again for bringing this bill forward and supporting our live music and creative industries. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:17): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. While The Greens absolutely love music festivals and are excited that the House

is debating music festivals—I recall being in The Domain in 2007 for the Ladies Domain special Homebake edition; it is one of my fondest festival memories ever—we have significant concerns with what the bill purports to do versus what it actually does. We have serious concerns as to whether the bill will deliver what is needed to allow current and future festival lovers in this State to continue to enjoy attending festivals at a reasonable price and to ensure that musos, artists, creatives and festival organisers are able to be part of a thriving music festival scene.

The bill follows the most recent review of the Music Festivals Act 2019, published earlier this month, and makes a series of amendments to the Act. Those amendments include removing the "subject" music festival designation from the Act and replacing it with a requirement for all festivals to develop a health and medical plan; requiring some festivals, as decided by NSW Health, to have an agreed health and medical plan; replacing the current decision-maker under the Act, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA], with the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, with the support of NSW Health and the NSW Police Force; creating a formal path for police involvement, who can propose that a music festival organiser submit to the secretary a schedule about matters relating to law enforcement and safety; creating an appeal pathway for festivals whereby an organiser can appeal to the ILGA against the secretary's decision that the music festival requires an agreed health and medical plan; and enabling music festival organisers to apply to have the NSW Police Force, ambulance or other government charges waived.

Among the amendments are requiring all music festivals to develop a health and medical plan—rather than just certain festivals, as is currently the case; replacing ILGA with the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport as the relevant decision-maker under the Act; and creating a formal pathway for police involvement. The bill will allow the NSW Police Force to propose that a music festival organiser submit a schedule about matters pertaining to law and safety to the Secretary of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport. It would also empower NSW Health to identify festivals that require their health and management plan to be agreed to by the health secretary in what would be known as an "agreed health and management plan". Beyond this, the bill would enable festival organisers to apply for a waiver of police, ambulance or other government fees. The bill amends the Liquor Act 2007 to allow unaccompanied minors aged 16 or over to attend licensed festivals, provided organisers follow certain measures.

The Greens support the shift away from the current model of safety management plans and the role of ILGA in this. We know that the involvement of that authority, particularly in determining whether music festival organisers needed to prepare a safety management plan at all, is highly problematic. The bill removes that power from the authority and confers it upon the secretary as described. That transfer of power is supported by a range of stakeholders, including those within the festival industry. The shift from safety management plans to health and medical plans under the bill seems like there is a move to refocus on health and medical matters. Indeed, as the Minister outlined in his second reading speech, that is exactly what the Government is purporting to do. However, The Greens hold serious concerns that, while this may seem like a refocus, the role and involvement of the NSW Police Force at festivals is still very much entrenched as set out in this new approach.

The 2019 coronial inquest into music festival related deaths raised significant concerns around heavy police presence, including with sniffer dogs, at music festivals. The bill does nothing to address those concerns, nor does it do anything to rein in the practice of police charging music festival organisers out-of-control sums for their presence at music festivals. Instead, it re-establishes an appeal process into law, which may result in fees being waived or reduced. This is hugely problematic, particularly given the amount of money we are talking about. Figures obtained through budget estimates suggest that the NSW Police Force made over \$88 million in user-pays charges from festivals in 2023—a nearly 70 per cent increase from just four years prior.

It is beyond belief to think that police in New South Wales are profiting from harassing and intimidating people who are attending music festivals in this State and that we are considering amendments to the Act that do not address this perverse situation and gross abuse of power. Police are not required at music festivals. Drug dogs are not required at music festivals. We must push back on the obsession with the law and order approach that seeks to over-police communities when they are simply seeking to come together, listen to music, dance and have fun. Equally concerning in the bill is the involvement of New South Wales police in several stages of the approval process that festival organisers are required to navigate just to get their festival off the ground. First, new section 5 (2) requires the health secretary to have regard to any advice from the Commissioner of Police when determining whether a music festival requires an agreed health and medical plan.

The Commissioner of Police can then propose that the music festival organiser submit to the secretary a schedule about undefined "matters relating to law enforcement and safety". After considering this, the Commissioner of Police may propose conditions for inclusion in the schedule. Once this has been approved by the health secretary, New South Wales police have the power to enforce these conditions. The Greens have heard from stakeholders that the law enforcement schedule framework is concerning. If we did wide consultation with

festivalgoers, they would probably use a word stronger than "concerning". My colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann and The Greens in the upper House are considering the concerning elements outlined above very closely. They will look to move substantive amendments to attempt to salvage the bill and to take away the incredible powers being given to police in a music festival bill that seems completely out of step with what is required.

Overall, The Greens categorically reject the idea that more police involvement—not less, or ideally none—is what music festivals need. We already know that music festivals are teeming with police and sniffer dogs. That does not make festivals any safer, and nor does it improve the health of the people that attend. All it does is intimidate people and create the perfect environment for harassment and fear. Just last week, *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran a harrowing report on young people traumatised by strip searches they were forced to endure at festivals in New South Wales. The Redfern Legal Centre in the Newtown electorate has launched a class action—possibly the biggest ever brought against the NSW Police Force—alleging that thousands of festivalgoers were stripsearched without consent or reasonable grounds.

In 2015, when I was first elected as the member for Newtown, one of my promises to the people who put me here was to introduce a bill to repeal the New South Wales drug dog program. When I honoured that promise, I highlighted the astounding number of people who were stripsearched following a sniffer dog interaction at a music festival and found to have nothing on them. Shamefully, back then the Labor Opposition and the Coalition Government were in lockstep when it came to continuing this taxpayer-funded, ineffectual drug detection—but highly effective harassment—public policing program. The fact that nearly 10 years later and under a Labor government we are now debating legislation that is supposed to increase vibrancy in the State but instead provides an ongoing oversight by police of our music festivals is truly astounding.

If we are serious about taking a harm minimisation approach to drugs and increasing the vibrancy in our cities and in our State, we need to be honest that, when it comes to keeping festivalgoers safe, sniffer dogs and over-policing is not required. Police intimidation does not work. Drug dogs do not work. All of those things encourage users to take dangerously large amounts of drugs before entering festivals in a risky bid to not get caught at the gates. There is nothing healthy about that. My Greens colleagues in the other place will be looking to significantly amend the bill. I hope that we can start talking about music festivals without needing to also address the New South Wales police in the future.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:27): As the chair of the Newcastle Live Music Taskforce and an avid supporter of live music, I support the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. It is well established that live music has many significant benefits to the health and wellbeing of a community, no matter what the demographic. Recent events over the past five years, including the COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, have emphasised the significant role live music plays in our lives and the importance of celebrating live music acts together. In addition to increased health and wellbeing benefits, live music provides artists with opportunities and platforms to be creative and gain supporters. However, the wave of recent cancellations from renowned music extravaganzas, including Hunter-based festivals This That and Groovin the Moo, highlight the growing difficulties festival organisers continue to face in delivering safe large-scale events.

Having been instrumental in setting up the Newcastle Live Music Taskforce in 2018, which organised our very own music festival called Sound Station in 2022, I am well aware of the difficulties of coordinating the logistics of a festival. While the festival was highly successful, we had to pay through the user-pays police scheme for a large number of police, which nearly resulted in the festival not going ahead. In the end, it did go ahead. While very successful with regard to participation and community benefit, the cost of policing determined that it was a break-even event at best. Following the recent cancellations of This That and Groovin the Moo in Newcastle, I received an unprecedented amount of feedback from my constituents calling for further investment and policy support to deliver more viable and safe live music events, reaffirming the significance of music festivals for the Hunter community.

Whilst it is apparent that the Music Festivals Act 2019 has seen many benefits for implementing safer music festivals, including improving the safety operations and practices of higher risk music festivals, the findings of the statutory review of the Music Festivals Act 2019 highlight several key gaps that must be addressed. As a result of the review, the following reforms are proposed. The first is to introduce objects into the Music Festivals Act 2019 that focus on government supporting the sector to run safe events and minimise harm while ensuring that the regulatory framework considers the impact of government regulation on the health and viability of the industry. The second proposed reform is to remove the role of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA] in determining subject music festival designations and to approve a safety management plan [SMP]. The designation and SMP requirements would also be removed and replaced with a requirement for an agreed health and medical plan [HMP]. The plan would focus on health-related matters and all festivals would be required to have an HMP, but only select festivals would need one agreed with NSW Health.

The realignment of the requirement means that the police would not have a role in the HMP process. Police would be able to propose certain safety conditions, but they would be applied to the liquor licence or be part of a separate law enforcement and safety matters schedule. The secretary would be responsible for determining whether to accept, amend or refuse the conditions. The NSW Police Force would not be responsible for enforcing the HMP, other than any conditions in the law enforcement and safety matters schedule. The third proposed reform is to allow a music festival organiser the ability to appeal a secretary's decision to ILGA if the organiser believes sufficient controls have been put in place to mitigate and manage health risks. The fourth proposed reform is that the bill create an appeal pathway for user-pays government charges to be waived or reduced. That would commence at a later date.

Ministerial guidelines would be developed to outline the application process as well as set out criteria and grounds for an appeal to be made. Changing cultural landscapes in recent years have also highlighted the need for festival policies to consider wider demographics of attendees, which has been recognised by the New South Wales Government. The Government is proposing to impose commonsense limitations on the conditions associated with all-ages festivals to facilitate more of those events. That includes limitations on the application of conditions that a minor who is 16 years of age or older must be accompanied by a responsible adult; making it clear that separation due to the use of restrooms would not be a breach; and a defence to any such offence if the licensee made reasonable efforts to ensure that minors were accompanied by responsible adults.

The amendments in the bill will make it easier for punters under the age of 18 to attend and, as such, will increase the viability and accessibility of large-scale events. That, in turn, will not only revive established organisations and festivals such as This That and Groovin the Moo, which were struggling financially, but also open the door for smaller festivals to become more frequent locally. It was not long ago that Newcastle and the Hunter could claim to be one of Australia's most fertile markets for music festivals. In 2019 alone, the Hunter hosted 14 music festivals, including By The C, The Drop, Live at the Foreshore, Up Down, Wine Machine, Groovin the Moo, The Gum Ball, Wollombi Paddock Sessions, Wollombi Music Festival, Dashville Skyline, FKA Festival, This That, Scene & Heard and Grapevine Gathering. Sadly, only four of those 14 music festivals have survived into 2024.

I have felt firsthand the impacts of ongoing music festival cancellations on my own community, particularly among young people. My son, who is 17, and my daughter, aged 16, were disappointed with the cancellation of This That and Groovin the Moo due to increased costs and safety concerns. The bill will go a significant way towards making it easier and safer to put on festivals in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (19:34): I speak in support of the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. I acknowledge that it is a Government bill and that the Opposition will be supporting it, but I put to the House that the bill does not go far enough to ensure the survival of music festivals not only in regional New South Wales but also right across the State. In my patch in the Northern Rivers there are some iconic music festivals, including Bluesfest and Splendour in the Grass—hopefully. In regional New South Wales there is the Parkes Elvis Festival and Falls Festival. I also acknowledge that the member for Tamworth has the Big Golden Guitar and the Tamworth Country Music Festival in his electorate. All those festivals make a significant contribution to local and regional economies and, indeed, the economy of New South Wales. Small and local events across the State also deserve the attention of the New South Wales Government.

When the New South Wales live music scene is strong, Australia's live music scene is strong. It is vital that the Government gets the settings right. Music festivals in the Northern Rivers are under tremendous financial pressure. It really is the perfect storm: Event costs are skyrocketing, while ticket sales are under pressure due to the cost of living. We have seen one major festival cancelled in the Northern Rivers, and another major festival has highlighted that next year will be its last. I urge the Government to do more to ensure that festivals remain viable and vibrant in New South Wales. My electorate of Clarence is next door to the electorate of Ballina, which is the home of the iconic Bluesfest in Byron Bay. Many of my constituents have enjoyed the festival over the past 30 years, and I want to see it continue. I want the Minns Government to ensure that iconic local festivals have a life in our great State.

It would be remiss of me not to mention other festivals that are suffering from the same skyrocketing costs as the events I have already mentioned. They, too, require the Government to understand their importance to our local economies. Events like Primex and AgQuip, and in my electorate the Jacaranda Festival and Beef Week, attract huge crowds and, in turn, contribute massively to not only our local economy but also the State's economy. Those smaller regional events are also under extreme pressure. I acknowledge that the shadow Minister, the member for Tamworth, will be moving amendments in the House tonight. The Opposition welcomes the opportunity to make it easier and more viable for music festivals to continue in New South Wales.

I support the Opposition's call for the expanding of exemptions under the Government's user-charges policy. The policy that the Opposition is proposing in its amendments would see a far wider ranging scope, which would allow additional exemptions for major events, including sporting events, cultural events and, of course, music festivals. In my electorate of Clarence, the Clarence River Jockey Club needs user-pays policing. That is an additional cost to a small race club. The New South Wales Government, if it agrees to the amendments, will see an equitable share of community input and output through the economy. The Government's music festivals panel will evaluate the applications for a charge reduction. Under the Government's bill, the panel will include representatives from the Premier's Department, Sound NSW and Destination NSW.

The shadow Minister will propose a number of amendments, including an amendment that gives the NSW Police Force representation on the panel. It is all about making festivals safe. I acknowledge that police have tremendous on-the-ground experience in that field. I would also like the Government to expand the remit of the music festivals panel to include sporting events and cultural events. That will allow them to grow in regional New South Wales, acknowledging the significant benefit that sporting and cultural events provide to our communities. The shadow Minister will also move an amendment that will ensure regional representation on the Government's music festivals round table. For me, that is of great importance. As noted by the Minister in his second reading speech, regional New South Wales is host to many major music festivals.

I also note that the Government has announced a \$3 million Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund. I urge the Government to make that fund permanent. That is a temporary package that is, by its own design, incredibly narrow. I urge the Government to ensure that festivals do not have to go broke to get access to those funds. The Minister in his second reading speech acknowledged that festivals are scattered throughout New South Wales, and they are terrific. They need a hand during this time of great uncertainty. As I said at the start of my contribution, I support the bill but I would like to see the Government invest more in music festivals, cultural festivals and sporting events across the State. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:41): I contribute to debate on the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. The bill is a significant milestone in the preservation and growth of our State's vibrant music festival scene. The bill proposes to amend the Music Festivals Act to address findings from the final report of the *Review of the Music Festivals Act 2019* to provide for the making of a principal regulation under the Music Festivals Act and to make a related amendment to the Liquor Act. The past few years have been tumultuous for music festivals in New South Wales. In the past few months alone, we have seen the cancellation of the iconic Splendour in the Grass festival and the announcement that 2025 will be the last Bluesfest, after around 30 years of entertaining people in the tens of thousands and only two or three years after seeing their largest attendance numbers ever.

Event cancellation is caused by huge increases in the up-front costs for festivals as well as changed consumer behaviour after COVID, with people buying tickets closer to the dates of events. But that is not always the case—Fred Again's tour sold out in 20 minutes. Generally, people are waiting until closer to the date because they know that festivals are not going to sell out. The only exception to that pressure on music festivals seems to be for niche, single-genre and smaller festivals like Laneway. Festival organisers face the terrible choice between cancellation or risking losses if they wait to see if there will be a pick-up in ticket sales closer to the event. Rising costs, economic pressures and regulatory complexities have pushed many to the brink, resulting in cancellations and a decline in the number of events being planned. It is imperative that we recognise the vital role that these festivals play in our cultural landscape and take action to protect their future.

The New South Wales Government has announced a comprehensive package of reforms and support measures designed to revitalise the music festival industry. Those initiatives, in addition to the bill, include emergency funding. A two-year emergency funding assistance program has been established to provide financial relief to struggling festivals. The Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund has been established to improve short-term viability for festival operators and retain the contemporary music festivals that are vital to the New South Wales music landscape. Music festivals are particularly important for emerging artists. They give emerging artists a platform and they give people who are curious about artists the opportunity to see them when they otherwise would not as standalone headline acts. Many of those artists have gone on to build great careers, but it all starts with the opportunity to sing to 100 people at 11 o'clock in the morning. The final report of the *Review of the Music Festivals Act 2019* states:

Throughout the consultation process, stakeholders indicated that the regulatory framework is having a significant impact on the viability of festivals to operate in NSW. The regulatory burden on festivals in NSW is seen as out of step with other Australian jurisdictions.

It also states:

The review found that there are opportunities to reduce the regulatory burden on festival organisers while maintaining the safety-related gains achieved since the Act's inception. The regulatory approach in NSW has resulted in a burden that is considerably greater than in other national and international jurisdictions. Excessive regulation is also counter to the Government's commitment to support live music when it is safe to do so.

It is no coincidence that, being the most over-regulated jurisdiction in which to hold festivals, New South Wales is also the most expensive in Australia. We are hoping to address that issue through these reforms. Key amendments to the Music Festivals Act include introducing explicit objectives in the Act that focus on the Government supporting the festival sector; removing the "subject" festival designation from the Act; requiring all music festivals to have a health and medical plan, expanding the industry's existing best practice across the sector and requiring festivals with previous incidents to agree to a plan with Health; making Liquor and Gaming NSW the key decision-maker, on advice from NSW Health and the NSW Police Force, but allowing the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to retain a role if a festival organiser appeals a requirement to have its health and medical plan agreed to by NSW Health; allowing decisions on costs and conditions to be appealed internally within agencies and giving a festival the right to appeal to a cross-government panel on costs if its economic viability is under threat; and allowing the NSW Police Force to retain the ability to recommend safety and law enforcement measures for a festival where it deems necessary.

Those reforms will have a profound impact on the music festival industry in New South Wales. They will improve safety and wellbeing by strengthening the focus on harm reduction and health and safety measures to create a safer environment for festivalgoers; enhance economic sustainability by helping to improve the economic viability of festivals, ensuring their long-term survival; support local communities, understanding that festivals are vital to local economies, by creating jobs and boosting tourism; and ensure that the regulatory framework is more streamlined, health focused and supportive of the sector by removing unnecessary red tape and duplication and ensuring that the requirements under the Act are related to health and medical matters and strengthening the administrative provisions of the Act. I welcome comments by the Australian Festival Association, the national peak body for festival organisers and suppliers. It said:

We welcomed the extensive industry consultation during the review process and are really happy with the Bill before the Parliament.

It also said:

We welcomed the following in the bill:

- Removal of subject festival designations, which created two classes of festivals.
- Recommending all festivals to have a Health and Medical Plan, extending access to the NSW Ministry of Health harm reduction teams to all festivals.
- Only requiring certain festivals to have their Health and Medical Plan "agreed" to with the NSW Ministry of Health.
- Replacing ILGA with Liquor and Gaming NSW as the decision maker for which festival will have to have an "agreed Health and Medical Plan".
- Replacing ILGA with NSW Health as the agency to approve sign off on an "agreed health and medical plan".
- Two new review/appeal mechanisms for user-pays charges for government services - internally at the relevant agency first, and then to the DCITHS Secretary, who must consult a committee of representatives from the Premier's Department, Sound NSW and Destination NSW.
- Better regulation of minors at music festivals. Supporting the industry to grow our audience pipelines and enabling young people to attend music festivals and discover new Australian music. Festivals are one of the greatest platforms for up and coming local artists to develop their audiences.

The New South Wales Government's commitment to the music festival industry is a testament to our State's dedication to culture, creativity and community. I note comments made by the Minister for Gaming and Racing in his second reading speech. He said:

We must act decisively to create an environment where music festivals can thrive without unnecessary burdens that threaten their existence. The path forward requires a collective effort to ensure that festivals can continue to drive economic activity, bring communities together, showcase talents and celebrate our diverse cultural landscape for generations to come. Since the commencement of the Music Festivals Act, the regulatory burden for music festivals has become significantly higher in New South Wales, more than in any other State or Territory, causing some touring festivals to skip New South Wales altogether. Music festivals that were formerly deemed "high risk" or otherwise known as "subject" under the current regulatory framework must develop a safety management plan, which means festival organisers must meet higher medical and safety standards. Safety management plans must detail how the festival will comply with NSW Health's guidelines, and cover the event's medical plans, water plans, shade provisions, chill-out spaces, harm reduction messaging and services, and security. I commend the bill to the House.

Through these reforms, we are laying the groundwork for a brighter future for music festivals in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government's bill strikes a balance between making sure festivals are viable and continuing to keep patrons safe. The New South Wales Government is supporting a thriving, vibrant music festival environment in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (19:50): I lead for the New South Wales Opposition in debate on the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. Firstly, the Opposition supports the bill. But I foreshadow that we will move amendments to strengthen the bill and ensure that music festivals have a bright future in New South Wales. Music festivals are critical to the vibrancy and culture of New South Wales. They are the beating heart of our communities and bring people together to celebrate and enjoy different forms of artistic expression, music, food and traditions. New South Wales plays an essential role in the Australian festival industry, hosting more than a third of Australian festivals. Festivals are also a major contributor to the New South Wales economy.

As the member for Tamworth, I update the House on the significant economic benefit that the Tamworth Country Music Festival provides the Tamworth community through January. Tamworth Regional Council event organiser and director Barry Harley states that the Tamworth festival contributes \$100 million in economic benefit to Tamworth. It is an incredibly important economic boost for the hospitality industry in what would normally be a very quiet time for pubs, clubs, businesses and artists in Tamworth, particularly after the Christmas to new year holiday break.

Similarly, festivals like Bluesfest, Parkes Elvis Festival, Splendour in the Grass and the Falls Festival have significantly contributed to the local economies of regional communities, including the smaller festivals that light up calendars across the State. Furthermore, festivals are essential to the ongoing viability of live music in Australia. Festivals offer musicians unparalleled exposure to new audiences, as well as an opportunity to earn revenue and a launching pad for touring throughout New South Wales and Australia. Ongoing difficulties with holding these large-scale events have led to the postponement or the loss of several festivals this year, requiring the Government to act. I acknowledge the advocacy of lead industry groups such as the Australian Festivals Association and Live Performance Australia. I have spoken to both groups in relation to the bill, as well as organisers for the Tamworth Country Music Festival, and I thank them for their contributions.

Creative Australia's Soundcheck report into Australia's music festival sector outlines the barriers and challenges to running music festivals in Australia, with 47 per cent of organisers reporting that rising operational costs have a severe or major impact on running their festival. That was followed by lack of funding and grants available, 39 per cent; rising cost of insurance, 31 per cent; extreme weather events, 22 per cent; and navigating regulatory requirements, 27 per cent. Those statistics reflect on-the-ground feedback that I have received, with one festival organiser reporting a 40 per cent operational cost increase on last year.

The Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024 amends the Music Festivals Act 2019 and the Liquor Act 2007 to help address concerns regarding regulatory requirements for festivals. The bill comes to the House following a review of the Music Festivals Act 2019, which is a requirement under part 5 of the Act to ensure that the policy objectives of the Act remain valid. The Music Festivals Act 2019 was introduced at a time of deep concern in the community regarding the safety of festivals, following the overdose deaths of several patrons at New South Wales festivals. The bill amends the Music Festivals Act to shift the regulatory response to safety concerns away from police and towards Health, placing a stronger focus on harm minimisation.

Key to the bill is the removal of the "subject festival" designation, which has been replaced with a requirement imposed by Health for festival organisers to have a health and medical plan in place. The bill amends section 6 of the Music Festivals Act 2019 to achieve that by removing the provision setting out the required contents of a safety management plan and providing that the health and medical plan must be prepared in accordance with guidelines set out by NSW Health. Under section 6 of the Act, all festivals will be required to prepare a health and medical plan, with only certain festivals being required to submit their plan to NSW Health for approval. The factors to be considered when determining which festivals must have their health and medical plans approved by NSW Health will be at the discretion of the Secretary of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, with advice from NSW Health and police. The factors that may be reviewed by the secretary are set out in new section 5 of the Act.

The secretary's consideration of those matters is designed to ensure that appropriate festivals are required to submit their health and medical plans to NSW Health under the Act. The secretary will make the determination with the support of advice from the Health secretary, police and the festival organiser. Importantly, the music festival round table has input into the decision-making process, ensuring the industry has a right to procedural fairness under the Act. I also note that new section 5A of the Act outlines provision for appeal against the determination to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, which has otherwise been replaced in the regulatory process for festivals by the Secretary of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport.

The bill also introduces a review process for government fees and charges. Traditionally, festivals in New South Wales have been required to foot the bill for government fees and charges, including policing costs and ambulance costs. The Act seeks to implement an appeal process based on financial viability and exceptional circumstances. The Opposition welcomes the opportunity to review fees and charges under the Act. The

Opposition has been calling for an expansion of exemptions under the Government's existing user charges policy. The Opposition's proposal would be far wider in its scope, allowing the Government to provide additional exemptions for major events, including sporting events, cultural events and music festivals. That would ensure the benefits of reform are shared equitably among major events in New South Wales, giving all in the community an outlet. Instead, the Government is proposing an internal review process, like the process undertaken for category D and E events under the current user charges policy.

The Government's music festivals panel will be responsible for evaluating an application for a reduction of charges. Under the Government's bill, the music festivals panel is to include representatives of the Premier's Department, Sound NSW and Destination NSW. The New South Wales Opposition is proposing an amendment to the bill to give the New South Wales police representation on the panel. Police have on-the-ground experience in community safety at festivals and would be able to assist the panel in its decision-making in relation to providing any exemption or reduction in fees and charges. However, it is important to note that festivals should be given every opportunity to thrive and survive. That should be the starting point. That should be the default position. Each festival is different and should be treated differently. One size does not fit all, and festivals should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The criteria for assessing applications by music festival organisers for an exemption are not set out in the Act and are, instead, set by ministerial order. The New South Wales Opposition will be monitoring the application of the Minister's order to ensure festivals are provided the appropriate support under the Act. The Government should expand the remit of the music festivals panel to include sporting events and cultural events, which are significant contributors to the economy of New South Wales. Currently, under the Government's user charges policy, cultural and sporting events can apply to individual agencies for a waiver or a reduction in charges. That can require duplication of resources for event organisers, which is unnecessary. The Government's music festivals panel should be expanded to include those events, acknowledging the significant benefit that sporting and cultural events bring to our communities.

The Opposition will continue to work with the Government on sensible measures designed to support the New South Wales festivals industry through this period of unprecedented pressures. The Government's bill also amends the Liquor Act to simplify the process of holding an all-ages festival. Currently rules that allow minors to attend festivals place undue burden on festival organisers and are a barrier to holding events. The bill rectifies that by inserting new section 127A into the Liquor Act to encourage all-ages events. The bill requires festival organisers to place sufficient controls in place to mitigate the risks of minors obtaining liquor at an event and provides protections for organisers if they have made reasonable efforts to prevent minors from accessing alcohol. The Opposition welcomes those amendments to the Liquor Act.

I have already flagged the Opposition's amendment to the bill in relation to new section 19C. The Opposition will also be moving additional amendments to strengthen the bill and better support the New South Wales festival industry. It is proposing amendments to level the playing field for government departments, requiring the secretary to take advice from police, the health secretary and the festival event organiser. There needs to be a balance, not one heavy hand over the other. The Opposition's amendment also confirms the bill's intention to place health and harm minimisation at the forefront of the regulatory process for festivals. The genre and risk profile need to be taken into consideration during that process. I make it clear that, if advice is provided, it should not place undue burden on the festival's round table or agencies that fail to provide advice.

The Opposition will also move to ensure regional representation on the Government's Music Festival Roundtable. As noted by the Minister in his second reading speech, regional New South Wales is host to many major music festivals and it makes sense that a regionally based representative would provide valuable input to the round table to assist it in providing advice to government. I note that the Minister for Gaming and Racing is in the Chamber. I thank him for his cooperation. I also note the Minister's staff are in the gallery. I thank them for their cooperation in working out these amendments on behalf of the Minister responsible in the other place. I also thank the Australian Festival Association. I urge the Government to accept the Opposition's amendments.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:01): I speak proudly in debate on the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024 as someone who has enjoyed more than my fair share of festivals. I have not been to one in quite a few years. But, as I was reading this bill, I reflected that I have been lucky enough to go to Future, Stereosonic, Defqon, Big Day Out, Soundwave, Harbourlife, Parklife and Shore Thing. Shore Thing was probably one of my favourite festivals. I also have travelled overseas to festivals. The Vans Warped Tour is one of my favourites. If I am going to Los Angeles, I will try to tie it in with the Vans Warped Tour. I think I have probably revealed a little too much about the music genre I enjoy. For those who grow up in Australia and Sydney, going to a music festival is a big cultural experience they can enjoy. I have taken my nieces and nephews to them as well. As I have been lucky enough to enjoy those festivals, it is my hope and wish that future generations get to enjoy them as well.

As I have reflected on the number of festivals that I have been to, I cannot help but also think about how many of them do not exist anymore. There is a large variety of reasons for that. Prohibitive cost is probably at the top of the list for some of them. There are other factors as well. It might be noise complaints, or nimbys may have stopped some of them at different points in time. But they are an important part of the cultural fabric of New South Wales. It is important the Government works to make sure that that important cultural experience and economic contributor remains in our State and that we do everything possible to make sure it exists. Music festivals are much more than just concerts; they are full-blown cultural events that combine music, culture, community and creativity in a really unique way that leaves a lasting impression on anyone who goes to one. I think back on my youth and some of the most enjoyable experiences I have had with my friends over that time. Music festivals were always a key part of that.

As has been brought to the attention of the House by previous speakers, music festivals are an important way for up-and-coming artists to have a platform to highlight their work and their art to large numbers of people. The bill at its core is very simple. It does two things: It removes duplication of government effort where possible and increases an emphasis on health outcomes. Those two really sensible measures have come out of the statutory review. The bill is incredibly important. The industry is under threat. We continue to see—even this year—a number of festivals closing down. As a government, we must make sure that the industry is sustainable so future generations can enjoy it as well. It is an industry and sector that employs thousands of people, and it is important to the cultural fabric of our society. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:05): I support the Government's Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. It is indisputable that music festivals provide positive benefits to our society and economy. For artists, festivals offer opportunities to gain exposure to new audiences, engage in professional development opportunities and play alongside more experienced performers. For audiences, festivals provide experiences of new music and connecting with other like-minded individuals socially and emotionally. Festivals are more than just cultural events; they play a crucial role in boosting the economy, especially in regional and remote areas. According to the 2024 State of the Scene report by Sound NSW, live music contributes significantly to the State's economy, generating a remarkable \$5.5 billion in economic output and providing jobs for over 14,000 individuals. It shows how much those events not only help our social and cultural life but also keep local economies strong and vibrant.

Since 2020 the industry has faced major hurdles. COVID-19, adverse weather, new regulations and rising costs have all hit the music festival scene hard, making it tough for many festivals to stay afloat. Consumer behaviour is also changing as people move away from buying tickets well in advance in favour of purchasing tickets closer to festival start dates. We also know that insurance costs and rising prices for goods and services are putting pressures on the sector. As result of those difficulties, some longstanding festivals have had to make the hard decision to postpone, downsize or cancel their events altogether. Mountain Sounds was cancelled in 2019 and not reprised since. FOMO, which famously hosted Nicki Minaj at Parramatta Park, went into liquidation in 2020. Falls Festival was cancelled in 2022 and 2023. Groovin the Moo was cancelled in 2024. Splendour in the Grass was cancelled in 2024. Bluesfest, one of Australia's longest running and well-loved festivals, will be closing its doors after 2025.

Deciding that a festival is not able to go ahead is tough for an organiser. Cancelling a festival can lead to serious impacts, including reputational damage, difficulties accessing insurance, and other complex financial and logistical issues. The Minns Labor Government acknowledges that urgent action is required to improve the regulatory environment for music festivals in New South Wales and to fulfill our commitment to supporting vibrancy, live music and culture in the State. That is why we have moved to put in place an improved framework that will support the sector ahead of the summer festival season. The Government is committed to working with the festival sector and continuing to strengthen the viability of festivals across New South Wales. That means working with festivals that are going through tough times and ensuring they can continue to operate for years to come. A revitalisation of the live music and festival sector will allow different music genres to be celebrated and promoted across New South Wales.

As a mother of two musicians in a band called The Bancrofts—members can download their EP on all good streaming services—I dream of seeing my sons presented with more opportunities to play and perform in regional, rural and metro settings, and on a larger scale. I know they dream of that too. For The Bancrofts and their contemporaries, it might be more attainable with changes like those proposed in the bill. These changes have the ability to attract more international artists and musicians to Australia while also supporting local and homegrown artists across all genres to break out and make their mark. Harder Styles United [HSU] is a festival and event organiser that has held festivals in Australia and around the world and consistently hosts events at the Sydney Showground in the Parramatta electorate. In 2023 HSU attracted a staggering 60,000 attendees at music festival Knockout Outdoor.

HSU has created the space for homegrown Australian artists to flourish, including Mish, a DJ and producer from Kiama who has 480,000 monthly listeners and will be returning to Sydney Olympic Park on Saturday 5 October 2024 for Knockout Outdoor 2024. Members of my team are counting down the days to that great local event. The critical issue facing the music festival industry is the higher costs associated with holding music festivals in New South Wales compared with any other State or Territory. The recent statutory review of the Music Festival Act 2019 revealed that the framework in New South Wales places a significantly higher regulatory burden on the festival sector compared with other jurisdictions. This burden is out of step with other jurisdictions. That burden has resulted in festivals deciding not to go ahead with their festival or skipping New South Wales altogether when operating national tours.

In particular, the report found that user-pays policing costs were notably higher in New South Wales than in other States and Territories. Festival organisers are required to cover the cost of user-pays policing in other jurisdictions, but those costs are usually lower or fewer police are required. It is evident that these rising costs are a considerable concern for the industry and may be placing undue pressure on festival organisers in the State. The Minns Labor Government is committed to levelling the playing field for festival organisers by making sure the cost to hold a festival in this State is comparable to others. That is why the Government is introducing new section 19C into the Act, which will commence upon proclamation.

For festivals experiencing significant financial viability issues because of user-pay charges, there will be a new opportunity for them to have their costs reduced or waived in very limited circumstances. New section 19C of the Act will allow festival organisers to appeal for financial support on financial viability grounds to a panel comprised of representatives from Sound NSW, Destination NSW and the Premier's Department. The music festival organiser may apply for the amount to be waived or reduced on the grounds that exceptional circumstances apply and payment of the amount would impact on the financial viability of the festival. Any appeal must be assessed against and meet a robust and narrow set of criteria set out in a ministerial order.

This new provision will offer much-needed relief to significant festivals, helping to ensure that they can continue to thrive despite the financial pressures they face. Music festivals are integral to our cultural and economic landscape, offering opportunities for musicians and creatives, enriching our communities and bolstering local economies. As a representative of the largest performance precinct in New South Wales—and Parramatta Park—and home to one of the largest youth populations in New South Wales, I passionately support the bill. I know how much it means not only to those who want to go and experience festivals but also to those creatives and young people who live in and around Parramatta and Western Sydney. It is essential that we support this sector by creating a more equitable and manageable regulatory framework.

The Government is committed to levelling the playing field, ensuring that our festivals can continue to deliver their valuable contributions to society and opportunities for creatives at all stages of their careers. I support these changes in the bill. Those necessary measures will sustain and enhance the vibrant music festival scene in our State. I thank those who have been advocating for these changes outside government. Mitch Wilson is in the gallery today. He was one of the first people I met in Parliament. It is wonderful that people with passion and lived experience have worked on this project. They have knocked on the doors of government for far too long. Now there is a government that is listening. We know how important the sector is to this State, to Australia and internationally. We pride ourselves on supporting creatives. But we cannot just say that; we have to take action and put those words into legislation so that we can make the changes and make it real for people. I commend the bill to the House and support it wholeheartedly.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:15): I contribute to debate on the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. I am excited to be joined in the Chamber by my Central Coast colleagues, the Minister for the Central Coast and the member for The Entrance, because we know the Central Coast has historically been a fantastic place for festivals. In 2019 there was a huge movement when the former Government did its best to destroy the festival scene. It was like "Goodbye, Gladys; hello, progress." That had nothing to do with Labor in the lead-up to the last election campaign; festival organisers across the Central Coast gave a voice to the importance of festivals on the coast. It is nice to be in the Parliament with a government that cares about vibrancy, the night-time economy, music festivals and live music.

There are lots of festivals on the Central Coast. We have the Rolling Sets and the Girrakool Blues at The Entrance, the Tubular Music and Arts Festival across the coast, Lost Paradise at Glenworth Valley and the Long Jetty Festival, which I will talk about later in my contribution. The Central Coast is spoilt for choice when it comes to our vibrant music festival scene. The Central Coast is home to a vast array of innovative, world-class, highly acclaimed artists, creatives and industries. Many people on the Central Coast are part of the music industry. They even participate in the Tamworth Country Music Festival—we have a fantastic country music scene. Music festivals across our region provide an unparalleled opportunity to bring together world-class creatives and artists and the industries that make those events possible.

In recognising the vibrancy of this sector on the Central Coast and across New South Wales, it is important to note that this Government supports creatives. It is critical that we also recognise the unprecedented challenges faced by the music festival scene, including increased labour and insurance costs, adverse weather events, changing consumer behaviour and the impact of significant regulatory burdens. In light of the recent cancellation of a number of large-scale music festivals, the New South Wales Government is committed to reducing the burden on festival organisers, removing red tape and creating a more supportive regulatory environment for music festivals. The bill seeks to amend the regulatory framework for music festivals in New South Wales, including the means by which music festival organisers work with the State Government and police to promote health and safety and also to ensure the viability of events.

The bill is a part of the Government's commitment to supporting vibrancy not only for the social and cultural benefits that these festivals bring but also for the economic boost they give to regional communities like the Central Coast. The economic boost from these festivals is clear: Bluesfest generates \$70.2 million for Byron shire, \$141.9 million for the Northern Rivers and \$232 million for New South Wales more broadly, which is massive. The Tamworth Country Music Festival—I note the member for Tamworth is opposite me in the Chamber—will inject \$140 million into the local economy. Many people who are part of the important music industry on the Central Coast benefit from that music festival. Those are only two examples of the 150 music festivals that deliver economic and cultural boosts to our communities in New South Wales each year.

The benefits are not just economic or cultural; there are huge benefits for humanity by participating in these festivals. They are outlets for young people to express themselves and celebrate their youth. That is an important part of the conversation that members should have in Parliament. This is not just about the economy; this is about young people having a place to be and an event to look forward to in their communities. I thank the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy for the review of the Music Festivals Act. I also thank him for the consultation paper and for recognising the need to focus on health-related components to mitigate the risk and respond to the medical emergencies, to make sure that festival attendees have their wellbeing first and foremost. The member for Parramatta spoke about the importance of festivals in her community. I acknowledge also the advocacy of Alex Ross-King's family in Narara. We lost Alex at one of the festivals in Parramatta, and her family members have been incredible advocates for the importance of safety at festivals. I acknowledge their advocacy while speaking about moving forward in the festival space. I know we have more work to do.

The Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024 will provide an increased emphasis on health outcomes as part of the regulatory framework and planning for a festival, while seeking to remove duplication of government processes where possible. In doing so, the bill seeks to address duplication that has occurred within safety management plans, whereby festival organisers are required to provide the same information to multiple government agencies, through multiple regulatory processes. By strengthening the Act's administrative provisions, the framework will be focused on health and medical matters, reducing user-pays government costs to support the ongoing viability of festivals, which is incredibly important, while removing barriers for minors to attend festivals.

The bill will achieve this in several ways, including amending section 6 of the Act to reframe the safety management plan to a health and medical plan, removing the contents of the safety management plan in the Act, and providing that the health and medical plan for a festival must be prepared in accordance with NSW Health guidelines. There is oversight to do that. Importantly, the bill introduces into the Music Festivals Act 2019 objects that clarify the Government's support for the sector to run safe events that minimise harm, while critically ensuring that the regulatory framework considers the impact of government regulation on the health and viability of the industry.

Further supporting the ongoing viability of the sector, new section 19D will better align New South Wales with other States and Territories, with festival organisers now able to apply for an internal review of user-pays charges. An independent internal review pathway for police and ambulance costs will be made available for festival organisers experiencing significant financial viability issues as a result of user-pays charges. Further, by allowing festival organisers to appeal to a panel of representatives of Sound NSW, Destination NSW and the Premier's Department, any appeal would be assessed on robust guidelines, recognising in exceptional circumstances the need for financial support.

Finally, by imposing commonsense limitations on the conditions associated with all-ages festivals, the bill will continue to remove regulatory red tape, with commonsense solutions. This includes limitations on the conditions for when a minor who is 16 years of age or older must be accompanied by a responsible adult and clarifying that separation due to unavoidable reasons would not constitute a breach. That is incredibly important because, realistically, you should not have to be 18 years of age or older to participate in the joy of festivals. I take my hat off to any responsible adults who support their minors to join with them.

In closing, I thank the Premier for having a Minister for live music. It is fantastic to be part of a government with the first Minister for live music in the world. I celebrate that John Graham is that Minister and I thank the Minister's team members for the work they continue to do in this space. We are right beside them. The Government is committed to undertaking reform that ensures that our communities remain safe, while also ensuring that music festivals remain viable now and into the future.

I acknowledge, with a whole bunch of love, Mitch Wilson, the managing director of the Australian Festival Association, the peak body, for his work in aiming to make festivals safer for patrons and reducing friction between festival promoters and reducing the regulatory burden. I acknowledge the organisers of the Long Jetty Festival on the Central Coast for their work in continuing to run it. It is an important festival. It is four years in, and it is important that the festival organisers operate in a timely manner, which gives all those bureaucratic components the ability to act in a timely manner to make sure everything is in place for the neighbours and all the other components of the festival. They have changed the date this time round, and the October long weekend is possibly problematic, but I commend Central Coast Council for the work it is doing. All of us would really love to see that festival happen in 2024 and for things to be put in place to ensure that that festival continues to happen in the future.

I acknowledge Greg Carey, who is an absolute lover of live music on the Central Coast, for the work he is continuing to do to facilitate live music to be a really important part of our community. Live music is such a significant component of vibrant, thriving communities in New South Wales. By removing red tape and streamlining the regulatory process, our Government will ensure that government support for music festivals is secured now and into the future.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:24): I second the comments made by my colleagues the member for Gosford and the member for Wyong about the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024. It will make important changes to the Music Festival Act 2019 to better support the music festival industry in this State. It really underpins the Government's commitment to having a stronger music festival industry and a more vibrant cultural life in the State of New South Wales. It is informed by the Government's review of the Music Festivals Act 2019 and its report that was issued in April 2024. The bill will also be supported by the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund to help the music industry with financial issues over the next couple of years, to ensure music festivals that may not otherwise have gone ahead do go ahead for the benefit of the State.

In my view, one of the key amendments is the creation of the Music Festival Roundtable, an industry consultative body that, importantly, as I have said to my colleagues on this side of the House many times and to the community, has union representation for the people who work in the industry. The round table will have 13 industry and 13 government agency appointments, as well as two harm reduction service providers, to continue the process of informing reform and strengthening the music festival and cultural scene in this State. That is also important for my community.

On the Central Coast we have many local festivals, which contribute to a really vibrant local cultural scene. In December the Rolling Sets are coming to The Entrance. That ticketed event has run successfully for several years and has a strong local following. The same organisers are also responsible for running the Long Jetty Festival, a non-ticketed event. The distinction between the two is important, and I will talk about that in a minute. I was pleased to work with the group from the Long Jetty Festival when it started in 2015 but also more recently, as it has grown. The festival closes streets in Long Jetty. It is also affordable because it is a non-ticketed event. That is really important because it supports local businesses and is a source of economic activation in the Long Jetty part of my electorate, which I always want to encourage.

It would be remiss of me to talk about music festivals without mentioning my constituent Jennifer Ross-King, the mother of Alex Ross-King, who in January 2019 died at a music festival from a drug overdose. Importantly, harm minimisation will be directly addressed by the make-up of the round table. That is important. It is unfinished business the Government has committed to addressing square on, but it is something that my community, particularly Alex's school friends and family, want to see happen sooner rather than later. I also want to underline my comments on commercial and non-commercial festivals. At the moment, both types of festival have to go through the same planning processes. That may be something that the round table can address.

It is really important that the bill assists by including provisions to appeal the user and agency charges, which are often a big hurdle for non-commercial festivals. We should support people who are making a living out of their music and cultural life, rather than making a profit. I hope the round table addresses that issue and the Government supports any sensible suggestions. At the moment the planning process is a little bit clunky for festivals that come back year after year. They have two planning options. They can put in a development application with their local council every time the festival is held, even though it is going to be similar to a previous festival. If they want to apply for multiple-year approval, the planning process has to be elevated to the local planning panel. I am not sure that is the best way to gain approval for longer-term music festivals in this State.

The round table may be able to consider that issue as well. Otherwise, the bill is a good contribution to improve the cultural life of, and music festival industry in, this State. I commend the bill to the House.

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) (20:30): In reply: I thank the members who contributed to the debate on the Music Festivals Amendment Bill 2024: the member for Heathcote, the member for Sydney, the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Newtown, the member for Newcastle, the member for Clarence, the member for Granville, the member for Tamworth and shadow Minister, the member for Coogee, the member for Parramatta, the member for Gosford and the member for The Entrance. I will address some of the matters raised in the debate. The member for Heathcote noted the importance of lifting the "subject festival" designation in the Act. The effect of the removal of that label should not be understated. The bill will set out a more supportive framework that is fair and practical, removes unnecessary red tape, and at the same time ensures the festivals sector is operated in a safe and responsible manner.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Sydney about the need for the framework to maintain its focus on the health of patrons attending festivals. The bill amends the Act to explicitly add harm minimisation as an object of the Act. That change will ensure that every person who exercises functions under the Act must promote harm minimisation measures relating to the consumption of liquor and drugs at music festivals to ensure the safety of persons attending. The Government believes that change will make a meaningful improvement to the regulation of festivals in this State.

I acknowledge also the contribution of the member for Newtown, who referred to the financial impact of user-pays government charges on the festivals sector. The Government acknowledges those pressures on the sector and believes the bill takes meaningful steps to address the issue. The appeal pathway created by new section 19C of the Act allows festivals to appeal user-pays government charges when exceptional circumstances apply or payment of the amount would impact on the financial viability of the music festival. I acknowledge the other concerns raised by the member for Newtown, and the Government looks forward to reviewing any amendments proposed by The Greens in the other place.

The member for Clarence and the member for Newcastle spoke about the financial pressures impacting the sector. In recent years, music festival organisers across the world have been faced with unprecedented challenges when planning and executing their events due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events, and rising operational and touring costs. Although those are international and national issues, the impacts are particularly hard felt by New South Wales festival organisers, given the higher comparative costs of doing business and the regulatory framework. The changes proposed by the bill are an important piece of the picture to ensure the Government is supporting the music festivals sector. More needs to be done to ensure a thriving music festivals sector in New South Wales, but the Government believes that the comprehensive reforms proposed by the bill, as well as the Government's new Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund, will make a meaningful difference.

I thank the member for Tamworth, who is a big supporter of music and entertainment up in Tamworth and across New South Wales, for his contribution. The member referred to the need for risks to be taken into account when determining whether a festival should have an agreed health and medical plan. The bill sets out that NSW Health will provide advice to the Secretary of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport that is based on and informed by the characteristics associated with drug-related health harms. Those characteristics are set out by NSW Health in its *Guidelines for Music Festival Event Organisers*.

I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Coogee, who outlined her experiences at a range of different music festivals; the member for Parramatta, who not only talked about festivals but also did a bit of an advertisement for her two sons; and the member for Gosford, who talked about the great festivals held on the Central Coast. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for The Entrance, who spoke about the Rolling Sets festival and acknowledged that he has been working very closely with Long Jetty Festival organisers to get that festival off the ground this year. He also outlined some of the issues around trying to get permission for multi-year festivals. The issues he raised are particularly important.

In closing, the Government is committed to supporting a vibrant live music culture in New South Wales, and this bill is a step forward to ensuring we have a great summer festival season this year. The Government believes the bill takes meaningful steps to remove unnecessary red tape and create a more supportive regulatory environment for music festivals. I am pleased by the detailed and productive engagement we have had with other members on the bill. I genuinely believe those discussions have made the bill stronger. In particular, I thank members for their detailed engagement in the debate this evening.

I extend my thanks to the many agencies that have collaborated to make the bill possible. It has been a complex set of reforms to bring together. In fact, sometimes the room was not big enough to fit everybody. We

made sure everyone had a voice at the table. I recognise the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport and the team at Liquor and Gaming NSW for their efforts to develop the reforms in the bill. They punch above their weight and work particularly hard. I acknowledge the work they do. Finally, I thank the industry representatives who have made the bill possible by providing crucial advice to the Government and contributing to the development of the bill.

As other members have correctly done, I thank the Australian Festival Association, particularly Mitch Wilson, and the other industry representatives who contributed to the review of the Act and the development of the subsequent reforms. I acknowledge their great passion for the industry and the desire to make sure New South Wales is the festival capital of the world. I am grateful for the collaborative manner in which they engage with the Government on a range of issues and their input to the reforms. I acknowledge my colleague Minister Graham and his passion for the reforms. I really appreciate working with him on the fine details to make sure we make a difference in this area. In conclusion, the Government looks forward to a thriving music festivals sector and remains committed to continuing this important work over the coming years. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Kevin Anderson.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): By leave: I will consider the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:39): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-166C in globo:

No. 1 Determining whether music festival requires agreed health and medical plan

Page 4, Schedule 1 [6], proposed section 5 (2) and (3), lines 12–16. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (3) Without limiting the matters to which the Secretary may have regard in determining whether a music festival requires an agreed health and medical plan, the Secretary must have regard to the following matters—

No. 2 Police Commissioner's involvement in determining whether music festival requires agreed health and medical plan—consequential amendment

Page 4, Schedule 1 [6], proposed section 5 (3). Insert after line 19—

- (a1) advice from the Commissioner of Police,

The reason I move the amendments in globo is because amendment No. 1 is the administrative instruction to facilitate amendment No. 2. The Opposition moves the amendments to level the playing field for government departments, requiring the secretary to take advice from police, the health secretary and the festival event organiser in equal measure. The Opposition's amendments affirm the bill's intention to place health and harm minimisation at the forefront of the regulatory process for festivals. I make clear that if advice is provided, it should not place undue burden on the festivals round table or agencies that failed to provide advice. I recognise the assistance of industry, particularly the Australian Festival Association, in consulting with the Opposition on the amendments. I also acknowledge the work of the Minister and his staff for working with the Opposition in relation to the amendments. I commend the amendments to the House.

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) (20:40): The Government supports the amendments. The bill provides that Liquor and Gaming NSW must consider advice provided by the NSW Police Force when determining the agreed health and medical plan status of a music festival and may consider advice provided by NSW Health and the music festival organiser whether a prescribed medical event has occurred, and advice from the music festival round table. The proposed amendments would list all the considerations in section 5 to be that Liquor and Gaming NSW "must" consider as opposed to listing some as "may" consider. The Government supports the amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-166C be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:41): I move Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-166C:

No. 3 NSW Police Force to be represented on music festivals panel hearing appeals against imposition of government charges in relation to music festivals

Page 10, Schedule 1 [36], proposed section 19C (4), line 16. Omit "Destination NSW.". Insert instead—

Destination NSW,

- (d) a person representing the NSW Police Force nominated by the Commissioner of Police.

The Opposition moves this amendment recognising the critical role and expertise of police in the safe operation of festivals, including music festivals across New South Wales. However, it is recognised that each festival is different, and one size does not fit all. In my contribution to the second reading debate, I outlined that the default position should be that festivals are given every opportunity to thrive and survive. Each event should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. I commend the amendment to the House.

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) (20:43): The Government opposes the amendment. The bill provides that a government panel be established to consider an appeal under new section 19C for user-pays government charges to be waived or reduced. The bill sets out that the panel is to consist of three persons representing the Premier's Department, Sound NSW and Destination NSW. The proposed amendment would expand that membership to include a person representing the NSW Police Force. The proposed amendment, which adds a police member to the panel, would create a conflict of interest with the police panel member, especially in situations where the panel is tasked with reviewing an appeal of user-pays policing charges.

The addition of a police member to the panel would also create a disparity as there are other user-pays charges that could be appealed and those agencies have no representative on the panel—for example, ambulance. Lastly, it is envisaged that the proposed ministerial order, as prescribed by new section 19D, will be developed so as to set out the process for the panel to seek information from the NSW Police Force on any appeals that relate to user-pays policing charges.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-166C be agreed to.

Amendment negated.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:44): I move Opposition amendment No. 4 on sheet c2024-166C:

No. 4 Regional representative to be member of music festival roundtable

Page 13, Schedule 2, proposed section 3(b). Insert after line 36—

- (x) 1 member who represents regional areas in NSW, nominated by one of the following, as agreed by the co-chairs—
- (A) a person or body that represents regional NSW,
 - (B) a person or body that represents the music festival industry.

The Opposition moves this amendment recognising the critically important role regional New South Wales plays in the festival industry in this State. Regional New South Wales is home to so many of the iconic music festivals that have been mentioned as part of the debate on the bill. Communities like Parkes, Tamworth, Central Coast, Byron Bay, South Coast, Kiama, Wollongong, Broken Hill and many more rely on the success of their local music festivals. That is why the Opposition moves that regional New South Wales be included in this space. I commend the amendment to the House.

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) (20:45): The Government supports the amendment. The bill expands the membership of the music festivals round table to include additional government members, and increases the industry representatives, resulting in a total of 13 members. The proposed amendment expands the industry representatives to also include a regional representative. Adding a regional industry representative will provide a more fulsome and balanced mix of representatives. It is noted that the bill also adds in a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service to be part of the round table.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that Opposition amendment No.4 on sheet c2024-166C be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended be agreed to.

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

Third Reading

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

UNIVERSITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Returned

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

Community Recognition Statements

MACARTHUR BULLS

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:48): I am extremely happy to inform the House that the mighty Macarthur Bulls have advanced to the final of the 2024 Australia Cup. The Bulls are hoping to secure their second cup in just three years after defeating South Melbourne 1-0 in their semifinal last Sunday. The players have worked hard through a tough off-season, with head coach Mile Sterjovski and his staff getting the team in tiptop condition for the upcoming A-League season. They will square off this Sunday against Melbourne Victory, which will be a massive interstate rivalry. While Macarthur and the south-west are already buzzing, I call on all of New South Wales to get behind the Bulls and get those cowbells ringing this weekend. I congratulate Gino Marra, Sam Krslovic and everyone at the club on another incredible achievement. Go the Bulls!

VICKI SANDIFORD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:49): I recognise Vicki Sandiford, who has an amazing story of recovery from stage 4 non-Hodgkin's diffuse large B-cell lymphoma. Vicki received this devastating diagnosis in 2016. The statistics are sobering. Over 7,300 people are diagnosed with this painful affliction each year. For 12 months Vicki endured a barrage of chemotherapies and radiations, blood transfusions and bone marrow biopsies. It was a battle that she needed to win. She went through a horribly gruelling schedule of treatment, but it was a testament to Vicki's grit, strength of will and determination that she could visualise a much more positive future 12 months later. I celebrate Vicki's inspirational and positive outlook and her passionate drive to spread awareness to others about lymphoma and the resources, information and support that are available from Lymphoma Australia. World Lymphoma Awareness Day was on 14 September. In the spirit of the day, Vicki donned lime green and took her faithful golden retriever, Holly, with her to sell raffle tickets to both fundraise and raise awareness. I am inspired by the many acts of kindness spread by others across our community. I thank Vicki for her generous spirit and wish her many years of good health and happiness.

LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:50): The culmination of 13 years of school is momentous, exciting and slightly anxiety inducing. As they say their farewells to peers and prepare for their HSC exams beginning next month, I offer my best wishes to the class of 2024. I acknowledge year 12 students from across the Liverpool electorate at All Saints Catholic Senior College, Ashcroft High School, Bonnyrigg High School, Cecil Hills High School, Freeman Catholic College, Hoxton Park High School, James Busby High School, Liverpool Boys High School, Liverpool Girls High School, Miller Technology High School and Minarah College. I congratulate each and every student from those schools on their diligence, perseverance and dedication to their studies. I particularly acknowledge and thank their teachers for fostering curiosity and learning. I am sure their mentorship of our students and investment in their education will have an impact on them for many years to come. Last but not least, I thank the families of those students for the love, support and encouragement they have given their children. Our year 12 students can be very proud of all they have accomplished. I know they are vital to the future of Liverpool.

DORRIGO SILVER SPURS CAMPDRAFT

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (20:51): The Dorrigo Silver Spurs Campdraft is a vivid showcase of rural Australia's spirit where skill, tradition and a deep sense of solidarity between horse and rider come together. This epic battle of man versus beast attracts riders eager to prove their horsemanship skills and honour a long-held tradition. The oohs and aahs, the whoops and the great horse work are intense as competitors demonstrate

exceptional skill and absolute determination to get that beast around the pegs. The support from the community was profound. The locals just love it. The tireless volunteers putting in a solid effort for their community highlights the true essence of our country spirit. The campdraft is more than a yearly contest; it is years of thrills and spills, heartbreak and glory, dust and dirt. It is a bond that unites us and a testament to our competitive nature. Events like this inspire us and remind us of our agricultural heartland. It is the very essence of dedication, resilience and heart that define our country way of life. This is what we do for fun.

EAST HILLS BULLDOGS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:52): I congratulate the East Hills Bulldogs Rugby League Club on being awarded \$75,000 as part of the Local Small Commitments Allocation program. The funding will go towards an upgrade to the barbeque area, including replacing the badly damaged concrete ground area. The upgrades ensure that the long tradition of watching footy, sharing stories and building friendships continues for many years to come for our local players, volunteers and families. It is more than just a financial boost. This investment is a recognition of the invaluable role that the East Hills Bulldogs play in our local community. It is about making sure that the club continues to be a welcoming space where lifelong memories are made and where community spirit is not only preserved but strengthened. Once again, I congratulate the East Hills Bulldogs. I cannot wait to see the work commence on upgrading this area. I am certainly looking forward to catching up in the future with old friends to watch our local footy teams play while enjoying a steak sandwich.

BERYL PAUL

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:53): I recognise Beryl Paul who has dedicated the past four decades to raising funds for the Fred Hollows Foundation. After being inspired by a chance meeting with Fred in an outback church in the late 1970s, Mrs Paul did not forget his remark that "doing nothing was not an option". She has since spent up to eight hours a day knitting and making items that are sold at markets and fetes. Mrs Paul has now raised \$25,000 for the foundation, with a further \$3,000 from a tea party in May this year. Previously a candidate for the local Citizen of the Year, she is now nominated for the Fred Awards, which celebrates everyday humanitarians across Australia who embody kindness, compassion and integrity. Mrs Paul is described as a tireless and inspiring advocate for the charity. Her husband, Richard, and the Griffith community are extremely proud of her. Well done!

CABRAMATTA ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (20:54): On 3 September 2024 I had the privilege of visiting the Cabramatta Anglican Church in my Cabramatta electorate. I had the opportunity to meet and speak to Senior Minister Joseph Thiem, Pastor Trung Chanh Doan, Senior Assistant Minister William Quach and Senior Assistant Minister Robert Young. I also had the pleasure of witnessing the everyday English classes being run by Senior Minister Joseph Thiem, which are to assist refugees and migrants in developing their proficiency in the English language. I was able to speak to some of the local class members to understand their enjoyment of learning English. The pastors and assistant ministers explained to me their struggles as refugees or newly arrived migrants and their journey to the Cabramatta Anglican Church. Through their reflections of their personal history, they emphasised the importance of supporting newly arrived struggling migrants in the community. I am proud that we have such remarkable individuals that are committed to providing a pathway for people to acclimate and belong to our local community.

KEANU ARYA

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:55): Few things make me prouder than the success of the Ryde Liberal team in the recent local government elections. Diverse, professional and future focused, the team is a reflection of modern Ryde. I particularly acknowledge the success of East Ward councillor-elect Keanu Arya, who is set to be elected following a historic result in Ryde. A professional auditor, multilingual, Persian community leader and a dedicated and hardworking campaigner, councillor-elect Arya has already done so much to advance the cause of Ryde. His election will represent a new era of Liberal representation as part of a team that breaks its own record for diversity, which was set last term. Councillor-elect Arya, like so much of the Ryde Liberal team, is thoroughly community based. The team's ability to know their neighbours, engage with new audiences, share good ideas and be responsive to community need is the ultimate recipe for political success. I look forward to working closely with Keanu this term to make the place I truly love—Ryde—an even better place. I congratulate Keanu.

WESTERN SYDNEY AWARDS FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:56): The 2024 Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence at Oatlands House were hosted by the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce to recognise and honour small businesses and entrepreneurs in Western Sydney. Each was judged by a panel based on innovation, growth, sustainability and contribution to the community from an established criteria. I congratulate the nominees and finalists in all

categories. The winners were Julian Fayad, from Loan Options.ai, for Parramatta Light Rail Outstanding Business Leader; Kairos Care for Excellence in Innovation; Success Works Partners for Outstanding Community Organisation; H&H Accredited Training for Excellence in Large Business; Kids United OSHC for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion; Curezma for Outstanding Startup; Earlwood Dental Care for Excellence in Small to Medium Enterprise; Evolve Housing Group for Outstanding Employer of Choice; Grabowski Financial Planning for Excellence in Micro Business category; Arts and Cultural exchange for Outstanding Community Organisation; and Hawkesbury City Chamber of Commerce for Outstanding Local Chamber. The Overall Business of the Year Award went to H&H Accredited Training.

DYLAN KINKADE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (20:57): I recognise the achievements of Dylan Kinkade, a 16-year-old from Forster who recently competed in the Lifesaving World Championships on the Gold Coast. Dylan started Nippers when he was five and has competed in surf lifesaving ever since. When he was 14 he completed his bronze medallion so that he could not only help the community with volunteer surf patrols but also continue to compete in surf lifesaving. Out of 118 competitors at the championships, Dylan came fourth place in the sprint final and twenty-ninth in the flags event, and he currently ranks third in Australia for that event. Dylan competed against athletes from 74 countries. His experience will no doubt serve him well when he travels to New Zealand next year to compete in the Trans-Tasman Tri-Series as part of the New South Wales country team. I congratulate Dylan on his achievements that are a well-deserved recognition of his talent and dedication.

BLACK BELT MARTIAL ARTS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:58): I give a huge congratulations to Black Belt Martial Arts [BBMA] for an impressive victory of six gold, six silver and nine bronze medals at the fiftieth Karate Australia National Championships in Geelong. BBMA in West Gosford has attracted hundreds of participants over the year. The classes are designed to cater for different age groups and levels of fitness, such as black belt, kickboxing and grand masters. Participants from three years old to over 50 years old can join and learn the beauty of martial arts while staying fit. BBMA Gosford is a well-loved centre led by many teachers who used to be BBMA students. The goal for every single student at BBMA is to be the best version of themselves. When visiting BBMA, people can expect to see the cute Little Dragons trying their best martial arts and the skilful adults practising their kickboxing, as well as the determined teenagers who are aiming for their black belt. BBMA West Gosford is also much appreciated by the working parents in our electorate for their amazing school holiday camps. I thank BBMA West Gosford for keeping our community members healthy and happy.

ILLUMINATE WOLLONDILLY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:59): I congratulate Wollondilly Shire Council and the Picton business community on an amazing Illuminate Wollondilly. On Friday 20 September the Picton Botanic Gardens came alive with lights, including illuminated sculptures, a lantern display, the lantern parade, the return of the sensational long-table dinner and the Illuminate carnival at Hume Oval. On Saturday 21 September there was the colourful return of the main festival in Picton, with market stalls, a food court, vibrant building projections and light displays, plus a live entertainment stage packed with local community groups and music performances. A highlight was the live music played by a number of local artists and the wonderful eclectic displays from the business owners, including the newest to open on the night, the Celebration Society, which opened after refurbishing the historic Corbett hardware building. Walking into that place without Keith being there will take some time to get used to, but the owners should be proud. The place looks amazing. The fireworks spectacular display capped off a great night for the community. The weekend finished on Sunday with jazz and swing music in the gardens.

HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX PARISH AND COMMUNITY OF WOLLONGONG

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (21:00): On Saturday night, hundreds of parishioners and members of the Greek community from Wollongong and further afield gathered to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Wollongong. Wollongong has benefited from waves of migration that have helped to build our community while adding cultural and religious diversity to the region. The Greek community is one of the larger migrant groups. Since its establishment in 1954, the Holy Cross church has been the spiritual hub of the region's Greek community. Over many years, the church has maintained its commitment to its faith and traditions while helping to improve the lives of many in the region. The anniversary celebrations would not have been possible without the hard work of the organising committee or the sponsors who contributed to it. The church and the Greek Orthodox community in Wollongong have greatly benefited from the vision of the original group that came together to form the church and its leadership since—including, most recently, the leadership of Father Sophronios Konidaris and Parish President Tom Anagnostopoulos. I congratulate the church on its platinum jubilee.

ANYA NIELSEN

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:01): I was delighted recently to attend and launch Anya Nielsen's remarkable new books, *Following the Grand Tour: To Italy, France & Spain* and *Babushka's Feast: Dishes Filled With Love*. As a long-time member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and former secretary of Wyong Writers, Anya's dedication to her craft is truly inspiring. Her short stories, regularly published in Seniors Card anthologies, have captivated readers with their charm and insight. Anya's writing offers a window into a fascinating life—one shaped by her travels around the world, her rich family history and the many experiences that have fuelled her creativity. Both *Following the Grand Tour: To Italy, France & Spain* and *Babushka's Feast: Dishes Filled With Love* beautifully weave those elements into stories that transport readers into different times and places. We are all so fortunate to be able to share in Anya's journey, both through her words and the incredible stories she tells. I congratulate Anya once again on the exciting milestone. I look forward to seeing where her writing will take her, and us, next.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (21:02): The Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce works tirelessly to drive real change across south-west Sydney. The chamber's impact is exemplified through a number of key initiatives, including the BRAVE Project, which empowers stakeholders across all industries to join forces and empower women in the local community; the roundtable initiative, which aims to tackle critical challenges facing businesses today; and the CEO for a Day program, which connects aspiring students with senior executives in the local community. Boosting community engagement and connecting fellow entrepreneurs, the chamber drives real change. I thank founding member and current CEO Wally Mehanna, as well as board members Bill Parasiris, Jason Arraj, Tracy Alexakis, Antoinette Khalil, Jessica Wehbe and Geoff Gaymer. I thank them for boosting societal goals through business collaboration.

ARMIDALE LIGHT FESTIVAL

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (21:03): I recognise the achievements of the Armidale Regional Council for initiating and hosting the successful Armidale Light Festival. The festival celebrated the unique nature of Armidale, illuminating the city's rich culture and creativity through an incredible display of immersive light shows that were attended by approximately 7,000 people. I congratulate the council and the many local organisations involved in the wonderful festival. A special thanks goes to Catherine Creagan and the Armidale Regional Council activation and precinct teams, which includes Renata Davis, Camille Jones, Maddie Fleming and Denise Palmer. I also thank the numerous council outdoor staff who ensured that Armidale was looking typically beautiful for the event. I commend all of those involved for the valuable initiative and for their commitment, teamwork and effort in showcasing the gorgeous city of Armidale. A special thanks also goes to the volunteers who give their personal time, as regional towns cannot function without the ongoing support and commitment of volunteers.

NEEL PATEL

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (21:04): I congratulate rising Schofields cricket star Neel Patel. Neel's exceptional talent and dedication to the sport is inspiring. He is an effective captain and an able batter, honing his skills at the nets by Galungara Reserve. Neel led the New South Wales under-15 boys to victory in the School Sport Australia Cricket Championships, achieving a strong 299 off 366 balls for his team during the tournament, which was the best result of any batter in the championship. Neel's talent has earned him a nomination to receive the NSW Government State Representative Award. He is a well-deserving nominee. I am sure it will be the first of many prestigious accolades that he will receive in his career. The New South Wales under-15 boys played exceptionally well and won the championship—a feat the whole State can be incredibly proud of. I am sure that we will be barracking for those stars in the making for years to come. I have no doubt that Neel will one day have a place in the national team, wearing the baggy green beside his heroes, and that future generations of our community will strive to bat like him.

NORTHERN BEACHES SECONDARY COLLEGE CROMER CAMPUS GIRLS' SOFTBALL TEAM

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (21:05): I recognise an outstanding achievement by the Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus, which has claimed the 2024 State championship for girls softball in a spectacular showdown. Facing off against The Hills Sports High School, Cromer's team defied all odds, showing tremendous heart, determination and undeniable skill. Despite being down a player for the entire tournament, the remarkable young athletes displayed unwavering teamwork and grit. As the final inning approached, Cromer staged a thrilling comeback, pushing beyond their limits to seize the lead in what I know will be an unforgettable moment in those players' lives. I congratulate the Cromer girls softball team and the awesome coach and support crew. On and off the pitch, their success makes their school and the community so very proud.

NANCY WEATHERMAN

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (21:06): I congratulate Nancy Weatherman, who was awarded Marine Rescue NSW's Officer of the Year at the recent Rotary Districts of NSW Emergency Services Community Awards. Nancy is the deputy unit commander of Marine Rescue NSW in Eden. She has been a volunteer with the organisation for 10 years and has served as unit commander and deputy unit commander. Nancy is a qualified marine rescue radio operator and has been involved in fundraising, community engagement and member recruitment in the strategically important region of the Port of Eden and Twofold Bay. She has been actively involved in the Eden unit's building and facilities upgrade committee. I regularly hear her voice on ABC South East NSW with her report on marine conditions in Eden, including the number of eighths of cloud cover, visibility, swell, wind speed, temperature and barometric pressure. Nancy is one of more than 3,400 volunteers who help keep our boating community and visitors safe at sea.

ANGELA MALTESE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (21:07): On behalf of me, my team and my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I congratulate, commend and thank my wonderful and hardworking senior electorate officer, Mrs Angela Maltese, on the 10-year anniversary of her employment in my office. Mrs Maltese's employment commenced on 25 June 2014 in a temporary casual position. She then became a permanent part-time electorate officer in September 2014, before rising further to become a senior electorate officer in 2015. Mrs Maltese has brought her incredible local knowledge and extraordinary work ethic to the role and has displayed that consistently, day in and day out. I am glad to, alongside my community, be the beneficiary of the work of such a quality and extraordinary individual as Angela Maltese. She has been alongside me supporting our community as we have faced many challenges and achieved many amazing outcomes. Our community is much better for Angela's service, and I wish her the very best as she continues her great work in my office.

HELENSBURGH LIONS CLUB

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (21:08): I acknowledge the Helensburgh Lions Club, which has been a pillar of service and community spirit since its founding in 1979. Helensburgh Lions Club has spent over four decades making invaluable contributions to the local area, always guided by its values of liberty, integrity and Australia's safety. From its early days, the Helensburgh Lions Club has been deeply involved in improving the community. The club has led a range of initiatives, from building playground equipment and shelters to sponsoring young talent and providing support to vulnerable residents. It has helped bushfire victims, sponsored musicians and scholars, assisted the Rural Fire Service and even sponsored a hearing dog for a resident in Otford. The club's involvement in important initiatives like Clean Up Australia Day, Illawarra for Drought and the annual Anzac Day service at Memorial Park in Stanwell Tops underscores its dedication to both local and national causes. On behalf of my community, I thank the Helensburgh Lions Club for its unwavering service and commitment. We are deeply grateful for the club's continued efforts.

IAN CHAFFEY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:09): I honour Mr Ian Chaffey for his remarkable service to his community. At 80 years of age, Ian has chosen to step away from his long-serving role as Mayor of Snowy Valleys to spend more time with his family. Retirement is not on the cards, though, for the father of four and grandfather, who will still drive school buses when required. Ian has been a passionate advocate for progress since his first election to the Tumbarumba Shire Council in 1977, serving as mayor numerous times and tirelessly working as a councillor for the betterment of our region. Ian's leadership and commitment have seen the community through significant changes, including the challenging amalgamation of Tumut and Tumbarumba councils. His legacy is one of community-driven development, where the voices of the people have always been at the forefront. Ian has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to his role at council. His leadership has always prioritised community voices, ensuring that development is driven by the needs and aspirations of the people. I wish him all the best and thank him for his service throughout the years.

BERALA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:10): On Tuesday 3 September I attended a special assembly at Berala Public School in my electorate of Auburn with students and teachers past and present to celebrate 100 years of learning at the school. Berala Public School is proud to set some of the highest standards in leadership and inclusive learning, with one of the largest and most diverse student profiles in the State. Last year 1,070 students were enrolled, with all but 3 per cent coming from households with a language background other than English. Many were from Chinese and Arabic language backgrounds. I pay tribute to the passionate teaching and support staff, who create a stimulating and success-driven learning environment at the school. That is achieved through a wide variety of learning programs and extracurricular activities, including English as a second language,

community language, reading recovery and First Nations learnings. We are all proud of Berala Public School's fantastic achievements and its ongoing commitment to providing students with a world-class education. I am sure that members will join me in celebrating the school's centenary milestone.

NORTHBRIDGE COMMUNITY FIREWORKS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (21:11): One of the great annual events in the Willoughby community is the Northbridge community fireworks organised by the Rotary Club of Northbridge. The event was originally scheduled for 4 May with the theme "May the fourth be with you" but was cancelled due to rain. Finally, the event went ahead with a bang on Saturday 14 September. As well as the spectacular fireworks display, there were plenty of amusements with food stalls, rides and entertainment at Northbridge Oval. Over the past 37 years, community support and attendance at the event has grown to more than 4,000 people, with the money raised going towards helping local disadvantaged youth, people at risk and international aid projects. I thank Luke Keighery, President of Rotary Northbridge, and all the club members for working hard to organise the wonderful event. I also thank the sponsors, including Northbridge Plaza and Willoughby City Council, for their generous support. The Northbridge community fireworks are just one of the great activities held by Rotary Northbridge to serve its community. The sustained success of the event is a real credit to the club.

WYNDHAM COLLEGE

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (21:12): I congratulate the outstanding wellbeing team at Wyndham College on receiving a commendation from the Secretary of the Department of Education, Murat Dizdar, for their exceptional work with the Wyndham wellbeing program. That initiative is a testament to the dedication and passion for supporting students from Quakers Hill, Seven Hills and Riverstone high schools, and precinct partner St John Paul II Catholic College, Schofields and Nirimba. The success of the program highlights a commitment to ensuring that every student learns, grows and belongs in an equitable and inclusive education environment. The wellbeing team has been instrumental in fostering a positive and supportive atmosphere, where students feel empowered to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. The Wyndham College team believes by nurturing the whole student they are contributing to a brighter future. That recognition from the education secretary underscores the significant impact the team has had on student success and wellbeing. I thank the team for their hard work and dedication.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE WESTMEAD

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (21:13): I recognise Ronald McDonald House, a not-for-profit organisation with locations around Sydney, including one location at Westmead. Ronald McDonald House provides a comforting place for families who need to be close to their children in times of need. It is where over 2,000 families stay a year. Recently I had the opportunity to visit the Ronald McDonald House at Westmead Hospital. It was a pleasure to meet the volunteer staff who work alongside the families to provide food, leisure and activities. The facility provides a great support network for families across New South Wales and Greater Sydney when they are in need. Its collective commitment to ensuring that families have a safe and supportive environment while their children receive medical treatment exemplifies the very best of community spirit and generosity. I extend my gratitude to the hard work of its staff, volunteers and generous donors, including CEO Claire Barber. Many families have found relief and strength at the facility when they needed it most. Their kindness and support truly make a positive impact on the lives of many.

NEWCASTLE POETRY PRIZE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (21:14): Organised by the Hunter Writers' Centre, the Newcastle Poetry Prize champions poets from across Australia. The generous prize pool of \$15,000, sponsored by the University of Newcastle, not only establishes the Newcastle Poetry Prize as the largest poetry competition in Australia but also provides a platform for emerging and established voices to shine. While I congratulate all seven prize recipients, I recognise the 2024 winner, Christopher Kelen, who was awarded first place for his work *Dombóvár*. Christopher has strong ties to the Hunter through his work as a conjoint professor at the University of Newcastle. Capturing the zeitgeist of Australian culture, the Newcastle Poetry Prize continues to solidify Newcastle's position as a prominent cultural hub for poetry in Australia. I thank the Hunter Writers' Centre and the University of Newcastle for their commitment and dedication to the Hunter.

MENAI HAWKS NETBALL CLUB

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (21:15): On Sunday 22 September I attended the Menai Hawks Netball Club junior presentation. This special end of season celebration brought together players aged eight to 17 to recognise their hard work, dedication and achievements. I congratulate club president Christine Newman, vice-president Ann Trentin, club secretary Belinda Lord, treasurer Janene Hucker, and club sponsorship and coaching coordinator Floreal Alvarez for their exceptional leadership and contribution to the success of the club.

It was a pleasure to be a part of the presentation, which highlighted the spirit of community and teamwork that defines the Menai Hawks Netball Club. I congratulate all involved on another successful season.

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:16): Friday 20 September marked the sixtieth anniversary of the blessing and opening of All Saints Catholic Church in Liverpool. To mark the occasion, I joined Archbishop Anthony Fisher, Bishop Emeritus Terry Brady as well as the broader parish community for a celebratory mass and multicultural fete. The campaign for a new church to cater for Liverpool's growing community began in 1961 with a huge collective effort to raise funds for the construction. The foundation stone was blessed on 11 August 1963, with the church opening just a year later. Blessed by Auxiliary Bishop James Freeman, the church is also designated as a war memorial. It was a lovely touch to have Nanette Geogheghan present, the first bride to be wed at All Saints. She and her husband, Ian, who has since passed, were married a few days after the church opened. I give a special acknowledgment to the All Saints social committee, which ensured that the celebration reflected the incredibly diverse nature of the parish. I know that All Saints will continue to be a community mainstay in Liverpool. I wish them the best for the year ahead.

Private Members' Statements

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (21:17): Every year World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September and R U OK? Day on 12 September offer opportunities to come together as a community and acknowledge the importance of greater mental health awareness. World Suicide Prevention Day and R U OK? Day play a pivotal role in emphasising that we all have a role to play. Under this year's themes of changing the narrative on suicide and R U OK? Any Day, we need to be the ones to start the conversation to help reduce the stigma around mental health and empower individuals with the confidence to act. This year on World Suicide Prevention Day I had the honour of joining the Lifeline Direct Hunter team for their annual Out of the Shadows walk. Each year the Novocastrian community meets at sunrise at Dixon Park and walks to Merewether Ocean Baths and back again to honour the memories of those lost to mental health struggles, those who have survived and those who bear the weight of grief related to suicide.

As an advocate for greater mental health awareness, I have joined this walk for many years, and I am always blown away by the support of the Newcastle community. This year was no different, and I was moved by the many stories I heard from those who walked alongside me. Latest data reports that in Australia alone nearly 10 million people are affected by suicide—almost half of our population. Further, over two in five Australians aged 16 to 85 are estimated to have experienced a mental health disorder at some point in their life. Therefore, we should never underestimate the impact that mental health issues have on family, friends, workplaces and the broader community. That is why organisations such as Lifeline Direct Hunter are so important for our community. Driven by the vision of "an Australia free of suicide", Lifeline provides essential services offering to help people seeking assistance, community training and awareness, and supporting national crisis support services across Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Maitland and the Upper Hunter regions.

I therefore take this opportunity to acknowledge Robert Sams, CEO of Lifeline Direct, for his great service to the Hunter community. After more than 12 years of leading Lifeline Direct, Rob will be stepping down from his role as CEO at the end of this month. Under the objective of working in community, for community and with community, Rob's leadership has been instrumental in raising mental health awareness to help reduce the stigma around suicide and empower individuals to take action. In 2021 Rob joined the ranks of more than 3,500 people as an accredited crisis supporter to ensure that people reaching out for help did not have to face their darkest moments alone. Rob's leadership and advocacy within the mental health sector have been invaluable to the Hunter community, and I wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

Finally, I highlight the pivotal steps that the Minns Labor Government has taken to address mental health gaps. In June this year, the Government announced a \$111.8 million package of initiatives to support community mental health and wellbeing programs. Investing \$30.4 million over the next four years, this initiative will expand community mental health teams across targeted regional areas, significantly increasing the accessibility of essential help and support to people in New South Wales. A further \$40 million for the Pathways to Community Living and \$39 million for a Mental Health Single Front Door program will be invested by the Government over the next four years as well.

Moreover, this funding will not only provide a workforce boost of approximately 35 additional mental health professional positions but also strengthen the coordination of care, enhance access to specialist psychological services and improve family involvement in care. Acknowledging the complexity of mental health issues across communities, the New South Wales Government has taken further actions to address mental health

concerns. This includes capping social media accessibility for teens, boosting mental health support for over 10,000 hospitality staff across the State and instigating an inaugural men's mental health forum.

In addition to highlighting the Minns Labor Government's strong commitment to addressing mental health gaps, these initiatives will ensure that sustainable and accessible support will be delivered to those in need across the many community sectors. Given the importance of strong mental health awareness and support for our communities, it is integral that we continue to advocate for mental health services, increase mental health awareness and provide support to those around us. Today and every day, we must make sure that we look after our loved ones. Together, let us take meaningful action to change the narrative.

MENTAL HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (21:22): Tonight I discuss mental health and wellbeing of older people in our State. As people age, they may face challenges such as physical decline, isolation, loss of loved ones and changes in independence. These factors can contribute to anxiety, depression and loneliness, which may go unnoticed or untreated. It is essential to promote social connections, access to mental health services and opportunities for meaningful engagement to improve their quality of life. Supporting older people with tailored mental health care, encouraging physical activity and fostering strong community bonds can significantly enhance their sense of purpose and emotional resilience.

We often speak about the importance of physical health as we age. We encourage exercise, proper nutrition and staying active to maintain a high quality of life. While these are undoubtedly important, it is equally essential to focus on mental health. It is also true that physical wellbeing contributes positively towards mental wellbeing. However, many elderly people have physical disabilities that prevent physical activity. This is particularly apparent in aged-care facilities. In September 2023 the National Mental Health Commission made a recommendation that the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety consider holding "a public hearing focused on ways that the aged care system may be better inclusive of safe, appropriate and high quality mental health services". Another key finding by the commission was that there was a lack of coordination between the aged-care sector and the mental health system, leading to unequal access to services, particularly in rural and regional areas.

Sadly, the commission found that nearly half of aged-care residents experience depression. Research undertaken by the Australian Institute of Family Studies found that normalising mental illness in older adults has acted as a barrier to care, particularly resulting in a lack of services specialising in mental health care for older adults, poor mental health literacy and the stigma associated with mental illness among the elderly. In younger age demographics, the three abovementioned issues are not as prevalent as they were in the past due to more awareness and sustained advocacy across a broad cross-section of society. However, it seems as though elderly mental health outcomes are well behind the rest of the population. We must change the narrative. Mental illness is not an inevitable consequence of ageing. Mental health literacy should be a core competency in aged-care facilities, ensuring that staff can identify and address those issues effectively.

A holistic approach to care, one that integrates physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, must be central to how we care for our older population. Policies that ensure access to psychological services in aged care, along with increased funding for non-pharmacological interventions, can greatly enhance the quality of life for older Australians. To further improve mental health for the elderly, we need to take a multifaceted approach that recognises the complexity of their needs. Telehealth services are a key solution, especially for those living in rural or regional areas where access to specialists may be limited. By expanding the use of technology, we can connect older people with psychologists, counsellors and support groups, regardless of their location. This is particularly important for those who are homebound or living in aged-care facilities, where access to in-person services may be restricted.

In addition, we should invest in community-based programs that promote social inclusion. Isolation is a significant contributor to mental health issues in the elderly, and programs that encourage social interaction, group activities and intergenerational engagement can help counteract loneliness. This can be done by partnering with local community groups that provide the opportunity for socialising and building support networks for fellow peers. Local groups like the Menai Men's Shed, the AASHA Foundation and the Liverpool seniors group in Wattle Grove are already doing so well in that space. Moreover, carer support is a critical area where we can make improvements. Those caring for elderly family members often experience stress and emotional strain themselves, which can negatively impact the care they provide. By offering mental health services and respite care for carers, we can create a more sustainable support system that benefits both the elderly and their caregivers.

We must also ensure that mental health initiatives are culturally sensitive and inclusive. In our diverse society, mental health care should account for the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing services and that cultural values are respected

in the treatment process. Improving the mental health of our elderly population requires concerted efforts across multiple sectors. By promoting mental health literacy, integrating technology, enhancing community engagement, supporting carers and ensuring cultural inclusivity, we can make a profound difference in the lives of older Australians.

BUNGENDORE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (21:27): On 11 September I was pleased—and somewhat relieved—to have the Deputy Premier in Monaro with me at Bungendore to announce a new site for the proposed Bungendore High School. The new site is in between Birchfield Drive and Whitton Rise into the east of Harp Avenue in north Bungendore. At just over four hectares, the site will enable us to build a school which accommodates, at its start, 600 students, with master planning for 1,000 students. It will have the capacity for a full-sized playing field and a full-sized gym. This is a welcome development in a very long-running problem which has been affecting Bungendore since before I was elected. This is fundamentally a better site for the school than what was originally proposed in Majara Street in Bungendore, but it is also practical because it is the best site that we are able to complete a school on quickly.

Bungendore has been seriously split since the former Deputy Premier and member for Monaro announced what he admitted was a surprise to many: a school site at Majara Street in the centre of town. Since then it has been the cause of huge division in the community and it is about time we started to heal that division. That previous site has been mired in legal action, which included the Land and Environment Court disallowing the approval of the site and a new application having to be put in. On that basis, earlier this year I let the community know that, as part of due diligence, we would be looking at whether or not it would be quicker to deliver the school on another suitable site, and I am very pleased that a better site was found. This site was not included in the initial consideration for the school; it was not available at the time. It provides some great advantages for the community, including those that I have outlined.

Planning is underway on the site. We expect to have a concept design released for public consultation by the end of this year and tenders in early 2025, with planning approval in mid-2025 and construction in late 2025. The target date for opening the school is the start of 2027. That is a lot longer than the community had been hoping, but it was clear that it was unlikely that we would be able to deliver the school on the Majara Street site by then. It was also clear that the elapsed years meant that we needed to reassess the school population. More people in our region are choosing to send their children to public high schools. That is partly because of the quality of our public high schools, but it is also because many of the schools in Canberra, which locals used to send their kids to, were full and were closing access to New South Wales students. It meant that we needed to look at a site that could cater for a bigger student population and longer term suitability for the community.

The new site is excellent in a number of ways. It has good access for young people. It is not in the centre of town—that is probably the only disadvantage it has compared with the other site. But it is in the centre of where Bungendore is growing. All the future development of Bungendore will be to the north and to the east of this site. That means it will have excellent pedestrian access for students as well as for the rest of the community. Water, electricity and sewerage are already available on the site. The land has been approved for residential development. That means that the approvals process should be quite smooth. A number of residents have asked questions about the site. I confirm that the land was purchased at a market rate from a developer. To be clear to the constant rumour-mongers, Labor does not accept developer donations and has not had any contributions from the developer. Indeed, I did not know who the developer was until the site was being considered.

The land is on a hill so it is not, as some clever people on social media have suggested, flood prone. If it flooded, the whole town would be under four or five metres of water. It is recognised as being an excellent site by the vast majority of people in the area. Over the next few years as we build the new school, I look forward to some of the hurt—which has been felt in the community because of the handling of this project by the previous Government and the difficulties around the site—starting to heal. We will be working with the school community on the future of the temporary site and the fact that it will need to expand for the final year of its existence in 2026. Again, we will be talking to the school community about that and keeping them informed of the project as we go through the process.

BATHURST ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (21:32): I will talk about a number of projects across my electorate. A lot of the projects are run by hardworking volunteers. Sometimes small amounts of funding can go a long way in supporting the work that they do in our local communities. I highlight some of the initiatives funded through the Community Building Partnership program. This significant program supports those community groups and, most importantly, supports the members who are a part of those organisations. The Secret Creek Sanctuary will receive \$20,000 to go towards upgrading the car park and making it more accessible. That is important. Under the previous

Government, the sanctuary received \$1.3 million for a wildlife hospital and rehabilitation centre. That will serve the people and the animals in the Blue Mountains and Central West region. The need for a wildlife hospital and rehabilitation centre was highlighted following the devastating fires in 2019-20, when many animals were killed or displaced and were in need of care to replenish those numbers.

The Secret Creek Sanctuary Wildlife Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre will also cater for staff accommodation and a meeting space. It is also building a cultural and visitor centre. That will be a new welcoming entry into the sanctuary. A cultural arts centre will be located on the second floor of the visitor centre in collaboration with a local Indigenous group, One Mob, to serve multiple uses, including as a gathering space for Aboriginal cultural education groups, a learning space for wildlife and ecosystems, and a health and wellbeing community centre for the local community. Nanna's Touch in Lithgow is also receiving \$8,000 to go towards upgrading its food storage. The organisation is run by volunteers who provide a soup kitchen, which is important to many people in the local community. Sometimes it is the vulnerable in the local area who need to be supported by the organisation. The \$8,000 is going towards upgrading the soup kitchen. There will be storage, new floor coverings, screens, shelving, work benches and exterior painting done to the building to make it more convenient for those who receive those support hampers.

Lithgow PCYC has received \$6,000 towards upgrading some of the gymnastics equipment within the facility. That will replace a lot of the old and damaged equipment. It also gives young people in that local community suitable equipment to use as part of a healthy and active lifestyle. The Bathurst Neighbourhood Centre has received \$5,000 for a smartboard, which will assist it in the meetings that it holds for a number of diverse cultural groups within the local community. The aim of the neighbourhood centre is to inform and educate members of the community by enabling them to connect with people, resources and ideas, and to support individuals and strengthen community. The smartboard will help groups that use the meeting rooms for their gatherings and will help bring the centre's resources into the digital era.

The Bathurst PCYC has received \$7,000 for room repairs. That is good news. It is going to repair one of the activity rooms and purchase some new technology for a meeting room. The meeting room will not be used by the club alone; it will also be used by community members who wish to hold smaller meetings and events at the PCYC. The Seymour Centre in Bathurst is receiving \$12,500 to go towards new flooring to replace the carpet in the building. The Seymour Centre has been around since 1980 and services a lot of our seniors in the community. It also provides support for people with disability and their carers. It allows people to be able to live independently and to maximise their participation in the community.

The Bathurst Tennis Centre will receive \$12,000 for a new PA system. The public-address [PA] system that it has at the moment has been there for 50 years. It has well and truly seen its use-by date. The new PA system will benefit not only the players but also the different competitions that the centre holds throughout the year. That is really good news. The Blayney soccer club will receive \$6,000 towards the purchasing of grandstands. Whilst the soccer season has come to an end, it will be able to purchase those grandstands for next season, which will make it easier for both visitors and families to sit back and watch a game of soccer. Lots of great things are happening in the Bathurst electorate. That is part one. I will be back in the Chamber for part two sometime later this week or at the next sitting of the Parliament.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:37): I celebrate over \$80 million of investment in the roads of the Gosford electorate, which is hugely important and something the previous Government failed to do. I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for the \$1.39 million investment in the Towards Zero Safer Roads Program, which was just announced today. Members may possibly remember that the Rawson Road level crossing has been a serious area of contention in the Gosford electorate. I have been thrown out of Parliament calling on Gladys Berejiklian to invest in a Rawson Road underpass or some sort of solution. Finally, the Minns Labor Government is investing in that railway crossing at Woy Woy and intersection upgrade investigation works about what can be done in that location.

I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and her team. I have been working with them since we had an incident in which a person accidentally drove onto the rail crossing. When they realised they were on the train line they got out of their car, but the train hit the car at speed, which was absolutely frightening. It stopped the train's movement for some time. I commend the safety team that cleared it up. We are in discussions with engineers and are moving towards a solution in that area.

The Government is going to invest \$826,000 in safety improvement works between Masons Parade and Adelaide Street in East Gosford. That is a really important part of the Central Coast Highway. There is a huge amount of congestion in the mornings and afternoons. The community will be happy with that work. The Government has invested \$115,000 to upgrade the intersection on the Central Coast Highway at Hely Street,

West Gosford. The community has been calling out for solutions. After six years of the former Government and Mr Faraway in the other place saying that they would take over that road, nothing happened. The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has found \$28.3 million. The Government is working with the Federal Government to jointly fund long-overdue landslip remediation and betterment works.

There are two dangerous one-lane sections of road that shut off the area between Wisemans Ferry and the Gosford electorate. It is a really important thoroughfare. When there is more than 30 millimetres of rain, Central Coast Council is obliged to shut that road. It puts up signage at Wisemans Ferry Bowling Club and Mangrove Mountain but, unfortunately, anyone who lives in between misses out on that information, even if it is on Facebook, because they do not have internet service. Often kids and families miss out on going to school and work. They end up at the road blocks and have to drive for another three hours to get around. If there is rain and the roads are shut off, kids cannot go to school, small children cannot go to child care and workers cannot go to work. That \$23.8 million investment for Central Coast Council will ensure that the Wisemans Ferry Road between the Hawkesbury and Gosford electorates is restored to the main thoroughfare that it needs to be.

Labor members of the Central Coast have fought hard for additional footpath funding. I do not know what it looks like in the electorate of the member for Cessnock, but on the Central Coast people are always complaining that we have no footpaths. The council is lagging behind significantly. While there is \$8 million in funding, it costs about \$400 to build a metre of footpath, so that is not going to go very far. But spreading that \$8 million across the five electorates of the Central Coast to improve footpaths is really important to our community. The Government has spent \$2.4 million on safety improvements on Kariong Hill, which is our main road into the Central Coast from Sydney. Those safety upgrades are more than welcome.

The member for The Entrance and I know that Gosford has huge traffic problems during peak hour. The Government is working on stage four of the Gosford bypass, which the member for The Entrance has campaigned about for a long time. It was previously ignored by the former Government, but the Government's \$40 million in funding is a massive investment. It will not fund the whole Gosford bypass. Two big bridges need to be built there. But \$40 million definitely gets us further down the track. That will fund planning and the purchasing of properties, which needs to happen as we go through there. The Gosford electorate is celebrating \$80 million of Labor Government investment towards roads and road safety in our community. I thank the Minns Labor Government.

WATER BUYBACKS

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (21:42): Today I will talk about compensation. Governments use the word "compensation" all the time—usually to get themselves out of trouble. We hear Ministers say things like, "Don't worry. We're going to compensate this person or that person for whatever the Government is doing." But we all seem to forget that the only reason a government finds itself paying compensation is because it is harming someone or something. The clue is in the definition of word. Compensation is defined as "something, typically money, awarded to someone in recognition of loss, suffering or injury". Before a government pays any compensation, it must have caused loss, suffering or injury. According to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, the southern basin produces \$30 billion of food and other products every single year—that is the food we eat and the clothes we wear.

Every single Australian needs the Murray-Darling Basin communities to survive and thrive. But all that is about to change because the Federal Government is about to rip 450 gigalitres of productive water out of the system, only to send that water down to South Australia's Lower Lakes before it flushes out to sea. Is there a more wasteful use of productive water than flushing it out to sea? When voters realise this is happening, they honestly cannot believe it—but it is happening. Productive water is being flushed out to sea for political reasons. It has been done to keep The Greens voters in South Australia happy, and the rural communities of New South Wales are paying the price. The Federal Government knows the damage it is doing to rural communities in New South Wales.

That is why Federal water Minister Tanya Plibersek keeps saying, "Don't worry. I'm going to compensate the rural communities that my buybacks will destroy." Tanya Plibersek knows she is about to do harm; that is why she knows she needs to compensate the community. This is where insult has been added to injury by Tanya and her useless department: Her Government will only compensate rural communities with \$300 million, despite the fact that she is threatening \$30 billion of annual production—what an appalling deal! A \$300 million one-off payment to compensate for risking \$30 billion in annual production is not proper compensation; that is a pathetic token payment that will not do anything to protect rural New South Wales communities.

Incredibly, the program providing that pathetic amount of compensation is called the Sustainable Communities Program. George Orwell would be rolling his eyes at that name. The Sustainable Communities Program should be called the "Destroying Communities Program" because that is what the Federal Government

is doing to New South Wales rural communities. Why is the Premier letting the Federal Government destroy rural New South Wales communities? Chris Minns is not the Premier of the Labor Party; he is the Premier of New South Wales, and that means he must prioritise the interests of the people of New South Wales. The fact is that the Federal Government would not be offering compensation—even a pathetic level of compensation—unless it was causing loss, suffering or injury.

The Premier should protect everyone in New South Wales from loss, suffering and injury—especially when that loss, suffering and injury is being caused by the Federal Government. The needs of the people of New South Wales should be more important than party politics. The Premier must stand up to his Federal Labor colleagues and say, "No, I'm not going to let you cause loss, suffering and injury to the people of my State. I'm not going to allow these buybacks." It is time for the Premier to stop these buybacks, just like the Victorian Government did. The people of rural New South Wales do not need compensation; they need protection.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ENGADINE GET READY WEEKEND

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (21:47): Last weekend I attended a Get Ready Weekend event in Engadine with the local emergency services, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, WIRES, Red Cross volunteers, the SES, NSW Ambulance and the NSW Police Force. The Get Ready Weekend is an annual initiative organised by the NSW Rural Fire Service to help local communities prepare for bushfire season. With bushfires posing a significant threat to our homes and landscapes, Get Ready Weekend serves as a timely and essential reminder that preparation is key to protecting lives, properties and our natural environment. Each September the RFS hosts the Get Ready Weekend across approximately 500 locations in New South Wales, connecting local brigades with their communities to raise awareness and share practical advice. As we have seen in recent years, bushfire seasons are becoming increasingly unpredictable and intense, meaning preparation must start early.

The RFS has already seen increased fire activity in certain parts of the State, underscoring the urgency for everyone to be aware of their risk and take the necessary steps to safeguard their properties. This year, the RFS is forecasting a normal start to the bushfire season, but let us not be lulled into complacency. With warmer than average conditions and moderate rainfall predicted, certain areas, particularly in western New South Wales, are at risk of severe fire danger due to the build-up of dry grass fuel loads. As the hotter, drier months of summer progress, those fuel loads could rapidly become dangerous, leading to significant bushfire threats. The message is clear: Every household needs to be ready. Get Ready Weekend is the perfect opportunity to engage with the experts and ensure that we are doing all we can to mitigate those risks.

One of the key elements of Get Ready Weekend is the promotion of the bushfire survival plan, which the RFS strongly recommends every household develop and regularly review. The plan outlines the necessary steps residents should take when a bushfire threatens, whether they plan to stay and defend their homes or leave early. In the lead-up to the bushfire season, I encourage residents in my electorate to take a close look at their homes and surrounding properties to identify any areas that may be vulnerable to fire. Maintaining a defensible space around your home is one of the most effective strategies for improving the chances of survival during a bushfire. Simple tasks such as cleaning gutters of leaves and twigs, cutting back overhanging branches and ensuring that lawns are kept short can significantly reduce the risk of embers causing fire. Insurance is another critical aspect of bushfire preparation. Residents are urged to check their home and contents insurance policies to ensure they are up to date and provide adequate cover for fire damage.

While we hope that this summer will be a mild one, the reality is that we cannot predict with certainty how the fire season will unfold. The RFS has already begun preparing for what could be a challenging season, and it is up to all of us to do our part as well. Bushfires can ignite with little to no warning. Having a plan in place, preparing your home and staying informed about fire danger ratings and local conditions are the best ways to stay safe. I thank our local RFS brigades and volunteers, whose dedication and hard work keep our communities safe. Their efforts in educating the public during Get Ready Weekend are invaluable, and their bravery during the fire season deserves our deepest gratitude. In closing, I urge everyone to take bushfire preparedness seriously by reviewing your bushfire survival plan and taking practical steps to protect your home. Together we can ensure that our community is ready to face whatever this bushfire season may bring.

COST OF LIVING

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (21:52): I express the concerns of my community in the electorate of Badgerys Creek about the increasing cost of living that has occurred during the term of this Labor Government and Labor's abandonment of Western Sydney. That includes the cutting of programs, which has only exacerbated the financial strain facing families and individuals. To put the disaster into perspective, food prices in New South Wales have risen 5 per cent in the short time since Labor has been in government. Rents have increased 8.1 per cent as of June, whilst the cash rate has continually climbed and, not that those opposite would be aware, is now 4.35 per cent. Those are extraordinary statistics. The reality is that growing numbers of people

within my community and beyond are struggling to absorb the continual growth in inflation, coupled with high interest rates. That cost-of-living pressures have grown so rapidly in such a short period of time is of great concern. We cannot afford for the cost-of-living pressures to continue to escalate.

Labor's response to the disastrous economy is to slash cost-of-living support and cut funding for schools, palliative care and infrastructure so that it can foot the bill in looking after its union masters, with families and households paying the price. In its first budget, this Labor Government axed the Liberals' Back to School vouchers, a cost-of-living assistance package that gave all parents \$150 per child in vouchers to help with the cost of school supplies, uniforms and technology. Following outrage from my community, I ran a petition and wrote to the Premier, calling on him to reinstate the program in light of the pain being felt by families. Unfortunately, the Labor Government refused to reinstate the program. In addition to the Labor Government cutting this vital cost-of-living support, it has also slashed Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers, meaning families across my electorate and beyond miss out on that crucial support in these tough times.

This is leading directly to children now missing out on participating in their favourite community sports. One would think that the community outrage would encourage Labor to change its approach, but it continues on the same path. A recurring theme of this Labor Government is not just the cutting of programs and support but also the drastic increasing of licence fees, which many constituents have complained to me about. Maritime licence and registration fees were increased from 1 July, with some of the increases being exorbitant. This includes the cost of a 10-year licence for boats and personal watercraft increasing from \$1,043 to \$1,961. That is a ridiculous increase of 88 per cent. I understand the frustration of my constituents and call on the Labor Government to reduce those licence fees to a reasonable cost.

What concerns me alongside the cuts to programs and the increases of fees is that Labor has no economic plan or vision to improve the overall economic situation. The failure of Labor Ministers to answer the most basic and straightforward questions at budget estimates was inexcusable. It proves they are incapable of coming up with plans and implementing policies with a view to reducing inflation, reducing fees, allowing people to seek and achieve prosperity, and allowing people to enjoy a higher quality of life without stressing about putting food on the table and meeting the cost of their next power bill.

As a member of Parliament, I have never seen such a rapid decline in the capacity and ability of people to meet the cost of their basic living expenses and utility bills as I have in the period between last year's State election and now. People are going on payment plans just to pay their electricity bill. Many of those struggling are full-time workers who work multiple jobs and whose households have multiple incomes. I am concerned going forward because there is no room for further decline. And, from what we have seen of Labor, we can expect only further decline. I call on the Labor Government to forget about looking after its union mates, reinstate the former Liberal-Nationals Government's cost-of-living measures, reverse increases to licence fees and come up with in-depth strategies and plans to reverse this economic spiral.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (21:57): From our first breath in life to the moment we take our last breath, they are there. During our most vulnerable times in life, they are there—the heartbeat of our health care. They are, of course, our nurses and midwives. Despite their tireless dedication, long working hours and painful separation from their families, the Labor Government is dragging its feet on its promise. It is fighting against giving these hardworking professionals a 15 per cent pay rise. The very people who are there for us when we most need them are being abandoned. We need to be there for them. These voices are genuine. They are screaming out for our help. They care for our most vulnerable people. How can the Government refuse to come to the table and negotiate in good faith?

We have heard the positive news about \$20,000 bonuses being offered to midwives to relocate from the cities to regional areas. I agree that a bonus is a good start. No doubt that will help to encourage our city-based nurses to try us out. Hopefully, they will even get a taste for the charm and beauty of our regional areas. But it is still just a bandaid on a much bigger wound. Dorrigo has a ward closed. Bellingen has a ward closed. Macksville has a ward closed. Why? The same answer is always given: because they lack nurses. Kempsey is in step-down. Women cannot give birth on country, in their own town, on the weekend. Either this policy is an answer that is misleading Labor's true intention or Labor's solution addresses only one small aspect of our health problem. The Country Women's Association of NSW made clear on 14 August, when it attended this House, that rural and regional health was its number one priority. The answer is not so easy to find, but a stopgap approach goes against the effects of good policy.

What will keep nurses and midwives in regional areas is fair pay. Nurses and midwives deserve money in their pockets for the hard work they do, which they can then spend in our regions and shops and on their homes and families. Nurses are asking for a necessary pay increase to ensure we can attract and retain essential workers

to our regional communities. If the Government pays quality wages, creates opportunities for quality professional development and shows nurses that it cares, we will have happy, healthy and high-functioning nurses and midwives around us.

My mum and wife are both nurses. My mother spent her life as a registered nurse and midwife. She taught me what it means to give selflessly to others. She spent long hours away from our family, never quite knowing what time she would finish work. She provided unwavering, selfless care for others, even when she was exhausted herself. She gave the last drop out of her cup when she needed to. It was just the way it was. She continued to educate herself and went on to become a clinical nurse consultant specialising in paediatrics and maternal and infant welfare.

My wife, Brigitte, is also a registered nurse. She comes home from a long shift, both mentally and physically drained, and fronts up to run a household, care for our three boys and somehow—and I seriously do not know how—keep the wheels of our crazy lives turning day after day. Nurses hold the weight of the world on their shoulders during long shifts. It is really hard work. We all know the rising cost of living continues to hit hard. While the Government may have shifted wages for some sectors, it has left behind our largest healthcare workforce, made up largely of women.

Other States have stepped up. In Queensland, entry level nurses and midwives earn \$82,753, compared with only \$70,050 in New South Wales. The situation is even more concerning within the New South Wales public sector. Entry level nurses and midwives are paid significantly less than teachers, police and firefighters, with margins of 10 per cent to 20 per cent. With recent wage agreements, that gap is set to widen. Whilst I do not support industrial action, the current situation is a call for justice, a cry for respect and a question of what is fair and, in some cases, overdue. I urge the Government to listen to the voices who were outside Parliament today. Hospitals do not operate without our nurses and midwives. The Government must invest in the future of health care in New South Wales.

STATE FINANCES

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (22:01): I briefly report on the state of the New South Wales budget and what it means for my constituents and the essential services the State provides for people across the great State of New South Wales. It is important to consider what independent agencies think about the New South Wales budget. It was heartening to learn that on 19 September Moody's maintained New South Wales's triple-A credit rating with a stable outlook, despite the huge cut in GST revenue the State suffered due to this year's Commonwealth Grants Commission decision and the troubling and challenging budget position inherited from the previous Government. It left behind \$188 billion of gross debt in the forward estimates, the largest budget deficit ever handed down from one government to the next.

Despite all of that, the budget repair work undertaken by Treasurer Daniel Mookhey and finance Minister Courtney Houssos has enabled the State to get to a point where Moody's has maintained our triple-A credit rating for the second time following last year's budget. That means that when the State of New South Wales goes to roll over debt and try to improve our debt position, we can do so from the best possible budgetary position. Moody's said that, despite slower growth and higher interest rates, the New South Wales economy remains resilient. In its credit opinion, Moody's cited the State's strong governance and management as a factor in its determination.

The Government is doing all it can to maintain a strong budget position, but it is doing so for a purpose. That purpose is to provide the essential services that the people of this State need and deserve. It is also to make sure the Government does its bit to win the fight against inflation. It is important for people in my electorate, across the Central Coast and across the State to know that the Government is doing everything it can to remove inflationary pressures from the budget and to invest in the essential services people expect and deserve. The expenses growth in the forward estimates was limited to 1.7 per cent per annum over the next four years, which is lower than the 2 per cent to 3 per cent inflation band that the Reserve Bank is aiming for. The figure clearly shows that, through its expenses growth and what it is pumping into the economy, New South Wales is aiming to do all it can to support the Federal Government and the national economy to get inflation down, sooner rather than later.

The Government is doing everything it can to reinvest in the workers who provide the essential services in our State. Labor came into office with a workforce who justifiably expected a significant change in the industrial relations conditions they were working under. The Government came into office with a promise to remove the wages cap of the previous Government. It has done that. When the Government came into office it did everything it could to dig into the budget to find as much money as possible to offer the best wage offer possible to our essential workers. The Government has done that. It offered 15 per cent over four years. All public sector workers got a 4.5 per cent increase last year. The current offer on the table to public sector workers is 10.5 per cent over the next three years.

There are groups of workers out there, including the nurses who were at Parliament today, who demand 15 per cent here and now. That will be difficult to offer. But I urge public sector workers, including nurses—whose work I value and who we all rely on and respect—to think about the long term and which party is going to provide the best chance of long-term wage justice for public service workers in this State. This Government ended the wages cap and quickly implemented a new industrial relations system that allows workers to bargain for higher wages. Only a Labor government will deliver public sector workers wage justice and repair the budget in this State.

WAVERLEY LIBRARY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (22:06): This week we are celebrating a very important milestone in the eastern suburbs: the sixtieth anniversary of the Waverley Library. The library first opened in 1964 but in 1967, under the late the Hon. Ernie Page, the library became free and public. Ernie was known to be a Labor man to his core. The pursuit of public libraries and the advancement of local government were some of the many values Ernie had at his core. Since the library's humble beginnings in 1967, it has continued to grow and flourish into an incredibly unique and special place that needs to be looked after for our community.

I will go into some of the fabulous courses and programs that the wonderful staff curate in the Waverley local government area. Libraries in the eastern suburbs of Sydney are incredibly important. The Coogee electorate is one of the most densely populated parts of New South Wales. The vast majority of families live in apartments. Libraries are part of their backyards. There are two libraries in my electorate—one in Waverley and one in Randwick—and there is another one in the Maroubra electorate. Every afternoon when school finishes, those libraries are full of high school kids studying. It is wonderful. I was one of those kids. I particularly remember from year 10 and up, my friends and I would all head to the library and form our big study groups. The study groups were not just from my school but from schools everywhere.

As I said, from very humble beginnings of being a home for books and a place to borrow books, the library has become so much more. There is a huge number of regular programs for adults as well as children. I was going through what is on at the Waverley Library this week and for adults there is collage making, art after dark, the bad movie club, a colour my life club, queer reads and queer cinema. They also have a justice of the peace. For kids, there is story time, baby book clubs for different age groups and rocking rhymes time where people come in and play music. It is so wonderful to see how our library has expanded and continued to grow as a really important cultural hub.

The Waverley Historical Society has phenomenal exhibitions at the library. At the moment there is a remarkable exhibition on the history of the different churches in the eastern suburbs. I recommend people check it out. I thank all the staff at Waverley Library and Waverley Council for the work they do to make sure our library is there for the community. The library is not just a home for books, a place for people to study at or our backyard but is so much more than that. I am so deeply thankful to the Hon. Ernie Page for creating this first public library and seeing it grow. I also thank all of the phenomenal staff at Waverley Council and those in particular who work in the library to make this such an important community space.

DOUGLAS PARK CEMETERY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (22:11): While I am no longer a councillor, I care deeply for my community and that means caring about the effect of any decision that is made by the council. The Douglas Park community is fighting an uphill battle over the expansion of an approved cemetery that was rushed through the Parliament by the previous Government in 2020. Councillors objected and the mayor of the time spoke at the panel. The doors of the meeting were closed, and the outcome was the approval of a cemetery on a rock shelf that would require milling of the stone before any bodies can be buried. The plot is accessible through a gorge cutting, and the roads are not appropriate for this sort of development. Naturally, the developer has taken those restrictions and made an amendment to the application.

The issue is that the community feels it is being left out of a decision and is willing to help the council fight the proposal. I note in particular Tracy McConchie and Sam Davis of the Reject Douglas Park Cemetery community group. They have in good faith reached out to the mayor who, for a number of weeks, has said he is unavailable. Meanwhile, the exhibition period has begun for the amended proposal and is due to end in the first week of October. A resolution of the council was in place for council to form an objection to the proposal with the support of the community. Community members have been told that to access the information for the development application, they need to fill out a Government Information (Public Access) Act—known as GIPAA—request. I am aware of how processes should and can work. The restrictions on the community in this case are unnecessary.

The reality is stark, and we must act together as a community to oppose anything that is not beneficial or in keeping with the area. The best consultants have been employed by the developer to sell the proposal. There have been claims of providing for the community. The consultants have glossed over multiple and serious logistical impediments, and offered mere tokenistic consideration of the land, people and heritage. They are all poised precariously on a shaky spire of promises that problems will be dealt with at some mythical time in the future. Residents do not have the luxury of indulging in marketing fantasy but must face the reality of sustained and insufferable gouging of sandstone to enable rock crypts; gushing and potentially contaminated overflows through their homes on route to the river behind them; reeking plumes—perhaps carcinogenic—from a crematorium; and long processions of hundreds of visitors daily, with two out of three access routes involving travel over winding one-way river causeways.

It is not just the human residents who are impacted but also the glorious flora and fauna that are earmarked for protection in the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan and protected by a regulatory control that the developer has spent decades flagrantly disregarding. Fast-forward four years and the proponent, having failed to sell the site in its current form, has increased capacity to almost 70,000 plots, ludicrously suggested triple-decker coffin placements in terrain that is unable to support single depth, added a crematorium and had it stamped "State significant". With his continued pursuit of this development that residents do not want or need, they are asking why his profit should take precedence over the rights of ratepaying residents who call Douglas Park home.

Some of the people involved in the effort to stop the development in 2020 have been made ill by what they think is a crushing David and Goliath process unfairly stacked against them, but many others remain, choosing to believe that those at the highest level will step in and do the only right thing and prevent the facility going in entirely the wrong place. To that end, we need the mayor to step in and meet with residents. They deserve not only an ear of the elected council but also to be assisted in their battle for their community. The process needs to be transparent for the best outcome for my community.

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (22:15): Last week I spoke about the far-reaching impacts of war on communities across the electorate of Auburn. Many of my constituents originate from those places of conflict, and the anguish and grief felt is overwhelming. Every week it seems another conflict erupts, striking at the heart of our community and leaving devastation in its wake. The mounting list of civilian casualties is a painful reminder of the brutality of war.

I emphasise the human toll of the ongoing conflicts, particularly in Gaza and Lebanon where the civilian death toll has reached staggering numbers. The numbers speak for themselves. In Gaza, the scale of human loss is unfathomable. Over 41,000 people have been killed and more than 95,000 people injured. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, an estimated 70 per cent of those killed are women and children. In Lebanon, the devastation continues to unfold. In the past 24 hours alone, 492 people have died due to aerial strikes, with over 1,500 wounded. Those numbers are likely incomplete as many victims still lie buried under rubble.

The weight of the tragedies is beyond measure, and the grief reverberates throughout our communities. Let me be clear: Every member of this Chamber, including me, has unequivocally condemned the actions of Hamas on 7 October 2023. Their atrocities, as well as the indiscriminate firing of missiles by Hezbollah, are reprehensible. However, it is impossible to ignore the disproportionate destruction that has followed in Gaza and now Lebanon. The loss of tens of thousands of innocent civilians cannot be justified by any means. The intensifying aerial bombardments raise serious concerns about the principles that govern the conduct of war.

The law of armed conflict is clear in its intent. It seeks to protect civilians and wounded persons from the dangers of hostilities, limit destruction to only what is necessary and shield combatants from unnecessary suffering. Yet we are witnessing widespread violations of those principles. The International Committee of the Red Cross, which is instrumental in promoting the law of armed conflict, emphasises the importance of minimising collateral damage. When military objectives are attacked, civilians and civilian objects must be spared from incidental harm to the greatest extent possible. Any incidental damage should not be excessive in relation to the direct military advantage expected. The indiscriminate use of excessive force is not only a violation of the laws but also a war crime.

The recent airstrikes in Gaza highlight the devastating reality. On 10 August, an airstrike on the Zeitoun School in eastern Gaza killed at least 22 Palestinians and wounded 30 more. Among those killed were 13 children, six women and a three-month-old baby. That is not an isolated incident. A strike on the Al-Jawni School run by the United Nations took the lives of six United Nations Relief and Works Agency staff members among the 18 reported dead. Those examples underscore the excessive use of force that is all too common in modern warfare. Commanders must take into account the foreseeable risk of civilian casualties outside their target areas. Neutralising a military target does not require the complete destruction of everything around it. Precision

weaponry exists precisely to avoid such tragic losses. However, the civilian death toll suggests otherwise, casting doubt on the proportionality of these attacks and the use of such weapons.

As the airstrikes continue to rain down on Lebanon, I cannot help but think of the grief that will soon ripple through my community. We have already seen it in the Palestinian, Ukrainian and Afghan communities. Now it will be replicated in Lebanon, where, once again, families are forced to flee their homes in search of safety. Thousands of people are desperately trying to escape, even as the death toll rises daily. The situation is dire. Lebanon, already on the brink due to the dual blows of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Port of Beirut explosion, cannot endure further human tragedy. A ceasefire is urgently needed. The bombardments must stop. The international community has a responsibility to protect civilians, uphold international law and pursue peace.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CHILDREN

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (22:20): I speak on an issue critical to the wellbeing of our children and community: the need for a better approach and stronger laws around social media access. As a father of three beautiful children, this debate is of significance to me and my immediate family but also, more broadly, to the families of Willoughby as well as New South Wales. Like all parents, I want to ensure that my children grow up in an environment that nurtures their development, free as much as possible from the pressures and dangers that social media present.

Recently, I was proud to support the 36 Months campaign, led by Michael "Wippa" Wipfli and Hamish Blake, advocating to delay social media access for teens by raising the minimum age from 13 to 16. The campaign's impact was truly felt when Wippa and Hamish, well known and respected by many, came to the Parliament to share the campaign with us all. The campaign highlighted the critical reasons why the delay is necessary—to allow our children more time to mature, develop healthy identities and be better prepared to face the online world. It was a powerful moment that emphasised how important this change is for the future of our children.

I extend my thanks to the member for Vacluse and to the Leader of the Opposition for hosting the event at the New South Wales Parliament. Their support means that the issue received the attention it deserves and further underlines the urgency of protecting our children. Moreover, organisations like Wait Mate, co-founded by Davina Berger and Amy Friedlander, are making a significant impact in this space. I recently had the pleasure of meeting Davina and learning more about the vital work that Wait Mate is doing to highlight the dangers of unrestricted access to smartphones and social media. I am proud to advocate for their cause and support their efforts to raise awareness about this critical issue.

With kids spending between four to seven hours a day on their phones—and some receiving over 237 notifications per day—it is no wonder that childhood development is suffering. Instead of playing outdoors, reading books or spending time with family, children are increasingly drawn into a world that often does not prioritise their wellbeing. As a parent, it is deeply concerning to see studies such as those conducted and written so well by Jonathan Haidt, who I heard speak at the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship last year, which show that over 46 per cent of teens are constantly online. That has been linked to increased rates of suicide, self-harm, anxiety and depression among young people.

The tech industry designs smartphone apps to be "sticky"—in a sense like gambling machines—and trigger addictive responses in our children's developing brains. It is alarming that one out of every four children has experienced cyberbullying, with countless others facing unwanted exposure to sexual and other content. Moreover, the impact on sleep patterns is worrying. Research indicates that smartphone use can significantly reduce both the quality and quantity of sleep. As parents, we know how important sleep is for our children's growth and mental health. Poor sleep contributes to a range of health issues, including obesity, weakened immune systems and heightened stress levels.

The push to raise the minimum age for social media access to 16 is a sensible and necessary step. It is about giving our children the time and space that they need to grow, learn and develop in a safer environment. It is about helping them build a solid foundation before they navigate the often overwhelming online world. As adults, we know how challenging social media can be, even for ourselves. Imagine the impact on young, impressionable minds that are still forming their sense of identity and self-worth. We must also consider the broader societal impacts. We should be ensuring that our children have every opportunity to experience moments, rather than being consumed by a virtual world that can often be harsh and unforgiving.

I share the experience of Tim Levy, the owner of Qoria. Tim was deeply affected by the cyberbullying and the tragic subsequent suicide of his niece's best friend. He could not accept that children, including his own, were living, learning and playing in a space that could be so inherently dangerous. That personal tragedy drove him to act. He established a social media monitoring app in 2015, which is now called Qoria. However, Qoria, a leader

in child safety and parental control technology, faces unfair challenges in Australia due to the anti-competitive behaviour of Google, Apple and Microsoft. Those tech giants limit access by third-party providers of parental control apps like Qoria. There is not a level playing field in relation to such vitally important apps to protect children.

A study conducted by the Menzies Research Centre—where I worked with Executive Director Nick Cater in 2021—declared, "Smartphone technology means the most dangerous place for children is alone in their own bedrooms." Sadly, in all too many instances, that remains the case today. I urge all policymakers and all governments, including the New South Wales Government, to take decisive action and to commit to implementing real and lasting changes to safeguard our children when it comes to social media. Now is the time for action.

LEBANON CONFLICT

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (22:25): Liverpool is home to thousands of residents of Lebanese heritage. Many of them fled the civil war of the '70s and '80s, leaving behind family and loved ones and carrying the scars of conflict with them. The clear escalation of conflict in Lebanon over the past week has left many in my Liverpool electorate feeling anxious and concerned. The news that thousands of pagers and walkie-talkie devices across Lebanon detonated, killing several and injuring thousands, marks a frightening turn in a conflict that has now waged for almost 12 months.

The immediate coverage that followed the attack was primarily focused on the level of sophistication required to carry out an operation of that nature. What was lost in that coverage was the significant human toll of the assault. Over the two waves of pager attacks, 42 fatalities have been reported, including at least 12 civilians. A nine-year-old girl, an 11-year-old boy and two healthcare workers were among them. Furthermore, the attack has injured thousands of civilians, with many losing fingers or eyes, and caused severe psychological harm to everyday people in Lebanon. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation [ABC] reported that one mother in Lebanon turned off her baby monitor for fear that it may be the next device targeted.

The conflict has had a profound impact on people in my electorate. Many Lebanese Australians in Liverpool still have family in Lebanon and maintain strong ties with their ancestral homeland. Many in the Lebanese Australian community across Liverpool and south-western Sydney have been at the forefront of calling for an immediate ceasefire and for peace to endure. The recent events in Lebanon have put their loved ones in jeopardy. To say that those recent events have fuelled their anxiety would be putting it lightly. For many, there is now a constant scramble to stay updated on the safety of their loved ones.

Zena Chamas and Chantelle Al-Khoury of the ABC interviewed several members of the Lebanese diaspora community in Australia. They found that many were fearful for their families and loved ones. That concern is warranted. Since the pager attacks last week, airstrikes in Lebanon have reportedly killed over 500 people, with over 90 women and 50 children included in that toll, according to Lebanon's health ministry. Additionally, over 1,800 people have been injured and countless families displaced in the south of Lebanon. Adding to the stress of people in my community is a deep-seated fear about the safety of reaching out to loved ones, especially in light of the recent attacks on communication devices. Fatima Tabaja said, "It could be your neighbours. It could be the person that you're walking past in the street. It could be a doctor's pager. It could be anything." For many in Lebanon, especially in villages where internet and other communication devices are not as common, using pagers to communicate with loved ones is commonplace.

We are approaching one year of conflict in Gaza. It has been a confronting period, with shocking images of dead children and flattened cities following airstrikes that have been beamed straight to our phones via social media. We have seen schools, hospitals and humanitarian camps in Gaza flattened. We have heard shocking allegations of detainees being subjected to torture and sexual abuse at military facilities. In the face of growing international condemnation and pressure, Israel has doubled down and continued its incursions into Gaza and has now potentially begun a parallel war in southern Lebanon, putting thousands of lives in jeopardy and risking the destabilisation of the entire region.

Despite assurances that Israel's war is with Hezbollah and not the Lebanese people, it remains clear that the average citizen is bearing the brunt of the impact of the war. As the international community, we must come together to say enough—enough death, enough suffering and enough loss. An urgent ceasefire and de-escalation of the situation is needed to ensure that Lebanon does not experience the protracted suffering and death experienced in places like Gaza and Ukraine. That is required to ensure that our community does not continue to experience its current anxiety and concern.

KAYUGA NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADE

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (22:30): A big congratulations goes to Steve Lonergan and the team at the Kayuga NSW Rural Fire Service brigade. It has been a long journey, but the new fire station is now

open for business, with a brand-new category 7 tanker to match. Not so long ago the brigade was working on a dirt floor in a farm shed on Jim Lonergan's private property up the road. A donga site shed was used as the office and the change room was non-existent. What a difference we have seen! I remember being there with former emergency services Minister Steph Cooke. She was on the phone to the commissioner sorting out the problems right there and then. That is how you get things done. It is the first station building for the brigade since its formation in 1930, with December marking 94 years of the brigade.

Captain Lonergan has created a great culture. I acknowledge the young, enthusiastic brigade, which is strong in numbers and has fantastic morale. The brigade attends bushfires and car crashes. It helps with floods, attends community events and helps with maintaining fire trails. I am glad to see that the community has got behind the brigade and made sure that it has a number of house-warming gifts to make it feel welcome. MACH Energy's Mount Pleasant mine has made a number of generous donations. Bengalla Mining Company funded the purchase of 20 personal protective equipment lockers for the new station. Blackroo Community Indigenous Corporation donated an awesome looking brand-new fridge to the brigade. Many community members have made donations that helped in a wide number of ways. I thank them all for their support.

The Kayuga bushfire brigade was officially formed on 23 December 1930 at a meeting of locals at Kayuga hall, where the new brigade building is located. The first captain was Jas Lonergan and the deputy captains were F. Lonergan, E. Fibbons and D. McIntyre. The original area was bounded by Blairmore Lane and Dartbrook Road, through to Wybong Road and Aberdeen Street, and Sandy Creek Road up to St Heliers Road. Back in the day, the following rules were established: Every property owner had to supply a bit of firefighting equipment; any farm over 1,500 acres had to supply two good men to the brigade; any farm under 1,000 acres had to supply one good man; and all hobby farms and villages had to supply one good man for every six houses.

From 1935 to 1960, the brigade had several large fires rip through the area. Several of those fires destroyed property, in particular around Hill Street, Muswellbrook, and Sandy Creek Road. One notable fire spread across 15,000 acres, starting at the intersection of Kayuga and Wybong roads. During that time there was an old Dennis open-top pumper and five old fire trucks of various makes, but people mostly attended fires in their own vehicles. Captain D. H. McIntyre served as the brigade captain for quite a number of years. Under his leadership, there was a number of amalgamations with other local bushfire brigades. But he also assisted in ensuring that a number of brigades around Muswellbrook remained operational, including the Wybong and Spring Creek brigades. There have been many great members over the years that have contributed to the success of the brigade today. It is a credit to them all.

During the time that I have shared with the brigade on its journey, it has experienced some tough times. The close-knit brigade lost one of its much-loved members, firefighter Campbell Hollis. Campbell served in the Hunter Valley communications brigade, as well as in the Kayuga Rural Fire Service brigade alongside his brothers, who are the deputy captain and senior deputy captain. Campbell was loved by all. It was a touching tribute to see the brigades escorting Campbell on his last voyage to the funeral home. I know he was loved by the brigade, and he loved the Rural Fire Service in return. I am sure he is looking down upon the new facility and new truck with a sense of pride and achievement. May Campbell look down upon his beloved brigade for every fire, every emergency and every training session into the future.

KING PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL ANNUAL SHOWCASE

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (22:34): I was honoured to recently attend the King Park Public School Annual Showcase, which has been hosted by the school for more than 20 years. The theme of this year's showcase was Level Up, telling the story of a character lost in the video gaming world, jumping into different dimensions and battling other characters. The story unfolded through dance and drama performances, including some pretty cool filmography. I was in total awe of it all. I thank the dedicated team that managed the Level Up showcase this year, including Ellissa Taylor, leader of the creative arts committee, alongside other committee team members such as Henry Shen, Carolyne Bou Goshn, Rida Botonis, Emilynn Maglague, Sharon Thompson, Jessica York and Kathy Zappala.

A special shout-out also goes to all the amazing staff—98 per cent of the school staff—who supported the show. I also acknowledge the superstar actors of the showcase: Aleyah Peroumal, Serena Khuu, Evonne Lay, Lili Botic, Natalia Ilic, Alyssa Mai, Kiara Tran, Bormey Chan, Jennifer Abreu, Anthony Alsedi, Teodora Curcic, Evie Cox, Novak Savic, Nathan Farren and Sarah Ta. Well done to the many other student dancers and singers who added to the spectacular atmosphere. Thank you also to the school principal, Carly Harding, for supporting another year of this wonderful initiative. I had fun and I cannot wait for next year's showcase.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (22:36): It is time for Australia to ban foreign investors from buying and developing Australian land. Why are both sides of politics so afraid to take a stand on what is a relatively simple issue? I know that banning foreign investors from buying and developing residential land is not a silver bullet, but it will help. If anything that puts downward pressure on prices and takes the heat off housing costs should be done, then this must be done. People in my electorate asked me to raise this in Parliament, and I am doing that not just as their representative but also because I believe this is the right thing to do.

Whilst I believe in markets—and I consider myself a classical liberal who believes in markets—those who put idealism before common sense will quickly find that public policy absolutism results in the denial of a debate around how to address some of the most challenging issues of our time. And housing affordability is one of the most important issues—if not the most important issue—particularly to younger Australians. Foreign investment is a factor in driving up housing costs for both renters and home buyers, as renters are crowded out and first home buyers face housing supply shortages. Growth pressures in my electorate are real, and this Parliament has an opportunity to press the Commonwealth to do what other nations have done and pause foreign investors from profiteering at the expense of our citizens, who are struggling to pay their rent and their mortgage.

On 1 January 2023 Canada implemented a two-year ban on foreign home ownership, known as the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act. The ban aims to address the housing crisis by preventing non-Canadians and foreign corporations from purchasing residential property. Exceptions apply to those married to citizens, diplomats, refugees, temporary workers and international students under specific conditions. Residential properties are defined as buildings with up to three units, with some exclusions like rural homes and cottages.

The ban targets metropolitan areas with over 100,000 people, aiming to increase housing availability for Canadians. Violations can result in fines of up to \$10,000, and offenders may have to sell the property. However, foreign buyers make up less than 6 per cent of home purchases in major cities, raising doubts about the ban's effectiveness. A related tax law, which was introduced in 2023, affects home owners who sell property within 12 months, subjecting capital gains to business income tax, unless that is due to specific life events. Additionally, rising mortgage rates have complicated home buying, with many unable to pass stress tests, limiting their ability to purchase homes. High demand and limited supply in cities like Toronto and Vancouver also contribute to the housing crisis.

The New Zealand Parliament passed a law banning many non-resident foreigners from purchasing existing homes. The ban targets foreign buyers, although Australians are exempt. Former Prime Minister Ardern campaigned on the issue and the Government said the ban would make home ownership more accessible for New Zealanders. Housing prices, especially in Auckland, have skyrocketed in the past decade, though recently they have showed signs of slowing. The Government slightly eased the ban to allow foreign ownership of up to 60 per cent of units in new apartment buildings.

For decades, Switzerland has restricted the acquisition of real estate by foreign nationals. In principle, all foreign nationals who wish to acquire Swiss residential real estate must obtain approval prior to their purchase, which otherwise would be invalid. Such approval is relatively difficult to obtain. The restrictions also mean that estate planning options for foreign nationals wishing to acquire holiday homes in Switzerland are very limited. It is possible for foreign nationals, who hold a Swiss residence permit, to acquire real estate for their own personal use, although the acquisition and holding of purely commercial real estate by foreign nationals is not restricted in Switzerland.

Foreigners in Denmark are limited in purchasing real estate. They require a residence permit and they must live in the country for at least five years to buy a property. In the Philippines, foreigners are prohibited from owning land but they can own units, provided that foreign ownership does not exceed 40 per cent in the building. In Thailand, foreigners cannot own land but they can buy units, provided that foreign ownership in the building does not exceed 49 per cent. I make clear that the New South Wales Parliament does not have the power to legislate against foreign residential ownership, which is the domain of the Commonwealth, but we can push for it, just as this Chamber has pressed many important national issues.

One matter I can press directly in this Chamber is for the provision of infrastructure alongside the Government's growth targets. The New South Wales Government has set some very lofty growth targets and is approving development, irrespective of the views of locals. While jacking up targets, this Labor Government is cutting infrastructure to our community, such as the Toolijooa public transport passing loop, which could double the seats on the South Coast Line; nor is the Government supporting new schools in Badagarang, which will have a catchment of over 4,000 homes being developed. We need more infrastructure, but what we do not need is more foreign investment.

DHL WORKERS

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (22:41): As I speak, hundreds of workers from DHL, who are members of the United Workers Union, are taking industrial action to fight for a better deal. Yesterday, along with a number of my Labor colleagues and Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey, I joined workers from DHL at Bowman Hall in Blacktown for a stop-work meeting. A similar meeting was held by fellow DHL workers in Victoria. The workers numbered in their hundreds, and they will not accept subpar wages and conditions that fail to keep pace with the rising cost of living. DHL workers effectively have seen their pay go backwards during a cost-of-living crisis. Under the previous COVID-era agreement, they received pay increases of 3 per cent per annum. This was despite annual consumer price index increases of up to 7.8 per cent.

In effect, this has left DHL workers with average real wage cuts of up to 8 per cent over the past three years. They are seeking wages that reflect the real cost of living. They are asking for recognition for the essential and skilled work they do, and they are asking for a fair go. The work that kept this country running through the COVID-19 pandemic was of critical importance to DHL. DHL workers from Leppington, Liverpool, Fairfield, Campbelltown, Blacktown, Plumpton, Mount Druitt and St Clair kept our supply chains moving, ensuring that goods arrived at hospitals, stores and warehouses during the toughest days of lockdown. They did not have the luxury of working from home. They showed up, day in and day out, because they knew their jobs were essential.

DHL, which is a multinational corporation with revenues exceeding \$140 billion in 2023 alone, is offering wage increases that fall far short of what is needed to even cover the most basic costs of living. At the same time, DHL is proposing to reduce pay for new employees, which will create a two-tiered wage system where new employees are paid less for doing the same work. These new workers would be unable to progress to higher levels of pay and will be permanently stuck on wages that are lower than those of people working next to them. This is an affront to a fundamental principle in this country: same pay for the same work. Fairness must be extended to every worker, regardless of when they commence employment and their level of skill.

Despite competitors such as Team Global Express, Linfox and DB Schenker all providing their employees with higher rates of pay for licensed and highly skilled forklift work, DHL workers are denied that important remuneration. That skilled work must be recognised and fairly paid. Those workers are standing up for themselves and fighting for their families and for the future of our region. They know, as we all should, that a fair wage and secure work are fundamental. What is happening in DHL is not an isolated incident; it is a reflection of broader issues facing workers across Australia. Companies are enjoying unprecedented profits while ordinary workers struggle to make ends meet. There is always a bottomless bucket of money for the CEOs, senior executives and shareholders but, when it comes to the workers, there are endless excuses.

When workers are paid fairly, they support their families and they also reinvest in their local economies. They spend their money at local shops, businesses and cafes, supporting other jobs and driving local economic growth. Good jobs make good communities, and that is something that every employer needs to understand, especially when it comes to Western Sydney—a region on the cusp of tremendous growth and transformation. The Western Sydney airport and aerotropolis represents massive opportunities for our region. But those opportunities cannot come at the expense of workers' pay and conditions.

I recall former Premier Gladys Berejiklian's trip to Incheon in South Korea in 2017 to see a world-leading aerotropolis in action. What was her major takeaway for the key ingredient to a successful airport? Was it crucial transport links, better pay and conditions for workers and ensuring that the world's leading airlines are flying from the airport? No. It was creating a free economic zone, which is code for low wages and poor working conditions. Perhaps those companies did not get the memo: The Liberals are no longer in charge and their business lobbyist mates no longer get to write policy on behalf of Ministers asleep at the wheel. The DHL workers are setting a precedent and sending a message to every employer looking to set up shop in Western Sydney: If they want to do business there, they must do so by their rules. They must treat workers with respect, ensure good conditions and pay them a fair wage. I stand in solidarity with the members of the United Workers Union at DHL and I urge every member to support them and recognise the importance of their stand.

NORTHERN RIVERS BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (22:46): On Saturday evening I attended the Northern Rivers 2024 Regional Business Awards. I formally record the winners and highly commended recipients. For the category of Excellence in Retail and Personal Services, Dinner is Served was the winner, and Studio Eleven and Hartleys Fresh Market were highly commended. For Excellence in Trade, Construction and Manufacturing, Joel Jensen Constructions was the winner and Highline All Electrical was highly commended. Collins Hume was the winner of Excellence in Business and Professional Services, with Barefruit Marketing and Effective Workplace Solutions both highly commended. Summerland Support Services won the Excellence in Health, Care and Wellness Industries award, and Pure Health Therapies was highly commended.

For Excellence in Agriculture and Primary Industries, Woodland Valley Farm was the winner, Five Sixty Farms was highly commended and HoneyBee Hives was highly commended. For Excellence in Tourism, Recreation and Visitor Experience, Potager was the winner and Lismore Lantern Parade was highly commended. Paul "Bluey" McDermott from Cherry Street Sports won Outstanding Employee and Suzie Slingsby from Zepto Payments was highly commended. For the category of Outstanding Young Business Leader, Paul Baker from McGloin Baker was the winner and Grant Sinclair from Northern Rivers Health was highly commended. Cate McQuillen from Mememe Productions—we have all heard of dirtgirlworld—won Outstanding Business Leader – 20 Employees or Under, and Claudia Lawrence from Dinner is Served and Peter Burr from Potager were highly commended.

For the category of Outstanding Business Leader – 21 Employees and Over, Michael Hampson from Norco Co-operative Limited was the winner and Damian Chapelle from Newton Denny Chapelle was highly commended. Cumulus Visual Effects won the Excellence in International Business award. Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion was awarded to Social Futures, with Autism Camp Australia, Winchester Farm, and Summerland Support Services all highly commended. For the category of Outstanding Local Chamber, Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce was the winner and Business Murwillumbah was highly commended. Women Up North Housing won Outstanding Community Organisation, and Autism Camp Australia was highly commended.

For the category of Employer of Choice for 20 employees or under, Potager was the winner and Barefruit Marketing was highly commended. For the category of Employer of Choice for 21 employees or over, Southern Cross Credit Union Ltd was the winner, and both Crystalbrook Byron and Newton Denny Chappelle were highly commended. For the category of Excellence in Innovation, Christie and Christie Pty Ltd of The Nail Snail was the winner, and Local Sounds Radio, Cherry Sports Group and Moneysmith Group were each highly commended. For the category of Excellence in Sustainability, Norco Co-operative Limited was the winner and Mememe Productions, ENV Solutions and Summerland Bank were each highly commended.

For the category of Outstanding Visitor Experience, Farm and Co Restaurant was the winner and Ballina RSL, where it was all hosted with outstanding service and food, was highly commended. For the category of Outstanding New Business, Terania Consulting was the winner and Better by Bike was highly commended. For the category of Excellence in Microbusiness, Off The Rails was the winner and 2020 Smokehouse BBQ was highly commended. For the category of Excellence in Small Business, Joel Jensen Constructions was the winner and Mememe Productions was highly commended. For the category of Excellence in Large Business, Cumulus Visual Effects was the winner and ENV solutions was highly commended.

The Northern Rivers Business of the Year was Norco Co-operative, the region's 100 per cent Australian farmer-owned dairy cooperative that began in Byron Bay in 1895, which is now an iconic landmark in Lismore and Australia's largest and oldest dairy cooperative. I am pleased to say they took out the 2024 Northern Rivers Business of the Year award. It was really good to see. The awards were presided over by the wonderful Business NSW Northern Rivers regional director, Jane Laverty, emceed by media identity Bruce Mackenzie with The String Sirens providing the entertainment.

Audiovisual production was provided by Jempire Events, the photographer was Orion Media Group. I thank Business NSW councillor Greg McNamara, who is a local dairy farmer and businessman and former chair and CEO of Norco. Sponsors started with the super sponsor SCU, as well as sponsors Ballina Fair Shopping Centre, The Winslow Group, Clarence Property, Sourdough Business Pathways Regeneration Connection Program, Commonwealth Bank, TAFE, TURSA, Northern Rivers New South Wales Brand, Northern Rivers Housing, Social Futures, Ballina RSL and Telstra.

Bills

CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Returned

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

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:52 until
Wednesday 25 September 2024 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

BRAVERY MEDAL - ERIK FINK

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate former Yamba resident Erik Fink who saved the life of a teenage boy who was caught in a rip on Turners Beach, in February 2019. As huge waves from tropical cyclone Oma hit the coast at Main Beach Yamba, Mr Fink had a 'gut feeling' to go to Turners Beach. Within seconds of arriving, Mr Fink saw two boys playing in the surf then one being washed off his feet and taken out to sea in a rip. Without hesitation Mr Fink selflessly ran to the water and quickly swam out to him. Once he reached the boy, the pair were dragged in front of the southern edge of the rocks by the rip. Some local bystanders on the rocks, threw them a surfboard which Mr Fink used to paddle back into shore, with the boy firmly holding on around his waist. When they arrived back onto the beach, Mr Fink received a standing ovation from the onlookers. Erik Fink is truly deserving as he will be awarded a Bravery Medal by the Australian Governor-General for his heroic actions that day. I honour you for your bravery and thank you!

CONGRATULATIONS ELYSE MCMASTER

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge Elyse McMaster, this year's Surf Life Saving NSW Volunteer of the Year from Evans Head-Casino Surf Life Saving Club. Elyse's dedication and selfless commitment to the Evans Head-Casino Surf Life Saving Club has been ongoing for over twenty years. A highly motivated volunteer who provides many tireless hours to her local club and offering support for young members assisting them to gain opportunities to engage with their community. Elyse is currently the Junior Activities Coordinator at the club, working to provide a new approach toward youth development, and support Age Managers so they can ensure appropriate levels of learning is applied within the Nippers program. Being one of only 3 female inflatable rescue boat drivers in Evans Head-Casino SLSC shows that Elyse has been devoted to learning and teaching as much as she can. She has also been a key part of the Club's annual Pink Patrol, helping to celebrate the incredible work women do within Surf Life Saving. Congratulations Elyse on being named the Surf Life Saving NSW 2024 Volunteer of the year, what a fantastic achievement, one to be proud of.

GRAFTON NETBALL - DAY FOR LIV FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Grafton Netball Association on a very a successful "Day for Liv 2024" fundraising event. Many activities took place during the day, including tie dying, hair braiding, selfie competitions, raffles and a classic chocolate wheel. Nobody went hungry, with a BBQ, bake sale, ice creams, lollies and coffees all proving to be popular among the crowd. Outstanding efforts saw over \$8,500 raised for charities Little Windmills: The Country Kids Charity and The Tie Dye Project: Making Rainbows and Fighting Sarcoma. I take my hat off to the hard-working organisers and many local businesses that donated money and raffle prizes to ensure the Day for Liv was a success this year. Great efforts - well done to everyone involved.

ALICIA EARSMAN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, the seat of Orange has a proud history of producing quality rugby league players and I would like to congratulate the latest on the list, Canowindra's Alicia Earsman. Alicia was recently named the NSW Women's Country Championship player of the year, with her award presented at the Brad Fittler Medal Night, held at the Star in Sydney. The award iced the cake for the Western Rams representative, who was named player of the match following the country championship's grand final, won by Western 28-12 over North Coast. During the grand final Alicia scored two tries with a dominant display in the front row. She put that dominance down to cutting her teeth in the halves as a younger player and some great guidance from coaches. A member of the Canowindra Tigers and Woodbridge clubs, Alicia also earned NSW Country selection, making 2024 a big year for her. I congratulate Alicia on a wonderful year in her chosen sport and wish her well in 2025.

ORANGE PIE COMPANY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, the best gourmet sausage roll is made in Orange and the Orange Pie Company has the trophy to prove it. With a reputation for thinking outside the box, bakery owners Mitchell Brown and Ben Coster have earned a strong following locally with their unique pie fillings and now they've gone a step further with their maple bacon and hazelnut sausage roll winning the gourmet sausage roll category at the 35th Official Great Aussie Pie Competition. The boys also claimed fourth place with their pork, apple and Chinese five spice entry. Nine other entries across the pie and sausage roll categories also medalled with both the sausage rolls claiming gold. Started in 1989, the Official Great Aussie Pie Competition is run by the Aussie Pie Council with judges coming from industry backgrounds including TAFE trainers, bakers, chefs and production representatives. The sausage roll section began in 2013 with the Orange Pie Company claiming a fifth placing in 2023. Imagination and experimentation are behind some delicious and unique pastry creations and

I look forward to tasting the Orange Pie Company's future gastronomic innovations. I congratulate them on creating Australia's top gourmet sausage roll.

TESS WOODS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the rising career trajectory of Tess Woods, a young woman who is fulfilling her enormous potential in a tough rural industry. Tess is pursuing a career in shearing where her commitment and talent have been endorsed by her appointment as NSW's representative in the Australian Wool Innovation's wool ambassadors' program. Just into her 20s, Tess grew up on her parents farm near Parkes showing unwavering enthusiasm for all things wool. That interest has not waned as she moves through the many facets of the wool industry, from handling to classing and now shearing where she hopes to make her career. With that goal, Tess has pursued opportunities to be mentored by some of Australia's leading shearers while she has also branched into sports shearing. As part of her AWI ambassador duties, Tess also travelled across the Tasman as part of a New Zealand exchange and again took the opportunity to absorb knowledge. Mr Speaker, shearing is a very specialised, essential trade in rural NSW yet recruitment is slow. To have such a motivated young woman join the ranks is heartening and I wish her well.

SUSANNE RATCLIFFE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Tenambit's Susanne Ratcliffe on the publication of her first novel, the first in the 'Stones of Wrath' series. Susanne has written stories, poems and lyrics since childhood. At the age of 18, Susanne won the JJ Cahill prize for poetry. Susanne then won a full-time scholarship to study at the Conservatorium of Music and became a high school teacher. Susanne married a Royal Navy helicopter pilot, moved to England and had a family. The family's travels in Europe, Israel, the USA, Africa, China, Chile and Argentina sowed the seeds of historical interest which is showcased in Susanne's writing projects. The 'Stone of Wrath' trilogy speculates on the connection of the lost tribes of Israel with the Vikings in early Christian lore. The book has already won an award for Historical fiction in the USA. Susanne is an accomplished wordsmith and a proud Hunter Valley ambassador. Congratulations Susanne on this publication, I wish you well.

IZZY JAMES

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I am pleased to acknowledge Morpeth's own Izzy James on her Country Music Association of Australia [CMAA] Academy of Country Music scholarship. Izzy, is just twelve-years-old but has been playing guitar since she was six years old. Izzy was raised on a steady diet of Shania Twain and Dolly Parton by her parents. Izzy loves everything to do with country music including performing, playing guitar, singing and songwriting. The scholarship is awarded by the CMAA, the representative body of country music performers in Australia and was set up to contribute to the maintenance and growth of the Australian country music industry at a grass-roots level. The scholarship allowed Izzy to spend seven days in Tamworth at the Country Music Association of Australia Academy of Country Music where she was guided in song writing and performance skills by professionals. Izzy, in year seven at Hunter School of Performing Arts, is currently recording the song she co-wrote at the Academy with musician Sarah Buckley called Biting Bullets. Congratulations Izzy on following your dreams to be a country music recording artist.

CHELSEA DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Mai-Wel Enterprises' Chelsea Day who was recognised as Outstanding Employee at the recent 2024 Business Hunter Awards. The Outstanding Employee Award recognises an inspirational employee who has demonstrated a passion for their role and a commitment to their workplace and the community. Chelsea was nominated by her employer for her unwavering dedication and passion. She adeptly manages the complex demands of acquiring new business, supporting existing customers, and securing meaningful work for supported employees. Chelsea's compassion and commitment shine through in her efforts to help team members achieve their employment goals, both within Mai-Wel and in the broader job market. Her drive for continuous improvement and innovation ensures the company remains at the forefront of the industry. By embracing change and fostering a culture of learning, Chelsea inspires her colleagues and creates a dynamic, collaborative environment where everyone is motivated to excel. Congratulations Chelsea.

VALE JOHN JONES

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I pay tribute to the late John Jones, a long term local of Lilli Pilli and Shire football legend who passed away in July. John's journey with the game began as a player in 1945, before joining Lilli Pilli "Junior Soccer" Club committee in 1973, where he served tirelessly as club secretary and later president for 16 years. John was elected to the Sutherland Shire Football Association [SSFA] committee in 1998.

In 12-years on the executive he left mark on the game, including as vice president, chair of the disciplinary committee and panel, ground official, and delegate to Football NSW. John was the ultimate volunteer doing all manner of jobs, from working in the canteen to actively directing major upgrades to the SSFAs head office in Kareela. John's 37 years in administration saw him earn numerous accolades, including life membership of Lilli Pilli FC in 1978, the Sutherland Shire Merit Award in 1981, honorary player life membership at Lilli Pilli FC in 1998, and life membership of the SSFA in 2007. In 2013, John was awarded the George Churchward Medal, the highest distinction in NSW Football. I extend my condolences to John's family and friends.

NORTHERN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 - AS USUAL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating As Usual from Macquarie Park for their outstanding achievement in winning the Cafe category at the 2024 Northern Local Business Awards. This well-deserved accolade reflects not only their excellence in service but also their significant contribution to the community of Ryde. As Usual has become a beloved local hub where Ryde residents gather for quality coffee and conversation. Their commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment has made them a staple of Macquarie Park and a valued part of the broader Ryde community. Through their active participation in local events and their support of community initiatives, As Usual has demonstrated a deep-rooted commitment to giving back. Their success at the Northern Local Business Awards is a testament to the positive impact they have had on both their customers and the community at large. I encourage the House to join me in congratulating As Usual on this incredible achievement and thanking them for their continued dedication to making Ryde a better place to live, work, and connect.

NORTHERN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 - BONOBO EDUCATION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Bonobo Education from Ryde for their well-deserved win in the Education Service category at the Northern Local Business Awards 2024. Bonobo Education has made a lasting impact on the Ryde community through their dedication to providing high-quality tutoring and educational services tailored to students' individual needs. Their innovative and personalised approach to education has helped countless young people in Ryde build confidence, improve academic performance, and achieve their full potential. Bonobo Education's commitment to fostering a positive and supportive learning environment has benefited students and contributed to the wider community. By offering programs that support academic growth and personal development, they have played a vital role in shaping the future of Ryde's young minds. This award is a testament to their passion, hard work, and the significant difference they have made in the lives of local families. I extend my warmest congratulations to Bonobo Education and thank them for their invaluable contribution to our community.

NORTHERN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 - LICKYOURPHONE MEDIA

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating LickYourPhone Media from West Ryde for their outstanding achievement in winning the Professional Services category at the Northern Local Business Awards 2024. This innovative business has significantly contributed to the Ryde community through their exceptional digital marketing services, supporting local businesses in reaching wider audiences and boosting their online presence. Founded with a focus on creativity and results-driven strategies, LickYourPhone Media has played a vital role in the growth and success of many small businesses in our area. Their expertise in navigating the increasingly complex digital landscape has been a source of reassurance and confidence for our local enterprises. Their dedication has elevated the profile of local enterprises and enhanced Ryde's overall economic vitality. Through their work, LickYourPhone Media has fostered a sense of collaboration and innovation within the Ryde business community, making them deserving of this award. I congratulate them on this remarkable accomplishment and look forward to seeing their continued positive impact on our local economy.

ANDY NEUDEGG

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the Caringbah Redbacks Football Club's dedicated president, Andy Neudegg, on being awarded life membership of the club. Andy's journey with the Redbacks started 14 years ago when his daughter signed up to play. "one not to sit idle" (as the club says), Andy stepped up to become a coach and manager for kids teams, but that was just the start. Andy brought his leadership to the committee, before contributing as registrar and then for the last eight years as president. On winning the award, Andy said he was so proud to lead the Redbacks and that it's "more than a club, it is now a family". I have seen Andy in action for myself at North Caringbah Oval and at grounds around the Shire, passionately leading the club's committee and volunteers so that the many jobs get done and players from miniroos right up to the open teams can enjoy the game of football. Andy can be proud of what he has achieved as president and the messages congratulating him on this honour regularly used the word legend to describe him. I acknowledge Andy Neudegg's contribution to the Redbacks and football in the Shire.

LIFESAVING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS SUCCESS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate our Bate Bay surf lifesaving clubs on their success at the Lifesaving World Championships held on the Gold Coast recently. The 2km beach runs were dominated by Shire representatives, with North Cronulla's Sari McKee and Wanda's Kyle Mason winning their respective youth events before backing up the next day to win the open titles. Winning 'double' gold of the youth and open titles has never been done before at this level of competition. Kyle then combined with Kai Hammond and Sam Mood to win the 3 x 1km men's beach run relay. Clubmates Sienna Alderson, Emma Blanch and Chloe Gentle took gold in the women's event. To make it a relay treble for Wanda, Sienna Alderson teamed with Jessica Henville and India Hulbert to take the women's youth gold. Beach sprinter Kobe Sorenson was victorious in the oceanman relay and the men's sprint for North Cronulla, and led Australia to gold in the beach relay. Wanda, North Cronulla and Cronulla also had competitors finishing with silver and bronze medals in a strong showing at an event involving around 5000 of the world's most talented and skilled lifesaving athletes.

BROWNE ACHIEVES WHAT NO OTHER NETBALLER HAS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Emily Browne of North Albury on her historic achievement with the Ovens and Murray Football Netball League. Emily has become the first netballer to receive four Toni Wilson Medals, making her one of the league's all-time greats. Emily first claimed the honour in 2012, as a 16-year-old Lavington Panther. She followed this with victories in 2017 and 2022 with the North Albury Hoppers, demonstrating her excellence over more than a decade. Over recent seasons Emily has been the driving force behind the Hopper's A-grade side as their midcourter. Her leadership and skill on the court have been credited for much of the squad's success. I would also like to extend my congratulations to North Albury wing attack Madi Lieschke - crowned the 2024 Rising Star, North Albury Georgia Pigdon who led the way in C-grade count and in football Lavington's Jack Costello who received the Richmond Hamilton Medal as the Rising Star of league. To Emily, Madi, Georgia, Jack and the Border Teams, your skill, dedication, and sportsmanship are a credit to your and the Ovens and Murray FNL. Well done on your outstanding achievements.

SMITH BROTHERS - TALLANGATTA MEAT PROCESSORS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Albury's Ambrose Smith along with brothers Fergus, Tom and Will—for their outstanding contributions to the Australian meat industry through their family-owned business, Tallangatta Meat Processors (Smith's TMP). The Smith family's journey in this industry began in the 1950s when brothers Ron and Neil Smith opened a small butcher shop. Their vision expanded in 1976 with the establishment of a processing plant, which has since grown under the leadership of Doug Smith and sons - Ambrose, Fergus, Tom and Will. Smith TMP demonstrates youthfulness, ambition and is the cornerstone of our regional economy, known for its commitment to quality, innovation, and community. It is the provider of high-quality lamb and mutton products to both domestic and international markets. The brothers' dedication to sustainable growth, including their plans to expand into the US market, promises to create jobs and further enhance the local economy. Well done, Ambrose, Fergus, Tom and Will, along with parents Doug and Angela, and I salute the legacy your family has created.

HURSTVILLE MUSEUM AND GALLERY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I wish to recognise and acknowledge the exceptional work of the Hurstville Museum and Gallery in displaying the St George Community's rich artistic heritage. The Gallery's recent exhibition, "Hidden Treasures," has given our community a unique opportunity to explore a diverse range of artworks which have never been seen before. From early 19th century engravings to contemporary works by local and international artists, the exhibition has highlighted the museum's extensive collection and its commitment to preserving and promoting the cultural history of the Hurstville area. I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to the museum's curator, Claire Baddeley and her dedicated staff who have worked tirelessly to bring the exhibition to life. Their passion and expertise have resulted in a truly inspiring and informative experience for all who have visited. I encourage the entire St George community to visit the Hurstville Museum and Gallery to discover the hidden treasures within its collection and to appreciate the cultural richness of our area.

JULIA MACLEAN

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Ms Julia Maclean who was awarded the 2024 South Eastern Sydney Local Health District CORE award. The CORE awards celebrate excellence, innovation and commitment to the delivery of healthcare within our community. Each year, NSW Health recognises and honours individuals who are making a significant contribution to improving patient care, health outcomes and service delivery. Associate Professor Julia Maclean works at St George Hospital as a Cancer Care Centre Clinical Specialist and serves on the Board of Directors of Southern Cancer Care. Professor Maclean along with Dr Sharon Tivey led a multidisciplinary team of clinicians to devise a system that alerts staff

to the special airway needs that some patients need in hospital. Professor Maclean and Dr Tivey have worked together for over 20 years to come up with solutions to ensure staff have the correct information available to them to keep patients safe. This innovation is a testament to the dedication and expertise of the team at St George Hospital and their unwavering commitment to improving patient outcomes. On behalf of the St George community, I extend our sincerest congratulations to Associate Professor Maclean for this well-deserved recognition.

SOROPTIMISTS OF THE HILLS, ANNUAL SPEAKING COMPETITION, 2024

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The 13th Annual Public Speaking Competition for High School students was held on 21 September 2024 at the Glenhaven Community Centre. Fifty students from local schools participated. The competition included 27 students in the Junior Division; 15 students in the Middle Division; and 8 students in the Seniors Division. Students presented a speech on the topic of: 'The Power of Learning. It was great to see many schools involved this year. I recognise students from Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, Galston, Girraween, James Ruse, Kellyville, Northholm, Our Lady and Mercy, Tara, and William Clarke. I congratulate the winners: Year 7 -Jasmine Leilia Hamdan from Tara; Year 8 Aniha Keshwani from Girraween; Year 9 – Sofia Trofa from Tara, Year 10 – Ashlyn Kumar from OLMC, Year 11 – Danuli Kankanamge from Baulkham Hills. I take the opportunity to extend recognition for the continuing service of the Soroptimist International of the Hills District. I recognise and congratulate Cathy Tracey and Jacqui McLachlan the entire Soroptimist team and the competition judges for conducting a wonderful speaking competition. I am sure students are looking forward to next year's speaking competition.

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES SOCIETY (CASS) MOON FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—On 12 September 2024 I joined with members of the Chinese community to celebrate the Mid-Autumn or Moon Festival. It is one of the most important festivals in the Chinese Calendar and for many countries right across Asia. The Festival for many marks the time for family reunion, lighting of lanterns and eating of course mooncakes. Families gather, share food and stores and express gratitude for the abundant autumn harvest. The event was organised by the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] to provide the opportunities for Seniors to come together and enjoy cultural dancing, singing and to share stories. CASS was originally established on 8 March 1981 provides many valuable services the community including Residential Aged Care, Home Ageing, Disability, Vocational Training, Settlement and Health to name a few. I thank Anthony Pang and the team from CASS for organising the event for the Seniors Activities Groups.

DALWOOD SPILSTEAD SERVICE ABORIGINAL ADVISORY GROUP

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this House the work of a remarkable advocacy group, the Dalwood Spilstead Service (DSS) Aboriginal Advisory Group, who have played an instrumental role in ensuring that this essential service remains fully funded and operational. As this House may be aware, the DSS in Seaforth, which provides crisis support to vulnerable families and at-risk children, had been facing an existential threat following an announcement last year that Government funding would be terminated. In response, a collective of community forces came together to successfully advocate for the funding to be reinstated. The DSS Aboriginal Advisory Group was one such force, and their contribution to this cause cannot be understated. Comprised of some truly remarkable local Aboriginal women who also represent the Gunyadu First Nations Women's Corporation, their relentless advocacy and passion for this service has helped ensure that Dalwood continues to benefit those children and families who need it most. I acknowledge the lasting contributions of Jai Fifita, Aunty Michelle Johnson, Aunty Lois Burk, and all those involved with DSS Aboriginal Advisory Group, and I sincerely thank them for their commitment and their efforts.

FRIENDS OF IVANHOE PARK BOTANIC GARDEN AGM 2024

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Speaker, I would like to ask that this House recognise and congratulate a wonderful community group in my electorate, the Friends of Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden, who hosted their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 11th September. Comprising passionate and active members of the Manly community, since 2018 this group has continually dedicated its time and efforts to enhance the protection, sustainability, and natural beauty of one of Manly's oldest parks and best kept secrets. This year's AGM was a fantastic opportunity to engage in important and constructive discussions about the strategic objectives of the group to ensure that Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden remains both a thriving ecosystem and public space to be enjoyed by all. I am proud to be the Patron of the Friends of Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden, and I pass on my sincere thanks to all involved for their continued stewardship of this historic site.

LOCALKIND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOP

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, LocalKind, formerly Community Northern Beaches, is a highly valued organisation in my electorate of Manly, which provides critical intervention and support services to

the most vulnerable. As a Patron of LocalKind, I am proud of the way the organisation provides both reactive and pro-active services. One such pro-active service is a Healthy Relationships Workshop which aims to empower young people with the tools and strategies they need to build and maintain strong, positive connections throughout their lives. The workshop, to be held in Manly on 9 October in association with Relationships Australia, will explore topics like friendship maintenance, recognising red flags, and navigating relationship changes. It will help build resilience and positive coping skills to handle challenges, as well as help develop confidence in making ethical choices that foster healthy relationships. The workshop is free, and I encourage young people to participate by registering with LocalKind, Northern Beaches. I'm also looking forward an unforgettable night of celebration and giving at LocalKind's Spring Fling with Layne Beachley and Kirk Pengilly on 26 October. It should be a night to remember while also providing support to a much valued local organisation.

PENRITH TEES OFF FOR BREAST CANCER

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—Penrith has once again this year started to turn pink as Penrith CBD's Pink Up Penrith teed off on this year's annual golf day. The event at Leonay Golf Club is the first of many events being held throughout the month of October to raise much-needed funds for the McGrath Foundation. The Penrith community is notoriously passionate about sport, and one of the biggest events for Pink Up Penrith is Pink Up Golf Day. This year, players and hole sponsors raised \$16,000 for Penrith's local breast care nurses at Nepean Hospital. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer for females in Australia, with approximately 21,000 breast cancer cases diagnosed in 2024. The money raised throughout Pink Up Penrith will help McGrath Foundation reach their goal of 250 breast care nurses by 2050. Penrith now has a total of 5 breast care nurses and we are looking to fund even more. A huge thank you to Penrith CBD Corporation, players, sponsors, and the community for making this event a tremendous success.

PENRITH HOSTS 2024 NETBALL FINALS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—On Saturday, 21st September, I had the privilege of watching Penrith's finest netball players compete in the Grand Finals and present titles to our winning teams. Congratulations to the Penrith District Netball Association and all the grand final teams for the tremendous work put in by all the coaches, parents, volunteers and athletes over the season. I want to congratulate the following teams on being victorious in their respective divisions: Bubblegums PRSL, Honeysuckles GPK, Snags SML, Jumbucks WARR, Peppers EMU, Billabongs PRSL, Zappos PRSL, Jungle Cats JS, Starfish SML, Unicorns STN, Desert Flames CC, Coosas CPNC, Parakeets STN, Jagers JS, Ratbags RIV, Kookaburras EPK, Jingles JS, Jaffas PRSL, Pixies STN, Peacocks EPK, Wedgetails WIN, Dambusters WARR, Tic Tacs PRSL, Sandpipers EMU, Ripples RIV, Light Stars EMM, Corals CPNC, Frangipanis GPK, KAOS WARR, Sweet AZ SML, Mockingbirds EPK, Currawongs EPK, Legacy SML, Troopers WARR, Champions CPNC, Wild Kats PSTH, Ultras WARR, Redbacks EMU, Sharnells WARR, Dandelions GPK, Clovers CPNC, Cornettos PRSL, Chevies CPNC, Nickstars STN, Bella Donnas CC, Funstars EMM, Walruses WARR, Vulcans STN, Supa Nova SML. Congratulations to all the players that made the finals.

WIGGLES AND GIGGLES HOST WILLIAM'S SYNDROME WALKATHON

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—On Sunday 22nd September Wiggles and Giggles childcare centres brought back their William's Syndrome Walkathon for a second year. The event was first run in 2023 after the owner of the preschool, has a daughter that was diagnosed with William's Syndrome. Our local Leonay Wiggles and Giggles has been very proactive in community and a tremendous success with businesses donating thousands of dollars for the cause. This year Wiggles and Giggles are using the donations to support and fund camps for families with William's Syndrome so that they can get together, network, and be provided with the necessary support as they enjoy a week or weekend together. William's Syndrome is a rare developmental disorder that presents at birth and affects different parts of the body. The condition can lead to a range of health complications, and with there being no cure treatment focuses on managing symptoms and health complications. Wiggles and Giggles hope that the event will encourage inclusion throughout the community, making sure that everyone, no matter their abilities, has an equal opportunity. Congratulations to all the Wiggles and Giggles staff and volunteers!

MITCHELLS MARKET - WARILLA GROVE SHOPPING CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Mitchells Market - Warilla Grove Shopping Centre for taking out the award for best Fruit and Vegetable Shop at the Illawarra South Coast Local Business Awards. The Awards were held on Tuesday 16 July 2024. The Finalists at the annual awards are decided according to public vote. Businesses are then judged against a set criteria and according to information they provide, as well as their online presence. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Mitchells Market - Warilla Grove Shopping Centre and wish their business all the success in the future.

JASMINE WRIGHT

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Jasmine Wright, Year 7 student at Corpus Christi Catholic High School, for being selected in the New South Wales Under 14's Girls State Hockey Team. The team will be playing in the National Championships in Perth, Western Australia, from 29 September to 5 October 2024. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Jasmine on this wonderful achievement and wish her all the best at the National Championships and all her future sporting endeavours.

KINGS KEBAB AND MEXICAN

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Kings Kebab & Mexican for taking out the award for best Fast Food/Takeaway at the Illawarra South Coast Local Business Awards. The Awards were held on Tuesday 16 July 2024. The Finalists at the annual awards are decided according to public vote. Businesses are then judged against a set criteria and according to information they provide, as well as their online presence. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Kings Kebab & Mexican, Stockland Shellharbour and wish their business all the success in the future.

YOWIES WOMEN MAKE HISTORY WITH GRAND FINAL RUN

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The Upper Macleay Yowies Women's Soccer Team made history by reaching their first grand final. Their journey, marked by a triumphant 4-2 win over Port United in the semi-final, showcased their resilience and unity. Despite a narrow 1-0 loss in the grand final, their spirit and dedication are a true source of pride. The team finished the regular season in second place with only one loss and one draw, setting the stage for their grand final opportunity. Despite a narrow 1-0 loss in the grand final, the Yowies' performance throughout the season was a testament to their hard work and determination. The Upper Macleay Yowies, deeply rooted in the close-knit community of Willawarrin, is more than just a sports club; it's a family. Weekly dinners for junior teams and the support of four junior and two senior teams reflect the strong community spirit. While the grand result wasn't what they had hoped for, the Yowies' historic run and unwavering spirit are a source of pride. Their journey remains a powerful example of dedication and unity, and the community continues to celebrate their remarkable season.

YOUNG DREAMER ON THE FAST TRACK

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Morgan Griffiths, just 10 years old, is already making a remarkable mark with his heartwarming venture, Morgan's Motoring Merchandise. Driven by his love for cars and a dream to restore a 1975 MGB as his first car, Morgan started crafting keyrings from Hot Wheels and Matchbox cars. What began as a simple project for family and friends quickly turned into something much more meaningful. When Morgan discovered the Mini Makers stall at the Riverside Markets, organized by Key Employment, he saw an opportunity to share his passion with a broader audience. Each month, with a mix of excitement and nervousness, he sets up his stall, proudly displaying his unique keyrings. Morgan's Motoring Merchandise is thriving, expanding to collector cars and working to create an online store. Morgan's journey isn't just about selling keyrings; it's a touching story of a young boy's dream and determination. His presence at local car shows and markets reflects his genuine passion and enthusiasm. Each keyring he sells represents not only his craftsmanship but also his commitment to turning his dreams into reality, inspiring those around him with his perseverance and heart.

PATRICIA TOLENTINO

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Drutt)—I wish to recognise Ms Patricia Tolentino, who is a resident of my electorate for her recent achievement where she received the Young Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards Regional Ceremony. Patricia has been a big advocate for human rights, she has held numerous volunteering roles across Amnesty International Australia, such as The big Lift, Yung Prodigy, SOUL Accelerator Program and the Red Cross, which have been driven by her dedication to human rights work. I would like to congratulate Patricia on this well-deserved award and I look forward to seeing her continue this incredible work.

GLENRAC SUPPORTING MEN

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of the Glen Innes Natural Resources Advisory Committee [GLENRAC] for hosting the Mens Night at Glen Innes recently. The event brought men together, provided information around men's mental health, with the aim of encouraging people to talk openly about their well-being. I congratulate CEO Kylie Falconer and the GLENRAC team for facilitating the event, seeing some 184 people in attendance. Thank you to the speakers: Warren Davies, Kerry White, Carol Mudford and Casey Chard for sharing stories, experiences and insights. Special thanks to the sponsors: Hunter

New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network, the Kayne Wells Memorial Fund, Centacare New England North West, along with the Rotary Club and Men's Shed of Glen Innes. Thank you to donors: The Ben's Falls Retreat, Say & Co Rural, Second Time Around Saddlery, Kemp Shearing, Shearing Supplies Dubbo, Elders, GrazAg and the Rotary Club all of Glen Innes. Thanks to entertainer Charlie Fittler and the Glen Innes Services Club. I commend all those involved in for this valuable initiative, for their teamwork and commitment to better the lives of others in the Glen Innes community.

RECOGNITION OF STUART AND LYNDALL TIGHE

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Stuart and Lyndall Tighe, farmers from Pallamallawa. Through their companies, Boolah Farms and PURE Grain Network, they have demonstrated innovations into sustainable agriculture and commercial scale regenerative practices. These were all demonstrated in the PURE Trial Farm Field Day held at Pallamallawa on 11th of September 2024 bringing in over 300 attendees. I congratulate Stuart and Lyndall for sharing their knowledge, by providing attendees with valuable insights into new processes and systems. These systems create platforms for continual innovation cycles, under models that are both commercially viable and regenerative. The field day was followed by a panel discussion at Pally Pub with guest speakers from all over the country. I commend Stuart and Lyndall for their work which has innovated the grain industry, by highlighting direct farmer-end user collaboration to maximise margins and benefits. Through Boolah Farms and PURE Grain Network, Stuart and Lyndall are enhancing supply chain value, while improving end user traceability and validation and optimising the entire 'seed to sip' journey.

ARMIDALE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of the Armidale Regional Council [ARC] for initiating and hosting the Festival of Lights recently. The festival celebrates the unique nature of Armidale, illuminating the city's rich culture and creativity. The festival included a raft of activities for young and old, with the focus being on bringing the community together. I congratulate ARC the many local organisations involved in this initiative, for their foresight and enabling this event to take place. Special thanks to the Coordinator Catherine Cragan and ARC Activation and Precinct teams for their support, which included Renata Davis, Camille Jones, Maddie Fleming and Denise Palmer. Thanks also to the numerous council outdoor staff who ensured Armidale was looking at its finest to host this event. I commend all those involved in for this valuable initiative, for their teamwork, time, effort and commitment in showcasing the beautiful city of Armidale. Special thanks also to the volunteers who give their personal time, as regional towns cannot function without the ongoing support and commitment their volunteers give.

LOTTO WINNER

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate the 30 year old local St Clair mother who won over \$22 million in last Thursday's Powerball draw. I was amazed to learn that a local of our community won this life changing prize, which she plans on using to buy a house, help her family and do some travelling. I wish her the best.

NATIONAL FAMILY BUSINESS DAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—The 19th of September 2024 marked National Family Business Day. I take this opportunity to thank all local family businesses in my electorate of Badgerys Creek. Family businesses make up 70% of all businesses in Australia and form a vital part of the fabric of our community. They play an important role in our economy and in our access to goods and services. I recognise and appreciate the hard work, initiative and risk involved in opening and running a small business. I encourage my community to continue supporting local family businesses. I thank our local family businesses and wish them success.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—With the school holidays soon to commence, I take this opportunity to remind people to drive safely during the school holiday period and overall for students and their families to remain safe as they enjoy the break. Far too often we hear of tragedy occurring on and off the roads during holiday seasons and it is imperative that safety remains the number one priority whilst driving on the roads or celebrating the holiday break. I also wish all students in the Badgerys Creek electorate, particularly the HSC class of 2024, the very best with their studies.

UPPER NORTH SHORE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2024

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On 20 September, I attended the 2024 Upper North Shore Volunteer of the Year Awards at Hornsby RSL. I recognise all the awardees. I recognise the Volunteer of the Year, Margaret McClintock from the Women's Justice Network. She helps women affected by incarceration to develop skills to reintegrate into the community and support with letter writing, phone calls, face-to-face visits and court and

hospital visits. I recognise Young Volunteer of the Year, Jiayi Fang. She helps prepare meals for those less fortunate with Kids Giving Back, helps with Youth4Difference fundraisers and Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushcare program. I recognise Senior Volunteer of the Year Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame. She leads bush regeneration in Lane Cove National Park with Bushcare, and has been doing so for over 40 years. Janet also helped establish the Landcare and Conservation qualification at Meadowbank TAFE. I recognise the Volunteer Team of the Year, Easy Care Gardening Thursday Earthworms. They help people maintain their gardens whilst also providing interaction through morning and afternoon teas. Finally, I recognise and thank Gemma Rygate, the CEO of the Centre for Volunteering for helping bring our Upper North Shore community together.

THE 416 GROUP IN KILLARA AND LINDFIELD

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise the 416 Group, a well-respected and organised community group that supports the residents of Killara and Lindfield. The 416 Group is appropriately named after the phone number of the local community (before a 9 was added in the 1990s). The 416 Group has been a force for good for over 20 years, working with local representatives, including Ku-ring-gai Council, to provide better outcomes for our community. Their advocacy includes protecting the built and natural heritage and environment; improving the amenities of parks, footpaths and roads, such as Lady Game Drive; and ensuring appropriate development within the character of the community, such as the iconic Lindfield Village Hub. I recognise the 416 Group committee, President Julian Ledger, Vice-President John Croker, Treasurer Bob McLaughlin, and committee members Margaret Frater, Mitchell Frater-Baird, Val du Pre le Roux, Ian Stuart, and Doug Turnock. Thank you for your continued service to our community and advocacy on important community issues. I look forward to working with you for the benefit of our community.

RADISSON BLU PLAZA SYDNEY - GALA DINNER 2024

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On 20 September, I attended the Radisson Blu Plaza Sydney's Gala Dinner. In 2024, the dinner raised funds and awareness for Bowel Cancer Australia. Importantly, the night was an opportunity to remember and honour Beth Tudehope, who passed away from bowel cancer in February 2024 after a heroic and brave battle. I recognise General Manager Peter Tudehope, who made the night possible. I saw firsthand his generosity in making sure that everyone who works, stays and visits the Radisson Blu is a part of his family and friends. The night was made special with the love and support of current and previous staff, who volunteered their time. It was amazing cuisine! On the night, I was a part of a panel that discussed bowel cancer with Peter Tudehope, Dr Penelope de Lacavalerie and Gareth McCray OAM. Our message is to take care of yourself and make sure you have check-ups with your doctor. When it comes to bowel cancer, you can be #NeverTooYoung. The night was a huge success, with over \$100,000 raised for Bowel Cancer Australia. This donation will make a real difference and help save lives.

THE MILBREY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Ashleigh Hotham has made to the people of Oberon. The Milbrey Kitchen & Store is a regional restaurant and gift store located in the heart of Oberon, NSW. Situated in a restored heritage building, the restaurant showcases quality seasonal produce in a relaxed setting, as well as delicious coffee and baked goods made fresh daily. The gift store has been carefully curated with an array of local, handmade and gourmet food items to suit all tastes. The Milbrey is a family owned and run business, with years of global experience, aiming to reflect the beauty of their beloved local town of Oberon. The Milbrey has made an exquisite addition to the town of Oberon and is supporting other local small businesses by stocking their products or produce. I was pleased to present Ashleigh Hotham with the People's Choice award for Hospitality at the 2024 Oberon Business Awards. Congratulations to The Milbrey for this well-deserved accolade.

MARY DAVID

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Mary David has made to the people of Oberon. Mary David is known as the face of real estate in the Oberon region having been selling houses and livestock since the 1970's. Mary is a savvy businesswoman who has started her own real estate business as well as working for Raine and Horne, Ray White, Ray White/Emms Mooney, and now Elders. There is more to selling a house than just making a commission. Mary has showcased a home with a lifestyle and a place to grow old. She has welcomed countless new families to town which has improved Oberon's community, economy and population. She knows Oberon is a great place to live, that's why she is so good at selling homes here. I was pleased to present Mary David with the OBTA Outstanding Contribution to Business award at the 2024 Oberon Business Awards. Congratulations to Mary for this well-deserved accolade.

ZANE WILKINSON

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Zane Wilkinson has made to the people of Oberon. Zane is everyone's favourite tradie in the town of Oberon. Having established Red Dog Plumbing Services less than a year ago, Zane's new business venture has grown in leaps and bounds as word spread through town about his quality tradesmanship and excellent customer service. Zane is committed to providing the Oberon & Surrounding areas with a professional plumbing service that takes pride in getting the job done right the first time, no matter how big, small or sometimes... how gross it can be. With 10 years experience and a 'can do' attitude it's no wonder Red Dog Plumbing Services is leading the pack in the plumbing game! I was pleased to present Zane Wilkinson with the People's Choice award for Favourite Tradie at the 2024 Oberon Business Awards. Congratulations to Zane for this well-deserved accolade.

CANREVIVE'S SOUTHERN SYDNEY CENTRE (HURSTVILLE)

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and commend CanRevive for its unwavering commitment to supporting Individuals affected by cancer within the Chinese-Australian community. For over two decades, CanRevive has served as a beacon of hope and compassion, providing invaluable services that range from counselling and patient support to educational programs and community outreach. The tireless efforts of CanRevive's volunteers and staff have made a profound difference in the lives of many in my electorate, providing emotional and cultural appropriate support during some of life's most challenging moments. Their work embodies the best of our community, bridging gaps in language and understanding. Over the past year, CanRevive have delivered 16,000 service incidents and supported around 350 new cancer patients and their families. I extend my deepest gratitude to CanRevive for their dedication and service to our community and I have no doubt that the contributions of CanRevive will be felt for generations to come.

LISMORE SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL WINS RESILIENT AUSTRALIA AWARD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Congratulations to the entire Lismore South Public School community on winning the NSW schools category of the 2024 Resilient Australia Awards with their entry, Wellbeing win for Lismore South students! Lismore South Public School was significantly impacted by the 2022 floods, losing their school building in the floods and three quarters of their families also losing their homes. They realised the essential need to support their children and their families and offered the Stormbirds small group program to every student in the school with far-reaching results. Stormbirds is an evidence-informed small group education program explicitly designed to aid the recovery of children and young people in the aftermath of natural disasters. Typically offered 3-12 months following such events, the program empowers children and young people to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand and effectively respond to these experiences. The program offers a safe learning environment, enabling children and young people to acknowledge their experiences. Stormbirds was central to the school's recovery. The Stormbirds groups created connection and enabled a continuing bond between staff, students, and families as they navigated the uncertain future together after such a traumatic weather event.

UKI PUBLIC SCHOOL EMBRACES AUSLAN AND ART

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Congratulations to staff and students at Uki Public School for implementing Auslan lessons in its youngest classes at the beginning of this school term. This move was prompted by the enrolment of twins Nikitya and Eliya Lakaez in kindergarten this year. The twins are hearing children in a family where their mother Kirsty Cumming is deaf and their father Jex Lakaez is deaf and blind. Principal Rachel Watkins told The Tweed Coast Times newspaper that learning any other language increases people's awareness of the needs of others, and Auslan is a language and a culture for a whole community of people. "It increases students' empathy and perspective and develops their availability to be inclusive," she said. Deaf teacher Marie Ware's lessons have been interpreted by local translator and deaf community and culture advocate Michelle Maguire. In other news, Uki Public School held its Art and Pottery Show on Thursday 12 September, this year partnering with local community pre-schools. Principal Rachel says Uki has a proud history of excellence in visual arts.

WYRALLAH PUBLIC SCHOOL HONOURS FRED HOSKINS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—It was my absolute privilege recently to officially open the Fred Hoskins Library at Wyrallah Public School, recognising former student and 'the mayor of Wyrallah' Fred Hoskins, a sprightly 90-year-old local legend. I was joined by Fred and his wife Olwyn, Wyrallah Public School Principal Lisa Fahy, P&C President and Founder/Director of Indigo Rose Disability Services Lismore & Tweed Nathan Rose, staff, students, former students, parents and caregivers. Lisa Fahy describes Fred as a humble, hard-working, humorous and heart-warming man who still has the energy to support anybody and everyone who might need a hand in his community. The Fred Hoskins Library is testament to Fred's legacy and enduring impact of decades

of unwavering dedication and diverse contributions to the Wyrallah Public School community. A plaque unveiling ceremony and speeches were followed by a morning tea. Coincidentally, Wyrallah Public School this September celebrates 157 years of continual operation, making it the oldest NSW State Government school in the Lismore area. Last year, to celebrate NSW Education's 175th anniversary year, Lisa arranged for Fred Hoskins to be interviewed by the Department of Education's media unit. Fred's story made front page news on the state website.

LEILANI JEFFREY-LAM

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 Leilani JEFFREY-LAM, a Year 11 student at Moorefield Girls High School. At this tender age, Leilani has flourished in the Performing Arts industry, studying both Music and Drama. She has a passion for singing and musical theatre and is an inaugural member of the school pop band who perform at school events. This year, Leilani auditioned for the 2024 Sydney NorthWest Music Festival and was successful, being chosen for a solo musical item. This showcase event had the best of the best performers showcasing their talent be it via bands, choirs, or individual musical items. Leilani performed the song, Promise by Laufey and proudly represented her school. The principal and staff who went to watch Leilani perform were impressed by her professionalism and sophistication. We are all excited to see our local student Leilani thrive in this space and will support her with many more opportunities in the performing arts. I would like to congratulate Leilani and wish this budding artist all the best in her future endeavours.

MILTON QUIGLEY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Milton Quigley to Warren Shire Council and Local Government. For the past twenty-two years, Milton has been a committed and dedicated Councillor, giving his time, energy, and expertise to better the Warren Shire. His service has included an impressive six years as Mayor and two years as Deputy Mayor. Milton decided not to contest the 2024 local Government elections, making the informed decision to step away from his role as Councillor. This decision marks the end of an era for Warren Shire, but also the beginning of a well-deserved retirement. He has been a passionate and strong advocate for not only the Warren Shire, but rural and regional NSW, ensuring that the needs of the community are heard and addressed at all levels of government. Milton has played a pivotal role in driving significant positive changes in the Warren Shire during his time, including increased infrastructure for the community. Congratulations Milton on all that you have achieved during your time as a Councillor, I commend you for your incredible service to the Shire and local government.

DAWN COLLINS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the remarkable contribution of Dawn Collins to the Narromine Shire Council and Local Government as a whole. For the past twenty-two years, Dawn has been a dedicated and committed Councillor, serving the Narromine community with passion and resilience. Her leadership has been demonstrated through her roles as both Mayor and Deputy Mayor, where she has guided the Shire through many important milestones and challenges. Throughout her time on Council, Dawn has been a passionate advocate for the Narromine Shire. Her involvement in committees like the Tomingley Advancement Association and the Traffic Committee have been vital, and her advocacy has always been driven by her love for the community. One of her many lasting contributions is her strong advocacy for the installation of the Glen McGrath statue, which now proudly stands in Tom Perry Park. As she steps away from an outstanding career in public service, I would like to congratulate and thank Dawn for her years of hard work, dedication, and the countless hours she has devoted to making the community a better place. I would like to wish Dawn the absolute best for the next chapter of her life.

TRACSERV

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Richard Kirby of Tracserv on thirty-five years in business! Since opening their doors in 1989 Tracserv have built a strong reputation for selling only the best heavy-duty vehicles and earth moving machinery, providing comprehensive repairs, and servicing, twenty-four hours a day seven days a week emergency breakdown service and comprehensive after sales support. The business was started by Richard with his late wife Sharon and a mate from the back of a Ute. Two blokes, each with two dollars and two toolboxes, wanting to fix vehicles and help people, never dreaming of the heights Tracserv would reach. Richard's slogan since commencing the business has always been "people over profit" and this is evident by the long-term tenure of their people, with some of the staff having been with the business for at least twenty years. The family aspect of the business is extremely strong and important with Richard's children Daniel and Leandra making up the executive leadership team with their Dad. In September 2022 Richard appointed his daughter Leandra as Dealer Principal. Congratulations to the team on this significant milestone. Your passion for your staff, customers and business is abundant.

BANKSTOWN SPORTS STARS FOOTBALL CLUB PLAY IN PURPLE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR PANCREATIC CANCER

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 the Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club girls' teams for their incredible efforts in dedicating a special Sunday to raising funds for the Australian Pancreatic Cancer Foundation. By playing in purple, they successfully raised over \$1,600 to support the fight against pancreatic cancer. This remarkable show of solidarity and compassion not only helps those affected by this illness but also unites our community for a meaningful cause. The girls embraced the event with enthusiasm, decorating the day with purple balloons, accessories, donuts, and face paint, to promote awareness and raise funds for pancreatic cancer research. The clubhouse staff showed great dedication, setting up the field early in the morning despite the challenging weather conditions from two days of heavy rain. This inspiring initiative highlights the positive impact our future sports stars are making within the community. I applaud the players, officials, and staff of Bankstown Sports Stars Football Club for their commitment to such an important cause. I hope to see this event continue to grow in the future, raising even more awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer.

RISING TENNIS STAR ABIGAIL CHAN

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Abigail Chan, a talented Year 6 tennis star, for winning her first Under 12 title at the 125 Junior Metro Sydney Tournament and the JT Junior 125 Blacktown Tournament in both singles and doubles. Following these incredible achievements, Abigail has been selected to represent NSW at the Bruce Cup National Tennis Championships in Darwin. Abigail's passion for tennis began at the age of six, when her grandfather first introduced her to the sport. She has since been training at the Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association, dedicating herself to the sport with six days of practice each week. Her hard work and commitment are truly commendable, and her success is well deserved. It is inspiring to see the devoted support from her family, coaches, and the Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association, all of whom have played a pivotal role in her journey towards becoming an elite athlete. Congratulations once again to Abigail, and I wish her all the best at the Bruce Cup Championships. I look forward to the day we see her competing as a professional athlete, proudly representing her community and country.

CELEBRATING TERENCE TRAN'S ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I am delighted to recognise the exceptional and extraordinary achievements of Terrence Tran, whose inspiring work has brightened the walls of Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. During a challenging two-month period in 2023, Terrence, a student at Bankstown Hospital School, not only kept up with his Year Nine studies but also used his time to create a stunning series of sketches titled 'My Hospital View.' Terrence's artwork, which captures the paediatric ward from his unique perspective, was recently unveiled in conjunction with NSW Public Education Week, under the theme 'Proud to Belong.' This theme aligns with the spirit of Terrence's work, which perfectly captures his ability to create a sense of belonging and connection through his art, even in a hospital setting. Terrence's contributions, including his enjoyment of sketching, reading, and engaging in robotics with fellow patients, highlight his resilience and creativity. His artwork adds a personal touch to the hospital environment and underscores the value of creative expression in every learning space. Congratulations, Terrence, on your remarkable contributions. Your artistic talent and positive outlook are a true inspiration to us all, and your efforts are truly commendable.

CODY COOMBE

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)—Cody Coombe from Blue Have represented Australia in the Spartan Kids World Championships in China. The championships were held in Chongli, China on August 17th for the 12-14 years age group completing the five kilometres of running and 26 obstacles. Cody has been training for seven years at the Obstacle Course Racing School at Tuggerah under the guidance of head coach Mick Gleeson. An amazing outcome from Cody who received second place in the Championships competing in the largest kids obstacle Course Racing event in the world. Cody is a young talented athlete with a great record and currently achieved this year first for his age group in the Hill to Harbour, first for his age group in the Central Coast Spartan Trail and fourth overall including adults, first overall in the True Grit 5km and 10th at Raw Challenge Doyalson in the adults Elite wave. Cody is also the 2024 age champion at his school for cross country, athletics, and swimming. I congratulate Cody for his incredible achievement in the Spartan Kids World Championships and wish him all the best in upcoming events.

HELEN CHISHOLM

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)—Helen Chisholm is marked a finalist in the Westfield Local Heroes at Westfield Tuggerah. Ms Chisholm is a social worker at St Philips Christian College Young Parents College at Wyong who is dedicated to helping young parents break generational cycles and improve their futures. She addresses issues on domestic violence, mental health, and parenting struggles. Ms Chisholm classes on parenting, sexual health, cooking, and nutrition aim to empower young parents to thrive. If Helen is successful in the community vote, the grant will be used to pay for mental health and wellbeing support for young parents, an invaluable resource for our community. Now in its 7th year, the Westfield Local Heroes program will have contributed \$8.6M across Australia and New Zealand to more than 860 successful Local Hero organisations since it began. Congratulations to Ms Chisholm for being recognised as a finalist in the Westfield Local Heroes.

COAST SHELTER WYONG

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)—Erin Jacob is marked a finalist in the Westfield Local Heroes at Westfield Tuggerah. Ms Jacob Community Education and Wellbeing Manager of Coast Shelter Wyong is dedicated to supporting disengaged young people, by co-ordinating in-school programs across four schools identified by local police as needing additional support. She also delivers important consent and respectful relationships education through youth education programs, like Love Bites. Participants learn about power and control, shame, choice, empathy, and emotional regulation. If Ms Jacob is successful, the grant will be used to take her youth support program into more schools, allowing twice as many young people to receive support. Ms Jacob has also been nominated as a regional finalist in the NSW Business Awards in the category of Outstanding Employee. Now in its 7th year, the Westfield Local Heroes program will have contributed \$8.6M across Australia and New Zealand to more than 860 successful Local Hero organisations since it began. Congratulations to Ms Jacob for being recognised as a finalist in the Westfield Local Heroes.

BEST OF LUCK, GOOD GRAVY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of Albury-Wodonga's barbershop quartet, Good Gravy, for their outstanding performance at the Barbershop Harmony Australia 2024 Quartet Finals. The quartet, comprised of Thurgoona's James Strachan, Walla Walla's Joel Bartholomaeus, alongside Cameron Walls and Jeremy Kerr, delivered a captivating, four-part a capella performance that wowed the audience at The Star Theatre on the Gold Coast. Their remarkable talents shone through in the semi-finals, where they placed 17th out of 31 quartets from across the country, securing 1st place in the novice category – an incredible achievement! Good Gravy continues to be a part of our local arts scene, regularly performing in local theatre productions and delighting the community each year at the Albury Carols By Candlelight. Congratulations, James, Joel, Cameron, and Jeremy! I look forward to following your continued success in the years to come.

GYMEA COMMUNITY AID AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 16 August 2024, I had the privilege to attend the graduation ceremony for various participants of the Driving Licensing Access Program run by the GyMEA Community Aid and Information Service. I commend the invaluable contributions of the GyMEA Community Aid and Information Service, a non-profit organisation that assists refugees and individuals from migrant communities by teaching important life skills. The Driving Licensing Access Program helps migrants develop the skills necessary to obtain a Driver's Licence, which has assisted many migrants in the Cabramatta community and improved their social mobility since many jobs require a driver's licence. This organisation also provides a multitude of settlement and multicultural services, including youth programs and education services to support migrants. I acknowledge its positive impact on the Cabramatta community and across NSW as many migrants that settle here come from non-English speaking backgrounds. I thank Joanne Cracknell and Mom Bishwakarma for their kind invitation for me to attend this graduation ceremony. I look towards attending future graduation ceremonies and wish for the continued success of the Driving Licensing Access Program and other services provided by the GyMEA Community Aid and Information service.

VISITING FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL WITH RYAN PARK

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 29 May 2024, I had the privilege of visiting the South Western Sydney Hand Centre, a vital facility within my local Fairfield Hospital. I also joined a press conference at Fairfield Hospital alongside the Hon Ryan Park MP, Minister for Health and other local State MPs, where we spoke about

the crucial healthcare matters. The Sydney Hand Centre at Fairfield Hospital, a specialized unit renowned for its excellence in hand surgery and rehabilitation. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by expert clinicians, the centre plays a pivotal role in restoring hand function and improving the quality of life for patients across the region. This exemplifies the government's commitment to enhancing healthcare infrastructure and addressing the pressing needs of our community. Minister Ryan Park revealed the Bureau of Health Information's [BHI] state-wide quarterly data, where heightened pressures on NSW hospitals have surfaced. He explained the details of the data, answered a number of difficult questions, and shed light on the structural reforms underway by the NSW Minns Labor Government. I thank the Minister for visiting our local Fairfield Hospital and look forward to his next visit.

VISIT AT THE LAO COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 2nd of August 2024, I was grateful to attend the weekly meeting of the Lao Community Advancement Co-op NSW Ltd. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions that this organisation has made particularly for the Laos community within the Cabramatta Electorate. I would like to personally thank Mr Bountham Vongsaya, President of the Lao Community Advancement Co-op NSW for inviting me to visit his organisation and I will continue to collaborate with the Laos community to deliver positive outcomes for its members. I also had the opportunity to announce that the organisation was successful in the recent Community Building partnership application. The grant will go towards repairing the stormwater-damaged ceiling and installing an air conditioning system for the community hall. I am delighted that this organisation will continue to support its community members and promote positive outcomes where everyone regardless of their cultural heritage can feel at home in Cabramatta. I look towards attending more events in the future and engaging with various leaders and members of the Laos community to promote inclusion and diversity within the Cabramatta Electorate.

MARK JENSEN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Mark Jensen, who saved a man's life in Forster. Mark noticed a man unresponsive in the gutter, surrounded by his workmates. Thanks to his recently renewed First Aid Certificate, acquired through his SES training, Mark jumped into action. With no pulse or signs of breathing, Mark performed CPR for over four minutes until paramedics arrived. Using a defibrillator, the paramedics worked on the man for another 16 minutes before he was rushed to Manning Base Hospital, where he was in a critical but stable condition. The man survived; he had been clinically dead for at least 90 seconds before CPR started. Mark's actions show the importance of first aid knowledge, and he is now encouraging others in the community to learn these essential skills. He's also inspired the man's workmates to undertake first aid training themselves. I thank Mark for his heroic act. His quick thinking in a critical moment saved a life, proving that, being in the right place at the right time can make all the difference.

MANNING SUPPORT SERVICES

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Manning Support Services [MSS] on their achievements at the 2024 MidCoast Business Awards. Being recognised with four awards is a clear reflection of the hard work of everyone involved. MSS is an important part of our community; they provide essential aged care and family services to the MidCoast and Port Macquarie-Hastings regions. Winning Outstanding Community Organisation and Best Personal Services Business proves the important role they play. The CEO of MSS, Joshua Rogers, was also awarded with Outstanding Business Leader. The Hall of Fame induction further highlights the long-standing service MSS has provided. They have set a strong example of care in our region. Congratulations on your well-deserved recognition thank you for your contributions and the work you do for the community.

FORSTER BAKEHOUSE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Forster Bakehouse for their recent success in the Great Aussie Pie Competition, an Australia-wide event. Forster Bakehouse took top honours with the best vegetarian and slow-cooked barbecue pies, competing against over 115 entries across five titles and 13 gourmet categories. The Great Aussie Pie Competition, now in its 35th year, celebrates the quality and passion behind Australia's pies. Owner Daryl Lisle began his baking journey in his father's bakery in the early 1980s as a seven-year-old standing on a milk crate, folding pastry blocks. Today, that early passion continues to thrive as Daryl and his team craft award-winning pies. I congratulate the Lisle family on their success and thank them for putting Forster on the map for great pies. I look forward to tasting their new pie flavours!

FAREWELL TO ANDREW FISHER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Andrew Fisher who recently celebrated his last day after 40 years of distinguished service at The Cowra Guardian. Andrew's

retirement from the Cowra Guardian marks the end of an era for the local newspaper and its community. After 40 years of dedicated service his commitment to journalism has not only kept the community connected but has also fostered a sense of pride in local achievements. Throughout his tenure, Andrew has covered a wide range of topics, from local politics to cultural events, always with an emphasis on fairness and accuracy. His ability to engage with readers, combined with a deep understanding of the region's history and dynamics, has made his contributions invaluable. As Andrew steps away from his role, he leaves behind a legacy of integrity and community service. The Cowra Guardian, under his stewardship, has not only informed but also united the community. I had the pleasure of catching up with Andrew on his final day to reverse the role and ask him some questions for a change... He is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Trish exploring the world.

2024 CANOLA TRAIL HAS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Established in 2016, the Canola Trail has been a massive success, not just as a tourist attraction, but as a testament to the long days and many hours invested by our farmers. With Springtime providing the perfect opportunity to showcase several fields of gold through the towns and villages of Junee, Temora, and Coolamon. Whether you're a fan of self-drive adventures, local attractions like the Temora Aviation Museum, Coolamon Cheese, or the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory, or simply enjoy a good meal at a historic country pub, the Canola Trail has something to offer for everyone. Some may wish to see the fantastic patchwork colour from the sky. They can view this magnificent masterpiece from a hot air balloon. The Canola Trail provides picturesque memories for visitors to capture on their camera or phone supports the local economy, and promotes regional NSW. There is, of course, 'canola etiquette', a set of guidelines to ensure those who visit the fields stay on the right side of the farm fence to prevent damage to the crop or cause any soil contamination. It's a responsibility we all share.

FIONA SOUDEN REPRESENTS AUSTRALIA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—West Wyalong's Fiona Souden has made her mark on the world stage. She recently competed at the first-ever Australian-held World Triathlon Multisport event, in Townsville, representing our country with pride. The World Triathlon Multisport event was a grand affair, with over 3000 competitors from nearly 40 countries. The event, which was initially cancelled twice in 2021 and again in 2022, was a long-awaited spectacle. Fiona's dedication to her training is truly inspiring. She has been putting in the hard yards, swimming in the West Wyalong Pool, cycling for many hours along Clear Ridge Road, and even managing her recently sold business, Souden's Furniture One. Competing over 11 days, Fiona was in one of the most significant competitor groups, up against some of the best, a three-kilometre swim followed by a 114km cycle stint. Fiona finished in 4th position with a finishing time of four hours and 19 minutes in the Aquabike event, 55-59 Female Category. Congratulations Fiona, your hard work and determination is a testament to your amazing result, we are all so proud of your achievement.

ARTARMON PUBLIC SCHOOL'S CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS CONCERT

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—In another showcase of outstanding local talent in my Willoughby community, Artarmon Public School held their Celebration of the Arts Concert on Wednesday night, 11 September. Held at the Chatswood Concourse, I was honoured to be a guest at this wonderful Concert with its superb musical pieces delighting the audience. The concert featured choreographed senior and junior dances, a year two choir and a Kameraygal choir accompanied by a pianist, as well as guitar and string. In the second part of the Concert, the audience was treated to a full concert band performance and a Finale Song. The concert concluded with an address by the School Principal, Mr Jono Coombes. I would like to thank Mr Coombes, together with the staff, students and parents of Artarmon Public School for staging such a terrific concert. The quality of the musical performance was a real credit to the talent and creativity of the students and staff at Artarmon Public School.

TRIBUTE TO STEVEN BOWERS – FORMER HEADMASTER OF SHORE PREPARATORY PRINCIPAL

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I honour the life of Mr Steven Bowers who served as the Headmaster of Shore Preparatory School in Northbridge from 1989-2009. Graduating with a Bachelor of Education, a Diploma of Teaching, and a Master of Education in Administration, Steven dedicated his life to both the education of our children and the discipline of pedagogy. Leading the junior campus of one of Sydney's oldest and most prestigious private schools for two decades, Steven impacted the lives of thousands of young students with the first-class education Shore Prep is renowned for. Following his time at Shore Prep, Steven went on to serve as the Principal of Burgmann Anglican School in the ACT. In addition to leading these two schools, Steven became a founding member of the National Board of the Positive Education Schools Association [PESA] and continued to serve as a director. The purpose of the PESA is to integrate the practice of positive psychology into the education system to

enable students and the wider community to flourish. I am very grateful for the contribution Steven Bowers made to education in both my local community and beyond.

THOMAS BIRTWHISTLE ROWING PARALYMPIAN (JOEYS ROWING)

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Thomas Birtwhistle is one of Australia's rowing champions who represented Australia at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. Born in 1992, Birtwhistle grew up in my community and attended St Joseph's College Hunters Hill, 'Joeys', where he excelled at rowing. While cycling to rowing training one afternoon in 2010, Tom was struck by a car which left him with long term injuries to his left hip, leg and pelvis. Tom returned to rowing in 2013, but soon quit to focus on his university studies and career. During the Covid lockdown of 2020, however, he decided to revive his rowing career and gave para-rowing a solid go. Receiving coaching from the UTS Haberfield rowing club, he qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics where he came fourth in the final as part of a mixed team of four rowers. Competing again at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, he finished fifth in the PR3 Mixed Coxed Four. Tom's rowing journey is testament to his strong personal character and resolve to overcome adversity and succeed. His representation of Australia in Paralympic rowing has done our country and his community very proud.

WINSTON HILLS LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB, 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—On 21 September 2024 the Winston Hills Little Athletics Club launched the club's fiftieth athletics season at the club's home field situated in Gooden Drive, Baulkham Hills. The launch marks a significant milestone in the history of not only the club but our local community. Many of the surrounding suburbs were developed in the seventies resulting in the formation of many sporting and community organisations. The Winston Hills Little Athletics Club provides the wonderful opportunity for parents and children to spend Saturday morning together. The Club has grown over the years and is now one of the most important community clubs within my electorate. The club continues to hold six state records with the oldest dating back to 2 March 1986 when Danya Kerr broke the Under 8 Girls Long Jump record and the most recent being recorded by Nate Applyard on 22 March 2024 for the Under 11 Boys 1100 walk. I thank the Club President Steven Pospischilli, Vice President David Macheski, Secretary Nicole Martin, Treasurer Sophie Bryant, and Registrar Melinda Hodinett. Thank you to all parents and committee members who have contributed to the success of the club.

JAE NISBET & NASH PAYNE - HAY

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise two outstanding boys, local heroes from Hay, who were honoured recently. Jae Nisbet, aged 8 and cousin Nash Payne, aged 11 were recognised for their bravery and actions taken on New Year's Day when they prevented a teenage boy from drowning. The incident occurred at the John Houston Memorial swimming pool when the victim suffered what is believed to be a 'shallow water blackout'. This usually occurs while holding your breath underwater for too long. Jae and Nash found the body of the teenager at the bottom in the deep end of the local pool and sprang into action, and in doing so, showed remarkable calm and maturity beyond their years. They alerted the lifeguard on duty and with the victim's mother, pulled the boy from the pool and performed CPR. Fortunately, the boy made a full recovery. Jae and Nash are to be commended for their quick thinking. Their actions underline the importance of the NSW Public School free swimming and water safety programs.

PAUL SMITH - LEETON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise Leeton Councillor Paul Smith. Paul is retiring from Council after being first elected in 2016. Coming from a country town himself, he is a strong advocate for the smaller communities within the Leeton Shire. He brought to council great listening skills, communication and leadership. Paul is a hard-working volunteer and is an Accredited Rescue Operator and President of the Leeton Volunteer Rescue Association Squad. The VRA Rescue Squad form a crucial part of the emergency services in the local area and are the real-life heroes of this volunteer organisation. Paul was awarded a 10-year Long Service medal in 2020. Paul is the long-term president for the Leeton Bidgee Classic Fishing Competition and MIA OzFish committees. While the Bidgee Classic is known as a popular fishing competition, one of its other main roles was helping restock the Murrumbidgee River with fingerlings. Paul is to be congratulated on his commitment to his community and the environment, and his work as a councillor.

REVESBY SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I wish Revesby South Public School a very happy 70th anniversary and thank staff, and the P&C for keeping this school thriving. Founded in 1954, Revesby South was built upon bush rock and clay during a time when our nation was recovering from the Second World War. Since its inception in April 1954, with just 74 students, this school has grown into a vibrant educational hub, fostering the growth and development of countless young minds. The journey from a humble infants school to a flourishing

primary institution speaks to the dedication of the educators who have shaped its legacy, as well as the unwavering support of the community. Over the decades, Revesby South has adapted and evolved, embracing co-education in 1961 and fostering an inclusive environment for all students. I commend the early efforts of the Parents and Citizens Association, whose commitment and hard work made the construction of the school hall possible in 1959. Congratulations to the staff, students, and families of Revesby South Public School on this significant anniversary and good luck with your upcoming fete. May the next 70 years be filled with continued success, growth, and inspiration.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—It was a thrilling day of netball at Sutherland Shire Netball Association's grand final day at the Bellingara Netball Courts on 7 September. The Sutherland Shire Netball Association is a powerhouse grassroots sporting organisation that facilitates a love of netball for around 7,000 local juniors. With more than 50 matches played amongst the finalists from the 25 clubs across the Sutherland Shire, grand final day was the culmination of another successful netball season in our local community. I was delighted to present trophies to the finalists in the 14 Division one competition from the victorious Miranda Magpies team and the runners up from Connells Point, along with the umpires who are the unsung heroes of the day and made the competition possible for our young girls. None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of the Association's executive committee. I recognise Nerida Noble, Anne Heptinstall, Maureen Finch, Jenny Rees, Tammy Moussa, Catherine Reynolds, Ashleigh Hillier, Abbey McCullough, Kim Scott and Kerry Phillips. I commend Sutherland Shire Netball Association on another successful season and extend my best wishes for the future.

THE YOUTH PARTNERSHIP VET EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incredible students from schools in the Miranda electorate on their success at this year's Youth Partnership Vocational Education Training [VET] Excellence Awards held in the Parliament of New South Wales. The Youth Partnership was formed to help young people make the successful transition from school to work or further education by coordinating work placements for students studying VET courses as part of their Higher School Certificate. Students nominated for the Youth Partnership VET Excellence Awards are selected for their commitment to their VET coursework, achievements, and aspirations within their chosen industry. I commend this year's award recipients. In the Hospitality category, I recognise Lucas Rego, Rachel Elton, Marcus Kandylas, Kezia Anak Agung and Leyla Cakirsoy. In the Business Services category, I acknowledge Ariton Shopov. In the Construction category, I recognise Stevyn Alexiou and Taj Bennett. In the Tourism and Information and Digital Technology category, I acknowledge Nathan Townsend. Finally, in the Electrotechnology & Automotive Mechanical category, I recognise Ryan Ward. I commend the wonderful students whose achievements were celebrated by the Youth Partnership VET Excellence Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

MIRANDA MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Miranda Musical Theatre Company for the incredible production of "The Full Monty" which is currently showing at the Pavilion Performing Arts Centre in Sutherland until 29 September 2024. Formerly called the Miranda Musical Society, the Miranda Musical Theatre Company ("the Company") has been entertaining our community since 1967. Anyone familiar with their productions can attest to the quality of the performances, an impressive feat given the not-for-profit nature of the Company. Based on the cult hit film of the same name, The Full Monty is a heart-warming musical production filled with honest affection, engaging melodies and just a little bit of raucous fun. I acknowledge performers and ensemble members Geoff Stone, Conor Healy-Green, Ellis Pinkerton, Tom Tobin, Stephen Halstead, Ralphie Walter, William Downie, Morven Taylor, Shani Patel, Rebecca Carter, Leanne Trumper, Anne-Marie Fanning, Luke Bevan, Alexi Collins, Jeff Mabey, Murray Baker, Cheryl Radburn and Zoe George. I also recognise the production team consisting of Company President Tim Dennis, Amelie Downie, Lauren Dennis, Matthew Herne and Pamela Diaz. I commend the Miranda Musical Theatre Company on the success of The Full Monty and wish them every success for the future.

TRUDY GREEN

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the artistic success of Trudy Green from Goulburn High School. Trudy's selection as a member of the Southern Tablelands Dance Ensemble to perform at the NSW State Dance Festival is a prestigious honour that reflects her exceptional talent and dedication to dance. The Festival, held at the Seymour Centre in Sydney, is a showcase of the finest dance works from public schools across the state, and Trudy's inclusion is a testament to her skill and hard work. Her participation in both the Southern Tablelands Dance and Monaro Dance Festivals has clearly prepared her for this opportunity, highlighting her commitment to her craft and her ability to perform at a high level. Trudy's achievement brings

great pride to Goulburn High School and the wider community, and I look forward to seeing her continue to excel in her artistic pursuits.

YASS HIGH SCHOOL WATER POLO

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the talent and skill represented by Yass High School's Felicity Shannon, Addie Hinds, Lucy McClelland, Lara McClelland and Jake Deery in Water Polo. The selection of Felicity Shannon, Addie Hinds, Lucy McClelland, and Lara McClelland for the South Coast Water Polo team is a remarkable achievement that speaks volumes about their dedication and skill in the sport. Competing at this level requires both physical prowess and a deep understanding of teamwork and strategy, qualities that these young athletes have clearly demonstrated. Their accomplishment is a source of pride for Yass High School and serves as an inspiration to their fellow students. Additionally, I acknowledge Jake Deery's efforts in trialling for the boys' team, showcasing great determination and competitive spirit. This success is a reflection of the strong sports culture at Yass High School, encouraging students to strive for excellence and support each other in their pursuits. I celebrate these student's outstanding achievements and look forward to seeing their continued success.

CHLOE CROKER

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the efforts and achievements of Chloe Croker, who has been recently elected as Goulburn Mulwaree Council's Youth Mayor. Chloe represents innovation and leadership as she begins her term as the Youth Mayor where, she will lead the Youth Council in organising a variety of events, including the "Goulburn Youth Council Battle of the Bands" at the Lilac Festival, showcasing local talent and engaging the community in a celebration of music and culture. Chloe has already implemented and begun organising community events such as the community bike ride, and tree planting. She has also campaigned for the idea of a "sports and youth connect day" that will be held in February 2025 to encourage children to be active and try new things. Chloe will be attending the Sydney Youth Conference in October and continue to demonstrate her talent in leadership. I recognise the dedication and skills to accomplish this position, and I hope you continue to inspire others and bring positive changes to the youth of Goulburn. I celebrate Chloe's outstanding achievements and look forward to seeing her success during her term.

LAUNCH OF THE 2024-25 ACBC SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday 20th August, I was pleased to attend the launch of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Commission for Social Justice Statement, at St Pauls Catholic College, Greystanes. Every year, the ACBC seek to make a substantive comment on a key social issue. Chaired by the Most Rev Vincent Long OFM, Bishop of Parramatta, this year's ACBC Social Justice Statement was titled Truth & Peace: A Gospel Word in a Violent World. The Statement examines rising tensions around the world, the nature of truth, the spread of misinformation and disinformation, the arms race, domestic cohesion, the need for dialogue and education for peace. It also lists practical action which can be taken to make a real difference. There was an important keynote address by Assoc Prof Joel Hodge, National Head, School of Theology, Australian Catholic University, and informed discussion by Jack de Groot, Executive Director, Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese, and Year 12 students from St Pauls Catholic College in conversation with Bishop Long. Congratulations to Bishop Vincent and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for the launch of this year's powerful, purposeful and poignant Social Justice Statement.

SMITHFIELD POST OFFICE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to give a heartfelt personal thanks to the team at the Smithfield Post Office for their continuous hard work and dedication to support our local community. Carol and Dung Yin have been operating the post office since 2008, and with the help of their committed colleagues Trinh Nguyen and Trinh King, they have provided vital services to many people. The post office has been described as a 'one-stop shop' that assists with matters ranging from parcel postage and paying bills to banking, passport processing and more. Behind the scenes, there are long hours and a lot of labour involved in making sure the public enjoys a smooth experience when visiting the store. This includes mail sorting, label-making and parcel pick-up. To complement the effort and enthusiasm they put into their work, the staff never fail to greet customers with a warm smile and a friendly face. I am personally very grateful for the integral role the Smithfield Post Office plays in sending and receiving mail for my electorate office. I extend a heart thank you to the staff for their ongoing efforts to keep our community connected.

SYDNEY MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION – ONAM CELEBRATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to the Sydney Malayalee Association on hosting a wonderful Onam celebration at Bowman Hall, Blacktown on Sunday 15th September. Onam is the traditional harvest festival welcoming the mythical King Mahabali. Originating in the Indian state of Kerala, the festival of

Malayalees is celebrated by people of all faiths. An occasion of joy, compassion and generosity, Onam embodies India's cultural unity and pluralism. The Sydney Malayalee Association is an historic community organisation that promotes social, traditional, cultural, charitable and literary activities among our vibrant Malayalee community. It recognises talented Malayalee Australians, organises Keralites of different generations and preserves Malayalee heritage and culture in our multicultural society. Malayalees form a wonderful part of our Prospect Electorate community and feature prominently in business and civic life across Western Sydney. With over 800 people in attendance on the day, celebrations included a traditional feast, the procession to welcome King Mahabali, traditional dance performances and even a rendition of a traditional Onam song by the SydMal Committee. My thanks go out to President, Santhosh Puthan, Executive Member, Jacob Thomas, and all the Committee at SydMal for your efforts to organise such a fantastic event. Onam Ashamsakal, happy Onam!

MELODY JAMES – HEATON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Melody James, a passionate, much-loved youth worker at Heaton Public and Waratah High School, and mother of two children, has for three years profoundly impacted the lives of struggling families from over 29 nationalities within her school community. Fostering a culture of care and support, she turns challenges into opportunities to improve student, family and staff mental health and well-being. Melody's strong sense of purpose helps families learn how to access essential services and she assists students who are having difficulty transitioning from primary to high school. She is a helper and educator, providing skills and opportunities, making beautiful connections with people and maintaining them. Melody facilitates resources for housing, medical support and other critical needs, such as families dealing with domestic violence and advocating in refugee trauma cases. She employs innovative approaches to therapy – including photography and breakfast clubs, capoeira, gardening, art and music therapy sessions and a girls' singing group. Melody's French heritage, her experience of the world and her ability to speak three languages, ensures effective communication across a diverse school community. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to your schools, Melody.

KEVIN JONES – BERESFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Mr. Kevin Jones, a Beresfield resident, has demonstrated remarkable generosity, commitment and dedication to the students and community of Beresfield Public School over his 15 years of volunteering there. His deep-rooted connection to the school is evident through the years his own children and grandchildren have attended, further strengthening his bond with the school. Kevin's unwavering support and selfless contributions have made him a true asset to public education. Kevin, recently retired, has led scripture and woodwork groups, sharing his skills and passion with the children. Admired and respected by all students, staff and the wider school community, he is known for his kind and caring nature, which endears him to everyone he encounters. In 2023, he was appropriately recognised during NSW Public Schools Education Week for his dedication to the students at Beresfield Public School - as a volunteer scripture teacher and woodwork group leader (where he would personally supply all of the materials himself) - offering his time and wisdom to enrich the students' educational experiences. Mr Kevin Jones, thank you for all that you have done – and please enjoy a well-earned retirement.

MISS ANGELA WATERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Angela (Ange) Waters has shown extraordinary dedication, deep care, a nurturing community spirit and commitment to Beresfield Public School, where her two sons attended. As a long-serving P&C representative, including executive roles, now as General Assistant, Ange has been a pillar of support for both students and staff, always kind, generous and on the lookout for ways she can help others. Ange actively engages with students, mentoring and guiding them to assist with general duties around the school to foster meaningful connections. She maintains the school grounds, contributing to a beautiful and welcoming environment. Ange will mentor students facing challenges by working with them in "community service" around the school - in the vegetable garden, looking after children, or small fixing-up jobs. She has built a yarnning circle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families, outdoor learning areas and a chicken coop. She envisioned community Easter eats to enjoy music and a nice family meal - raising money for our school. Without fanfare, Ange provides assistance, food and clothing for needy students and families. Thank you, Ange. Know that you are much loved and appreciated.

SPRING GARDEN COMPETITION

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of Hunters Hill on yet another successful Spring Garden Competition this year. The Competition is part of Rotary's \$20,000 contribution over two years for the restoration of the historic Hillman Orchard in Hunters Hill. It is a brilliant initiative, and I'm proud to have such a great and active Rotary Club in my Electorate.

TRACEY DIXON AND MATT WARD - MCGRATHS HUNTERS HILL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation on behalf of the Hunters Hill community within the Lane Cove Electorate to Tracey Dixon and Matt Ward of McGraths Hunters Hill for their significant sponsorship of the 2024 Hunters Hill Spring Garden Competition. Their contribution to this recent but much-loved community event is an excellent example of civics-based sponsorship.

MR KARL ROMANDI - HUNTERS HILL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr Karl Romandi of Hunters Hill for winning 1st Place with the Best Overall Garden without help in the 2024 Hunters Hill Spring Garden Competition. Mr Romandi won best streetscape in last year's competition, but with his thoughtfully planted nature strip outside, and his 'jewel box' front garden, was propelled into first place this year.

BRUNCH BY THE GREENS – GIANT STEPS FUNDRAISER

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Fabiola Gazzera and Loretta Shenouda who organised the Brunch By The Greens 2024 Fundraiser for Giant Steps. Fabiola and Loretta are Giant Steps parents and their efforts have ensured \$15,000 was raised for Giant Steps at this year's event in addition to \$11,000 which was raised in 2023. It was a privilege to attend the fundraiser and to hear from local parents about the way that Giants Steps has transformed their lives, for their children and their family. Giant Steps has been providing educational support to children with autism and their families since 1995. Their holistic approach to education ensures each child or adult is met with the support they need both in the classroom and beyond. The dedication and devotion of Fabiola and Loretta is truly inspiring, and today I recognise their efforts to raise funds for this wonderful organisation. I look forward to attending many more events organised by Fabiola and Loretta and wish them both, and their families all the very best. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Giant Steps, making a difference in our community every day.

SIR RODEN AND LADY CUTLER FOUNDATION

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge the Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation, a local organisation dedicated to helping those in need to access medical services and appointments. The foundation is named in honour of Sir Roden Cutler, the longest serving Governor of New South Wales and his wife Lady Helen Cutler, a former Lieutenant during WWII. The Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation offers patient transport services providing free, reliable, and compassionate transport to medical appointments, supporting those who would otherwise face severe mobility challenges. Their volunteers go above and beyond to ensure people retain their independence and dignity, making a genuine difference in the lives of thousands each year. I would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge Chief Executive Officer Virginia Flint, and all members of the Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation Board for their dedication to supporting those in need. I commend all volunteers, staff, sponsors and supporters of the Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation for their invaluable contribution to community service. Your efforts in supporting our community are truly commendable.

GREIG SCHUETRUMPF

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge and congratulate Greig Schuettrumpf, Director of City Assets at the City of Canada Bay Council. Greig was recently awarded the Champion of Change Award at the 2024 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government. The Champion of Change Award is a recognition of Greig's dedication to supporting women's participation at Canada Bay Council. He has worked tirelessly to foster a culture of diversity and equality in the workplace and across the broader community. Greig's service sets a high standard for council staff both locally and across the state. This award is a testament to his passion and dedication to making our community a better place to live. I extend my sincerest congratulations to Greig on this well-deserved acknowledgement. It has been a pleasure working with him on local projects, and I thank him for his service to our community. Congratulations Greig, I wish you all the very best.

PORT MACQUARIE KOALA HOSPITAL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Port Macquarie's Koala Hospital has celebrated its 50th birthday and I'm so proud that our koala hospital was the first wildlife and koala hospital in Australia. In 1973, from humble beginnings in the garage of local lady, Jean Starr, koalas were cared for and rehabilitated. Jean and her husband Max were pioneers in the care of our much loved national icon. In 1974, the National Parks and Wildlife Service was established and a modest shed was built where the Hospital stands today to accommodate a few koalas. In the 1980's, singer John Williamson visited, prompting the "Goodbye Blinky Bill." Royalties from this song were donated to build the intensive care units which remain today. The Hospital and its operations have

continued to expanded to now include a science and education centre, wildlife rehabilitation spaces, museum, the management of two plantations and several regeneration sites. Commendations to the staff and volunteers for their ongoing commitment to each koala and every program, so expertly run with care and knowledge as they work in earnest to rebuild our precious local koala population. Thank you to all volunteers past and present over the last 50 years.

CAMDEN HAVEN REDBACKS FINALS WIN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to the triumphant Camden Haven Redbacks for taking out the Women's B grade football Premiership on Sunday, 15 September at Lake Cathie. The mighty Redbacks competed against the Upper Macleay Yowies in a Grand Final match to remember, winning 1-0 in a penalty kick. The match was fiercely contested by both sides, with Redback's Maria Wilson kicking the winning goal to secure the championship. It is hard to believe that this formidable group of talented, young women were not playing 12 months prior due to their lack of numbers. New recruit and coach this season, Shelby Mackenzie praised her teammates and attributed the win to a disciplined training routine and engagement throughout the season. Already focused on 2025, the Club hopes to build on their membership in the offseason by showcasing their win to rebuild. The Redbacks aim to shine a spotlight in the community on women's football to increase interest and participation. I congratulate Coach Shelby Mackenzie and her amazing team for ending the season as champions for 2024.

INCLUDING INDIGENOUS SIGN LANGUAGES IN THE SYLLABUS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise the dedicated work of local hearing-impaired educator Kerry Kranitis and her colleagues, who demonstrate the importance of Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and Indigenous Sign Languages [ISL] in our primary schools. I acknowledge the important work being done by itinerant support teachers, who strive to make the learning environment accessible and enjoyable for all students with hearing needs. Kerry is Assistant Principal for the NSW Education Department's Mid North Coast Hearing Support Unit. She is also one of the key organisers of the Deaf Day Out - an annual one-day event where local students enjoy a day alongside adult role models. It is a sobering Bureau of Statistics data that reflects that 43% of First Nations Australians aged seven and above have some form of hearing loss. Ms Kranitis has been working tirelessly with Aboriginal Education Officers, language teachers and indigenous elders, as they strive to have Auslan and ISL included in the syllabus by 2026. I congratulate and sincerely thank Kerry for her years of service, enthusiasm and commitment to the education of children experiencing hearing loss in our classrooms.

2024 VOLUNTEER TEAM OF THE YEAR – DRESS FOR SUCCESS' REFERRAL AGENCY WORKING GROUP

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I would like to wish a heartfelt congratulations to the Referral Agency Working Group team at Dress for Success - 2024's Volunteer Team of the Year at the recent NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards. Dress for Success empowers women entering and re-entering the workforce by providing them with workplace clothing and programs, as well as the support and self-belief they need to succeed - all at no cost. Their services are designed to ensure that every woman, regardless of her background or circumstances, has the confidence and resources to build a successful career. This incredible team dedicate their time to help women facing trauma or unemployment to find stable and rewarding long term work. Working with community partners and referral agencies, they develop relationships across the community and ensure that the women who need free career support services know how to access them and feel encouraged to do so. Congratulations Ev Aguilera, Susan Tandi, Helen McFadden, Melly Sah Bandar, Kate Wilkie, Allison McKnight, Gail McGuckin, Maggie McKelvey, and Ling Wong on this amazing recognition of your hard work and commitment!

VALE CAROL CARNEY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I would like to extend my deepest condolences to the family of Carol Carney following her passing on 23 August 2024. Carol leaves behind a legacy of incredible compassion and devotion to her community. Carol was a central member of the Marrickville community, working for nearly a decade as a dedicated member of the New South Wales State Emergency Service Marrickville Unit. Carol's contributions and caring personality made every member of the Marrickville Unit feel valued and welcomed. Carol was also a constant source of support and inspiration for her husband of over 26 years, Michael Carney. Carol stood alongside her husband, encouraging, and pushing for them both to work toward supporting our community. Carol's community spirit held strong until the end of her life. Carol's legacy of service, compassion, and love for the Inner West will be remembered forever. Her contribution to our local area will be looked upon fondly and her passing has been felt deeply within the community. Vale and thank you Carol Carney.

PARALYMPIAN – SARAH CLIFTON-BLIGH

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—Congratulations to Sarah Clifton-Bligh, a resident of my Summer Hill electorate who recently competed at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. The Paralympic Games showcase the extraordinary talents of athletes with disabilities, promoting inclusivity, resilience, and determination. The Games challenge societal perceptions, inspiring millions worldwide while highlighting the importance of equal opportunities in sports. The event fosters unity, empowerment, and celebrates human potential, transcending physical limitations through athletic excellence. Despite her young age, Sarah is an experienced athlete, having already competed at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the 2023 World Para Athletics Championships in Paris. Sarah competed in the Shot Put F32, placing 10th with a throw of 4.85m and the Club Throw F32 placing 15th with a throw of 14.7m. You have done us all proud on the world stage Sarah. Congratulations and good luck for your next events!

MOOREBANK CRICKET CLUB COMMITTEE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—It is a pleasure to recognise the new executive team at the Moorebank Cricket Club. Their commitment to serving our community through sport is truly commendable, as they work to provide opportunities for participation, growth, and connection. Held on 7 August 2024, the club's Annual General Meeting elected: Justin Quigley as President & Junior Coordinator, Avinesh Charan as Vice President & Senior Coordinator, Abhi Falcao as Secretary, Tushar Gulavani as Assistant Secretary, Suren Anthony as Treasurer, Remesh Cheriyaapurath as Infrastructure & Equipment Manager, and Katrina Davies, Raja Durai Selvarajan and Partha Vijendra as General Committee Members. I am confident that the new executive will take the club from strength to strength, with a fantastic legacy being left by former President Ross Gorton. The new team is well-positioned to build on this legacy, ensuring that Moorebank Cricket Club remains a pillar of our community, fostering not just athletic talent, but also camaraderie, inclusivity, and community pride for years to come.

AASHA FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Saturday 21 September 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the AASHA Foundation Liverpool Multicultural Social Hub at the Hilda Davis Senior Citizens Centre. The name "AASHA" comes from the Hindi word for "hope", which stands for Assistance, Acceptance, Support, Help, and Advice. Operating off the mantra of "Compassion, Care, Collaboration, Culture, Trust, and Inclusion", AASHA organises forums to create awareness about mental health, elder abuse, cancer and diabetes prevention, and run digital literacy workshops to help the most vulnerable in our society. At the opening of the Liverpool Hub, I had the pleasure of participating in a lamp lighting ceremony, prayer dances, songs, yoga, and BollyFit, alongside many members from our local community. I would like to thank and congratulate the AASHA team including Percy Vij, Bijinder Dugal, Dr Praful Valanju and Dr S Sunder, who were pivotal in facilitating the opening of the Liverpool Hub. Their work helping the elderly in our community must be commended and I look forward to seeing the group flourish into the future.

BERRY CWA – A VOICE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the incredible work of the Berry Country Women's Association [CWA], a pillar of support in our community. This year, during Awareness Week from 1st to 7th September, the CWA of NSW shone a light on the pressing issue of gender-based violence. In particular, domestic and family violence, and violence against women outside intimate relationships. Berry CWA plays a vital role in supporting these and other causes, raising awareness and much-needed funds for local charities and peak bodies, like Domestic Violence NSW. Their commitment helps ensure the voice of those in rural and regional areas is heard, calling for crucial reforms such as stronger bail laws and better funding for victim support services. The Berry CWA's dedication to community service continues to be an inspiration. Their advocacy around women's safety to their tireless fundraising efforts, they have made a lasting impact on our region. I thank the Berry CWA members, volunteers, and all those who stand with them in making our community a safer and better place. Their work is invaluable, and we are deeply grateful.

LOCAL LEGENDS AT THE 2024 OZTAG STATE OF ORIGIN

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises three outstanding young athletes from Gerringong who excelled at the 2024 Oztag State of Origin in Coffs Harbour. In the Junior Girls 14s, Portia Hingle and Coco Sedden's impressive teamwork and skill were on full display during each of their four games, playing a dominant role in each game to help bring home the glory for NSW. In the Junior Boys 14s, a huge congratulations to Malakai Robin, who was named Player of the Match by his coaches for his outstanding performance to help bring victory to NSW for the Junior Boys. Malakai's talent shone through in every game, making him a standout player in the tournament. These young athletes have not only represented their state but have made our community in Gerringong immensely proud. Their success is a testament to their

hard work and dedication, as well as the support of their coaches, families, and teammates. Congratulations to Portia, Coco, and Malakai on your remarkable achievements – you are local legends, and we look forward to your continued success!

2024 ILLAWARRA BUSINESS AWARDS – SILOS ESTATE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the incredible success of local Shoalhaven business, Silos Estate, at the 2024 Illawarra Business Awards. I congratulate Silos Estate, who took home two prestigious awards – Excellence in Sustainability, and Excellence in Tourism & Hospitality. This outstanding local winery in my electorate has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to sustainability. They are leading the way with cutting-edge practices such as GPS-controlled robotics for mowing, laser pest management, and the use of recycled materials for their wine labels. Their innovative approach sets a high standard for businesses not only in the region but across the industry. My friend Raj Ray and his team have worked tirelessly over the years to develop Silos Estate into what it is today, and they should all be extremely proud of themselves. It is truly inspiring to see how Shoalhaven businesses are thriving and making waves not just in the local community, but the wider Illawarra-Shoalhaven region.

CRICKET NSW VOLUNTEER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—It was a pleasure to attend the launch of the Cricket NSW Volunteer Certification Program [VCP] where I was invited to present certificates to the first volunteers completing Level One of the pilot program. Thus far, six volunteers from Western Sydney have completed both the academic and practical components of the VCP, and Cricket NSW is proposing to offer the program to many more clubs across the State. Developed in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney Industry Innovation Program, the VCP is designed to provide education and training on key aspects of running a cricket club such as the PlayHQ platform, child safety standards and policies, Cricket Blast, inclusion and female cricket. Importantly, the VCP requires participants to be active volunteers to complete the certification. When I saw that Deb Pooley from the Parramatta Women's Grade Cricket Club was one of the first certified volunteers, I realized that this was a wonderful opportunity to support those volunteers who are so dedicated to their clubs. Thanks to Parramatta Cheetah's Cricket Club, Chirag Bansal and Raj Panchal from Harris Park Cricket Club and Deb from Parramatta Women's Grade Cricket Club for being part of the program.

PARRAMATTA'S ATHLETIC STARS

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Parramatta City Athletics is a great way for youth to get active, developing essential motor skills, improving fitness and making new friends. For over 50 years Parramatta City Athletics has promoted fitness and wellbeing as a local center for athleticism. For ages 4-19, and 20 above, PCA has something for everyone. Notable PCA alumni include Olympians Brandon Starc and Joshua Katz. Brandon competed in the 2016 Rio Olympics, Tokyo 2020 and most recently Paris 2024 in high jump. He claimed gold in the 2018 Commonwealth Games and other competitions in Germany and Belgium. Brandon is the national record holder for men's high jump. Josh Katz is a distinguished athlete, winning national judo championships throughout his sporting career and competing in the Rio 2016 Olympics at age 18. He rose to prominence through PCA, building his profile as a skilled athlete. Josh and Brandon are testament to the skills that Parramatta City Athletics has to offer. I'm so proud of the sporting tradition we have in Parramatta. Congratulations to Brandon and Josh on your achievements representing your sport and your country and a shout out to all who are involved as coaches, volunteers and supporters of PCA.

PERMACULTURE HAWKESBURY VALLEY INC.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Permaculture Hawkesbury Valley Inc. of Wilberforce, for the work they do in creating and maintaining a sustainable future for Hawkesbury. Permaculture is based in the Australian Pioneer Village and focuses on educating the community about food sources and inspiring self-reliance through community involvement and hands-on experiences. The non-profit organisation regularly hosts educational programs and events, particularly in school holiday periods. Young learners are offered opportunity to interact with friendly chickens, ducks and goats whilst learning of their value in supporting sustainable living practices. These meaningful experiences encourage curiosity and teach essential life skills, with the bonus of connecting children with nature. Permaculture also offers information and support for adults, with workshops on topics such as home canning and preservation, foraging, baking and gardening. I thank Permaculture for their efforts and dedication in encouraging ecological living practices. It is wonderful to have such a meaningful organisation working with community members of various ages and backgrounds to achieve shared goals of environmental conservation and sustainability. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HAWKESBURY RIVER SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the dedication and success of Hawkesbury City Council's River Safety Campaign. The council won the 2024 RH Dougherty Award for Excellence in Communications at the Local Government Week Awards, for its work in promoting safe swimming in local water bodies. The council has created safety signs in consultation with Royal Life Saving NSW. The signage includes clear and concise information for all visitors to the Hawkesbury River, particularly in Macquarie Park where there have been previous incidents. The use of internationally recognised safety symbols and efficient design have ensured high visibility. The creators have also included a QR code, which translates the information to the five most common non-English languages of visitors to Hawkesbury. I applaud the efforts of the team and commend them on already implementing the campaign ahead of swimming seasons, using a river safety pledge and social media campaign to raise awareness. Congratulations to Hawkesbury City Council for the Hawkesbury River Safety Campaign and I thank council for its dedication to keeping our community members and visitors safe. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

WHITEMAN PROPERTY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Whiteman Property on winning the Outstanding Real Estate Agency category at the 2024 Local Business Awards. These awards recognise the vital role that local businesses play in our communities, and Whiteman Property has been acknowledged for its remarkable achievements in the real estate industry throughout the central Coast. Led by Brian and Jennifer Whiteman, this distinguished, family-owned enterprise has been at the forefront of luxury real estate on the Central Coast for over a decade. Since its founding in November 2013, Whiteman Property has grown from strength to strength, shattering sales records and building a solid reputation. Their carefully curated team of professionals embodies the highest standards of service, blending expertise and a commitment to putting clients first. This win reflects the hard work and dedication of the Whiteman Property team and also the trust and loyalty they have built with their clients, who turn to them for their most significant investments. Thank you to the Central Coast community for your ongoing support of local businesses like Whiteman Property. Congratulations again to Brian, Jennifer, and the entire team for this outstanding achievement! Here's to many more years of success!

BOW THAI RESTAURANT - DAVISTOWN

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is my great pleasure to congratulate the Bow Thai Restaurant at Davistown on winning the Fast Food/Takeaway category at the 2024 Local Business Awards. These awards recognize the vital role local businesses play in our community, and Bow Thai has been recognised for its exceptional dedication to delivering the finest Thai cuisine on the Central Coast. Bow Thai has been a family-run business since 2009, with a passion for creating delicious, authentic dishes that truly stand out. From classic Thai favourites to unique culinary creations, their commitment to using only the freshest ingredients ensures that every bite is a memorable experience. Winning this award for the second year in a row, after also taking the title in 2023, is a testament to their unwavering dedication to quality and excellence. Being a finalist in such a highly competitive field is already a huge achievement, and winning again this year highlights the consistent hard work and passion of the Bow Thai team. I'd also like to thank the Central Coast community for your continued support of local businesses like Bow Thai. Congratulations once again to the entire Bow Thai Davistown team on this well-deserved accolade.

DOUGLAS PARK COMMUNITY HALL UPGRADE

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—It's great to see grant funding benefit the whole community, and this is definitely the case for the multiple clubs and organisations that will benefit from the update to Douglas Park Community Hall. The Douglas Park 355 Committee/Wollondilly Shire Council successfully secured a NSW Government Community Building Partnership Grant 2023 for the hall, and in early September I was pleased to be invited to share a cup of tea and witness what has been installed. An energy-efficient ducted air conditioning system will be a game changer, making this well-used space comfortable for activities, exercise promotion, social and family engagements, and playgroup. It will regulate temperature and help circulate and filter the air, which will be a godsend during the blistering summer months! It was great to catch up and spend time with those representing their various organisations, clubs and groups including the Douglas Park 355 Committee, Douglas Park Menangle Netball Club, Douglas Park Wilton Physical Culture Club, and many others. I congratulate all the Wollondilly Electorate organisations that were successful in their 2023 application and look forward to seeing how these projects make a real difference for community groups in the area.

PICTON SPORTSGROUND UPGRADES

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—The Picton Sportsground Extension Multipurpose Amenities Building is progressing so well that it is almost complete. Earlier in the year, the slabs were poured, and piers and external footings were installed. Significant progress has been made, and credit goes to everyone involved in this important project for providing excellent amenities for sporting clubs and other community groups. This is part of a massive investment into parks and sports grounds right across the local government area of Wollondilly. This facility will benefit both local and visiting teams. It includes home-and-away change rooms, a club room, a multipurpose area with space for emergency services. There are improvements to the existing canteen, storage and referees' rooms, a first aid room, an outdoor barbecue area, spectator seating, and connection to town water. Picton Rangers Football Club secured two grants for the project including the 2019 Sports Election Commitment Program and the Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant. I am pleased that this funding was made available from both the NSW and Federal Governments. We're all looking forward to the facility's completion and many wonderful sporty seasons ahead!

SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY - MACARTHUR REGIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS WOLLONDILLY NOMINEES

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Our volunteers are extremely valued in our community. Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart! The South Western Sydney / Macarthur Regional Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony was held on Tuesday 10 September, 2024. The Awards program is an initiative of The Centre for Volunteering, and is sponsored by the Department of Communities and Justice, ClubsNSW, Mint Awards and Sixt and Beyond Bank. You may be familiar with some of the nominated volunteers that were in attendance this year from the Wollondilly Electorate: Gymtastic Kids in Picton, RSL LifeCare Veteran Services, Spur Ranch Equine Program, IC Care, Muscular Dystrophy Wollondilly and Team AwesomeKids4kids for the Great Cycle Challenge. The volunteers in these groups and organisations contribute so much to our community and bring opportunities and positivity to the lives of those involved. Congratulations to the nominees and the winners. Well done to you all!

THE GLEBE SOCIETY AND ELSIE WOMEN'S REFUGE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Glebe Society and their advocacy to recognise the Elsie Women's Refuge as a historic site for women's liberation and the first women's refuge to open in Australia. The Elsie Women's Refuge has just been added to the NSW State Heritage Register after being nominated by the Glebe Society for the honour. To quote Ian Stephenson, former President of the Society and Planning Convenor, "The bold and audacious actions of a few feminist women in Glebe in 1974 inaugurated a truly nationwide refuge movement for women and children." The Glebe Society worked tirelessly to protect the refuge and to share and preserve its history. They have been leaders in recognising this historic site, organising educational panels about the site and advocating against the outsourcing of funding for the refuge. Their work follows on in that same radical tradition that the Elsie Women's Refuge was founded on - organised resident action and unwavering commitment to our community. I'd like to congratulate The Glebe Society and their management committee, including President Mr. Duncan Leys, for their success in marking this important part of the Glebe landscape.

PAULINE LOCKIE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today, I would like to thank my hard-working former colleague on the Inner West Council, Pauline Lockie. Pauline served the Inner West community as an Independent Councillor since 2017. A tireless advocate for our community even prior to election, Pauline was a founding member and spokesperson for the WestConnex Action Group, campaigning against the project and fighting for better outcomes for Inner West residents. During her time on Council, Pauline continued to advocate for sustainable planning and development, liveable cities and local democracy. She was a progressive voice in the Chamber for equality, introducing Pride Seats celebrating key LGBTIQ+ activists to the Inner West and launching the #RacismNotWelcomeHere campaign, and pushing for improved public and active transport including getting safer speeds on our local streets and completion of the Greenway. I want to congratulate Pauline for her hard work on Council. Her genuine connection to our community, thoughtful contribution to council debates and campaigning for better outcomes for our residents was exceptional.

GANESHOTSAVA

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—The annual Ganeshotsava at the Whitlam Leisure Centre brings together thousands of people from across Sydney into Liverpool to celebrate the birth of Lord Ganesha, one of the most revered deities in the Hindu pantheon. This year was particularly special as we were joined by a Premier of this great state for the first time! The Premier, as well as the Member for Leppington Nathan

Hagarty, Federal Member for Werriwa Anne Stanley, and Councillors Dr Betty Green, Sandy Reddy, and the newly elected Mira Ibrahim, were treated to a cultural extravaganza as young people showed off their exceptional skills. This reinforced the need for a dedicated hub for South Asian communities to pass on cultural knowledge and traditions. Which will soon be the case with a Hindu Cultural and Community Centre. Congratulations to Friends of India Australia for keeping these wonderful traditions vibrant for decades now!

CORE COMMUNITY SERVICES MOBILE PANTRY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—Cost of living concerns are top of mind for many people in our community. Services like CORE are vital for residents across south-west Sydney. That is why I have been working with CORE to help start their Mobile Food Pantry. I was so proud to see this project come to fruition yesterday. The Mobile Food Pantry van will allow essential groceries to be delivered directly to those doing it tough across the 2168 area. It will cater for those who rely on this support for themselves, their families, and their companion pets. The team at CORE's Miller Hub work tirelessly, with community front of mind. I would like to especially acknowledge Rowena Assaad, a proud lifelong resident of the 2168 and the brains behind the Mobile Food Pantry. This initiative has been a Liverpool-wide effort, with Warwick Farm icons Peter Warren Automotive assisting CORE in sourcing and fitting out their new van. I know that this new service will change lives in the 2168 for those who need it most.

BONNYRIGG HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL SERBIAN SHOWCASE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—The Liverpool electorate is proudly home to so many who trace their lineage back to Serbia. I have previously spoken in this place about the valuable contributions Liverpool's Serbian community have made to our area. On 12 September, the students and staff at Bonnyrigg Heights Primary School held a special showcase to highlight Serbian culture through song and dance. Bonnyrigg Heights Primary are always looking for ways to work with the broader community to promote positivity and multiculturalism. The showcase provided a unique opportunity for students to better acquaint themselves and understand Serbian culture. I commend everyone involved for their ongoing commitment to preserving culture and promoting understanding through these events. I particularly want to acknowledge the staff at Bonnyrigg Heights, led ably by Daryl McKay, for their ongoing commitment to the students.
