

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 25 September 2024

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: QUORUMS AND DIVISIONS

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended from 7.30 p.m. today:

- (1) No quorums be called.
- (2) Any divisions called for during Government business to be deferred until 10:30 a.m. on Thursday 26 September 2024.

Motion agreed to.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Bills

PUBLIC HEALTH (TOBACCO) AMENDMENT BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ryan Park, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (10:18): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring before the House the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill 2024. I have always said that we have a unique opportunity to stem the spread of these unhealthy practices. As the State Minister for Health, I am constantly looking at how we can keep our children and the broader community safe and healthy, and we will continue to look at ways to do this. From 1 July 2024 new Commonwealth laws became enforceable, meaning all vaping products, regardless of nicotine content, can only be prescribed by a medical or nurse practitioner and dispensed from a pharmacy in Australia. For all other retailers in New South Wales, the sale of all e-cigarettes or e-liquids is illegal. That also includes online sales.

Our vaping enforcement efforts, including seizures, will continue. Between 1 July to 9 July 2024, NSW Health, with other enforcement agencies, including the Therapeutic Goods Administration [TGA], conducted 60 retailer inspections. Those raids seized around 12,000 vapes, close to 2,000 nicotine pouches, over 730,000 cigarettes, and 135 kilograms of flavoured and loose-leaf tobacco worth an estimated street value of more than \$1.29 million. Our compliance and enforcement efforts, as well as our regulatory and legislative frameworks, need to appropriately meet the enormity of this challenge.

The bill proposes to amend various pieces of legislation, following the Commonwealth Government's recent legislative reforms to target illegal vaping goods. The changes in the bill will align New South Wales with the Commonwealth by including specific New South Wales offences that ban the supply and possession of vaping goods, unless authorised for therapeutic use, and will make a number of other consequential amendments. Importantly, these changes will support officers to implement the ban in New South Wales.

I take this opportunity to thank the Committee on Law and Safety for its inquiry and corresponding report on e-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales. The inquiry rightly highlighted the significant risks associated with e-cigarettes in our community and the need for the New South Wales Government to support the Commonwealth Government's vaping reforms, and to continue to work closely with Federal agencies to align enforcement and compliance efforts. I acknowledge the presence of the shadow Minister for Health in the

Chamber today. She is a strong advocate and has had a number of discussions with me and my office around this important issue of vaping and its harm, particularly on young people.

Before turning to the provisions of the bill, I will firstly speak about the widespread emergence of e-cigarette use, known as vaping, particularly amongst young people, which has occurred at an alarming pace. E-cigarettes were marketed and sold to consumers and governments around the world as a cessation aid for long-term smokers who were unable to quit smoking tobacco by using existing behavioural and therapeutic pathways. If we are all honest with ourselves as policymakers—this is certainly not a political comment—this issue got ahead of us with the belief that e-cigarettes would only be used for reducing cigarette smoking.

However, they were never intended to be used as recreational products. These products have been deliberately targeted at young people, designed to hook a whole new generation on nicotine. Dr Kerry Chant and I have had a number of discussions about e-cigarettes and we believe it is one of the most significant public health concerns our young people face. We know that our children and young people will suffer increased risks from a lifetime of nicotine dependence. The bill aims to address those concerns by aligning the New South Wales legislation with the recent Commonwealth reforms made under the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act.

At a high level, from 1 July 2024 the vaping reforms in the Therapeutic Goods Act prohibit the importation, manufacture, supply and possession of vaping goods—being vaping devices, vaping accessories and vaping liquids, regardless of whether those devices contain nicotine, unless a relevant defence or exception applies. In general, that means that vaping goods can only be manufactured, sold and possessed for therapeutic purposes. While vaping goods, irrespective of nicotine content, have been banned since 1 July this year in New South Wales and Australia-wide due to the Commonwealth reforms, the purpose of the bill is to include specific supply and possession offences under the New South Wales legislation, which are aligned with the Commonwealth reforms, to support the enforcement of those reforms in New South Wales.

In doing so, it will enable officers appointed under the New South Wales Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act and the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 to use their existing powers to enforce these new offences. Having specific offences in New South Wales will help officers enforce the vaping laws within the context of New South Wales legislation, utilising their existing enforcement powers. While the Commonwealth laws also extend to importation and manufacturing, the bill does not include importation and manufacturing offences because enforcement of such matters generally falls within the remit of the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Administration. The bill aims to ensure that enforcement can occur efficiently and effectively in New South Wales retail settings by officers under New South Wales law and, where appropriate, in consultation with other enforcement bodies.

Before turning to some other specifics of the bill, I make clear that, similarly to the Commonwealth provisions, the bill does not intend to criminalise the possession of vaping goods for personal use, particularly for young people who have been targeted with these products. That is an important point to make. The controls within the bill ensure that individuals will not be penalised for experiencing nicotine addiction. Both the Commonwealth offences and the provisions of the bill allow for the therapeutic supply of vaping goods to support smoking cessation or the management of nicotine dependence.

I turn now to schedule 1 to the bill, which contains various amendments to the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act that align with the Commonwealth supply and possession offences. Firstly, new section 20 prohibits the supply of vaping goods, which has the same meaning as the Commonwealth legislation, to include vaping devices, vaping accessories and any vaping liquids, irrespective of nicotine content. The maximum penalty for this offence is seven years imprisonment, 14,000 penalty units, or both. Where the offence is prosecuted as a strict liability offence, the maximum penalty is 560 penalty units, being \$61,600. These are consistent with the Commonwealth laws, with the penalty units adjusted for the difference in their value between New South Wales and the Commonwealth.

As with the Commonwealth laws, there are strict liability offences, which are offences where the prosecutor is not required to prove a mental element of the offence. They assist in ensuring a proportional approach to regulation is applied based on the seriousness of the offence. Importantly, these offences will not apply if a relevant exception exists, including where persons are otherwise authorised to supply the vaping goods by way of being an authorised manufacturer or wholesaler or are authorised to supply the goods under the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act. The offence will also not apply where supply is by a pharmacist, medical practitioner or nurse practitioner who is otherwise authorised to supply the vaping goods under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act, where the supply meets certain quality and safety requirements, and is for the purpose of smoking cessation, management of nicotine dependence or another indication determined under the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act.

I turn now to the inclusion in the bill of new sections 21 and 22 of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act, which going forward I will refer to as the poisons Act. These new sections contain two types of offences for the possession of vaping goods: firstly, offences for the possession of commercial quantities of vaping goods; and, secondly, possession offences that apply specifically to retailers. The offences, penalties and definition of the commercial quantity in the bill are aligned, again, with the Commonwealth laws. Under the bill, it will be an offence to possess a kind of vaping good that is at least the commercial quantity but less than 100 times the commercial quantity, with a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment or 2,800 penalty units; to possess a kind of vaping good that is at least 100 times the commercial quantity but less than 1,000 times the commercial quantity, with a penalty of four years imprisonment and/or 8,400 penalty units; and, finally, to possess a kind of vaping good that is at least 1,000 times the commercial quantity, with a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment and/or 14,000 penalty units.

As with the Commonwealth laws, there are also strict liability offences with lower penalties which will allow for graded enforcement action depending on the nature of the offence. From 1 October 2024 the Commonwealth has set the commercial quantity for vaping devices at nine; for vaping accessories the commercial quantity is 60, and for vaping liquids the commercial quantity is 400 millilitres. In line with the Commonwealth, those offences do not apply to possession by a person who uses vaping goods for their personal use, provided that the person possesses less than five times the commercial quantity of vaping goods, which from 1 October 2024 will be 45 vaping devices, 300 vaping accessories or 2,000 millilitres of vaping liquids. That amount is determined by reference to the Commonwealth's vaping goods determination. Similar to the supply offences, there will be exceptions where a person is lawfully authorised to possess vaping goods, including pharmacists, medical practitioners and nurse practitioners or those who are otherwise authorised to supply under the Commonwealth laws.

I turn now to the retailer possession offence in new section 22 of the poisons Act. This possession offence will apply solely to retailers on retail premises. A retailer is defined consistently with the Commonwealth laws to mean owners, lessees or occupiers of retail premises, a person conducting business at a retail premises, directors, officers or agents of the retail premises, or a person performing work at a retail premises, including an employee. This offence is intended to capture retailers who wish to sell illegal vaping goods and who deliberately keep stock levels of the illegal product below commercial quantity in order to avoid the more serious offences for the possession of commercial quantities of vaping goods.

In addition, the offence is intended to ensure that retailers who wish to sell illegal vaping goods cannot argue that illegal vapes on retail premises are for personal use. As a starting point, the offence does not apply where a retailer possesses a permitted quantity of vaping goods that has been lawfully supplied to the person for their personal use. The permitted quantity for vaping devices is two. For vaping accessories, it is three, and for vaping liquids, it is 60 millilitres. Those are determined by reference, again, to the Commonwealth's vaping goods determination. That carve out is necessary to ensure that retailers who do not wish to sell illegal vapes for commercial purposes but who possess vaping goods for personal use are able to lawfully do so whilst they are at work. However, such legal vaping goods must be kept to a minimum.

Turning to the offence provision, the offence will apply to a retailer who possesses a number of vaping goods that is less than the commercial quantity but is over the permitted quantity. The penalty for the offence is 12 months imprisonment and/or 1,400 penalty units. Similar to the other offences, there is also a strict liability offence, with a smaller penalty of 160 penalty units. Also similar to the other offences, the retail possession offence will not apply if a person is otherwise lawfully authorised to possess the vaping goods, such as a medical practitioner, pharmacist or nurse practitioner.

I will turn briefly to schedule 2 to the bill, which contains amendments to the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022, which I will refer to as the medicines Act. The medicines Act passed Parliament in 2022 to replace the poisons Act following a review of the latter Act. The medicines Act is expected to commence in 2025 following the development of regulation to support the Act. The amendments to the medicines Act in the bill that create the new vaping goods supply and possession offences are substantively the same as the amendments to the poisons Act that I have just spoken to. The offences will commence when the medicines Act commences to ensure there is no gap in regulation. Schedule 3 to the bill contains amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act to provide that the offences in the poisons Act and the medicines Act are to be dealt with summarily unless the prosecutor elects otherwise. That will ensure that matters can be heard summarily or proceed on indictment, as appropriate to the circumstances.

Schedules 4 and 5 to the bill contain amendments to the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 and the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000 that are consequential to the ban on the supply of vaping products and goods outside of a therapeutic pathway. Currently, the Public Health (Tobacco) Act includes a range of provisions regulating e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco products. That includes requirements to register as an

e-cigarette retailer, banning the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, requirements regarding display of e-cigarettes and mandatory signage requirements. Schedule 4 to the bill removes references to e-cigarettes in the provisions in the Public Health (Tobacco) Act, with the exception of the provision which prohibits a person from vaping in a car with a minor. It will remain an offence to vape in a car with a minor, consistent with the requirements that vaping is only permitted where it is permitted to smoke tobacco.

Schedule 5 to the bill contains a minor consequential amendment to the Smoke-free Environment Act. That Act requires that vaping can only occur where it is permitted to smoke tobacco. The requirement will not change. However, it does that by defining smoking as including using an e-cigarette within the meaning of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act. Given the definitions are changing in that Act, there needs to be a consequential amendment to the Smoke-free Environment Act. I emphasise that all other smoke-free requirements will remain for e-cigarettes. Vapes cannot be used wherever tobacco smoking is prohibited, including in most public enclosed areas, on public transport and in many outdoor areas, such as within four metres of an entry point to a public building.

The bill is an important step to help improve New South Wales enforcement efforts in relation to the recent Commonwealth ban of e-cigarettes. The bill will complement the Commonwealth changes and allow New South Wales officers to enforce the e-cigarette ban in retail settings within the context of New South Wales specific legislation. I thank the NSW Health team and the Ministry of Health team. I thank my personal staff, Dr Vivienne Moxham-Hall, Jenelle Rimmer and Lynden Bartrim for their work on the bill. It is an important reform. As the parent of a teenager, I can assure the House that this topic is an issue that many of us face within our own families or communities. We stand ready to do what we can to protect young people. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN TRUST AMENDMENT BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Scully, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (10:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Amendment Bill 2024. The bill is vital for the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust to continue to serve the people and communities of New South Wales. The Royal Botanical Garden is a heritage-listed, 30-hectare jewel opened in 1816 and is the oldest scientific institution in Australia. The gardens and The Domain are open every day of the year and access is free. Its location on Sydney Harbour near the Sydney Opera House and the large parkland on The Domain make it one of the most visited attractions in Sydney. The bill amends the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980 to increase the term for leases and licences, and to update the description of the land the trust is responsible for overseeing.

The bill will increase the term for leases and licences granted by the trust to a term of up to 50 years. It does not make any changes to the current requirement that the trust may only grant a lease or licence for a purpose that directly or indirectly assists in attaining the objects of the trust. Currently the Act only allows for the granting of leases for no more than eight years generally or 10 years for cafes or restaurants. The provision discourages prospective investors as the short period of the lease limits their potential financial return. That then leads to reduced potential investment and much-needed revenue for the trust.

A more sustainable investment in capital and infrastructure leads to better facilities and services for the people of New South Wales to enjoy the publicly owned garden and its parklands. Therefore, we need to give the trust the ability to grant longer leases. The trust has served the people of New South Wales for over 200 years as Australia's oldest scientific institution. It is important for the Government to make sure the trust has the ability to generate revenue and attract investment. An increase in revenue and investment means the trust is able to maintain these crucial public assets without needing to call on competing demands for taxpayer funding. This provides a greater visitor experience for everyone, which is particularly important for an organisation that received over 13 million visitors last year—and we can keep access free for all.

The bill will also correct an oversight so that all trust land is accurately captured by the Act. Certain areas of the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah and the entirety of the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan are not currently included in the schedule. This is largely a result of portions of land being acquired by the trust after 1980. Public spaces are valued assets for the people of New South Wales, and the trust oversees over 700 hectares of land across its four sites. The Act regulates the way the trust can deal with land in schedule 2,

including preventing the trust from selling, mortgaging or disposing any part of the land identified in the schedule. It is clear that an accurate description of trust land is required to protect these spaces in perpetuity for the people of New South Wales. By accurately identifying this land in the Act, the Botanic Gardens can continue the maintenance and improvement of these public spaces for generations to come.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the bill. The bill makes amendments to section 20 of the Act, replacing the current reference to eight years, in relation to the length permitted for leases, to 50 years. There is also a consequential amendment to section 20A (1), which currently allows restaurants and cafes to be granted leases up to 10 years. With the increase in lease terms to 50 years, it is appropriate to remove what was a longer term lease for restaurants and cafes and is now a redundant provision. The increase to 50 years would provide consistency in leases granted by the trust, as the Act currently allows for leases up to 50 years for certain trust land, including the Andrew (Boy) Charlton Pool and the Domain Parking Station. However, this increase comes with the condition that any lease or licence with a term of five years or more will require ministerial consent.

The bill also inserts proposed section 20AA, which will require that leases and licences with a term of 10 years or more must not be granted unless they have been the subject of an open tender process. This will prohibit unsolicited proposals being made with respect to trust land and make sure that public spaces are protected and managed in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. This amendment reflects similar clauses in the management of other public spaces, such as the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022, creating consistency across the Public Spaces portfolio. The bill also makes amendments to schedule 2 to the Act to include references to additional trust land to make sure that all land vested in the trust is captured in that schedule. This includes sections of land at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah and the entirety of the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan. By accurately identifying these areas in the Act, we can make sure that these lands continue to be used and enjoyed by future generations.

The bill is an important piece of legislation. It provides for the future of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, an institution that has served the people of New South Wales for over 200 years. It will lead to better facilities and services so that the people of New South Wales can enjoy these beautiful parklands and facilities now and for generations to come. It brings consistency to the terms and conditions of leases and licences across the Public Spaces portfolio, so that the Botanic Gardens and the Greater Sydney Parklands can enter into long-term lease agreements only if a public tender has been held. Importantly, this means an increase in sustainable revenue for the gardens and the important work it undertakes in scientific research and the preservation of our national environmental heritage. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Dr Hugh McDermott, on behalf of Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:44): On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Justice Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2024. The bill will amend the Coptic Orthodox Church (NSW) Property Trust Act 1990 to reflect changes made to the Constitution for the Coptic Orthodox Churches in the Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions. These amendments are being progressed at the request of the Coptic Orthodox Church to align legislation with recent changes to the church's constitution. I acknowledge the clergy and members of the Coptic Orthodox Church who were in the gallery yesterday. They have worked closely with the Attorney General over many months to make this piece of legislation happen. I also congratulate the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism, the member for Mount Druitt, who worked very closely with the Attorney General and the Premier on the legislation.

Any changes to church property trust legislation in New South Wales must meet the requirements of the New South Wales churches policy. The policy requires the New South Wales Government to consider several criteria when determining requests from a religious entity or group to amend or enact new church property trust legislation, including that the church's governing bodies and a substantial majority of church members understand and support that change. The Coptic Orthodox Church has consulted its community on the consequential changes and demonstrated compliance with the New South Wales churches policy. Apart from that amendment, the bill also introduces several miscellaneous amendments to improve court and legal processes and ensure operational

efficiencies; improve and clarify government processes and functions; and finally, clarify the regulation-making power of existing legislation.

Regularly reviewing and updating legislation is an important mechanism to ensure that laws remain fit for purpose and keep pace with developments in the community and legal system. Miscellaneous bills are a sensible and practical way to introduce amendments to multiple Acts in order to achieve that. I turn now to the details of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 to insert into section 32A specific regulation-making powers in relation to searches of a detainee's room and any property in that room; searches of visitors and their vehicles at detention centres; searches of visitors and juvenile justice officers, and anything under their control at detention centres; decisions that the secretary or centre manager may make about matters referred to in the regulations, either generally or in relation to specific areas; and finally, the development and management of case plans.

Section 32A of the Children (Detention Centres) Act provides regulation-making powers in relation to a wide range of matters, such as the procedures to be followed by visitors to detention centres. In particular, section 32A (a) provides a broad regulation-making power which states that the regulation may make provisions for the management, control, supervision and inspection of detention centres. Currently, while section 32A allows regulations to make provision for the circumstances in which a body search can be conducted on a detainee and the process to be followed, it is unclear whether that extends to searches conducted on a detainee's room and the property in that room, as currently provided for by section 11A (1) (b) of the regulations.

Similarly, while the current regulations empower the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice or a centre manager to make certain decisions that are relevant to the operation of a detention centre, such as providing approvals for a dentist to perform functions as a dental officer under the regulations, it is currently unclear whether the regulation-making powers in section 32A extend to such matters. While these matters appear to fall under the management and operation of detention centres, as provided for by the broad regulation-making power under section 32A (a) of the Act, the bill amends section 32A to provide specific regulation-making power relating to these matters.

I now move on. With great pleasure I turn to the amendments to the Coptic Orthodox Church (NSW) Property Trust Act 1990. Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Coptic Orthodox Church (NSW) Property Trust Act 1990 to reflect changes made on 11 September 2022 to the constitution of the Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions. The diocese holds its property in a property trust constituted as the Coptic property trust under the Coptic church Act. The diocese has proposed changes to the Coptic church Act to align the legislation with recent changes in its constitution made in 2022. The amendments primarily replace the current sole-trustee structure with a board of trustees. The board is referred to as the Diocesan Trustees and is constituted in accordance with the constitution.

Schedule 2, items [1] to [13] reflect the diocese's proposed changes by amending the Coptic church Act to replace references to the bishop as the sole trustee with references to the board as constituted under the constitution. Schedule 2, item [14] inserts clause 1A into schedule 1 to the Coptic church Act to allow for regulations to be made containing provisions of a savings and transitional nature consequent on the commencement of the amendments in this bill to the Act. Schedule 2, item [15] inserts schedule 1, part 2 to the Coptic church Act to validate actions taken by the board between 11 September 2022, when the constitution was changed, and when the relevant amendments to this bill commence, provided those actions are consistent with the constitution and the amended Act. This ensures that any actions taken by the board prior to the commencement of this bill are not deemed to be invalid due to any inconsistency with the Coptic church Act at that time.

Schedule 2, item [15] inserts clause 4 to provide that the board is taken to be a continuation of the bishop in the bishop's capacity as sole trustee of the Coptic property trust. This clarifies that any arrangements entered into with the bishop in his capacity as sole trustee in such a way as to give rise to obligations or duties on the part of the trustee would remain in place, except that the trustee is now comprised as the board. As a member of Parliament who has a large Coptic community and a cathedral in his electorate, I thank the Coptic Orthodox Church leaders in New South Wales for the support they provide to our community in Western Sydney and throughout the Sydney Basin and New South Wales. May God bless their work and them and their families.

I now move on to the amendments to the Defamation Act 2005. Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Defamation Act to extend the defence of absolute privilege by adding to schedule 1 to the Act matters published to the Judicial Commission for the purpose of making a complaint under section 15 of the Judicial Officers Act 1986. This is to implement a reform agreed nationally in 2023, following the review of the Model Defamation Provisions. Attorneys-General agreed in September 2023 that jurisdictions would review the complaints-handling bodies in their jurisdictions to determine whether complaints to them should be protected by absolute privilege. Jurisdictions agreed that they would then amend their defamation Acts accordingly. The rationale for the reform is that the potential threat of defamation proceedings may deter victim-survivors from coming forward to

complaints-handling bodies about conduct such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, bullying, discrimination and harassment. Absolute privilege would address any chilling effect because it provides a complete defence that cannot be defeated in any circumstance.

Section 15 of the Judicial Officers Act provides that any person may complain to the commission about a matter that concerns or may concern the ability or behaviour of a judicial officer. The Judicial Commission is the appropriate body to list in schedule 1 to the Defamation Act because, firstly, the Judicial Commission deals second-hand with complaints about the behaviour of judicial officers, including complaints about harassment, bullying and discrimination; secondly, there is a need for a protection due to a perceived chilling effect and lack of other protections for complainants; and, finally, there are significant safeguards to protect against damage to reputation if a false or misleading report is made. For example, section 37 of the Judicial Officers Act provides that a member or officer of the commission shall not disclose any information obtained in the course of his or her office in relation to a complaint except in certain circumstances.

Items [2] and [3] of schedule 3 to the bill amend schedules 2 and 3 to the Defamation Act to extend the defences for publication of public documents in section 28 of the Defamation Act and of fair report of proceedings of public concern in section 29 of the Defamation Act to apply to documents produced to, and in proceedings of, the Modern Slavery Committee. The Modern Slavery Act 2018 establishes the Modern Slavery Committee, a joint committee of members of Parliament. Schedule 1 to the Modern Slavery Act contains provisions relating to the Modern Slavery Committee. Clause 7 of schedule 1 sets out provisions relating to confidentiality and provides a mechanism for the public disclosure of confidential documents and evidence.

The note in this section indicates that the defences in sections 28 and 29 of the Defamation Act were intended to apply to proceedings of the Modern Slavery Committee, conducted in private, if the evidence or documents were disclosed or published in accordance with clause 7. However, the relevant schedules to the Defamation Act have not been updated to refer to the Modern Slavery Committee. The amendment corrects this oversight and provides the committee with the benefits of these defences, consistent with other parliamentary committees and with the intent of the Parliament. Item [4] of schedule 3 to the bill provides that the amendment is to have retrospective effect to ensure that the amendment applies to proceedings commenced and actions taken prior to the commencement of this amendment.

I now move to the amendment of the Dormant Funds Act 1942. Schedule 4 to the bill amends section 19 of the Dormant Funds Act 1942 to insert subsection (3) to clarify that a fee for the formulation of a proposal for a dormant fund may be calculated as a percentage of the value of the dormant fund. The Dormant Funds Act regulates dormant funds, obviously. Dormant funds are funds donated, collected or acquired for charitable and/or public purposes that have become dormant, such as by not being used for the stated purposes for at least six years or by it becoming impractical or unlikely that the funds will be so used. The Act establishes the Commissioner for Dormant Funds, being the chief executive officer of the NSW Trustee and Guardian. The functions of the commissioner under the Act include determining a fund to be dormant, requiring the provision of accounts or statements and developing proposals for the use or application of a dormant fund.

The Dormant Funds Regulation prescribes details of the operation of the Dormant Funds Act, including for a fee payable to the commissioner for the formulation of a proposal for the use of a dormant fund. Currently, clause 5 of the regulation provides that a fee of 5 per cent of the value of the dormant fund is payable to the Commissioner of Dormant Funds for the development of a proposal for a dormant fund. Section 19 of the Dormant Funds Act provides that the regulation may provide for the fees and charges that may be imposed for the Act. The proposed amendment clarifies the regulation in section 19 to put it beyond doubt that the regulation can set fees by way of a percentage. The amendment to the regulation-making power of the Act is being made upon the advice of Parliamentary Counsel to clarify the position in relation to the existing regulations. It is not intended to alter the existing position or provide new powers to charge fees to the commissioner.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: There is a full public gallery today. It is wonderful that so many students have joined us. I welcome to the Chamber Silvi, Hector, William and Aiden Destro, guests of the member for Drummoyne. I welcome the students and staff of Verona School, guests of the member for Fairfield. I acknowledge Peter Quinnell, the member's father-in-law, and Ted Bramble, guests of the member for Camden. I acknowledge also Anyi Hobourn, a guest of the member for Balmain. I welcome Ishaana Prasad and Taylor-Jaye Raela, guests

of the member for Leppington. I welcome also Isabella Hey, a guest of the member for Oxley. I welcome William Della Vedoda, a guest of the member for Parramatta. I acknowledge students from Cammeraygal High School. Finally, I also warmly welcome my guests, members from Southlakes U3A.

Announcements

BUSHFIRE READINESS

The SPEAKER: I remind members that there will be a Rural Fire Service drop-in session today from 12.00 p.m. to 1.00 p.m. in Room 814. The session will provide lots of information about the upcoming bushfire season that members can pass on to their constituents. The Minister for Emergency Services and I encourage all members to attend the session if they have the opportunity to do so.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that 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.

Question Time

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:05): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Yesterday outside of Parliament, the Nurses and Midwives' Association secretary said that when the Labor Government "promised to look after the essential workers, it was all hollow". Are nurses unreasonable when they say that the Labor Government betrayed them?

Ms Prue Car: He needs some explicit teaching.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:06): The Minister for Education and Early Learning is right. The Leader of the Opposition needs some explicit teaching. In year 7 mathematics students learn about compounding.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: When one freezes a person's wages at a certain point and another group of people in another State do not freeze their wages—for The Nats, we have got two boxes. In one box wages are frozen and in the other box wages are unfrozen.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. If the member for Coffs Harbour and the member for Port Macquarie continue to interject, they will be directed to leave the Chamber.

Mr RYAN PARK: What tends to happen—and I am trying to be Mr. Squiggle here—is that the unfrozen wages tend to grow faster and higher. The other group does not tend to do that.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Private sector wage inflation follows the public sector. That is basic economics.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: The member for North Shore should save it for preselection. She should take her issues somewhere else.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat while I hear the point of order from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order relates to direct relevance, Standing Order 129. The question was about what the nurses are saying about this Government's acts of betrayal. Are they being unreasonable?

The SPEAKER: Prima facie, I uphold the point of order. I also recognise it is a difficult question to answer in the way that the Leader of the Opposition would like.

Mr RYAN PARK: Government members understand that working men and women are annoyed because they did not receive an increase in their pay for such a long period of time under the former Government. Not only did Opposition members implement the wages cap, but they also want to bring it back.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: I know they want the cap back, which would cause further problems for the pay of working men and women. On 27 June the shadow health Minister said, "Labor's removal of the wages cap presents the biggest threat to the State's triple-A credit rating."

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. Members will come to order. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Alister Henskens: The point of order relates to direct relevance. The question was about whether the nurses were unreasonable when they said that the Government had betrayed them. Pointing out quotes from other members is irrelevant to that.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I will rule on the point of order. I give this message to the Opposition about the nature of questions. The question was worded in such a way that it was almost impossible for the Minister to do more than answer as he did. I am sorry that is the case. It is my interpretation and I do not need to be second-guessed or given directions by Opposition or Government members. I have made a ruling. Members might not like it but, as I have said in the past, members might not like how I preside over any given question time. I will be judged over the longer term. I am trying to be fair to every member in this House, and I am a little tired of what has been occurring. We will reset the bar. There is no point of order. I had already ruled on how the Minister was answering the question. The time for the answer has expired.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:10): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on how the New South Wales Government is releasing surplus government land for housing?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:11): It is an urgent need for New South Wales. We have a lot of young people in the gallery today. The statistics show that twice as many young people are leaving New South Wales as are staying, and that is even taking into consideration that New South Wales is the leading entry point—38 per cent of inbound migrants for the entire country come to our State. Even taking that into consideration, we are losing so many people to other jurisdictions, particularly Queensland. Interstate migration has been a pattern in New South Wales for a long time. Generally speaking, it has been older Australians moving north during their retirement years. Now the opposite is happening. We are losing young people in the prime of their working lives who we want to establish families, join communities, start businesses and join firms in New South Wales.

The primary reason for that migration north is housing and getting a roof over their head. We have seen double digit increases in the cost of rents in New South Wales. We have seen the median house price in the State hit \$1.4 million. The next most expensive capital city is Melbourne at \$1 million, and it is roughly the same size. One of the reasons for that is the cost of housing and the difficulty of building housing in New South Wales. The Government made a difficult decision during the election campaign to say that where there was surplus government land, we would build housing, particularly for young people. We are getting on with the job of doing that. Yesterday we announced 10 further government-owned sites for 1,100 new homes as part of the Government's land audit. That will see over time, through that order, 30,000 well-located homes across government land, primarily located on major public transport routes.

We want good communities that have great amenity, more open space, access to jobs and, perhaps most importantly, access to public transport. Major cities around the world are building where there is existing public transport infrastructure. We have given credit to former Premier Gladys Berejiklian for building that brand-new infrastructure, particularly public transport infrastructure. Now we need the houses, and that means more density closer to the city. The leading nimby in this Parliament for a long period is the member for Wahroonga. In March this year *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the New South Wales anti-corruption watchdog had released a statement clearing a senior planner accused of corruption by the member for Wahroonga of any wrongdoing, saying it found no evidence that she misused information.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: *The Sydney Morning Herald* quite understandably went to the member for Wahroonga, and reported:

... he acknowledged the ICAC's statement but insisted he would wait to have "discussions" with a "confidential source" ...

[Extension of time]

He accuses an official publicly of corruption, ICAC clears the official and does he apologise? "No, I have to have some discussions with my confidential sources." That was in March. Now we are in September, nearly October. How are the confidential sources going?

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: No information? The member used parliamentary privilege last time. Why not use it this time?

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question asked the Premier to give an update on the release of surplus government land. This has nothing to do with that question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has been directly relevant to the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Not only have we missed out on an apology for this official, we have missed out on the podcast. The member has not done a podcast since he has been defaming planning officials in the New South Wales government. One of the last podcasts he did was with the member for Vacluse, who must be named correctly. The member for Vacluse said:

I reject this notion that we're all nimbies in the east because we're saying don't build high rise. We already have the high rise.

And then Henskens asks a leading question:

Isn't this just blatant class warfare?

And then the member for Vacluse says:

Yes, it is.

We are picking on the rich again. Can you believe it? We are actually taking a tiny little bit of housing. I will read out the statistics for Woollahra. The former Government had a target of 500 houses over five years. Under Labor, it is 1,900 houses. To put that in perspective, over the same period Liverpool had 16,000 houses and Blacktown had 21,000 houses. In relation to the reforms, the people of this State can only trust Labor to deliver housing for the next generation of young Australians.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:16): My question is directed to the Premier. Yesterday nurses' signs said "More lies than my ex" and "A story of betrayal" with the Premier's photograph. Will the Premier apologise for betraying nurses?

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Premier, I note that the very nature of the question makes it almost impossible for the Premier to answer. I am happy for the Premier to do so, but I give Opposition members fair warning that there are not many legitimate reasons to raise points of order about relevance during his answer.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:17): I am unsurprised that the nurses came up with a better line than the Opposition and that the Leader of the Opposition had to steal it for question time. The Opposition is absolutely hopeless. At the end of the day, if he had any integrity in relation to this, he would go out and explain to the nurses that he wants to bring back the wages cap in New South Wales. The Opposition's fundamental criticism of the Government is that the way to solve the nurses' calls for a 15 per cent increase in salary is to give them 2½ per cent. That will solve it. Just go out the front and say, "I know you want 15 per cent, but we're going to give you 2½." The Leader of the Opposition comes into the Chamber like Jimmy Hoffa, like some kind of union secretary.

The Government is not going to let members of the public or nurses or their association forget. Not long ago the shadow Minister for Health said in a tweet, "Chris Minns and Labor's budget is built on broken promises." Then she went on to say, "When Labor and the unions win, you lose." That is from the shadow Minister for Health. Guess what? Yesterday she went to the rally. Last year it was, "When the unions win, you lose"; this year she is Norma Rae. She is going to jump up on this table soon. "O Captain! My Captain!" she is going to say, leading the union rally. Honestly, it is a joke. The Opposition has a stated policy of suppressing wages in New South Wales and reintroducing a wages cap in New South Wales. One of the leading reasons there is so much pressure on nurses and police officers and teachers is that during the pandemic, when inflation hit decade highs, the New South Wales Government decided to roll back wages to zero.

The SPEAKER: Government members will cease assisting the Premier.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In relation to the question of betrayal, during the election campaign the association went to the Government and said, "We want you to commit to safe staffing ratios," and we agreed. They said,

"We want you to conduct and implement an independent industrial register," and we agreed. They said, "We want you to permanently employ the COVID nurses," and we said we would do it.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: They said they wanted the wages cap removed, and we did it. So I reject the suggestion of betrayal.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded his answer.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:20): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on how the investment from the Minns Labor Government is going into preschools to improve affordability and access?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:20): I thank the member for Cessnock for this important question about access to early childhood education and its impact on a student's journey through primary and secondary schools, and also on tertiary education and placement into work. The evidence is very clear. Members would not find me coming to this House and quoting former President of the United States Donald Trump every day, but I will quote something he recently said in one of his characteristic stream-of-consciousness interviews. It is a nugget of information. He said, "Child care is child care; you've got to have it." While I do not believe that he understands the actual value of early childhood education and care, I tend to agree with him that we have to have it.

This Government is hellbent on delivering early childhood education, especially for children and families that need it the most. We are putting in the work from the beginning of our government, not in the dying days. In the dying days of the former Government, its Ministers sat around the Cabinet table and suddenly realised, "Hang on, early childhood education is a thing too. Let us promise 500 preschools and have absolutely no way of delivering them. The public might be duped into thinking that we can deliver 500 preschools." Members on this side of the House are putting in the work to ensure equity of access to early childhood education. Regardless of where you live, whether it is in suburban Sydney, Western Sydney, south or north-west—which are neglected areas of our State—or in rural and regional New South Wales, we are delivering.

We are very proud to be providing the State's largest ever investment in early education fee relief. This year we will provide more than \$430 million for families with preschool-aged children. Hands down, that is more than anything ever provided by members opposite. That relief is what happens when the people of New South Wales elect a government that actually cares about investing in early childhood education and the transition to primary and secondary education. This investment is set to support up to 200,000 families, including support for three- to five-year-olds in community and mobile preschools, and support for three- and four-year-olds in preschool programs at long day care. We know that people access preschool programs in a range of settings. That investment is even before we get to our investment in public preschools—the biggest ever investment in the history of New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

The elephant in the room is that we can provide all the fee relief possible, and we have our shoulder to the wheel on that, but we also need to invest in the workforce to ensure that we have those critically trained early childhood educators and teachers to deliver that play-based learning and education in preschool and long day care. That is why we are fully subsidising professional learning for educators through TAFE NSW. I thank Minister Whan for that important investment where education has worked with TAFE to provide those upskilling opportunities for our early childhood educators. We are fully subsidising professional learning to make sure that educators can upskill, as well as saying that we value them and want them to stay in this profession because our society needs them.

Members hear me talk a lot about the need for teachers. We also desperately need early childhood educators because at every primary school I go to the principal tells me that they can see the difference between kids who access preschool before kindergarten and those who do not. We have spoken a lot about our historic investment in 100 public preschools. We are also supporting existing services and providers with \$20 million to build more places for not-for-profit providers in underserved areas, which is crucial, and \$20 million for the Flexible Initiatives Trial, which is for centres to trial new ways of working that might respond to their particular communities. Places in round one went to Plumpton Long Day Care in the Mount Druitt electorate; Menindee Children's Centre in the Barwon electorate; and Denison Street Early Learning Centre in the Tamworth electorate. That is the sort of investment that a government who cares about education puts into the education of our earliest learners to make sure they have the best start in life.

Mr Greg Warren: Mr Speaker—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: Under the standing orders, question number five must come from the crossbench.

Mr Roy Butler: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I call the member for Barwon.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:26): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the complexity of problems in regional New South Wales in the areas of health, youth crime, ageing infrastructure, educational attainment and the requirement for an overarching government response, how will the Premier coordinate that government response?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:26): That is a reasonable question from somebody who is deeply engaged with his community and who represents regional New South Wales. I think he is right. After 12 years of the National Party in regional New South Wales, the areas were run down, with major issues relating to infrastructure, fairness, equity and access for regional communities. Those problems require an overarching government response. We are committing funds across the board, particularly in relation to human capital, or people. We have been clear about the previous Government's investment in Sydney infrastructure, particularly public transport infrastructure, but I think it would be agreed by common consent that the investment in human capital in regional New South Wales just was not there. That was best demonstrated by the wages cap and a suppression on wages that could attract people—particularly young people—to a regional post.

A regional post in a New South Wales police station or a school could be a major life-changing career for somebody, but we have to attract them there in the first place. That is why the Government is committed to incentives in both health and education to say in a coordinated way to young people, "Go to regional New South Wales. You will have experiences in that town and in that region that you just will not have in a metropolitan setting. You will meet great people. Country people will be welcoming." But we have to come to the table initially to attract that life-changing decision. That goes to the health system as well with regional incentives for health workers to go to country towns. The Parliamentary Secretary for Health is nodding. He has devoted his entire medicine career to the regions and knows how important it is to invest in the stock of people coming through the health system.

A 2022 report was scathing in relation to regional and remote New South Wales, saying it had inferior access to health and hospital services, which led to instances of patients receiving substandard levels of care. Zero dollars had been committed to new and regional roads in the last two years of the previous budget and, as the education Minister has repeatedly pointed out, 56 per cent of the teacher shortages across the State were concentrated in the regions. Roughly one-third of people in New South Wales live outside of Sydney. Having 56 per cent of vacancies in education undeniably, and disproportionately, affects regional communities. What ends up happening is that classes are cancelled or merged on a gigantic scale, meaning that regional kids get an inferior education. [*Extension of time*]

I have got a long list of initiatives in the budget for regional communities, much of which I have recently spoken to the member for Barwon and other members about. The key difference—and it gets to the crux of the question and the purpose of question time—is the investment in people. There is a sense from the current Government that it is only going to be as good as the best teacher, the best paramedic and the best corrections officer in the public service. That is why the Government is investing in them and why it removed the wages cap in New South Wales.

BRADFIELD CITY CENTRE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:30): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the recent approval of the *Bradfield City Centre Master Plan* will deliver an exciting future for Western Sydney and south-west Sydney and attract investment to the Western Sydney Aerotropolis?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:30): I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. He has been absolutely relentless in his approach to making sure that the game-changing opportunity of a new airport, the aerotropolis and the Bradfield City Centre delivers for not only his community of Campbelltown in the south-west but all of Western Sydney. I am happy to advise the House that I approved the Bradfield master plan on 4 September 2024. Under the Minns Labor Government, there is genuine momentum being built around Australia's first new city in over 100 years. This Government's ambition is simply explained: It wants to see more skilled jobs closer to where people live and with the right infrastructure

to improve the lives of young people and families in Western Sydney. It is a good and strong ambition. It is the Government's ambition. It is the opportunity that Western Sydney has been waiting for and that it deserves.

While Bradfield will not pop up overnight—after all, we all know the old saying "Rome wasn't built in a day"—the approved master plan sets up major growth for coming years. The vision for the city will build on the significant momentum already underway across the aerotropolis. The Nancy-Bird Walton airport is set to open in late 2026. As the project continues, the new, ambitious city could provide over 20,000 jobs and 10,000 new homes, with at least 10 per cent being affordable housing. The master plan includes over two million square metres of mixed-use gross floor space for commercial and retail opportunities. It will also be a unique walkable parkland city for residents, workers and visitors across a 114-hectare mixed-use city centre. Over 36 hectares will be open public space. All of that will be within 400 metres of the new Bradfield metro station.

Exciting new public open space areas are proposed across the city centre, including the two-hectare Central Park located adjacent to the metro and bus interchange, a naturally integrated swimming area on Moore Gully and a major events space on Thompsons Creek. Ahead of the opening of Western Sydney airport, new development and infrastructure will also be accelerated following amendments to the Western Parkland City State environmental planning policy [SEPP]. The SEPP provides an optional master planning process for owners of large or strategic sites in the heart of the aerotropolis. It makes the planning assessment process faster, easier and more streamlined, just as the Government is doing in other parts of the planning system in New South Wales. Bradfield City Centre will have a strong focus on culture, creativity and innovation. Importantly, it is being designed to support a circular economy. [*Extension of time*]

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Around 80 per cent of rooftops will feature gardens or biosolar systems, addressing urban heat, and design features to maximise energy efficiency and better manage temperatures. The development is backed by a \$1 billion investment from the New South Wales Government. The process is underway for the 4.8-hectare Superlot 1, which is going through an open market process. The expression of interest stage has received widespread interest both locally and internationally, with shortlisted participants invited to develop the details of their bids. The appointment of the Bradfield Development Authority's first major privately funded development partner will follow in 2025. Those opposite did a lot of talking about the new city but, as usual, very little doing. The Government is getting on with the task of making sure that the photo opportunities that members opposite were in the habit of doing—featuring hard hats, high vis and glossy documents—are being turned into homes, jobs and open space.

Opposition members are excited about it. I can hear them talking on the other side of the Chamber. They are saying, "It is great. You are finally doing something. Good on the Minns Government." It is heartening to see that members opposite are backing us in 100 per cent. The Minns Government has cleaned up the chaotic decision-making that it inherited from the previous Government. The Government has installed an infrastructure coordinator to get infrastructure projects back on track. Members opposite are cheering. We are working with the Federal Government to make sure we are maximising the opportunity. There is \$1 billion allocated in the budget for the funding of new roads as part of the \$5.2 billion Western Sydney roads program. The Bradfield Development Authority has been established and is focused on delivering the Bradfield town centre under its new CEO, Ken Morrison. The first building is almost underway, which is part of the Minns Government's work to build better communities and a better New South Wales.

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

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:35): My question is directed to the Premier. Leadership requires one to front up, but yesterday the Premier refused to go outside to address nurses. Why does the Premier always go missing when things get tough?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Vaucluse will resume her seat. Members will come to order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: If the member for Vaucluse wants to ask a question, it has to be consistent with Standing Order 128. It cannot contain argument, it cannot contain inference, it cannot contain imputation, it cannot contain ironical expression and it cannot contain expression of opinion. Her question infringes on just about every one of those subclauses. If the member wants to ask the Premier a question, she must ask one that is consistent with the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time. I uphold the point of order. As I did yesterday, I commend Standing Order 128 on page 46 of the standing orders to the Opposition. The question has infringed unequivocally on a number of parts of Standing Order 128.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER WAIT TIMES

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:37): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on the impact that GP shortages are having on emergency departments and how the New South Wales Government is working to relieve the State's busy hospitals?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:38): I thank the member for Leppington. He is an outstanding Government Whip. He has not missed a division yet, although there was a close call last week. We talked yesterday in the House about the challenges around GP access. There is further evidence reported in *The Daily Telegraph* today that it is becoming a problem. Data indicates that people are now waiting around three weeks on average to get a GP appointment, and one in 10 of them are waiting four weeks. In those three weeks, often their condition worsens. When they present to emergency departments [EDs] because they need care before that three-week period, not only are they going to the wrong facility but they are also often more unwell, which means more intense treatment and more time spent in the emergency department.

This is almost a triple whammy. People are struggling to see a GP. When they can see a GP, they are struggling to get an appointment in a timely manner. When they finally do see a GP, as we spoke about yesterday, the gap on top of the Medicare rebate is growing. It is clear to see from that evidence how our emergency departments are starting to be used as quasi medical centres. No government of any political persuasion designed emergency departments to be used in that way. When members in the Chamber were growing up, we went to emergency departments only when we were very unwell or had a serious injury. I have a son who spends a bit of time in emergency departments. He does crazy things. Apart from parents like me, people are having to use emergency departments for medical cases that those departments were not designed for. That puts pressure on staff, on people waiting to access that service and on the system in general. That is happening now. [*Extension of time*]

This issue was evidenced in the Telegraph in today's article and in yesterday's article about the costs incurred to see to a GP, and in the recent Bureau of Health Information independent data that indicates that fewer people are able to access GPs. This Government has made the unusual decision to invest in an area of health care that is not the responsibility of the State.

Ms Kellie Sloane: We have heard it all before. You have said it before.

Mr RYAN PARK: Easy, comrade.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr RYAN PARK: The Government is investing in a GP bulk-billing initiative. Despite this being a problem for five years, this is the first time a State government has invested in health care to try to end the freefall of bulk-billing GPs. We on this side are making sure that GPs who do the right thing and bulk-bill to certain levels across New South Wales do not get whacked with a payroll tax. That is the first thing, and that comes at a cost of about \$180-odd million. We are investing in urgent care centres. We have seen a massive increase in the number of people presenting to those centres, particularly after hours. We are expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists. We are investing in virtual care to enable people to call Healthdirect on 1800 022 222 to access alternative care outside of EDs. We are expanding initiatives like Hospital in the Home. We are doing everything possible but, in a two-funded system, every party has to do its job.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:43): My question is directed to the Premier. Why did the Premier not go outside and face the nurses and midwives yesterday?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:43): I am happy to meet with nurses. In fact, I am meeting with them tomorrow as part of a series of meetings that the Government has had organised for a long time.

The SPEAKER: Members on both sides of the Chamber will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The meeting will cover everything to do with wages and conditions, the log of claim prior to the election and after the election, and Labor's election campaign pledges, including the abolition of the wages cap, the introduction of safe staffing levels and the permanent hiring of COVID nurses. The original question asked by the member for Vaucluse today shows, by any honest reckoning, that members opposite are not

good faith actors in relation to this dispute. In many ways, they are the architects of a savage attack on wages that stretched for 12 years.

As I said yesterday in the Chamber, the fundamental disagreement between the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Government is that in one year they want us to make up the wage suppression imposed on them by the Liberal Party. The Government does not have the budget to do that in one year. It would like to do that over a number of years. The union is in dispute with the Government over that. We on this side would love to say that this issue is solved, but it is not. I do not expect Opposition members to help with this matter, but it is worth noting their perspective on it. There are different views about how to solve this dispute. Which member of Parliament said, "Labor will impact your life because of the choices they make and the choice they made to get rid of the public sector wage cap"? It was the member for Vacluse.

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

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Kellie Sloane: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129 relating to relevance. The question was directly related to yesterday's industrial action: Why didn't the Premier turn up yesterday?

The SPEAKER: I understand the need for direct relevance, but it can be almost impossible. The Premier has been directly relevant.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: This is an interesting intervention. The member for Vacluse said:

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

I have more. The member for Vacluse also said:

Labor is so beholden to the unions that soon 52 Martin Place will not be the offices of the New South Wales Government; it will be the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

The SPEAKER: Government frontbench members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I have thousands more. The member for Vacluse has been busy. She said:

Wages as a proportion of government expenditure were around 40 per cent to 41 per cent under the former Coalition Government. They have risen to 45 per cent. I am seeing heads shake on the opposite side. They need to read their own budget ... which is a cost to the people of New South Wales not only now but to their children and grandchildren.

The member for Vacluse is the Gordon Gekko of the New South Wales Parliament. She is smashing them in Vacluse. I note with interest a tweet from a while ago, which stated, "Labor's budget will abolish EV repayments. But when Labor and the unions win, you lose." The Opposition is pro-Tesla and anti-nurses.

SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:46): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the south-west link bus service and temporary transport plan in the lead-up to the T3 Sydenham to Bankstown conversion?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:47): I thank my excellent Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, the member for Coogee, for that important question. I am pleased to advise the House that the final stage of converting the T3 Sydenham to Bankstown rail line to a metro line will begin on Monday. This work is really important. We need to disconnect the existing railway to create the future T6 Bankstown line and take the magic of metro all the way through the communities of the inner west and Canterbury Bankstown to the south-west. Our city has been loving the metro. In fact, more than six million people have jumped on board the city metro. They are loving the reliability of the four-minute services and the shorter travel times. It is also taking pressure off our entire public transport network. It is providing more services, and more reliable services, for more people.

We want to take that service all the way to the people who have been waiting for it for a long time. The communities of the inner west and Canterbury Bankstown have been promised this service since 2019. They have been subject to 70 closures of their line, often on weekends and most school holidays. The Government is ensuring that they get the services that they were promised and that they deserve. Work is starting on Monday. We know that this is going to be a difficult time for those communities. It means that we have to move 60,000 journeys a day to other public transport services. It means longer journey times and disruption and inconvenience, but the painful period will be worth it.

In the end, stations that currently have only one service every 15 minutes in peak times will have one service every four minutes. It means that more people will have access to fully accessible train stations and will have the metro service that they have long been waiting for. Those replacement buses are a high-frequency service. The Southwest Link services have three different routes: SW1 is an all-stops service; SW2 is an express to Belmore and all stops to Bankstown; and the final one is an express, just Canterbury and Campsie—those important stations—and then on to Bankstown. They are dedicated bus services from early in the morning until late at night to make sure that people can get to where they need to go. Unfortunately, due to the industrial action last week, we have had delays in the delivery of the train service from Bankstown to Lidcombe via the CBD that we wanted to put in place. It will take us a couple more weeks to get that service there for the people in Bankstown. *[Extension of time]*

In the intervening couple of weeks there will be bus services for those commuters and those services will include an express service, Bankstown to Lidcombe, and an all-stops service. When we get the T6 line in place there is good news also for the communities of Fairfield and Liverpool, for example, who have wanted for a very long time those direct services to the CBD. The new T6 line will deliver those as well. We know that the replacement bus journeys will be longer. There will be lines. It will be inconvenient. That is why we are making those buses free. Every single one of the pink Southwest Link buses will be a free service. You will not have to tap on and off. That is in recognition of the fact that it will be inconvenient. Those communities have been through a very difficult period to date, let alone the time ahead of us. We are committed to making sure that people can get to where they need to go and, in the end, they will get the metro service that they want.

We have a 12-month delivery program for the Sydney Metro Southwest and we are absolutely going to hold our contractors and our delivery partners to that time frame. But this is, as we have talked about before, a really complex project. We are converting a 130-year-old rail line to a brand new, turn up and go, high-tech metro service. There may be complications along the way. I am being really up-front with that community. It might take longer. It is like renovating a Federation house. When you take off the walls, sometimes you find things that you did not know. We want to make sure that we keep the community up to date and that they can still get to where they need to go. This will be a painful period, but the buses will be free and, in the end, we will be taking the magic of metro all the way to the people of south-west Sydney.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:52): My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier claimed he could afford wage increases for teachers and paramedics, but he cannot afford the nurses' claim. Is first in, best dressed his public sector wages policy?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:52): That is exactly consistent with our offer. It is 40 per cent more than the previous Government. I do not know if the member has been paying attention. The Government has come to the table, without prejudice, to say that it is offering 40 per cent more than the previous Government's offer in relation to wages.

Ms Robyn Preston: That is not what they are asking.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I understand that. I know what is going on with the negotiations. It is clear that you do not. That is the problem.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. The member for Keira will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The question was, in the election campaign, we said we could pay more. We are. That is committed to. It is in the New South Wales budget. There is only one group that wants to pay less—that is the Opposition. Honestly, you can get anyone to ask questions.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Guess who was the other Liberal Party MP that had the gall to front up to the protest yesterday? It was the member for Hawkesbury. What an absolute hypocrite! "We want to introduce a wages cap in New South Wales, but we'll go out into Macquarie Street and pretend to show solidarity." Give me a break. Led by the member for Vacluse into the street, she probably said, "Let's go and get some lunch." The member for Vacluse gets out there and the member for Hawkesbury joins her. She says, "Hang on, there's a rally on. I thought we were going to get something to eat. No, we'll join the union, get a quick snap, and then we'll go and have something to eat—and then we'll reimpose the wages cap." All in a day's work for the modern Liberal Party!

TOURISM WORKFORCE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:54): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Can the Minister please update the House on how the Government is boosting the New South Wales tourism workforce by delivering subsidised training programs?

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:54): I thank the member for East Hills for her question. As we know, the tourism industry in New South Wales is experiencing a resurgence and is exceeding pre-COVID levels of activity. In the year ending March 2024, New South Wales received a total of 103.9 million visitors, who spent \$52.9 billion. I am sure some of those people came into our State on planes that would have been serviced by graduates of Certificate IV and diplomas in aeroskills from Padstow TAFE. Of course, the member for East Hills is a very strong advocate for Padstow TAFE.

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

Mr STEVE WHAN: As with many critical industries in New South Wales, the tourism sector is suffering from a potential shortfall of workers, impacting its ability to keep up with the growth in the sector. That is why this morning I was thrilled to join Minister Graham on top of the State Library next door to announce an exciting collaboration between TAFE NSW and Destination NSW. We have announced a suite of training programs to support the visitor economy.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr STEVE WHAN: For members opposite, the bar was not open. The new training will ensure that we bolster the visitor economy workforce and provide businesses with a steady supply of skilled workers. It includes a short online course that will be free to the public for one month, and free ongoing for New South Wales high school students. The short course, which is a micro-skill, provides quick, accessible foundation knowledge, equipping people with a solid understanding of the visitor economy. For too long there has been a perception for many that careers in the visitor economy are short term. One of the important things that we need to do is to highlight the fact that they are great long-term, very rewarding and enjoyable careers for people to engage in.

TAFE NSW is also developing free online masterclasses designed for upskilling existing staff or those who are new to the industry who wish to expand their knowledge base. The masterclasses will cover topics such as sustainability, marketing and social media, memorable customer experiences and cocktails. Additionally, TAFE NSW will be working closely with industry to update the Certificate III in Tourism for delivery next year. Those updates will include new visitor economy skills based on industry feedback to ensure that the courses meet the current needs of the sector. This morning we had two people with us who are amazing examples of tourism hospitality training. Nathan Turner was with us. *[Extension of time]*

Nathan has completed a Certificate III in Tourism and Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing. He is currently studying a Diploma of Travel and Tourism Management and Certificate IV in Guiding—all at TAFE NSW—and is now a guest experience officer at Taronga Zoo in Sydney. He spoke passionately about his enthusiasm for the job and for the TAFE training that he received. Keisha Lesaisaea has completed a Certificate IV in Travel and Tourism at TAFE NSW. She now works in administration for a global cruise company, Ponant. She described how she switched from a university degree to pursuing what she really loved, which is the travel and tourism industry, and she is thoroughly enjoying her experience in the industry.

It is fantastic to see the work that is being done in conjunction with Destination NSW and with the support of the Federal Albanese Government. It is very positive news. We are building on all of these things by having the VET review, which was recently released. That includes key elements, like building better links with secondary schools and the sorts of things that we are talking about with short courses. This week I had the great pleasure of attending the first graduation ceremony at the Seven Hills High School Vocational Innovation Centre, which the Deputy Premier and I opened last year. It was really exciting to see young people looking forward to moving from year 12 straight into occupations in the aged-care industry and then into nursing, and many other trades with the skills that we need in construction, plumbing and industries like that. I enjoyed meeting Caitlyn and Imogen, who demonstrated their abilities in the nursing sector and are looking forward to their future careers in a vocational sector.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:59): My question is directed to the Premier. Yesterday the protesters outside said they were being ignored by the Premier and "told we are being greedy". When the Premier meets with the nurses tomorrow, as he has stated, will he apologise for calling them greedy?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:00): No, that is complete verballing. When did I say anything like that? That is a straight misleading of the House. I would expect nothing less from the absolute rabble on the other side of the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. My observation is that the Premier can answer the question without any assistance.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Dubbo is clearly a joke. He has resorted to coming to this place and accusing Government members of saying things that we have never said. I dare the member to produce any bit of evidence that suggests either I or the Minister for Health has ever labelled anyone greedy while asking for an industrial agreement.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Mr Speaker—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Come on, provide the evidence! Provide the information.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have a situation where the Opposition is demanding that I apologise for things that I have never said.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. I will hear from the member for Dubbo.

Mr Dugald Saunders: I am happy to clarify that it is not me saying it; it is the nurses saying it.

The SPEAKER: That is not a clarification. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The member for Swansea will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. The Premier is quite capable of answering the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It shows us everything we need to know about members opposite. They are not good-faith actors on this issue. They are hoping that it drags on, presumably. Why would they think otherwise? This is the party that imposed a wages cap on New South Wales and led to 12 years of underpayment for frontline healthcare workers. I have found photographic evidence of the very first union rally for the member for Vacluse and the member for Hawkesbury.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Don't they look natural? Where is their banner? Where is their flag?

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: They do not even have a sign. How many times have other members had to wear a shirt? Those members need a shirt. If they are going to go to a union rally, they have to get a shirt!

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business rises on a point of order.

[*Interruption*]

I call the Premier to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Mr Alister Henskens: The Premier should not be using props.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The use of props is not permitted in the Chamber. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I have been very unfair. I apologise to the member for Vacluse. I know what has happened. She has gone to the rally and tried to get a photograph with a nurse, and all she could find was the member for Hawkesbury.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded his answer. I call the member for Murray. Members will come to order and listen to the question.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF WATER COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:03): My question is directed to the Premier. An audit by the Inspector-General of Water Compliance has found that the department of the Federal water Minister, Tanya Plibersek, has flawed policies, untrained staff and conflicts of interest, and gives away market secrets. Has the Premier read the report?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:03): In all candour, I have not read the report. It is a Commonwealth report.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I should disclose to the House that the Commonwealth independent water inspector is a former member of this House—Troy Grant, a former member for Dubbo and, by common consensus, the best member for Dubbo there has ever been. We remember what happened to him, though. He was brought down by his own party. Beware the ides of Dubbo.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I assume the Premier knew that his comment might elicit a response. I will hear the point of order.

Mr Dugald Saunders: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Premier is reflecting on the former member for Dubbo.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In any event, this is an important issue, and we acknowledge that the independent report was scathing. I have not read it, but my staff have briefed me on it. It is scathing of water practices at the Commonwealth level. To the Minister's credit, she has acknowledged that and is making remediation efforts within her department. We need integrity, particularly from water agencies. It is so important because this marketplace is the lifeblood of regional communities. If we get it wrong, at best we get distortions of the market and at worst a major crisis when it comes to crops and agriculture and regional economies. We take it seriously. I acknowledge the passion that the member for Murray has for this issue. This is the eleventh question about water that she has asked me. She has asked one of the Deputy Premier. That is 12 questions on water. I fully acknowledge that it is the lifeblood of regional communities. By way of comparison, guess how many questions National Party members have asked? None! Not one.

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

RENTAL MARKET

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is making renting fairer in New South Wales?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:06): I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question and for his great interest in advocating for renters in his electorate. The 39 per cent of households who are renters in his electorate would be keen to hear the answer about what the Minns Labor Government is doing for them. It is not only in Western Sydney. It is also the 46 per cent in the North Shore electorate, the 42 per cent in the Ryde electorate and the 30 per cent in the electorates of Coffs Harbour and Tamworth.

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will come to order.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: More than 2.2 million people across New South Wales electorates are renters. The Labor Government knows that more people are renting and that they are renting for longer. That is why we need to update our rental laws to make sure that they strike the right balance between renters and landlords. The Government will soon introduce its bill, which will see some of the biggest changes in the rental market in a decade. We will end no-grounds evictions by requiring landlords to have a valid reason to end a periodic or fixed-term lease, and we will make it easier for people to have pets in rentals. Those changes will help renters turn their rental property into a home. I know that Jinxy is relying on the member for Ryde to support our bill.

We will also take practical steps to help relieve household budget pressures for renters. The Government is ensuring that renters can pay their rent easily and without being charged extra fees. Every dollar counts for every renter. Those admin fees can add up to hundreds of dollars a year. We will tighten the law to require landlords and agents to offer electronic methods of payment that are free, such as electronic funds transfer or the Commonwealth's Centrepay system. That will no doubt be a welcome relief for many renters. In fact, 92 per cent of respondents to our survey support the reform, including 82 per cent of landlords who responded.

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

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: As another cost-of-living measure, the Government will ensure that renters do not have to pay for their own background checks when they apply for a rental property. We are not stopping there. We are also making an \$8.4 million investment to set up the Rental Taskforce within NSW Fair Trading. The taskforce will be made up of investigators, inspectors and a support team to help renters and to act on serious breaches of our rental laws. On top of that, this week we launched Rent Check, which is a new free website that allows renters to check whether the rent they are being asked to pay is fair. Rent Check uses the latest bond data to provide an accurate and comprehensive breakdown of market prices. That transparency helps renters better understand the market to make more informed decisions. [*Extension of time*]

Landlords can set more competitive prices by using the rental check tool, making rents fairer and enabling landlords to attract good tenants. The Minns Labor Government is also developing the nation's first portable bonds scheme. We have committed \$6.6 million in this year's budget to develop and deliver the scheme, which will provide relief to cost-of-living pressures by allowing renters to digitally transfer their existing bond to a new property. All of these measures are designed to reduce the stress of renting in a tight market and to ease the financial pressure on many renters. We know that tackling the housing crisis must be done on multiple fronts. We are overhauling the planning system and investing in social housing. We are uplifting the standards in the building sector and updating strata laws to boost confidence in strata investment, and we are delivering on our election commitments to improve rental laws.

There is no denying that the current rental market is tight and it is a very tough time for renters. We have historically low vacancy rates and a system that leaves renters vulnerable to being evicted at any time. Renters have been calling for change for a long time. Unlike members opposite, the Minns Labor Government has listened and, not only that, it has acted. We have developed a broad package that will make renting fairer, to give renters peace of mind and to give landlords a clearer set of rules. The Government has got the balance right. I urge all members in this place to support our comprehensive rental package because 2.2 million renters across all our electorates are counting on us to make their lives better.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Reports

Ms TAMARA SMITH: As Chair: I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General entitled *Sixteenth General Meeting with the Valuer General*, report No. 1/58, dated September 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The CLERK: I announce that the following ePetition signed by more than 20,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Bridgette "Biddy" Porter

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to initiate parliamentary inquiries into the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Mental Health Review Tribunal, reform victim support services and conduct a coronial inquest into the death of Bridgette "Biddy" Porter, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

The CLERK: I announce that the following ePetition signed by 500 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

Mudgee Coalmining

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to stop coalmining expansion in the Mudgee region, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

*Bills***JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2024****Second Reading Speech****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:13): On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I now turn to the amendments to the Firearms Act. Schedule 5 to the bill amends section 12 of the Firearms Act to remove references to the "Department of Industry" and replace it with the "Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development". By operation of various administrative orders, from 1 July 2024 the Department of Regional NSW was renamed the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The functions referred to in the two instances where the Department of Industry is mentioned in section 12 of the Firearms Act are relied upon and managed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The proposed amendments therefore replace redundant references to the Department of Industry with references to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, in line with machinery-of-government changes.

I turn to the amendments to the Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Act. Schedule 6 to the bill will insert a new section 13 (2) into the Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Act to state that a prescribed officer for the purposes of the section means the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice or an officer authorised by the secretary. Where a prisoner is to be transferred for trial to another State or Territory, or under a law of the Commonwealth, consents or requests must be given or made by the Attorney General or their counterpart in the receiving jurisdiction. Prescribed officers under section 13 may certify that requisite consents or requests have been given or made, and the regulations currently prescribe the secretary or the general counsel of the Department of Communities and Justice as prescribed officers. The amendment will improve clarity by defining the term "prescribed officer" in section 13 and will provide flexibility for the secretary to authorise other officers to fulfil that function where the general counsel is unavailable or otherwise unable to do so, or for any other reason.

I move to the amendments to the Solicitor General Act. Schedule 7 to the bill amends the Solicitor General Act to allow the Solicitor General to exercise the functions of the Attorney General when the Attorney General is on leave but still within the State. The Solicitor General Act confers various functions on the Solicitor General of New South Wales, the second highest law officer of the State. One of the functions is to exercise the powers of the Attorney General in certain circumstances. Under section 3 (1) (b) of the Act, the Solicitor General can exercise the functions of the Attorney General when the office of the Attorney General is vacant, or when the Attorney General is absent from the State or is ill. However, the provision does not provide for the Solicitor General to exercise those functions when the Attorney General is on leave but still within the State. These amendments will address that gap in the legislation. It will ensure continuity in the exercise of the Attorney General's statutory functions when the Attorney General is on leave, regardless of whether they are within or outside the State.

I turn to the amendments to the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act. Schedule 8 to the bill will amend the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act to ensure consistency with recent amendments made by the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act. In February 2024 the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act amended the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act. The amendment enabled applications to be made for post-sentence detention and supervision of high-risk terrorist offenders at the end of their overall prison term where that term contains a sentence for a New South Wales indictable offence, irrespective of where the sentence for the New South Wales indictable offence falls in the continuum of the overall term. The requirement for an offender to serve a sentence for a New South Wales indictable offence is a key parameter for eligibility for orders under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act. The High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act kept this requirement but sought to prevent offenders avoiding orders because the sentence of the New South Wales indictable offence had expired by the time an application is made at the end of the overall term.

The High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act aimed to align the Terrorism High Risk Offenders Act with the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006, which enables orders to be made against high-risk offenders at the end of a cumulative prison term that includes a sentence for a relevant sex or violent offence, regardless of whether that sentence has expired by the end of the overall term of imprisonment. Some provisions in the Terrorism High Risk Offenders Act that require an offender to be serving a sentence of imprisonment for a New South Wales indictable offence at the end of the overall prison term were not amended by the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act.

The bill rectifies that omission and any other inadvertent omission by inserting a definition of "sentence of imprisonment for a New South Wales indictable offence" into the Terrorism High Risk Offenders Act to incorporate aggregate and cumulative sentences that include at least one sentence for a New South Wales

indictable offence, regardless of whether that sentence has expired. The bill implements the policy supported by Parliament when it passed changes to the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act. These amendments do not detract from the policy intent of the amendments made by the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Act and are not intended to capture a broader cohort of offenders.

I turn now to the amendments to the Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006. Schedule 9 to the bill amends the Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006. Items [1] and [2] of schedule 9 amend sections 8 and 14C of the trees Act to clarify that after lodging an application with the Land and Environment Court, the applicant must provide the respondent with notice that the application has been lodged and the terms of any orders sought 21 days before the hearing. The trees Act allows landowners to apply to the Land and Environment Court to resolve disputes between neighbours concerning trees. Under the trees Act, applicants are required to give owners of the land on which the relevant tree is located notice of applications made and orders sought under the Act.

Recently, court users and legal practitioners have interpreted sections 8 and 14C of the Act as requiring the applicant to give notice that an application will be made prior to making the application, rather than giving notice of an application after an application has been made. This amendment clarifies the current procedure and is consistent with the intent of the legislation and court practice. In conclusion, the bill is an important part of the Government's ongoing work in regularly reviewing and updating legislation to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 September 2024.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (12:22): The Opposition supports the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill makes minor amendments to the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010 to address a technical issue that has arisen in the operation of the Acts, which establish and govern the operation of two longstanding portable long service leave schemes covering workers in the building and construction industry and the cleaning industry. The portable schemes are necessary for those particular industries because workers more frequently change employers as a result of changes in contracts. It has become apparent that there are situations where work that would otherwise be covered by the long service provisions are not covered due to the operation of the Commonwealth Places (Mirror Taxes) Act 1998.

The Commonwealth Act prevents the State from imposing a long service levy in relation to work, including cleaning or construction work, performed at a Commonwealth place. Consequently, any day on which a worker registered under either of those portable long service schemes works at a Commonwealth place counts as a non-service day, including towards the four-year non-service period, which results in the cancellation of a registration. The bill will address that issue by excluding days worked at a Commonwealth place from being counted as non-service days so that registration can be maintained without regard to any such days worked. The bill will also allow reinstatement of registrations that have been cancelled due to previously counting days worked at a Commonwealth place as non-service days. I note the Minister is present in the Chamber. I thank her and her office for their work on the legislation, and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:24): I support the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which amends the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010. Labor governments enacted those two Acts for workers in this State, and I am very proud to support the bill. Those Acts established two separate schemes to provide eligible workers with portable long service leave benefits after 10 years of service in the sector, rather than after they have worked for a single employer for that period. The bill will amend both Acts and their regulations to preserve the registration of workers who perform building and construction or contract cleaning work on Commonwealth places.

In turn, this will preserve any previously accrued service credits for work on other places. These changes will only protect previously accrued service credits for work on non-Commonwealth sites in New South Wales; it will not enable service credits to be given for work at a Commonwealth place. Constitutional barriers prevent the schemes from applying to Commonwealth places in New South Wales—that is, places that the Commonwealth acquires for a public purpose and generally owns. The practical effect is that otherwise eligible work conducted on Commonwealth places does not accrue service. Moreover, the Long Service Corporation cannot collect levies

for work performed on these sites. There may be as many as 150 Commonwealth places in New South Wales, including military bases and Federal airports such as the Sydney and Western Sydney airports.

Not all Commonwealth places in New South Wales are affected; only those places where otherwise eligible building or cleaning work is completed on the site are affected. Workers who cannot accrue service credits for unrecognised work on Commonwealth places are at risk of having their registrations cancelled if that work exceeds four years. That is because both Acts require the Long Service Corporation to cancel a worker's registration if there is a break of four years from the date of their last service credit. Both Acts currently allow a cancelled registration to be restored within six years of the cancellation date if special circumstances exist that warrant the reinstatement of a worker's registration. However, work on an ineligible site, including Commonwealth places, does not meet that threshold.

To prevent registrations being cancelled and credits for work previously completed on other sites in New South Wales being lost, the bill will prescribe a day where a worker performs work on a Commonwealth place as a non-service day. This means that any time spent working on a Commonwealth place will not count towards the threshold of a four-year break in service, which triggers cancellation. Although this does not make work on Commonwealth places eligible, it will ensure that any existing service credits are not at risk of being forfeited due to working at Commonwealth places. As a safeguard, the amendments explicitly allow the Long Service Corporation to reinstate a registration that was cancelled due to work at a Commonwealth place within six years of the cancellation. It should be noted that there are no confirmed instances of a registration being cancelled for this reason.

The bill amends the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 to put beyond doubt that previously accrued service credits are restored when a cancelled registration is reinstated. This is consistent with an existing provision in the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010. The bill provides greater legislative clarity for both Acts and improves protection and fairness for the thousands of people in New South Wales who conduct work at Commonwealth places for extended periods. When consulted, a major peak body in the building and construction industry said it "agrees that these amendments are essential and a good starting point for preserving workers' rights and ensuring equitable access to long service leave benefits, regardless of the nature of their worksites". The bill will indeed protect the hard-earned service credits of workers, and is equitable and commonsense. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:30): On behalf of the Greens, I speak in support of the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill seeks to partially rectify a perverse situation for construction and contract cleaning workers at Commonwealth places, who do not currently have full access to portable long service leave. In New South Wales the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986, which I will refer to as the BCI Act, and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010, the CCI Act, established long service leave schemes for construction and contract cleaners. Both schemes allow eligible workers to accrue credits for years of service, which can then be converted into long service leave and are transferrable between workplaces. Long service leave is a good thing. Portable long service leave is a great thing. Hopefully, we can implement it in other industries in this State in the coming years.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: I agree.

Ms JENNY LEONG: I acknowledge that interjection. The Minister is keen, and we are looking forward to that happening. Maybe that is on the 2025 to-do list for us. Under the BCI Act and the CCI Act, the Long Service Corporation must cancel a worker's registration under the relevant scheme for a non-service period, or break from eligible work, of four or more years. The BCI Act allows an exemption to this mandatory cancellation when a worker has accrued more than five years of service prior to the non-cancellation period. The CCI Act has no similar provision. Cancellation of a worker's registration invalidates all credits earned for prior work. Both Acts count work of any duration at a Commonwealth place in New South Wales toward the four-year non-service period that triggers cancellation of a worker's registration. Commonwealth places include airports, military bases and any other site the Commonwealth has acquired for a public purpose and over which it has proprietary rights.

By the Government's own estimation, there are as many as 150 such worksites in New South Wales. In a practical sense, this means that contract cleaning workers covered by the relevant Act who spend five, six or seven years working as cleaners and earning credits to put toward long service leave simply have those credits wiped out if they then go on to work at a Commonwealth place for four or more years. To make matters worse, the construction and cleaning workers cannot currently accrue credits for any work performed at a Commonwealth place. If they start their careers at a Commonwealth place, they cannot even register in the appropriate portable leave scheme until they work on a non-Commonwealth worksite. Why? It seems that the Federal Constitution has come into play and prevents the enforcement of Acts of New South Wales on Commonwealth sites.

The same constitutional prohibition also means that employers on a Commonwealth site cannot make contributions to a long service leave levy even if they wanted to. It would be illegal for the Long Service Corporation to accept these funds. At least that is what we are advised. The bill seeks to amend the BCI Act and the CCI Act and their respective regulations to address the first of these three issues. Schedules 1 and 2 to the bill amend the regulations of both Acts to ensure that days of work at a Commonwealth place are not considered non-service days and are therefore not counted toward the four-year threshold for cancellation. Schedule 1.1 [2] to the bill inserts new section 19A into the BCI Act, which provides for the reinstatement of registration and associated credits for workers who have had these cancelled due to work on a Commonwealth site. Schedule 2.1 [2] inserts a parallel section 3 into the CCI Act, which would have the same effect for workers covered under that scheme. These are sensible amendments, and The Greens absolutely support them.

Let us take a step back and look at what is going on. It is absurd that workers who have spent years delivering vital construction and cleaning services on non-Commonwealth sites currently have recognition for those years of service wiped out if they move to a Commonwealth place. Their long service leave entitlements should not be contingent upon whether the State or the Commonwealth has rights to their place of work. That being said, it is deeply concerning that this work at a State level does not appear to be coupled with the necessary work at a Federal level to address the underlying constitutional issues. This bill is welcome, but it does nothing to ensure that workers at these Commonwealth places can actually accrue long service leave credits while doing the work there. It does nothing to allow employers at Commonwealth places to contribute to a levy that can eventually be used to pay out long service leave entitlements. It does not do those things because it cannot. Action is needed at a Federal level to solve the problem.

I understand the Minister's contribution and the frustrations felt at a State level. It is not possible for the New South Wales Government to resolve this unless we have parallel action from the Federal Government. One would think that if there was ever a time to work out this problem, now would be that time, given we have State and Federal Labor governments. We should be able to resolve the issue given we have a Prime Minister who claims to care about workers' rights and a State Labor Government that says it will deliver for the workers of New South Wales. But we are not passing legislation that resolves the issue. Construction and cleaning workers working at Commonwealth places will still be not accruing long service leave, and their bosses will be let off the hook, not having to pay in to long service leave entitlements, because the Federal Labor Party and the State Labor Party have been unable to resolve this issue.

So while I absolutely acknowledge that the New South Wales Labor Government is doing as much as it can, I genuinely question when this problem will ever be fixed if it cannot be fixed with Federal and State Labor governments. Clearly, it is not something that the former Coalition Government was interested in fixing, but why are we not solving the fundamental problem now? The Greens hope that this frustration and annoyance and the real-world consequences for workers in this State will turn into more urgent action, with the Labor governments at both State and Federal levels finally stepping up to resolve this situation. If the Government's Federal counterparts are not taking the action needed, then I urge the Minister to publicly call on them to act now as part of this legislation's passage. What are we waiting for otherwise?

Thousands of workers at Commonwealth places in New South Wales are edging ever closer to the four-year threshold when their registration will be cancelled and their credits for prior service wiped clean. Thousands of people have been working hard to construct things such as the Western Sydney International Airport, on which work commenced in 2018. Many of them would be accruing long service leave now if they were employed in workplaces that were not Commonwealth places, but they are currently being denied that right because NSW Labor and Federal Labor seem unable to resolve this issue. The clock is ticking. Those workers are not getting the rights they have fairly won and deserve. I urge the Minister to give the biggest possible call-out to the Federal Labor Government to finally resolve the issue. We all know it will not be solved when Peter Dutton or the next Scott Morrison—whoever the next Coalition leader is—and Opposition members are back in control. It will only be solved by the current State and Federal Labor governments. So let us get it done now.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:39): I support the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, an urgent and necessary response to a looming risk faced by a particular cohort of workers through no fault of their own. To reiterate, constitutional barriers prevent both portable long service leave schemes from applying to Commonwealth places in New South Wales. While an enduring solution is explored, there is an immediate risk that must be dealt with. The Long Service Corporation is required to cancel a worker's registration when there has been four or more years since their last service credit. Service credits are forfeit upon cancellation. If a worker has their registration cancelled on that basis, they currently have no recourse to have their registration reinstated. That creates an impending risk to workers with existing service credits who go on to work exclusively at Commonwealth places for four or more years. Thankfully, there has yet to be a confirmed instance where a worker's registration has been cancelled for that reason. However, it becomes more likely each day this bill is delayed.

A worker should not be at risk of losing their hard-earned service credits for doing otherwise eligible work merely because the work is conducted on a Commonwealth place. This bill is necessary because it effectively removes that risk by explicitly prescribing a day worked on a Commonwealth place as a day that is not to be considered as part of the four-year break that triggers cancellation. Moreover, the bill provides a safeguard by ensuring that the Long Service Corporation can reinstate a registration if it was cancelled due to work on a Commonwealth place. To ensure that the bill is appropriate and fit for purpose, the Department of Customer Service conducted targeted consultation with key stakeholders, including employee representative groups, employer representative groups, sector peaks on the industry committees and Commonwealth Government counterparts.

During consultation, the department made clear, as I have today, that this bill is not intended to resolve the constitutional barriers at large. Rather, these amendments provide a necessary interim solution to a time-sensitive issue while the enduring solution is explored. Stakeholders understood the rationale for the amendments, and most did not oppose the bill. Reasonably, they also implored the Government to resolve the broader issue. To that end, I am assured that the Minister for Industrial Relations has been engaging with her Federal counterparts. Additionally, the department is continuing to work with the Commonwealth and other Australian jurisdictions to define the problem and find an enduring solution. Until then, this bill will protect the cohort of affected workers and minimise the potential harm caused by the constitutional barriers we are experiencing. These workers should not risk losing their long service entitlements through no fault of their own. This bill ensures that they will not have to. I thank the Minister, her team, the public servants involved and all stakeholders for their work on this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:42): I make a brief contribution in support of the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, an important legislative reform that brings fairness and justice to thousands of workers in the building, construction and contract cleaning industries of New South Wales. The Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 addresses a significant issue affecting workers who serve at Commonwealth places within the State. In New South Wales, workers in the building, construction and contract cleaning sectors have access to portable long service leave schemes. This system allows workers to accumulate long service leave entitlements even when they switch employers or work on different projects.

That critical mechanism ensures that workers are rewarded for their years of dedication, regardless of the transitory nature of their employment in these industries. However, a constitutional barrier currently exists that prevents the schemes from applying to Commonwealth places in New South Wales, such as military bases, airports and other government-owned sites. Thousands of workers at the Western Sydney airport alone have been impacted by this constitutional anomaly. While they perform the same work as their counterparts on non-Commonwealth sites, their service at Commonwealth places does not count towards their long service leave entitlements. This bill, therefore, seeks to correct this unfair situation by ensuring that workers can maintain their registrations in the schemes and have their service credits restored when they work at Commonwealth places.

Schedule 1 and 2 to the bill make critical amendments to the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010 respectively. The amendments ensure that if a worker's registration in the long service leave scheme is cancelled due to their work at a Commonwealth place, the cancellation can be reversed. Workers will not lose their previously accrued service credits simply because they worked at a Commonwealth site. For example, if a worker had accrued eight years of service but spent the next four years working at a site such as Sydney airport, they would have faced cancellation of their registration under the current laws. This bill would restore their registration and credits, as though the cancellation never occurred. In simpler terms, this provision ensures that a worker's time on Commonwealth sites does not harm their entitlement status and maintains their rightful credits without interruption.

This bill is necessary because the issue lies with the constitutional limitation on New South Wales' ability to impose a levy on work performed at Commonwealth places. The Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970 effectively prohibits New South Wales from collecting the levies that fund entitlements for workers employed on Commonwealth lands. This results in an untenable situation where otherwise eligible work is not recognised for long service leave purposes. This bill is not about sidestepping the constitution but about providing relief and fairness within the confines of existing laws.

The bill addresses an immediate problem. It ensures that workers at risk of losing their entitlements due to no fault of their own are protected. At its core, this bill is about equity and fairness. A cleaner who worked hard for eight years could have their service wiped out because they spent the next few years working at a Commonwealth site. That is not only unjust, but it also undermines the very principle of long service leave to reward long-term commitment and service. Workers in the building, construction and cleaning industries often

switch between different employers and sites. It is unfair to penalise them for working on Commonwealth land, when in every other sense they are doing the same job as their counterparts on non-Commonwealth sites. The contribution of those workers to the New South Wales economy is undeniable. They build vital infrastructure and maintain the cleanliness and functionality of important public spaces. They should be able to accrue long service leave regardless of where in New South Wales they work.

The bill was developed with extensive consultation from key stakeholders, including unions and industry representatives, and is largely supported. The Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 is a well-crafted, practical measure that protects workers from losing their hard-earned entitlements. It ensures that they are treated fairly, regardless of whether they work on Commonwealth or non-Commonwealth sites. I thank the Minister for Industrial Relations for introducing the bill to the House. It will rectify an anomaly and create fairness and equity. I urge my colleagues to support the bill and stand with the workers who give so much to our State. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (12:48): I support the Portable Long Service Leave Amendment Bill 2024, which amends the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Leave Payments Act 1986, or the BCI Act, and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010, or the CCI Act. This bill arises due to constitutional issues that prevent the building and cleaning portable long service schemes from applying to Commonwealth places in New South Wales. Currently, the BCI Act requires the Long Service Corporation to cancel a worker's registration if a worker has less than five years of service and there is no service recorded for four or more years. The CCI Act requires cancellation regardless of the amount of prior service. Commonwealth places are not currently recognised, thereby counting towards a worker's break period, meaning workers lose their registration and service credits.

The bill addresses those existing limitations through a number of amendments. First it provides that service at a Commonwealth place does not count towards the four-year threshold of non-service and so does not trigger a cancellation of registration. It also clarifies that the Long Service Corporation can restore cancelled registrations where the registration was cancelled due to work at a Commonwealth place. The bill also ensures that restoring a cancelled registration under the building and construction industry Act will also restore prior service credits as though cancellation had not occurred, similar to an existing provision in the contract cleaning industry Act. Many stakeholders urged this Government to find a solution to recognise service at Commonwealth places and introduce protections for workers' registrations, and the bill achieves that. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (12:49): I speak in support of the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. There are thousands of workers in New South Wales who perform building and construction, and contract cleaning work at Commonwealth places. These dedicated workers make significant contributions to our State by delivering critical infrastructure such as the new Western Sydney airport, and supporting the operation of services at other Commonwealth sites in New South Wales. Despite this, those workers currently cannot receive credits towards their portable long service leave because of constitutional barriers that prevent the legislation for both portable long service leave schemes for building and cleaning from applying to Commonwealth places.

A practical effect of that is that ordinarily eligible work is not recognised if it is conducted at a Commonwealth place. Work at a Commonwealth place is effectively considered a gap in service for the purpose of the portable long service leave schemes. This is particularly problematic for building and cleaning workers who change employers, as they are unable to access other types of long service leave. Because the Long Service Corporation must cancel a worker's registration after four or more years since the last service credit, workers who are employed exclusively at Commonwealth places are at risk of losing their registration and previously accrued service credits.

The bill addresses that pressing issue by ensuring that a worker's registration cannot be cancelled simply due to working at a Commonwealth place. Schedules 1.2 and 2.2 will achieve that by prescribing a day worked at a Commonwealth place in New South Wales as a day that does not count towards the four-year cancellation threshold. In the cleaning scheme a single day of work at a Commonwealth place will effectively reset the four-year threshold. Additionally, if a worker's registration is cancelled due to working on a Commonwealth site, the bill provides a pathway for that registration to be reinstated. Item [2] in schedule 1.1 and item [2] in schedule 2.1 will achieve this by explicitly allowing the Long Service Corporation to reinstate a registration if it has already been cancelled. A restoration must occur within six years of the cancellation. The power to restore a restoration is an added safeguard in the event that the Long Service Corporation identifies cases where a registration has already been cancelled due to this issue. Though there are no confirmed instances of that happening, this will ensure entitlements are protected if the situation arises.

The bill also puts beyond doubt that when a registration is restored, any previously accrued service credits from work conducted at non-Commonwealth sites are reinstated. The service credits that will be restored are for

work at other places before the worker first started at the Commonwealth place. The corresponding levy for these service credits will have already been paid. As such, the bill would not adversely affect the health of either of the scheme funds. Schedule 1.1, item [1] will amend the building and construction Act to ensure that restoring a cancelled registration has the effect of the Act applying to that worker as if the registration had not been cancelled. Effectively, all service credits previously accrued at non-Commonwealth places would be restored. The contract cleaning Act already has an equivalent provision.

Consultation was conducted with unions and industry stakeholders. Most stakeholders did not oppose the bill and generally agreed that it would be a positive step to protect prior service credits. They understood that these amendments are urgently needed to safeguard the many workers who contribute to our State's infrastructure, economy and communities. The bill does not seek to resolve the constitutional barrier at large. However, the New South Wales Government is committed to doing so in collaboration with the Commonwealth and other government agencies in due course. I commend the Minister for her work on this issue and her advocacy for impacted workers. Ultimately, the bill will mitigate the risk of harm to affected workers while a solution is considered. As members have heard, it will achieve this by ensuring that a worker's registration and prior service is not forfeited simply due to the location of their work. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:54): I speak in support of the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The Long Service Corporation administers portable long service leave schemes in New South Wales for the building and construction industry [BCI] and the contract cleaning industry [CCI]. These schemes were established through the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010. These two schemes provide benefits for thousands of workers each year. In 2023, for the BCI and CCI respectively, there were 495,000 and 121,996 registered workers and 38,491 and 1,196 registered employers with \$109.45 million and \$4 million paid in benefits, and \$175 million collected as levies. I have two sons who are tradies. This is a really important scheme for those workers who transfer jobs or work for a number of employers. It allows for them to accrue long service leave that they would not normally be entitled to.

The New South Wales Government has received legal advice that there are constitutional barriers that prevent the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010 from applying to Commonwealth places. These are sites that the Commonwealth acquires and generally owns for a public purpose, such as military bases and Federal airports and office blocks. As a result, the Long Service Corporation cannot collect levies and award service credits for work performed at Commonwealth sites. This also means that workers new to the sectors who start at a Commonwealth place cannot register in this scheme for their work. For workers who are already registered, any work at a Commonwealth place will not count towards their total service.

The bill rectifies scenarios where workers lose their registration and prior service credits due to working at a Commonwealth place for four or more years. This occurs because the Long Service Corporation must cancel a worker's registration in the circumstances set out in section 28 of the contract cleaning Act and section 19 of the building and construction Act. For building workers, a break of four years with no service triggers cancellation if they have less than five years of service accrued. The same applies to contract cleaners, irrespective of the amount of previously accrued service. As work at a Commonwealth place is not currently recognised, it is effectively a break in service and counts towards the four-year break that triggers cancellation.

To illustrate the issue in practice, consider the fictional example of Kora. Kora is a construction worker who has accrued five years of service credits from work in New South Wales at a non-Commonwealth place. Kora then begins work exclusively at the Albatross air base in Nowra, which is a Commonwealth place. Because work at a Commonwealth place is not recognised, if she works there for four or more years, Kora is at risk of having her registration cancelled, forfeiting five years of her previously accrued service. The bill removes that risk by prescribing work on a Commonwealth place as a non-service day. That means that work on a Commonwealth place will no longer be considered as a break in service that would ultimately trigger cancellation.

To be clear, the amendments in the bill will not enable Kora to accrue service credits for her work on a Commonwealth place. They will, however, protect service credits from prior work on non-Commonwealth places. If a worker like Kora has already had their registration cancelled due to their work on a Commonwealth place, the amendments in the bill will also allow the Long Service Corporation to reinstate their registration and restore previously accrued service.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): It being 1.00 p.m., debate is interrupted to take note of committee reports. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:00): As Chair: I speak on report No. 3/58 of the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. The report examined the draft Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 2024, which would repeal and replace the regulations under which all members of the New South Wales Parliament are currently required to disclose their pecuniary interests. The committee's report was made in response to the referral from the House, pursuant to section 14A (5) of the Constitution, for the purpose of making representations to the Governor before the regulations are made. The proposed regulations, which arise from recommendations made by the Independent Commission Against Corruption in its Operation Whitney report, would require members to disclose the interests of immediate family members and a range of other interests and matters, including conflicts of interest, water access licences and trusts.

Under section 14A (6) of the Constitution, regulations of that kind made under section 14A (1) cannot be disallowed by one House only, which gives significant power to the Government. The committee has closely scrutinised the proposed exercise of that power but can support the proposed regulation only in part. First, the committee supports the proposed changes to the manner and timing of members making disclosures. Given that the register of pecuniary interests is so important for ensuring that members are accountable to the public, it is long overdue that it be published online in an accessible and searchable format. Second, the committee supports the proposed requirements for members to lodge a return within one month after the House first assembles after a general election or after a member takes their seat after a by-election.

The committee also supports requiring members to update their returns within one month of any relevant changes to their circumstances and make an annual declaration—in most cases, by 31 July each year—that the register is complete and accurate. The changes will simplify the regulations and emphasise the importance of members' disclosure obligations. However, given that the requirement for members to update the register within one month might not be compassionate in some cases, the committee has recommended that there be a provision for time to be extended in limited circumstances—namely, where a family member has died or the member is seriously ill or injured.

The committee supports increased transparency for members in relation to their interests in trusts, noting the central role that those legal relationships played in the Operation Whitney report, and increased transparency around water access licences, noting that they are tradeable commodities worth billions of dollars in New South Wales. Nevertheless, the committee cannot support the regulation in its current form, as there are several matters that require clarification about their intended purpose or operation. Many of the proposed regulations would require the disclosure of the interests of members' immediate family members. The committee finds that that would give rise to serious privacy or safety risks. For example, members would need to disclose the names and addresses of their children's workplaces. They would also need to disclose detailed information about their family's income.

The regulations propose to deal with risks to privacy and safety by giving the Clerk a discretion to exclude certain information from the registers that are made publicly available. It is proposed that any information excluded by the Clerk would only be accessible by the ICAC and members, including members of the other place. Professor Emerita Anne Twomey, AO, from whom the committee was pleased to receive a submission, made three short points that underscore why the committee does not support burdening the Clerk with that discretion. First, it would potentially politicise the Clerk's position. Second, the Clerk has no expertise to support making an assessment about safety. Third, the Clerk is not placed within a structure that allows for judicial review or merits review of their decisions. The committee's firm view is that any regulations that impact upon a family member's rights to privacy should be provided in the regulation or by substantive legislation and debated in the House.

Section 15 of the proposed regulation would require that members disclose any conflicts of interest, which would not be limited to their pecuniary interests. The committee does not support a mandatory conflict of interest register for a number of reasons. The most significant are as follows: First, the regulations would apply to potential and perceived, as well as actual, conflicts of interest. Because a member's seat being declared vacant under section 14A (2) is the only remedy available under the Constitution for a wilful breach of the regulations, the possible consequences from conflicts of interest being wrongly perceived are significant.

Second, and related to the above, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries disclose their conflicts of interest to the Premier in private. The Premier acts as the "reasonable person" in deciding whether the "private interest" could objectively have the potential to influence the performance of the Minister's public duty". There is a

different, closed process for Ministers, who have a greater capacity than backbenchers for decision-making that may involve potential conflicts of interest. The committee finds that the concept of "conflict" is too imprecise and that the consequences of a finding that a conflict was deliberately not disclosed are potentially so serious that the draft regulation should not proceed in its current form.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their collaborative approach to the inquiry, and the members who shared their insights into the terms of the proposed regulation and how it could operate in practice. On behalf of the committee, I thank the Clerk in her capacity as committee clerk and registrar, and the staff of her office in supporting the committee secretariat and members of the House with respect to the disclosure of pecuniary interests. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
AMENDMENT (PROHIBITING NO GROUNDS EVICTIONS) BILL 2024**

Reports

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:07): As Chair: The committee tabled its report on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024 on 17 September 2024. Currently, the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 allows landlords to evict a tenant by terminating a periodic or fixed-term lease without providing a reason. According to the State Government's own end of tenancy survey, that allows for one renter in New South Wales to be issued with a no-grounds eviction notice without reason every 18 minutes. Ending no-grounds evictions has long been a focus of mine, as well as of many who have raised concerns about the ongoing rental crisis that the State is facing. In February this year I introduced the second Greens bill aiming to outlaw that unfair practice by amending the Residential Tenancies Act to require landlords to provide a reason for terminating any residential lease. The bill also included a range of compliance and enforcement provisions, such as penalties and compensation orders, to prevent landlords from misusing eviction grounds.

In May 2024 the bill was referred to this committee for closer examination of its provisions and its likely impact on housing affordability and availability in New South Wales. I acknowledge and thank the Parliament for establishing the select committee and appointing me as chair to be able to conduct that investigation. Throughout the inquiry, the committee heard compelling evidence from multiple stakeholders about how the current law perpetuates a power imbalance between landlords and tenants, and negatively impacts people who rent. The committee heard that renters in New South Wales are haunted by the spectre of a potential eviction through no fault of their own and that this threat makes them less likely to exercise their right to request repairs and maintenance on their rental home.

The committee heard evidence from a range of stakeholders, including Shelter NSW, the Tenants' Union of NSW, the NSW Council of Social Service and various community legal centres, that no-grounds evictions are compounding the worsening housing crisis in New South Wales and causing significant financial and psychological harm to renters. One submission from the UNSW City Futures Research Centre described ending no-grounds evictions as "the single most important tenancy law reform that the New South Wales Parliament could make today". I acknowledge that, while the inquiry was ongoing, just before our first public hearing in July the Minns Labor Government announced plans to fulfil its election commitment to end no-grounds evictions by introducing legislation in September.

That announcement was welcomed by most stakeholders who participated in the public hearings. But I note that we are at the end of the September sittings and we are now expecting this legislation to be introduced in the October sittings. As the committee heard throughout the inquiry, renters cannot afford to keep waiting for this critical reform. The committee's report recommended that the Government listens to the experts and ends no-grounds evictions for both periodic and fixed-term leases. To ensure that there are no loopholes for landlords or property managers to exploit, the committee also recommended that compliance and enforcement mechanisms be introduced alongside a ban, and that specific eviction grounds be coupled with a requirement for landlords to produce evidence that an eviction ground is valid. Those safeguards would ensure that, once an eviction has taken place, a property will be used in the way the landlord claims it will be.

During public hearings, the committee heard concerns from a minority of stakeholders within the real estate industry that ending no-grounds evictions would discourage property investment and negatively impact rental supply. That was difficult to reconcile with the other argument advanced by the same stakeholders that no-grounds evictions are scarcely used by landlords in New South Wales and therefore did not merit legislative reform. Overall, the committee was not satisfied by unsubstantiated claims of reduced rental supply and investment. We were strongly compelled by evidence from the NSW Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, on the second day of

public hearings that there is "no statistically significant evidence" in any Australian jurisdiction that has outlawed no-grounds evictions of any negative impact on the rental market in terms of investor lending or vacancy rates.

Similarly, the committee did not accept the argument that unrestricted use of housing as an investment was equally, if not more, important than renters' rights to a secure and stable home. After considering the evidence and different viewpoints expressed throughout the inquiry, we have taken the position that the benefits of housing security and certainty for renters far outweigh absolute property rights for landlords, including the right to evict tenants at whim and without reason. Tackling the housing crisis facing our communities will take a lot more than what is currently on the table. We know that the rental reforms recommended in the report will go some way to addressing the many concerns of the more than two million people who rent in this State.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and commitment to working within a tight time frame to participate in the inquiries and deliver the report. I am grateful for the constructive debate that strengthened the report. I also thank the secretariat, particularly Shanshan, who is in the Chamber, for the ongoing professionalism and support that I required throughout my first experience chairing a committee. Most of all, I thank the submission makers and witnesses who engaged in the inquiry and the many groups that have advocated for this reform for many years. The committee greatly appreciates their contribution to improving the laws of the State. I commend the report to the House.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (13:13): It is with pleasure that I, as deputy chair of the committee, take note of the report of the Select Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. The committee tabled its report on 17 September 2024. I acknowledge the committee members, including the chair, the member for Newtown; the member for Cessnock; the member for Blue Mountains; and the member for Willoughby. I thank the committee staff for their professionalism and for working within extremely tight deadlines. I also thank all stakeholders for their valuable contributions, presenting lived experience and raising issues and concerns on behalf of their members.

The select committee was established in May 2024 to inquire into the private member's bill introduced by the member for Newtown. The bill was referred to an inquiry, which enabled public debate to consider the issues in the reform. On the weekend of 28 July, before the committee's first inquiry, the Premier, Minister Chanthivong and Minister Jackson announced that the New South Wales Government would commit to fairer renting. The announcement significantly changed the dial for the committee. It gave the committee concrete certainty that the Government was acting on its election commitment to make renting fairer by introducing improved rental laws to end no-grounds evictions. The Minns Labor Government announced that the change would be one of the biggest reforms to the rental market in a decade, helping to ensure that we get the balance right between renters and home owners.

The number of renters in New South Wales is increasing daily. In my electorate of Parramatta, 57 per cent of people are renters. That is a staggering statistic, one that a decade ago would never have been considered for Parramatta. The area now has the second highest percentage of renters in the State. More people are renting than ever before, and that is not just in metropolitan areas; it is in regional and rural New South Wales. Around 33 per cent of the New South Wales population are renters, which is an increase of 17.6 per cent since 2016. However, the current rental market in New South Wales is the toughest that renters have experienced in decades. The findings and recommendations made by the committee, after listening to the contributions of stakeholders on both sides of the debate, will support and strengthen the legislation that will be introduced by Government. That will put renters in New South Wales in a great space and it will ensure that landlords retain access protections. I commend the report to the House.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (13:17): I take note of the report of the Select Committee on Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. The report examines the issues and challenges faced by tenants and landlords in New South Wales, the terms of reference for which were tightly linked to the bill introduced by The Greens. It is important to note that I speak as the only Coalition member of the committee. All members know the bigger picture. Rents in Greater Sydney have surged by over 13 per cent in a year. The proportion of available housing that is affordable to an average income earner has fallen, with only 28 per cent of rental properties considered accessible, which is down from 35 per cent just a year ago. In contrast, that figure was at a record high of 48 per cent under the Coalition in 2020-21.

Renters are understandably frustrated. Rising rents combined with limited government action on rental reform has left many renters feeling concerned. We cannot ignore renters' calls for greater certainty, improved timelines and conditions, and more options. At the same time, the report rightly sheds light on the concerns of property owners, investors and real estate professionals. Property owners play a crucial role in the rental market, and we must avoid policies that could discourage investment in rental properties. The availability of housing depends on property owners offering properties for rent. If regulations, policies and laws become too burdensome, housing supply will be further strained.

Supply is the biggest issue by far in this space. It is the main issue. In reality, it is issue number one, two three, four and five. The essence of the bill and the report do nothing for supply. I have recorded my concerns in the committee's minutes, which reflect my comments that the current draft of the report lacks a clear statement of incidence of no-grounds evictions; lacks balance between the two sides of the market, namely the supply side and the demand side; reflects a different standard of evidence between the two sides of the market; and, therefore, is a flawed report overall. I will deal briefly with those points.

The reforms proposed in the bill substantially turn the tables in such a way that suggest no-grounds evictions are widespread and deeply problematic. The report does not do justice to the essential matter of incidence. How common are they? The committee heard that there are one million renters in New South Wales. The Tenants' Union submitted that there are 28,000 no-grounds evictions per year. Fair Trading submitted it was 32,000 per year. They are close—about 3 per cent of tenancies are affected each year. Yet the bill includes major reforms that pose considerable risk and would change the dynamic in 100 per cent of tenancies. On the question of balance, of the many tens of groups involved, only three addressed the concerns of property owners. The submissions of property owners, property investors and real estate agents are not given due weight. Any objective examination of the transcript of the hearings confirms that.

A report that lacks balance between the supply and demand sides of the market runs the risk of destabilising the broader property landscape. If we discourage landlords from investing, housing supply will inevitably decrease, worsening conditions for renters. I further tackle the point I made on the standard evidence that was seemingly imposed upon parties making submissions. It appeared to be the case that property owners were required to meet an absolute standard of detail and incontrovertible facts, whereas in respect of tenants and some other community groups, it was feelings and risks that seemed to be an appropriate threshold for recording their concerns. There is a lack of balance there. I point out that the committee's own survey—and I encourage all to look at it—makes clear that there are real risks to supply in the market.

In conclusion, the report does not adequately reflect the complexities of the rental market in New South Wales nor adequately respect both sides of the market. The report does not do enough to find balance. Now is the time to move forward carefully with real balance that will support both sides of the market. I thank committee staff and all involved, and I thank the House for hearing my concerns.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:21): I contribute to the take-note debate on the report of the Select Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. I thank the chair; it was her bill introduced in this House that led us to the inquiry process. I also acknowledge the Government's courage to accept and take seriously a matter raised by a member of the crossbench and to send it off to a committee inquiry for us to go through that process and on that journey. I thank everyone who made submissions—all the people who took the time and effort to put something in writing—and those who actually turned up to our public hearings. I endorse the report that has been tabled.

I speak briefly on some of the comments made by the member for Willoughby. He and I obviously come from a significantly different ideological space, and I suspect that we could probably sit down for several weeks with the same report, the same witnesses and the same details and still not agree. During the hearings we tackled some of the issues that I thought he might raise in this debate. He talked about the number of renters—whether it is 28,000 or 32,000—who have been evicted on no grounds and said that there are about one million renters. To the member for Willoughby, that represents about 3 per cent. That is actually 28,000 or 32,000 renters who might be evicted on no grounds of those who change their rental property that particular year. If 10 per cent of those renters change their property that particular year, then 30,000 equals 30 per cent and not 3 per cent. If 200,000 change that year, then 30,000 equals 15 per cent. They are the numbers.

But the truth is, whichever way the data is pushed or pulled, if we have 28,000 families—mums, dads, carers, single parents or there are multi-family dynamics—then those people are being booted out of what they thought was their home and the place from where they pursued their dreams and ambitions. They have made a decision based on work and public transport. They have put their children into school. That is a significant number of people. The member for Willoughby says, "It is only 3 per cent. Do we really need to ponder the importance of that?" But 30,000 families seems pretty significant and important to me. The member also mentioned the submissions and the evidence given by some of the property owners and corporates. I own rental properties. I am an investor. I am a landlord. Some of the information provided to us by some of those groups reflected their view and opinion, and it was great. It added layers, but I did not necessarily accept it and I would have enjoyed the chance to interact with them for longer.

Finally, for 90 per cent or 95 per cent of landlords, the most important thing is to have a good tenant who pays the rent and looks after the property. A small number of landlords or investors are driven by dollars and dollars alone, and we heard through the evidence that they can be part of the problem. I commend the report to the House. It is a wonderful piece of work and the committee was well led by the chair.

Report noted.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Reports

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:26): As Chair: I am delighted to contribute to the take-note debate on the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety entitled *Electric and hybrid vehicle batteries*. New South Wales has seen a marked uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles in recent years. We have also seen more personal mobility devices, such as e-bikes, on our roads and cyclepaths. Those technologies are critical to decarbonising transport and supporting the New South Wales energy transition. However, the uptake of electric vehicles has raised concerns about EV battery safety and subsequent fire risks. The committee initiated this inquiry to ensure that the risks of electric and hybrid vehicle batteries are better understood and addressed comprehensively.

We found that EV fires are relatively rare and less common than internal combustion engine vehicle fires. That is due in part to effective regulations and design standards that are applied to newly sold EVs in Australia. However, when EV battery-related fires do occur, they are severe and more difficult to extinguish than petrol or diesel vehicle fires. We heard that personal mobility devices are more likely to catch fire than EVs, and that is due in part to the prevalence of low-quality imports and gaps in the regulation of those devices. Pleasingly, though, during the inquiry the committee heard that the New South Wales Government had strengthened regulations for e-bikes and other personal mobility devices, applying stricter standards and more stringent testing requirements. The committee welcomes that development and recommends that the regulations are backed by strong enforcement—particularly online, where we heard that riskier, low-quality personal mobility devices can still be sold.

In addition, we recommend that the New South Wales Government advocate for the nationwide adoption of common standards for those devices. While some work has been done, the committee knows there is so much more that can be done. We need to see the Federal Government engaged in the process, particularly with online purchases and imports from manufacturers outside Australia that may not have the consistent standards that we expect and the market sets in Australia. Emergency services workers play a crucial role in keeping our community safe, including from EV battery fires.

The committee heard about the dangers that first responders can face when dealing with electric vehicle battery fires, such as intense flames, toxic gases and the risk of re-ignition after a fire has been extinguished. Because of this, the committee has made recommendations aimed at keeping emergency service workers safe, such as sector-wide training on safe management of EV battery fires. Secondly, ensuring that all emergency service workers have effective personal protective equipment, otherwise known as PPE. Finally, that PPE is effectively decontaminated from EV battery fires. The committee also found that there were information and data gaps about injuries and the long-term effects of exposure to EV battery fires. As a result, the committee recommends that New South Wales government agencies collect data on injuries and health impacts from EV battery fires to support further research and better manage any identified health risks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): It being 1.30 p.m., debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Bills

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE AMENDMENT (GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2024

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (14:33): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today the Government continues its reform of icare. The State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Governance Arrangements) Bill 2024 includes practical amendments to the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015. The measures in the bill are aimed at strengthening governance arrangements between icare's board and

management, better supporting icare to be responsive to government priorities and strengthening icare's accountability and transparency to its stakeholders, including government, the Parliament, injured workers, premium holders, premium payers, employers and the broader community.

The bill also aims to embody icare's newly established principal objectives, including to promote efficiency, transparency and accountability in the conduct of its operations. The new objectives were established last year by an amendment to the same Act. The bill also gives effect to the findings of Treasury's recently completely operational expenditure review into icare that require legislative change. I put on record that the operational expenditure review that was conducted by Treasury will be released in the public domain.

Icare is one of Australia's largest insurers responsible for administering workers compensation, dust diseases and lifetime care and builders' warranty insurance on behalf of New South Wales employers, employees, drivers and home builders. It is also responsible for insuring the New South Wales Government's own property assets and other insurable risks. At present, icare provides workers compensation cover for approximately four million workers, 338,000 employers and 204 New South Wales government agencies. Icare handles approximately 100,000 workers compensation claims each year. It also manages more than \$49 billion of assets, including the Treasury Managed Fund, which on its own accounts for \$16 billion of the State's assets. It is critical for injured workers, business and government that icare's governance arrangements are as transparent as possible.

The first element of the bill deals with the composition of the icare board. At present, the board is made up of 10 voting members, including the managing director, chief executive and employee-nominated director. We have also asked for an employer director and seven independent, non-executive directors. Consistent with contemporary trends in corporate governance, which attach a high value to the role of non-executive directors, the removal of the chief executive as a voting member of the board will sharpen the distinction between the board and management. It sends a clear signal that the board's role is to set icare's strategic direction and hold management to account for icare's business management and day-to-day operations, and that management is subject to the board's control.

The bill also proposes the appointment of the Secretary of NSW Treasury or nominated Treasury official to the board. The size of the board will remain unchanged with 10 members, but the make-up of the icare board will look similar to NSW Treasury Corporation. TCorp is the New South Wales Government's other public financial corporation. Its board includes the NSW Treasury secretary and another NSW Treasury senior executive. The icare board will be better supported to understand the Government's priorities, and the board in turn will benefit from a deeper understanding of the government environment and context.

One of icare's unique features is the role it plays as the New South Wales Government's self-insurance provider. Insurance for NSW manages several government funds and statutory insurance schemes. They collectively support and protect the New South Wales public service in the course of its operations. The largest of these schemes is the Treasury Managed Fund. The TMF's liabilities count towards the total State sector accounts, and its liabilities are funded through contributions either via agencies or directly from the Consolidated Fund and income from investments managed by TCorp.

Icare's role as the State's mandatory insurer for the provision of workers compensation, acting on behalf of the Nominal Insurer, builder's warranty insurance and its various lifetime care schemes, and the size of its assets and liabilities—approximately \$49 billion—means that its role as scheme administrator has a broader economic significance, with direct implications for workforce participation and productivity. These dimensions mean it is equally important for Treasury to build a deeper understanding of the State's insurance and care landscape, as well as gain new insights into icare's business, strategic direction and broader operating context and policy challenges. The change builds on the Government's investment through the 2024-25 budget to establish an ongoing policy and system stewardship function for the State's insurance and care system within NSW Treasury. It is also in line with a recommendation by the Auditor-General of New South Wales for NSW Treasury to work more closely with icare's board and take a stronger financial oversight role.

The third part of the bill clarifies the role of the Minister with respect to the appointment of the icare CEO by the board. Under the current Act, the board is simply required to consult with the responsible Minister before appointing a CEO. That requirement is ambiguous. Going forward, the board will need the Minister's approval for the chief executive to be appointed. At the same time, the bill acknowledges the board's role in appointing the chief executive. The final change made by the bill is a new requirement for icare's statement of business intent to be tabled in Parliament. The main purpose of the statement of business intent is for icare to present to the Government and to the public a clear understanding of how its commercial objectives, strategies, plans and activities align with the Government's expectations.

The agreement between icare and the Government allows icare's business performance to be monitored and tracked over time. But, under the current Act, there is no requirement for icare's statement of business intent

to be made public or tabled in Parliament. In April 2024 the Auditor-General of New South Wales recommended that icare publicly release its 2024-25 statement of business intent setting out its approach to achieving its legislative objectives for workers compensation. The bill will legislate that requirement going forward. It is a welcome change that will improve transparency for key stakeholders, including the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Law and Justice, and employers and employees across New South Wales to whom icare owes a statutory trust.

As the New South Wales Government's social insurer, icare plays a key role in creating strong social, financial and economic outcomes across our community. That means it is vital that both government and the wider community can have confidence in icare and its performance to deliver high-quality services. In summary, the bill proposes a series of practical changes intended to improve icare's governance. They build on changes to appoint employee and employee-body nominated directors to the icare board and establish principal objectives for icare. The bill also responds to recommendations and findings made by the Auditor-General of New South Wales and NSW Treasury.

Ensuring that we reform icare was part of the Government's election mandate. This bill is the third icare bill that we have brought to Parliament. It will not be the last. There is a lot more work to do with respect to supporting injured workers. I note that the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government is in the Chamber. He oversees the State insurance regulator, which makes sure that icare performs its role and duty to the people of New South Wales, injured workers and employers. Under our Government, icare has a duty and responsibility to ensure that injured workers are a priority and that employers who pay the premiums have better engagement with it.

I acknowledge the staff at icare. I acknowledge the executive and the board headed by Mr Robertson, and the work that has been undertaken since we were elected. There is still a long way to go. I appreciate everyone's patience and acknowledge the hard work. I have met with a number of icare staff in our regional offices. I thank not only them but also the icare staff across the State for the work that they do to ensure that injured workers are put front and centre. That is one of the principal objectives for icare that we introduced last year. I also thank Unions NSW, the Injured Workers Campaign Network and Business NSW for their engagement on the bill. The bill demonstrates the Government's continuing commitment to implement recommendations made by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, in 2021 and fix icare from its foundations. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

STATE EMERGENCY AND RESCUE MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Jihad Dib, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (14:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the State Emergency and Rescue Management Amendment Bill 2024. The bill contains a range of proposals to amend one of the State's key emergency management laws: the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, known as the SERM Act. The bill makes changes that will streamline and improve the management of incidents and emergencies in New South Wales, including establishing a new power for emergency services workers to temporarily close roads in relation to hazards; improving safety for those workers and others; creating a new function for the State Emergency Management Committee to support our emergency services and other organisations to plan for the development and maintenance of the capabilities and service delivery capacity of the emergency management volunteer workforce; and establishing education services as a functional area under the SERM Act. The bill also makes other miscellaneous amendments to improve the management of emergencies and to recognise machinery of government and other changes to emergency services organisations.

I will now go through each of the bill's provisions. Schedule 1 [10] to the bill creates a new power for responsible persons for emergency service organisations to temporarily close a road or a road-related area to traffic due to an obstruction or a danger to traffic. The power can be used whether or not a state of emergency is in place. It is also not limited in its use in relation to emergencies. It may, for example, be used in relation to minor incidents such as a fallen tree or a vehicle collision. The power will be available to all emergency services organisations and it recognises their shared role in managing incidents and emergencies. "Emergency services organisation" is already defined within the Act at section 3 to include the following organisations: Ambulance Service of NSW,

Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Police Force, NSW Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Surf Life Saving New South Wales, New South Wales Volunteer Rescue Association Inc and Volunteer Marine Rescue NSW. The bill defines a "responsible person" for an emergency services organisation as the person in charge of members of the organisation present at the site of an obstruction or danger to traffic.

The bill adopts the existing definitions of "road" and "road-related area" from the Road Transport Act 2013. The bill places two limits on this new power. First, the power cannot be exercised if the closure is inconsistent with a direction given by an officer of the NSW Police Force, Transport for NSW or the relevant roads authority. Those agencies remain the most appropriate to manage road closures. Secondly, the person who closes the road or road-related area is required to notify the NSW Police Force and Transport for NSW as soon as practicable after the closure. The intention behind this new power is to support emergency services organisations to manage incidents safely, effectively and efficiently. It is anticipated that the new power will be particularly useful in remote and regional areas of New South Wales when a rescue unit is the first on the scene at an incident.

I am advised that it is not uncommon for some emergency services persons to need to close roads by using their own vehicles as roadblocks, to protect themselves, their colleagues and the public. If enacted, this new power will provide emergency services workers with a legal and safe way to close roads in relation to obstructions or dangers to traffic. Emergency services organisations will also work together with Transport for NSW and any other relevant members of the State Emergency Management Committee to put in place appropriate arrangements for the use of the new power to manage the closure of roads. These arrangements will be set out in an updated Management of Road and Traffic Incidents Memorandum of Understanding. To provide time for this important preparatory work to be undertaken, schedule 1 [10] will commence on 1 January 2025. The rest of the bill will commence on assent.

Schedule 1 [6] amends section 15 of the SERM Act to include a new function for the State Emergency Management Committee, or SEMC, to support emergency services organisations and other organisations to plan for the development and maintenance of the capabilities and service delivery capacity of the emergency management volunteer workforce. Earlier this year the reviews of the emergency volunteering reports were released. They emphasised that the emergency volunteer workforce is the backbone of the State's emergency management arrangements. As recommended by the reviews, we must support the volunteer workforce in the medium and long term to meet the growing challenge of more frequent and compounding disasters. The SEMC was established under the SERM Act to develop emergency management policy and oversee emergency management in New South Wales.

The SEMC brings together the key stakeholders across government and non-government agencies and includes representatives from our emergency services organisations. It is well placed to assist these organisations in planning to grow and maintain a sustainable and well-trained emergency volunteer workforce. Schedule 1 [3] to the bill amends the definition of "functional area" at section 3 of the SERM Act to include education services. Functional areas are a category of services involved in the prevention of and preparation for responses to or recovery from an emergency. They include, for example, transport, health and welfare services. Following the review of the New South Wales State Emergency Management Plan, on advice from the SEMC, I established and endorsed a new functional area for education services in December 2023. Including education services as a functional area in the Act formalises this new emergency management arrangement.

The education services functional area works across public schools, independent and Catholic schools, TAFE and non-TAFE skills providers, and higher education and early childhood education. As a functional area, education services will maintain a supporting plan that outlines how it will provide support to combat agencies and other functional areas during emergencies. For example, in the event of a bushfire, the education services functional area will coordinate the closure of schools by liaising with the education sector and the bushfire combat agency, which is the NSW Rural Fire Service. Schedule 1 [9] to the bill amends section 60KA of the SERM Act to include local emergency operations controllers, or LEOCONs, and regional emergency operations controllers, or REOCONs, within the definition of "directing officer".

Both LEOCONs and REOCONs are emergency management roles established under the SERM Act. LEOCONs are police officers with significant emergency management experience and are appointed by relevant REOCONs. REOCONs are appointed by the Commissioner of Police and must be a regional police commander. In New South Wales, emergency response is conducted at the lowest level of effective coordination. In emergency situations, it is police officers appointed as LEOCONs or REOCONs who either help to coordinate the support required by a combat agency or who coordinate and control the response activities when there is no combat agency leading the response.

The amendment to the definition of "directing officers" will clarify that police officers appointed to these positions can exercise powers of direction under part 4A of the SERM Act relating to emergency safety measures. Some of these directions may include directing persons to evacuate, pulling down or shoring up damaged walls,

and shutting off or disconnecting the gas or power supply to premises. Currently, only the Minister for Emergency Services, the State emergency operations controller or a police officer of or above the rank of sergeant can exercise these powers. These powers do not explicitly extend to police officers appointed to the roles of LEOCONs or REOCONs. I have been advised that this may create challenges in some remote and regional areas of New South Wales where staffing availability is limited.

This amendment will ensure that an officer could be appointed as a LEOCON and give appropriate directions in their role controlling the response to an emergency, regardless of their rank. Consistent with existing section 30 (2), the officer to be appointed as a LEOCON would still need to be, in the opinion of the relevant REOCON, a person who has experience in emergency management. The bill also amends various sections to update references and remove redundant provisions. Schedule 1 [1], [5] and [11] supports replacing references to "Department of Justice" with "Premier's Department". This reflects current administrative orders. Schedule 1 [1], [2], [4] and [7] replaces references to "New South Wales Volunteer Rescue Association Inc" with "VRA Rescue NSW Limited". The Volunteer Rescue Association has changed its corporate structure and adopted a new legal name; the amendment recognises its correct legal name. Schedule 1 [8] repeals a redundant provision. This is a housekeeping amendment.

The bill makes small improvements that will have important and wideranging impacts, improving safety on our roads for both our emergency services personnel and road users. It will also see increased coordination and planning in the development and maintenance of the emergency management volunteer workforce. I thank our emergency services workers and volunteers for their tireless efforts and ongoing commitment to supporting our communities. I acknowledge the shadow Minister, who is in the Chamber. He is a volunteer with the RFS. One of the things I love about this job is the opportunity to travel around the State and meet incredible people. Volunteers are everyday heroes. They believe in things that are greater than themselves; that gives them a sense of purpose. On behalf of all members of the House, I acknowledge the amazing contributions of our emergency services volunteers, and volunteers across the board.

We are in the lead-up to summer; it may be a big summer for our volunteers. We wish them all the very best. I put on record our thanks to those volunteers for the contributions they make and for taking time away from their families to support others. I also thank every member who contributed to putting together this legislation for all their research and work. Our best days lie ahead, but the actions we take today can help to guarantee that. We must look for opportunities to make sure our communities, volunteers and emergency services agencies are well prepared. The bill contains a package of sensible and tangible amendments to help us prepare for the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (14:59): I resume my speech on this important legislation, the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. It is important that we protect existing workers from their registrations being cancelled, given that they are continuing to do otherwise eligible work. The bill will do this by providing that service at a Commonwealth place does not count towards the four-year threshold of non-service and so does not trigger cancellation of a registration; clarifying that the Long Service Corporation can restore cancelled registrations when the registration was cancelled due to work at a Commonwealth place; and ensuring that restoring a cancelled registration under the Long Service Leave (Building and Construction Industry) Act will also restore prior service credits as though cancellation had not occurred, similar to an existing provision in the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act. Workers should not have to choose between continuing employment at Commonwealth places and the preservation of their service credit balance. This bill will remove this risk and ensure that workers do not lose service credits through no fault of their own. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:01): I make a contribution to debate on the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I thank the Minister and her team for introducing it to the House. This is a positive step towards protecting people working in the building and construction industry and cleaning contractors who work in Commonwealth places such as the new airport and military sites, as well as New South Wales Government sites. Those workers play such an important role in our community and provide considerable input into our economy and yet they are currently not eligible for New South Wales portable long service leave. There is currently a constitutional barrier, meaning people who work on Commonwealth worksites and then move to New South Wales worksites lose access to our portable leave scheme. The bill will make practical amendments

so as to not trigger cancellation of their long service leave entitlements due to working in a Commonwealth place. This issue was brought to the attention of the previous Government, which failed to take action.

I commend the Minister and her team, who have worked with unions and employers to create solutions to ensure that construction and cleaning workers on Commonwealth sites have access to continuity of their long service leave and that they do not lose their eligibility, as historically has occurred if they moved from the New South Wales schemes into the Commonwealth scheme. Currently, the cancellation of their accrued service occurs after five years in construction and four years in cleaning. The Minister gave an example of a cleaner with eight years experience in New South Wales who took up a contract at the new airport. Without this legislation, the eight years of service would be cancelled solely because they moved to a Commonwealth worksite. New South Wales workers now cannot lose their long service leave entitlements, which is an important part of protecting workers in New South Wales. I acknowledge the member for South Coast, who expressed the importance of this legislation for her tradie sons. It will allow them to accrue long service leave between State and Commonwealth worksites.

Before I complete my brief contribution, I thank the fabulous team at the Long Service Corporation office on the Central Coast for the service provided to people at the front counter who need to find out more details about their long service leave. I note the work undertaken and thank the staff members at Service NSW for their general assistance with long service leave for workers across New South Wales. Most importantly, in closing, I thank the Minister for looking after the rights of some of the most vulnerable workers in our State and making sure their entitlements are captured in perpetuity.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:04): I support the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. One of the many reasons I wanted to be elected to represent my electorate and working families across New South Wales is to make a difference in people's lives. A current issue is breaks in service when contracts are up for renewal. Some members of unions have been saying to me for many years that they have had jobs that are up for tender and that portable long service leave will give them more stability. Effie from the Australian Services Union said that portable long service leave will give her members more freedom.

Providing portable long service leave for everybody in New South Wales is pivotal. The Long Service Corporation administers portable long service leave schemes in New South Wales for the building and construction industry and the contract cleaning industry. These schemes were established through the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act [BCI Act] and the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act [CCI Act]. The two schemes provide benefits for thousands of workers each year. In 2022-23, for the BCI Act and the CCI Act respectively, there were 495,003 and 121,996 registered workers, 38,491 and 1,196 registered employers, \$109.45 million and \$4 million paid in benefits, and \$175.44 million and \$9.582 million collected as levies.

The New South Wales Government has received legal advice that there is a constitutional issue preventing both portable long service leave schemes from applying to Commonwealth places in New South Wales. Workers are impacted in places such as Western Sydney international airport and military bases. Work conducted at Commonwealth places currently does not count towards portable entitlements in both schemes. That is because the New South Wales legislation has the effect of imposing a tax and cannot apply of its own force to Commonwealth places in New South Wales. In effect, that means the Long Service Corporation is unable to collect the levies for otherwise eligible work conducted in Commonwealth places and that otherwise eligible work does not count as recognised service for workers who live in New South Wales.

I assure the people of New South Wales that the Minns Labor Government is committed to fixing this issue. I thank the Minister, her team and the department for all the work they are doing on this. It will require Commonwealth assistance. The Minister and the Department of Customer Service have been meeting with the Commonwealth to progress this issue to allow workers covered by the portable leave schemes to accrue credits for time worked at Commonwealth places. The bill is intended to provide temporary measures until the substantive issue is fixed, including by providing that service at a Commonwealth place does not count towards the four-year threshold of non-service and so does not trigger a cancellation of registration; clarifying that the Long Service Corporation can restore cancelled registrations when the registration was cancelled due to work at a Commonwealth place; and ensuring that restoring a cancelled registration under the BCI Act will also restore prior service credits as though cancellation had not occurred, similar to an existing provision in the CCI Act.

There is still much more to do. The substantive issue needs to be fixed. Again, I congratulate the Minister, her team and the department on all the work they are doing. I also thank the trade union movement in New South Wales and all their unions for their advocacy on behalf of workers in New South Wales. I look forward to reaching out to the Federal member for Cunningham, Alison Byrnes, and meeting with her to talk about this issue and ask for the assistance of the Federal Government. Together, the New South Wales Government and Federal Government can address this outstanding issue in a timely fashion for all affected workers.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:09): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I acknowledge the Opposition spokesperson for small business and finance, the member for Miranda, and thank her for her support of the bill. I acknowledge the member for Penrith, who is a strong advocate for the large number of building and construction workers living in her electorate. I acknowledge the member for Parramatta for her strong advocacy. There are a large number of government deliverables in the Parramatta electorate, so this is a very important area of public policy for her.

I thank the member for East Hills for her strong advocacy on behalf of tradies and the large number of cleaners in her electorate. I acknowledge the member for Mount Druitt, who represents a large community in Greater Western Sydney, where a lot of building work is currently happening. This issue is of interest to him and his community. I acknowledge the member for Fairfield. He is a new member, but he is very active in his multicultural community and understands what his constituents need at this point of time, which is for local builders, construction workers and cleaners who are working on Commonwealth sites to have their rights restored by this bill.

I acknowledge the member for Gosford and her views on regional New South Wales communities and the important work that builders, construction workers and cleaners undertake in her community. A few months ago, the member for Gosford and I visited the important counter service that the Long Service Corporation recently reopened in Gosford. I also thank the member for Heathcote for her contribution. She is another new member and strong advocate in south Sydney and the Sutherland shire with a strong affinity to working people. It is part of her DNA. I acknowledge that the member for Heathcote intends to take the cause to the Federal member for Cunningham.

I acknowledge the advocacy of the member for Newtown. We are in alignment. We did put out the call for other industries to join with the cleaning, building and construction sectors and, more recently, the community sector to be part of the portable long service leave scheme. I am open to discussions with other industries, including the hospitality, clubs and security industries. It is important for people to have flexible, secure work, and that they do not lose their long service leave entitlements when there is a change of employer. That is important, particularly in the carers sector. I acknowledge the point raised by the member for Newtown about the two Labor Governments at the State and Federal level. We are working closely with the Federal Government to fix the second part of the issue and amend the Commonwealth Places (Mirror Taxes Administration) Act. I acknowledge the member for South Coast and her sons, who work as tradies. I thank them for the important work they do. The member explained how important the portable long service scheme is.

As I said in my second reading speech, the bill proposes simple but critical changes to better protect builders and cleaners in New South Wales. Currently, workers exclusively engaged on Commonwealth places in New South Wales are at risk of losing their accrued service if their time on those sites exceeds four years. Earlier we discussed the issues with Western Sydney international airport and the defence bases. Eligibility for portable long service leave is tied to the accrual of service credits. Because work on a Commonwealth place is not eligible, the Long Service Corporation have had no choice but to deem work on a Commonwealth place as a period of non-service.

The bill will expand the list of protected days known as "non-service days" to include work on a Commonwealth place. The change will mean a worker's registration cannot be cancelled only because they are working on a Commonwealth place. Finally, the bill ensures that a registration can be reinstated if it has already been cancelled. That clarification is a safeguard in case the Long Service Corporation becomes aware that a cancellation has already occurred. Together, these changes recognise that if affected workers have not left the cleaning or building sectors in New South Wales, they should be entitled to keep their registrations and prior service credits so they can continue where they left off when their work on a Commonwealth place ends.

The bill protects workers' registrations and service credits. This Government is committed to finding an enduring solution for workers in New South Wales. The bill is essential to minimise harm while that work occurs. I look forward to updating members on the Government's progress on delivering an enduring solution in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government. I acknowledge the officials from the Long Service Corporation who are present in the gallery today. They have done an excellent job. As I said in my second reading speech, from day one when I was confronted with this issue, we have exhausted every possible avenue to find a solution in New South Wales without going to the Commonwealth. I have asked many questions. It has been an exhaustive process. This bill goes part of the way to resolve the issue but, as I said, it is not the entire solution.

During the last few months of Labor's last term in office—and I have spoken very openly about those last days in government, and not in a good way—we introduced the portable long service leave scheme to support cleaners. That scheme has been operating since 2010-2011. Since about 2018 to 2020, thousands of cleaners have been able to access their long service leave entitlements and every year thousands of cleaners do access their long

service leave. In the 2021-2023 period, 2,408 cleaners were able to access the portable long service leave scheme. If that had not been brought in, those cleaners would not have been able to access their long service leave, which is important to them.

Whether they are building, cleaning or construction workers—and in the near future our community sector workers, and if any other industry would like to get involved in this—that access does make a difference. Unfortunately, they are not always going to be able to take a holiday. They are not going to be able to have a break. But I have spoken to some cleaners. One has gone overseas to tend to their dying mum. Another cleaner said to me that they needed that period of time off, but that money went to fix their teeth. Another cleaner spoke to me about needing to get a hip replacement. Cleaners work really hard and receive median average wages. At the time of that important legislation, it was a Labor Government, and we are seeing that again now, supporting working people. I acknowledge and put it on the record that the Opposition supports this legislation.

It is important for us to acknowledge the work of cleaners. Indeed, the parents of many members in this place did do those types of cleaning jobs to get us through life. I acknowledge also the building trade unions for their important and robust exchanges throughout this process. We still continue to work together to have an enduring solution. I thank the industry bodies for their contribution and also for making representations to the Federal Government and writing to us in support of this. My message is loud and clear: They want to pay the levy to New South Wales. They do want to pay the levy. It is about the Federal Government making that change. I hope that the Federal Government fast-tracks and does that quickly so that we can get a solution for our New South Wales building, construction and cleaning workers. I also thank the phenomenal team in my office, who have done a great job. I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

POLICE AMENDMENT (POLICE OFFICER SUPPORT SCHEME) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 September 2024.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (15:24): I lead on behalf of the Opposition on the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024. There is no doubt that having a police insurance scheme for officers killed or injured in the line of duty is essential. It provides necessary financial support to the families of those fallen officers killed in the line of duty, or those who suffer from permanent or temporary disability, helping them to cope with sudden loss and ensuring financial stability for them during a challenging time. Insurance cover and benefits offers injured officers peace of mind and compensation for medical expenses and lost wages, acknowledging the risks they face daily while serving and protecting the community. This support should primarily focus on injury prevention, rehabilitation and supporting officers to return to work wherever possible, as well as recognising their sacrifices and value. The new Enhanced Police Support Scheme [EPSS], commencing on 1 October 2024, will support New South Wales police officers who are injured at work. Replacing the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance [PBRI] scheme, the new scheme will be a new safety net for injured police officers. I will come back to this aspect later.

I acknowledge that the scheme was developed in close consultation with the Police Association of New South Wales. The EPSS is designed to streamline support for all injury management claims; improve support for recovery and return to work; address the significant concessional cap taxation issues; and provide an improved safety net to support officers and their families. The EPSS promises to provide officers with weekly workers compensation as well as supplementary support payments for eligible officers who are injured on duty for up to seven years, with the possibility of extension for up to an additional three years in cases of catastrophic or exceptional circumstances. I acknowledge that there were concerns with the concessional cap, which have now been addressed.

Previously, an amount was paid into each officer's superannuation account, which was immediately transferred out to the insurer. When the Australian Tax Office looks at each officer's income, it includes the extra super contributions made for their insurance as income. This meant that police officer incomes were artificially inflated, making them look higher than they actually were, and many police officers ended up breaching high

income thresholds that cut them off from benefits that they may have been entitled to, including to things such as health rebates, childcare rebates and parental leave, and a loss of family tax benefits. The new scheme also promises to fix this concessional cap problem for New South Wales police, and the Opposition welcomes this change. I also acknowledge that police officers will continue to contribute 1.8 per cent of their salary towards the new scheme.

I remind the Government that before the 2023 State election, it announced that the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance Scheme would be retained in its current form. This has not transpired; it is yet another promise broken by the New South Wales Labor Government.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Government promised, once the scheme ran out at the end of September, to renew the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance Scheme for the following three years of its term. The Premier made a commitment to the Police Association of New South Wales that Labor was to "maintain the current Police Blue Ribbon Insurance Scheme and workers compensation benefits for the full term of government". The association welcomed the Government's commitment. It was quoted in the Police Association's publication that to have those entitlements locked in for four years was a significant benefit to members of the force and the association, and was a major achievement for the election campaign. There is a picture of the Minister with members of the association.

On 19 August this year the police Minister broke that promise. She announced a new scheme called the Enhanced Police Support Scheme, which would become a new safety net for injured police officers and would replace the PBRI scheme. The police Minister was quoted as saying that it was a great day for New South Wales police. However, I put on record that not all police officers would agree. Before Government members start patting themselves on the back and high-fiving one another, the matter has been handled badly. Since the announcement, around 350 police officers have applied to leave the force. That is because the Minister and the Government made the announcement by putting out a press release without fronting up to police officers to explain the change. There is now a situation that is continuing to cripple New South Wales police. In the month since the announcement was made, around 12 officers have walked away from the force every day.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Congratulations, NSW Labor! It is accelerating the crippling staff shortages in the NSW Police Force.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Bathurst will resume his seat. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. The member for Bathurst is not helping by raising his voice in the Chamber. The Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and the Minister for Emergency Services know better. I do not need assistance from the member for Tweed. The member for Bathurst will consider his tone of voice. Government members will cease interjecting. The member for Bathurst has the call.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I remind NSW Labor that the State is already 2,279 officers below authorised strength. Over the past nine months, the State has lost 1,000 police officers under Labor.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Bathurst will resume his seat. The Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism will cease interjecting. I asked the member for Bathurst to consider his tone of voice. Government members know better than to interject; they are all experienced members of Parliament. Members will cease interjecting. The member for Bathurst has the call.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am happy for the police Minister to look at the figures that were quoted in budget estimates in December 2023 and the estimates figures that were given in August this year. She will see that close to 1,000 officers have left the force under her watch.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: On top of that, people are on long service leave, off work due to mental health, or on secondment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Minister for Emergency Services will resume his seat and remain silent.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: One-quarter of the NSW Police Force is missing. The staffing shortfall has doubled under Labor. NSW Labor has lost the trust of the NSW Police Force and morale is already low. Members have shared with me their feelings of confusion and frustration over the new scheme's definitions for "catastrophic" and "exceptional" injuries because it is not clear if, and where, psychological injuries are included. I ask the police

Minister to confirm whether that definition has been covered in the regulations. Whilst the new scheme proposed in the bill addresses some tax and concession cap concerns, many questions are still unanswered and the regulations of the new scheme remain unclear. It concerns me that the new scheme may have legal loopholes and undefined terms left to interpretation, which will ultimately mean that some officers may be worried that they will not receive the benefits they deserve when seeking support after injury.

Our men and women in blue put themselves in harm's way every day when they respond to emergencies. They face unpredictable situations and put their safety on the line for our wellbeing. In return, they expect the New South Wales Government to stand by them and provide the necessary support and protection they deserve. They do not want broken promises. The Opposition will not stand in the way of an insurance scheme for the State's police officers, because it values the work they do. Many officers in the NSW Police Force are disappointed. Their trust has been lost because of another broken election commitment by the Premier, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and the Labor Government.

I thank the Minister's officer who provided a briefing to me on the important matter, as well as Deputy Commissioner Dean Smith and members of the Police Association, including Kev Morton, Pat Gooley and Executive Director Darren Bark. I conclude by saying that the Opposition is disappointed in the Labor Government's disloyalty to the hardworking police officers who keep people in New South Wales safe. Enhanced or not, the scheme is not what police officers were promised. However, the Opposition will not stand in the way of an insurance scheme for our police officers and leave them uninsured. Therefore, I indicate that the Opposition will support the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): This is an important bill. Members will cease interjecting.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:36): I make a brief contribution in support of the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024. The bill will amend the Police Act and the Personal Injury Commission Act to enable a comprehensive police officer support scheme in the form of a safety net of payments for police officers who die or become permanently or temporarily incapacitated from work. Currently, police officers contribute 1.8 per cent of their remuneration towards the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme, which consists of a nine-month waiting period on full pay, followed by up to seven years of income protection at 75 per cent of salary. Under the current Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme, officers are protected by insurance premiums if they get sick or injured at work. The premiums are paid by the Government, along with a small officer contribution of 1.8 per cent of their salary. The scheme is outdated and no longer fit for purpose.

The amendments in the bill will enable the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme to be replaced with a new, more effective scheme. The purpose of the change is to implement a scheme that will not have adverse tax implications for police officers in New South Wales like the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme does. The new scheme will enable officers to salary sacrifice more into their superannuation fund without administrative burden or the risk of it impacting their access to government benefits. It is known as the police officer support scheme. The scheme aims to streamline support related to any injury management claims, improve support for recovery and return to work, and provide an improved safety net to support officers and their families.

Similar to the protection benefits of the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme, the police officer support scheme will provide weekly compensation top-up payments to officers to specified levels over different benefit periods. Unlike the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme, the benefit periods will include a payment of 100 per cent of the officer's ordinary rate of pay for the first nine months and up to 75 per cent of salary, with 17 per cent loading for non-commissioned officers, for up to seven years. Further to the police officer support scheme, there will be provision for a catastrophic exceptional extension payment, or CEEP, in particular circumstances, which will provide up to an additional three years of payments that provide benefits of 75 per cent of the officer's salary as well as a 17 per cent loading for non-commissioned officers.

The bill requires regulations to be made in relation to the police officer support scheme. That includes requirements for the scheme's structure, eligibility for the payments and contributions, dispute resolution procedures, sharing of information, monitoring and reporting. The bill also requires regulations for the obligations of the commissioner, policer officers and former police officers relating to the rehabilitation, retraining and redeployment of incapacitated police officers and former police officers. The bill provides for regulations to allow for the monitoring and reporting on the success of the scheme by the Auditor-General to ensure that it delivers for injured officers and supports officers to return to work when it is appropriate and possible for them to do so.

The police officer support scheme does not apply to officers who are contributors to certain superannuation funds or officers who are not contributors to the scheme. The bill also provides further functions for icare under the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 to include conducting reviews of decisions made under regulations under the Act. The Personal Injury Commission will have the jurisdiction and functions under the bill

to hear and determine applications relating to disputes and appoint medical assessors. Disputes can be appealed to a presidential member and then to the Court of Appeal. For the police officer support scheme to be functional, the bill requires that information can be shared between the parties that need to process and administer claims and payments. That includes icare, its agents, the police, the Personal Injury Commission and medical practitioners. The bill will provide a more comprehensive scheme that is fit for purpose to meet the needs of our injured police officers and will allow the Government to work more closely with those workers to assist with their rehabilitation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:42): I contribute to debate on the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024. The bill will provide an updated and modernised safety net of payments for police officers who die or become permanently or temporarily incapacitated. It is probably a fine time for this legislation. I have been a member of this place for 18 years. Over that time I have worked closely with our local police, including Superintendent Dave Roptell. I have been on various patrols with the police and have seen how hard they work. I have also seen the mental and physical pain that they go through after altercations in the course of their work. All members in this place owe them a great debt of gratitude for their commitment to the work. They see the worst of the worst. The job of police men and women is to protect us and keep us safe. It behoves members on both sides of the Parliament to do anything we can do to look after them, even after they have left the service.

I am horrified to find out, through the shadow Minister's contribution, the number of police officers who are leaving the profession. I know some of those officers and their families personally. I also know the years of dedication that they have put into keeping the community safe. I am deeply concerned that we are losing numbers and we are not supporting some of them—300 or less. Over my 18 years in the Chamber I have participated in debates about operational strength, actual strength and so on. But recently I have been advised that the strength in my electorate is 220-odd and that around 20 to 30 officers were off on long-term sick leave. I have run licensed clubs, and if I lost 25 per cent of my staff I would find it very hard to service the general public.

The bill amends part 9B of the Police Act 1990, which is headed "Police officers—death and disability", from 1 October 2024. Shortly after the Coalition came to government, I stood in the Chamber representing the then police Minister in the upper House, the Hon. Mike Gallacher, with an audience from the Police Association in the gallery that was extraordinarily noisy, and read through various bills. I just focused on the paper. The more that we can do to help officers, the better. The current Police Blue Ribbon Insurance [PBRI] scheme is a compulsory insurance scheme cover, paid via Aware Super, that covers death, terminal illness, total and permanent disability, and income protection. The NSW Police Force and the Police Association of New South Wales have identified issues with the PBRI, including that the premium payments being made through the superannuation cause officers to breach superannuation concessional tax caps, resulting in additional taxation assessments and, in some cases, a reduction in government benefits such as childcare rebates.

The bill has been informed by feedback from a steering committee of government departments and agencies that have been consulted on the reforms. The Police Blue Ribbon Insurance policy includes a nine-month waiting period followed by either up to seven years of income protection at 75 per cent of the officer's salary—including 17 per cent loading for non-commissioned officers—with offsetting for other income including workers compensation for on-duty injury, or two years for an off-duty injury, and death, total and permanent disability, and terminal illness cover. Police officers contribute 1.8 per cent of their salaries towards the scheme. The amendments included in the bill will enable the current part's PBRI products to be replaced by a police officer support scheme [POSS] in supporting regulations. The bill will enable the income protection insurance product to be replaced by one that does not have adverse tax implications for NSW Police Force officers, allowing them to salary sacrifice more to superannuation without administrative burdens.

I highlight key reforms in the bill. The bill contains enabling provisions for the enhanced supplementary support of police officers. It removes the current part 9B to enable the POSS, which is intended to consist of an Enhanced Police Support Scheme [EPSS], payments on death, and off-duty payments for officers who become temporarily or permanently incapacitated. The EPSS includes payments for three periods. In period one, which is from zero to nine months, the payment is up to 100 per cent of the ordinary rate of pay. In period two, which is up to seven years, the payment is up to 75 per cent of the officer's salary, including 17 per cent loading for non-commissioned officers. In period three, which is up to an additional three years, the payment is up to 75 per cent of the officer's salary, including 17 per cent loading for non-commissioned officers. Similar to the PBRI benefits, there is provision for a catastrophic exceptional extension payment in certain circumstances during period three, providing benefits of 75 per cent of the officer's salary for up to three years. The scheme also covers exceptions such as circumstances under which EPSS payments will cease for an officer. Further to the EPSS, death benefits are maintained on the current policy terms. Off-duty income protection will be extended from two to three years.

The bill includes provisions to continue police officer contributions as in part 3 of the Act and provisions to enable regulations. The regulations may include monitoring of the costs of the scheme, rehabilitation obligations, injury prevention programs, dispute procedures, and benefits and coverage of the arrangement. The bill also includes provisions to enable information sharing. Given the EPSS is a top-up of the weekly workers compensation payments, information sharing is necessary between the Police Force, icare and the claims manager EML. The bill includes provisions for the resolution of disputes in the Personal Injury Commission [PIC]. Double payments would create a moral hazard and police officers are required to repay benefits if they have received benefits for the same injury.

I agree with the member for Bathurst, the shadow police Minister. NSW Labor made an election commitment to continue the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme; however, they have chosen to discard the original scheme and introduce the Enhanced Police Support Scheme. The Police Association of New South Wales supports the new scheme; however, its members and police officers of this State are divided about the changes. There are concerns as to what the new definitions of "catastrophic" and "exceptional" injuries mean and what injuries, especially psychological injuries, would be included. That concern extends to the open interpretation of those terms throughout the claims process or by legal professionals.

We have all experienced, in some form or another, insurance companies playing the "Artful Dodger", trying to get out of a claim, twisting it around, doing an interview or getting some of their so-called medical professionals to give an adverse report. At the end of the day, the men and women of the Police Force wearing that blue uniform have gone out of their way to keep us safe. We should do all in our power to protect them—especially if they have been injured—and their families. I am a bit horrified about the bill. I have seen how hard police officers work. If an insurance company can get out of the scheme, it will get out of the scheme. While I do not object to the bill, I implore the Minister to take special note and ensure that the so-called insurance companies do not screw over our Police Force.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:51): As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and the member for Prospect, I make a contribution to debate in support of the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024. Officers of the NSW Police Force are on the front line each and every day, 24/7, giving their all to protect and serve the people of New South Wales, whether they are responding to a noise complaint at 3.00 a.m. when the neighbours are celebrating too hard; keeping the family safe on the drive to grandma's place by patrolling speeding drivers on the road at Christmas; climbing into a dark, abandoned mine shaft to conduct a search and rescue when a loved one does not return home; bringing a lost teenager home to their family safe and sound; leaving their family to immerse themselves in an undercover operation to prevent millions of dollars of cocaine from hitting Sydney streets; investigating a string of arson and armed robberies to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice; or consoling a mother after hearing that her daughter was lost to another tragic act of domestic and family violence. For many, it is a lifetime commitment. It is high time those brave officers receive the support and compensation that their service and sacrifice deserves.

I thank the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism for her preparation and hard work on the bill and for her consultation with stakeholders to develop effective reform that will better support our hardworking and dedicated NSW Police Force when they need it most. Without the efforts and strong advocacy of the Police Association of New South Wales, this important reform would not be possible. I thank the association and the more than 16,000 police officers who campaigned for the reform. I especially thank Police Association president Kevin Morton, who has fought long and hard for this change. When Labor came to government, it inherited the broken Police Blue Ribbon Insurance [PBRI] scheme. The Government set up a working group to design a solution. With contributions from the NSW Police Force, icare, the State Insurance Regulation Authority, the Personal Injury Commission, Aware Super, Treasury and the Cabinet Office, the Government has developed a new fit-for-purpose scheme for New South Wales police injured in the line of duty.

The bill provides a legislative scheme needed to replace the current Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme, which simply is not up to scratch. Amending both the Police Act and the Personal Injury Commission Act, the bill enables the development of a comprehensive support scheme for police officers who die or become permanently or temporarily incapacitated for work. By modernising the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme, the bill provides long overdue cover for on- and off-duty injuries. Currently, insurance premiums to protect officers in the case of illness or injury are paid for by the Government, with police officers contributing 1.8 per cent of their remuneration towards the PBRI. The PBRI scheme provides a nine-month waiting period on full pay. That is followed by up to seven years of income protection at 75 per cent of salary, with offsets for other income, including workers compensation, income protection, total and permanent disability and terminal illness cover. The scheme is over a decade old and therefore no longer fits the needs of our modern police force.

The PBRI scheme also contains one of the most financially onerous and unfair systems, which has been imposed on the NSW Police Force for the past decade. Modernising the scheme will finally correct the

concessional superannuation cap issue hidden within the PBRI scheme. Under the PBRI scheme, the relevant amount is first paid into each officer's superannuation account and then immediately transferred out to the insurer. That means that when the Australian Taxation Office [ATO] reviews each officer's income, the additional super contributions made for their insurance are counted as income. As a result, many officers' incomes are artificially inflated. Consequentially, many officers breach high-income thresholds and lose access to valuable benefits they would otherwise be entitled to. That includes the loss of means-tested Commonwealth benefits like health and childcare rebates and parental leave, which are entitlements shared by every other Australian dependent on income; the loss of family tax benefits; being penalised when receiving child support payments from a former partner because the level of child support is set according to their inflated income; and breaching the cap on concessional superannuation tax rates, leaving their normal super contributions taxable at a higher rate.

Officers are receiving large tax bills from the ATO for just doing their jobs and receiving normal employer super contributions. Officers are also unable to increase their retirement savings by making additional super contributions. That leaves New South Wales police officers the only workers in Australia who are denied the right to make voluntary super contributions at the tax rate shared by all other Australians. It is unacceptable. We are in a cost-of-living crisis, and our brave police officers should be given the same entitlements to assist them to get ahead and plan for a long-term, financially secure future.

New part 9B in the bill replaces the PBRI scheme with the Enhanced Police Support Scheme [EPSS] to address the critical issues and provide a system best structured to support our Police Force. Administered by icare and the NSW Police Force, the new scheme moves away from an outdated insurance product arrangement to explore a new approach and bring the scheme back into public hands. The scheme allows for closer involvement with the NSW Police Force to facilitate tailored return-to-work outcomes and support early intervention. It corrects the adverse tax implications for officers, allowing them to salary sacrifice to superannuation without impact on their entitlements. Importantly, it streamlines support for injury management claims to reduce the hassle on officers and their families.

I now address the key amendments in the bill which give way to the formation of the EPSS. Under part 9B, the new scheme is set to provide a weekly compensation top-up payment to officers over different benefit periods. That includes a payment of 100 per cent of an officer's ordinary rate of pay for the first nine months and up to 75 per cent of salary, as well as a 17 per cent loading, for non-commissioned officers for up to seven years. The new scheme includes a provision for a catastrophic or exceptional extension payment, or CEEP, providing an additional three years of payments for those most in need.

The EPSS will be managed under new section 199D, which allows for development of regulations to determine structure and governance of the scheme. The bill also enables regulations to allow the Auditor-General to monitor the success of the scheme to ensure it delivers for injured officers and supports their return to work. To ensure determinations made under the scheme may be reviewed by an independent umpire, division 4 of the bill confers jurisdiction on the Personal Injury Commission to hear and determine applications regarding disputes, and to appoint medical assessors. The EPSS equips the NSW Police Force with a fair and effective scheme that makes taking care of cops its top priority—helping officers to recover and return to work or taking care of them if the Police Force cannot. [*Extension of time*]

A 2017 study conducted by Sergeant Michael Stierli of the NSW Police Force, with Dr Rob Orr and Dr Rod Pope, directors of the Tactical Research Unit at Bond University, found that:

Police officers participate in physically challenging and stressful activities, including restraining non-compliant persons, performing manual handling of suspects and objects, running varied distances and performing effective defence tactics. Given the unpredictable work environment, officers are at higher risk of experiencing physical injury than other workforces.

We know too well that our thriving New South Wales society could not function without our brave police officers. It is essential that the NSW Police Force is supported with an effective scheme to match the vital and effective support it provides our community.

On Monday 15 April, our community in Prospect and the surrounding area of Western Sydney were shocked by the stabbing of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel at Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley. A 13-year-old boy leapt from his seat, attacking the bishop in front of his congregation. Our Assyrian Australian community was devastated to witness a knife attack at their peaceful place of worship. Chaos erupted over the following hours, with many reacting in fear and anger. A riot commenced, creating further risk to our community. If not for the valiant efforts of the NSW Police Force—our line of blue—the outcome may have been far worse. In their efforts to break up the riot and restore peace, 51 officers were injured. While some officers suffered only minor injuries and were fit to return to work promptly, others faced injuries that required some time to recover.

Legislating an effective and considered support scheme for police ensures that brave officers who face injury in situations like the one I have just described on the border of Prospect are supported in their recovery and

return to work. Changes to the PBRI scheme are just one part of the reforms we are implementing as a government to support and retain police officers in New South Wales. We have appointed an assistant commissioner to help support the work health and safety and wellbeing of police officers. We are continuing to invest \$79 million in proactive support for the mental and physical health of officers. In October last year we also introduced an initiative to pay recruits to study. Since then, the NSW Police Force has received more than 2,093 applications for new recruits to train at the New South Wales Police Academy in Goulburn—a 52 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

In conclusion, this bill can offer our brave men and women in blue, and the wider blue family, a greater sense of security and protection at work when they are faced with injury on or off duty. The bill acknowledges the courageous and often extremely dangerous work that our NSW Police Force undertakes to maintain public safety. By developing a new comprehensive support scheme, the bill ensures that our brave police officers will have better protections to maintain their economic stability. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:05): I speak in support of the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024, which amends the Police Act 1990 to support police officer income protection by establishing the Police Officer Support Scheme. The Police Association of New South Wales identified issues with the current insurance cover provided to police officers by Police Blue Ribbon Insurance. The insurance covers death, terminal illness, total and permanent disablement and income protection. Premium payments, which are made through superannuation, have caused some officers to breach superannuation concessional tax caps or experience a reduction in government benefits. The bill proposes the establishment of the Police Officer Support Scheme, which addresses those limitations.

The new scheme will replace the existing Police Blue Ribbon Insurance policy. It will enable New South Wales police officers to salary sacrifice more to superannuation without administrative burdens, enabling police officers to access income protection insurance without adverse tax implications. Key reforms include enabling provisions for enhanced supplementary support for police officers, police officer contribution, enabling regulations, enabling information sharing, resolving disputes in the Personal Injury Commission (PIC) and avoiding double payments. Our police go above and beyond to protect New South Wales residents and I have seen firsthand what the Fairfield City Police Area Command do for the members of my electorate. The bill supports the officers who support us, providing a modernised safety net of payments in their time of need. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:06): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024 and congratulate the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism on the exceptional work that she and her team have done to make the bill a reality. I will speak more to that later, but I thought it was quite pressing to say that, especially given that the former police Minister seemed to want to give some free character assessments but did not hang around to listen to a response. That seems to be what members on the other side do.

What is very clear, and all members would agree, is that police officers are on the front line 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—366 in a leap year. They put themselves in danger all the time. Everyone knows that they should call the police when there is a problem. The police are the first people we call. They suffer in the most difficult circumstances and see the most traumatic things, yet it is expected that when they go home everything is normal. When one has that experience over and over, of course it will have an impact. I place on record my gracious thanks and the thanks of my community, especially to our Campsie and Bankstown local commands, but to all police officers and everyone in the police family, because it really is a policing family.

We want to make sure that our officers are looked after. It is clear that the current insurance scheme was not doing the job that it was meant to do. I listened to members complaining about a promise, or things along those lines. This is actually a better system that has been worked out by all. When we came to Government we discovered that the PBRI scheme was broken. It was not helping cops get back to work and there were significant tax implications for police officers. They were two problems that were highlighted to us by officers and their representative organisations.

Minister Catley set up a working group to work on a pathway forward. That group was co-designed with the assistance of a lot of people—including the police, icare, Treasury, the Police Association as well as assistance from other government agencies—so that we could get it right. The Enhanced Police Support Scheme will support injured police officers. It will be administered by icare and the NSW Police Force. It includes a top-up of weekly compensation payments of seven years at 75 per cent. We have heard speaker after speaker in this debate talk about those benefits. It will also streamline support for all injury management claims. That is a key point, and we must make sure that we support the recovery and return to work of officers, as well as ultimately providing that safety net for those people that we rely on at all times. We need to make sure that we are also there for them.

I will particularly address the comments made by the member for Bathurst, the former police Minister and current shadow Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, in this debate. He spent much of his contribution bagging out the Government and then said at the end that the Opposition supports the bill. Let me put a few things into perspective. Those opposite were in government for 12 years and left behind broken systems. When those systems are being repaired, it seems to be a custom for those opposite to decide that they will have amnesia and have a go at the Government. We inherited a shortage of around 1,500 officers. The member for Bathurst has returned to the Chamber. It is good to see him back because I am responding to his comments. I am glad that he is back; I thought he was going to run away and scurry off somewhere.

Mr Paul Toole: I've been watching you. Let's talk about your 1,000 in the last nine months.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Members will return to the leave of this important bill.

Mr Paul Toole: Let's get back to the facts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I do not require assistance from the member for Bathurst. Members will focus on the bill.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I am well focused. I was focused on introducing the facts, as I have been asked to do. The fact is that the previous Government left a shortage of around 1,500 police officers across the board. Those opposite had no plan for recruitment. They had no plan for retention. As we saw in question time yesterday and today, the wages cap seems to be their way to go.

Mr Paul Toole: The pay deal for the police had expired three months ago. You have not even sorted that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I call the member for Bathurst to order for the first time.

Mr JIHAD DIB: This is how a government that consults and gets it done right. Under the previous Government, the idea of an offer was 2½ per cent, full stop. We believe in negotiation, and this consultation group will get there. As part of the suite of reforms, we have done things to arrest those challenges that we inherited. We have stood up the Work Health and Safety Wellbeing Command, with an assistant commissioner to ensure that that work is done. The PULSE initiatives also continue.

Since the Minister made an excellent announcement on 31 October 2023 to support recruits, some 2,093 applications have been received to train as a police officer. That is because the Minister listened to people about paying recruits to study, bringing experienced officers to New South Wales from other jurisdictions through the police mobility program, as well as giving people from regional New South Wales an opportunity to be officers in their hometown. The police Minister has clearly looked at what the problems are, and, rather than bury her head in the sand and pretend it is too hard to do things, as the previous Government did, she has come up with different solutions.

Mr Paul Toole: It is three years—three months late.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I love that the member for Bathurst says that it is three years and that it is a bit late. He had 12 years. I would be quiet if I were him. This Minister believes in getting things done for the NSW Police Force, which needed the support, with the Police Association of New South Wales on board. The former Minister is suffering from relevance deprivation syndrome and wants to start sledging from the edges. We do not believe in amnesia. We believe in the solution, and there are lots of solutions. I finish up by acknowledging the team at the Police Association of New South Wales, Kevin Morton and his hardworking colleagues. We have had a lot to do with them over the years.

The Police Association does what all associations and all unions do, and that is to find the best things it can for its members. Good governments also work in partnership with those organisations to make sure that they achieve those outcomes. I thank the Police Association. I thank the leadership and officers of the Police Force for everything they do. I thank the Minister for fixing things that were left to her by previous Ministers who thought they had done the work. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:14): I contribute to debate on the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024. I begin by congratulating the Minister, who is the hardest working Minister I have seen for a long time. I thank her and her exceptional team. Let us talk about a few facts. New South Wales police officers work hard around the clock to care for our communities to ensure our safety. They put their lives, safety and health on the line every single day. We all agree that that is a fact. The job of a police officer is beyond stressful. That is a fact. When we came to government, we wanted to make sure that our officers were looked after, and the current Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme was just not doing that.

We decided to fix something that was broken. It was not helping cops get back to work, and there were significant tax implications for police officers. It was an absolutely nightmare. That is a fact. What is this new scheme that will address those problems? The new Enhanced Police Support Scheme [EPSS] will support injured police officers and help them get back to work. It will bring the scheme back into public hands.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Order! The member for Tweed and the member for Bathurst will remain silent.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: The new EPSS will also improve support for recovery and return to work, streamline support for all injury management claims, address the significant concessional cap taxation issues and provide an improved safety net to support officers and their families. This Government and this Minister are helping officers get back to work. Changes to the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance scheme is just one part of that. When Parliament is in session, the Minister stands up in this place and talks about her support and our Government's support for police officers. When she is not here, every single day she is out across the State, listening to those police officers and bringing their concerns into policy change for their health and safety.

As a government, we are focused on retention. Other members have spoken in this debate about the different measures that we are taking to address retention, We are also focused on recruitment, especially after the mess we inherited. The gall of the member of Bathurst, the former police Minister, to disregard some of those important steps that he knows were needed to fix a broken system is unbelievable. Our police Minister does not need a Toole stool to do her job. Local cops in my area have talked to me about the concessional cap problem for quite some time, and this new scheme puts an end to one of the most financially complex, onerous and unfair schemes imposed on the New South Wales police.

We are addressing the needs that our local police have spoken to us about, listening to those on the ground and respecting those police officers. The new scheme fixes those problems for New South Wales. I take this opportunity to thank the exceptional Blue Mountains Police Area Command, some of whom have spoken to me about their frustrations with those taxation problems. They are pleased that the Minister and her team, along with the Police Association, are addressing those issues through this bill. I thank the Blue Mountains Police Area Command. They have had a tough couple of weeks. The challenges that they take on are monumental. This is one significant reform that they need and deserve. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:19): The Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024 is important legislation that provides insurance protection to our valued police officers in a way that does not disadvantage them. I do the Henley Park run in my electorate every Saturday morning. About six weeks ago a long-serving police officer approached me after the run and described to me the very situation that the bill seeks to address. I did not have any background on this issue, and he explained how police insurance premiums were paid through the superannuation system, which meant that it pushed police above the superannuation concessional caps and they could not make additional contributions without incurring tax consequences. It drove up their taxable income so that at the end of the financial year they would get a big tax bill.

I thought this was totally nonsensical and crazy. I asked myself, "How can this be? This sounds nuts." Six weeks ago we made a representation to the Minister's office, and six weeks later the problem is being fixed. How is that for responsiveness and action by the police Minister? Many members before me have spoken about the incredible role that police officers play in our community. All of us know the community is under a great amount of stress. In this Chamber we discuss and debate a range of issues, from knife crime to road safety and, of course, domestic and family violence, and police officers are at the front line of all those incidents. When we run away, police officers run in the direction of danger.

We remember the tremendous heroism of Inspector Amy Scott during the Bondi Westfield massacre. We think of our friends and colleagues in Queensland who attended the Wieambilla terrorist incident, when constables Matthew Arnold and Rachel McCrow tragically lost their lives. At a recent domestic and family violence workshop that I ran in my community, Superintendent Christine McDonald, who is the commander of the Burwood Police Area Command, made a remark that has stayed with me. She said that we expect so much from our police officers. We expect them to be so much. We expect them to be our protectors, to be psychologists and counsellors, to be amazing negotiators and to be great with kids. It is incumbent on us to provide the same sort of insurance protections for police that people from other professions have. They should not be significantly financially disadvantaged through a quite bizarre and awkward insurance process. The bill fixes that.

On behalf of the residents of Strathfield, I thank Superintendent Christine McDonald from Burwood Police Area Command for her amazing leadership and her work. I thank Superintendent Simon Glasser and the Auburn Police Area Command for their tremendous work. I thank the police leadership and the police Minister and her team for the tremendously important work they are doing. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:23): The Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024 amends the Police Act to establish a scheme to provide payments to or in relation to police officers who die or become temporarily or permanently incapacitated for work, and to set up the Police Officer Support Scheme Division to hear and determine disputes under the scheme. I note the comments of my learned friend the member for Strathfield, who described the need for the bill and what it achieves for police officers throughout the State. I underline the important role that the Police Association has played in developing the bill. It should always be the case that unions that represent working people are involved in consultation about any bill that affects working people. The Government has done that in this case. On behalf of my whole community, I take this opportunity to put on record our appreciation for police officers on the Central Coast and the great job they do. That includes the Tuggerah Lakes Police District led by Chad Gillies and the Brisbane Water Police District led by Superintendent Darryl Jobson. I thank them for their service.

While I am talking about legislation that benefits workers, it is worth pointing out that the bill is the second piece of legislation we have debated in the House today that provides some improvement in the conditions of working people in this State. Earlier we debated the Portable Long Service Leave Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which tidies up some provisions under portable long service leave schemes that needed attention. The Government has only been in office for just over a year but it has already passed several pieces of industrial relations legislation that are beneficial to working people throughout the State. We have extended portable long service leave to the community worker sector. Thousands of workers who were denied long service leave in the past because most of them were casual workers now have access to portable long service leave. We have introduced penalties to combat industrial manslaughter and to make accountable people who, in the past, would have been unaccountable.

We have introduced further protections for retail workers from assault in the workplace. We have changed regulations under the Local Government Act to protect workers against contracting. We have protected workers in Sydney Water and Hunter Water from privatisation, which always changes working conditions for working people. Above all, we kept our election commitment to repeal section 146C of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act to remove and end the wages cap that public servants in this State had been labouring under for the past 10 years, and to remove the industrial straitjacket of section 146 that stopped them from getting wage justice for that very long period. We kept our promise to those workers. One of our first acts was to get rid of the wages cap and to introduce instead the mutual gains bargaining stream—a new province for law and order, if you will, in this country that enables public sector workers to be equal partners in negotiating improvements in the delivery of public service in the long term and, in return, be rewarded through their wages and conditions.

I appreciate that those public sector workers are understandably frustrated at the moment with their take-home pay. That has been the focus of particular disputes, including the one we saw yesterday involving nurses and other unresolved public sector worker disputes across the State. There has been an—and I will use this word—immature focus on wage outcomes, instead of a longer-term view of what wage justice is achievable under a Labor government as opposed to that which a public sector worker, or any worker, can expect from a conservative government. Labor came to office promising to get rid of the wages cap and introduce a new bargaining stream in this State. We have kept that promise. Despite inheriting from our predecessor the largest debt ever inherited by an incoming government, we have done all we can to scour the budget to make the best offer possible to public sector workers.

I accept that a whole bunch of public sector workers would like to see a higher wage offer than we have made. However, I say to them that we have set up a system that will provide wages justice for public sector workers in this State in the long term. I ask them—and particularly their leaders, who should know better—to remember that when they sit down to negotiate with the Government during the current round of wage negotiations. Having said that, nurses who spoke to me referred to issues of a local nature. I am old enough to have been a public sector worker. I worked for a very short period during the Greiner Government. I ask public sector workers to look at the wages policy of the Greiner Government. There was no wage rise unless we signed an enterprise agreement, which contained trade-offs. I worked in the public sector as chairman of the Department of Industrial Relations workplace committee, so I have skin in the game.

I say to public sector workers, including the nurses, that I have the impression that after 10 years there is a managerial prerogative, and an industrial straitjacket has stopped workers from bargaining and solving those local, day-to-day issues. That is also causing frustration. The Government must send a message to the managerial class of the public service to say that the managerial prerogative does not reign supreme any more. Those managers must sit down with their workers and work out issues like rosters, which should not be bargained at the peak level. They should be worked on at a local level, in the workplace, hand in hand with the workforce. In that way we will end up with a better industrial relations system and public service overall in this State. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (16:30): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Police Amendment (Police Officer Support Scheme) Bill 2024. In particular, I thank members representing the electorates of Bathurst, Mount Druitt—the exceptional Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism—Tweed, Prospect, Fairfield, Blue Mountains, Bankstown and The Entrance. I echo the sentiments of the member for Blue Mountains regarding her police area command. They have had a tough couple of weeks. The team worked with dignity, empathy and care. We owe them a lot.

Certain matters were raised during debate on the bill about which I will make some comments. Politicising police and, in particular, their workers compensation scheme is quite a new low for the member for Bathurst. I will address the comments made by the member for Bathurst and the member for Tweed. They said that Labor's election promise was that the Police Blue Ribbon Insurance [PBRI] scheme would stay, unless there was a better scheme. I have the signed letter in my hand. Unfortunately, the member for Bathurst did not read to the bottom of the letter, which said:

Our commitment to maintain the scheme should not prevent improvements or a better scheme being agreed and introduced during the first term of a NSW Labor Government.

That is far from a broken promise; it is an election commitment. That letter addressed matters like developing a sustainable scheme that provides the necessary benefits for members, providing better return-to-work outcomes and redeployment opportunities, and providing the best treatment and rehabilitation possible. The member for Bathurst may not agree with the Minns Labor Government addressing those matters, but we have honoured our election commitment. That is exactly what we are doing: We are delivering a better scheme. In fact, the member for Bathurst admitted that in his contribution—so it sounds like we are on the same page. The member for Bathurst wanted to keep the former scheme with its concessional tax problems that caused headaches for police officers across the State and left them financially disadvantaged. It is quite clear he supported the scheme because he did nothing about it for years when he was police Minister. I will not be lectured to by the member for Bathurst.

Mr Paul Toole: We said we support it.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: If you support the new scheme that is great. You should sit there and say very little.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair. The member for Bathurst will cease interjecting.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The Government has proposed a better scheme. The new scheme provides a streamlined approach for assessing supplementary support payments for all work-related injuries to improve officers' experiences. On-duty claims will now be administered by the NSW Police Force, while off-duty claims will continue to be administered by TAL. Death cover will continue to be administered by Aware Super. The scheme will provide improved coverage and supplementary support payments for eligible officers injured on duty for up to 10 years, and there will be improved off-duty support benefits with income protection payments for up to three years. The Government will ensure that no officer is left without cover as we transition from the PBRI to the Enhanced Police Support Scheme, or EPSS.

There will be no additional cost to officers with salary sacrifice contributions remaining in the scheme. The EPSS fixes the longstanding concessional contribution cap issue, about which I receive correspondence every day—including from the member for Bathurst. No additional steps will be required for commanders or managers, and shared services in health, safety and wellbeing will be involved in the enhanced support provided to our injured officers. The officer experience will be enhanced with the aim of providing a positive return to work. The member for Bathurst said that we are bleeding police officers. That is because the former Government sent police wages backwards. The former Government had no plan for recruitment or retention, and it took wages backwards. That is why we are bleeding police.

The Liberal-Nationals Government kept wages low. Wages in the public sector were capped at a dismal 2.5 per cent per year, which meant that our State's public servants, including police officers, paramedics and nurses, went backwards in real terms. The member for Bathurst stated that there was still confusion around catastrophic and exceptional extension payments. I will clear that up for him—and I will say it slowly. The definition in the regulations is as follows:

Catastrophic injury has the meaning given by the Workers Compensation Guidelines Part 9.1—

which is not new—

- (1) An exceptional injury for a person who is or was a police officer is an injury that renders the person—
 - (a) totally incapacitated, and

- (b) unlikely ever to engage in any gainful profession, trade or occupation for which the person is reasonably qualified by reason of education, training or experience.
- (2) To avoid doubt, in assessing whether a person who is or was a police officer is unlikely to ever engage in a gainful profession, trade or occupation for which the person is reasonably qualified by reason of education, training or experience the assessment—
 - (a) is not confined to an assessment of the person's capacity to be a police officer, and
 - (b) will consider the person's broader ability to engage in any profession, trade or occupation to earn an income.

I have cleared that up. Now I thank those involved in the development of the scheme and bill. This is an incredibly complex piece of work. It required a lot of people to create a scheme that was supported by all involved. I start with the Police Association of NSW, led by Kevin Morton, which worked tirelessly with the Government to deliver a scheme that will benefit its members for years to come. The association has an eye on the future, not on the past. I thank Deputy Commissioner Dean Smith and his indispensable offsider, Darren Bark, who worked around the clock for many months. They are both in the gallery. They literally worked around the clock. I am glad we do not pay them by the hour—if we do, we may have to revisit that! I thank them so much for the work they have put into the bill.

I thank Deputy Commissioner David Hudson, Assistant Commissioner Brett Greentree, and the health, safety and wellbeing command led by Rochelle Conroy. I thank also the industrial relations and finance team at the police, including Andrew Reid, Nadia Napolitana, Erin McMullen, Kylie Cannock, Charles McKinnon, Corrinne Hutton and David Kumar. I thank those members of icare who worked on the scheme—they are now Darren Bark's best friends! I thank SIRA, Treasury, the Personal Injury Commission, the Cabinet Office and the industrial relations team in the Premier's Department. I thank the Treasurer and members of the Treasurer's office, including Tom Westbrook-Braithwaite and Michael Buckland. They have all been of enormous assistance.

From the Premier's office, I thank James Hammerton and Peter Remfrey. From the office of the Minister for Industrial Relations, I thank Ayshe Lewis and Tom Craven. I thank my chief of staff, Ross Neilson. Last but not least, I thank Tilly South for her astonishing work. We would not be here today without Tilly. I thank her very much for her incredible patience and diligence. It is with great pleasure that 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.

Third Reading

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

MARINE SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 September 2024.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:40): I speak on behalf of the Opposition on the Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024. The Opposition will not be opposing the legislation; however, we may move some amendments in the other place. In New South Wales we are blessed to have some of the best beaches and waterways in the world. I may be biased, but I think it is fair to say that my community has the best beaches in New South Wales, if not the world. I know that that is always contentious. My community, like everyone in New South Wales, loves being on the water. You only have to look around on a sunny day to see people enjoying our waterways, such as kids learning to sail at Woollahra Sailing Club, the avid paddlers of the Eastern Suburbs Dragon Boat Club, which I have done myself, early-morning kayakers getting some exercise, surfers and fishers. Being on the water is part of our way of life in Sydney.

As the Minister highlighted in her second reading speech, New South Wales hosted approximately 215,000 registered recreational vessels in 2023-24. The Marine Safety Amendment Bill aims to change the State's marine safety legislation and to enable further regulatory changes once Transport for NSW's ongoing statutory review of the Marine Safety Regulation 2016 concludes. I understand that the review closed for consultation in January 2023, and the Opposition and stakeholders await the release of the regulatory impact statement. The Marine Safety Act 1998 is the primary legislation that oversees the safety of navigation on our waterways. The objects of that Act are to ensure the safe operation of vessels in ports and other waterways; to promote the responsible operation of vessels in those waters to protect the safety and amenity of other users of those waters and the amenity of occupiers of adjoining land; to provide an effective framework for the enforcement of marine

legislation; to provide for the investigation of marine accidents and for appropriate action following any such investigation; and to consolidate the marine safety legislation.

The waterways of New South Wales also support an extensive and diverse range of commercial and recreational boating activity that delivers major economic and social benefits for the State. In fact, it is estimated that our marine estate generates over \$15 billion annually. Although we want people to enjoy our waterways in a sensible manner, there have been and continue to be some significant issues in some areas that need addressing. I will leave it to my colleagues in the other place to unpack some of those issues. I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill will introduce amendments to provide safety improvements to the State's port operations. Trading ports in New South Wales are vital to our community and the economy. This bill will harmonise the State's legislative framework with other States and Territories, where compulsory pilotage is required for vessels of 35 metres and above, in turn making the State's maritime safety laws more consistent with those in the rest of the country. The limit is currently 30 metres in New South Wales.

The bill will also introduce a new offshore anchorages framework for ports, in particular aimed at limiting cumulative seabed disturbance. With the increasing number of movements of merchant vessels, there is a need for designated anchorage areas located away from sensitive habitats to manage sea floor impacts and limit the extent of disturbance. The Opposition supports the principle of this approach. However, we are interested to see how the new framework will be implemented. The Opposition supports the bill's amendments to strengthen regulatory powers for the effective management of unsafe vessels and former vessels. Again, we may seek some minor amendments in the other place. However, in principle, this is an appropriate approach.

The increasing number of ageing and derelict vessels in our waterways is a huge problem for people in my area and other coastal areas. It is caused by the lack of a requirement for boats not in service to be registered. Therefore, we are seeing this scourge of vessels causing environmental impacts but also issues in many of the mooring areas across the State. A lot of people will welcome this news. I thank the House for the opportunity to discuss this bill and once again reflect that there may be amendments in the other place.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I have a beautiful creek in my electorate, but I am envious of colleagues whose electorates have beautiful beaches and waterways.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:44): I support the Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024. The waterways of New South Wales are some of the most stunning in Australia and the world. I echo the sentiments of the member for Vaucluse. In my electorate of Shellharbour we have the Shellharbour Marina, which is a wonderful waterway used by all of our local community. Waterways in New South Wales deliver numerous benefits to the community, such as enjoying recreational boating and water sports, and are also economically crucial to the community. I will brag about Shellharbour first. Killalea Regional Park is absolutely beautiful and untouched. The surf is treacherous, but it is great for surfers. I recall a time when those opposite were in government and wanted to develop the park with buildings, cabins and function centres. A development does not need to be behind every blade of grass, in my view.

Over the past few years, the popularity of activities such as fishing, sailing and paddling has increased. With that, we have also seen a corresponding rise in ageing and derelict vessels across New South Wales. In response to these trends, a modernisation of the marine safety legislation is required, and I will detail a few of the bill's provisions to support this. The first relates to the amendment of the definition of "unsafe vessel" and related provisions in the Act to include derelict vessels and unseaworthy former vessels. End-of-life vessels, which are vessels, built in the last few decades, that are reaching or have already reached the end of their useful lives, can be considered derelict vessels. The most pressing concern is end-of-life vessels stored on moorings, which often end up owned by people who cannot fund their disposal. Some owners may deliberately abandon their vessels or retain their registrations and mooring licences to avoid paying the hefty costs of the vessels' removal. That not only prevents active boaters from accessing the moorings but also presents potential safety, navigational and environmental risks.

Moored vessels that are not maintained adequately are at risk of sinking or detaching from the moorings, becoming partly or fully submerged navigational hazards or threats to the environment due to the leaking of chemicals, oil and fuel. When this occurs, NSW Maritime is obliged to remove and dispose of the vessels. It is estimated that NSW Maritime spends around \$1 million annually doing this, with only a small percentage of costs recouped from the vessels' owners. The bill captures end-of-life vessels as derelict vessels under the definition of "unsafe vessel", and this term is commonly understood in the maritime and shipping context and has been used in other marine legislation.

The bill also includes provisions for the management of former vessels. These vessels are typically large ex-commercial vessels purchased by owners who lack the means to properly maintain them. Such vessels pose increased risks to life, property and the environment and their removal from the waters of New South Wales

ultimately becomes a burden on the taxpayers. The MV *Baragoola*, which sank on 1 January 2022 in Sydney Harbour, was one of many such vessels. That incident reinforces the need for more effective regulation of them. Under the bill, end-of-life vessels and former vessels that are no longer seaworthy will be regulated as unsafe vessels. As such, Transport for NSW will have the power to direct the owner of an end-of-life vessel or unseaworthy former vessel to remove the vessel or authorise its removal or disposal and recover reasonable costs incurred from the owner. Transport for NSW will also have the regulatory scope to track and monitor unseaworthy former vessels and execute necessary enforcement action to prevent them from capsizing or sinking.

In addition, the bill increases the maximum penalty for the operation of unsafe vessels. The current maximum penalty for the operation of unsafe vessels is often lower than the repair costs for some large unsafe vessels, which can reach tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. As such, vessel owners are more likely to pay the penalty fees than to stop operating the vessels or repair or remove them. The increase in the maximum penalty will more effectively deter vessel owners from operating unsafe vessels and encourage them to repair or remove them from our waterways. These legislative amendments will enable more effective regulation of vessels and facilitate the development of more robust policy measures to address the growing problem of end-of-life vessels and former vessels.

The bill also amends the Act to enable flexibility in the duration of the existing aquatic licences that can be issued. This will allow better regulation of commercial and non-commercial activities with different periods and conditions. More importantly, it will address issues with the outdated existing regulatory framework for management of commercial activities on New South Wales waters. Currently, many maritime-related commercial activities operate under ad-hoc direction notices and exemption orders, which creates uncertainty for the industry and unnecessary burdens for Transport for NSW. For instance, some hire-and-drive business owners have been operating under exemptions issued by Transport for NSW for several years. Those exemptions do not provide ongoing certainty around sale and transfer. Additionally, there are concerns around barriers to entry to the sector.

Under the current conditions, Transport for NSW does not have the appropriate fee mechanisms for the administration of existing businesses. The amendment to the Act will create greater business certainty by allowing commercial businesses to transfer their aquatic licences to new business owners. Increased investment in maritime-related commercial activities and a clearly defined pathway for new entrants to the market will also be provided. Not-for-profit organisations, social clubs and short-term commercial events will continue to be regulated under the aquatic licence. The modernisation of the licensing framework is not expected to impact the current operations and resourcing required to administer and enforce the licences.

The effective regulation of commercial activities on New South Wales waterways will contribute to the Government's long-term vision of creating successful places and supporting a strong economy. Additionally, businesses facilitating waterway activities will provide more people in the community the opportunity to experience New South Wales's waterways in a safe environment and increase their knowledge of recreational boating. The changes contained in the bill will modernise marine safety legislation and contribute to safer and more efficient practices on our waterways. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:53): On behalf of The Greens, I support the Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to the bill during the consideration in detail stage. The bill amends the Marine Safety Act 1998 to address recommendations arising from the *Marine Safety Regulation 2016 Discussion Paper* released in 2022. The bill makes a number of amendments to improve water safety and protect marine environments in New South Wales. Schedule 1 [2] to the bill extends the definition of vessel to capture "a thing capable of being used on or in relation to the water". Schedule 1 [47] gives authorised officers powers in relation to the removal, detention and seizure of unsafe vessels. Schedule 1 [55] requires Transport for NSW to establish and keep a public register of vessels to which an outstanding statutory notice relates, if the Minister is satisfied the notice relates to the current condition or safety of the vessel.

The issue of unsafe, dilapidated vessels resonates with my community in Balmain. In fact, a dedicated coalition of residents has joined together to form the Save Our Sydney Harbour group. Their mission is to tackle the issue of marine pollution, particularly from the derelict vessels and failing structures and moorings that pollute and degrade our environment. They have exposed how the iconic Sydney Harbour has become a dumping ground for marine waste, with rotting boats and wharves left to pollute our precious environment. Save Our Sydney Harbour has documented more than 100 derelict vessels, wharves and mooring points across Sydney Harbour. When left to break down, these vessels and structures cause damage to our environment and, as seen recently, pose a risk to local heritage. Only last month, a derelict vessel caught fire and came dangerously close to the iconic SS *South Steyne* ferry. Fortunately, the heritage ferry was not harmed, but it was a clear reminder of why we need to act to clean up Sydney Harbour.

Derelict vessels are more than just an eyesore; they pose a real threat to our environment and local heritage. I have sponsored a community petition organised by Save Our Sydney Harbour that has received strong support

in the community, with almost 2,000 signatures so far. The petition calls on the Government to ensure dilapidated and redundant vessels and failing structures and wharves are removed from Sydney Harbour to ensure they are not left to further deteriorate and harm our environment.

As the Minister for Transport recognised in her second reading speech on this bill, our pristine waterways are one of Sydney's major drawcards for locals and tourists alike. Sydney Harbour is an iconic shared space that is important to us all. It is essential that the Government protects our waterways and stops them becoming dumping grounds. The amendments put forward in this bill go some way to address these concerns and better protect our precious marine environment and local heritage. During the consideration in detail stage, I will move amendments to strengthen the bill and further address these concerns, but for now The Greens support this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (16:56): I support the Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024, which provides for the safe and responsible operation and ownership of vessels in New South Wales ports and waterways and enhances the existing marine safety legislation framework. New South Wales ports are vitally important to the community and economy, generating more than \$15 billion each year. The bill amends commercial and recreational vessel operations to improve safer navigation and boating behaviour and allow more efficient and harmonious use of port waters. The increase in the minimum length of a vessel requiring pilotage to 35 metres will harmonise New South Wales's compulsory pilotage requirements with other Australian jurisdictions. The introduction of a special recreational vessel permit to the marine safety licences provides recreational vessels 35 metres and above with an exemption from compulsory pilotage in New South Wales.

To mitigate potential safety risks from the perpetual validity of a marine pilot licence, the bill introduces the ability to cancel licences with notification requirements. The licence of a marine pilot who has retired or left the industry will be cancelled after two years. These provisions will ensure the maintenance of optimal health standards and high performance by marine pilots and instil confidence in the marine pilot licensing framework. In addition to ensuring improved safety outcomes in our ports, the bill also strengthens the protection of the marine environment, in particular sensitive seabed habitats that need to be protected from the anchors of merchant vessels. The declaration of designated anchorage areas outside of port areas will protect the sea floor and areas with high conservation and heritage value and improve the safety of vessels waiting to come into New South Wales ports.

Growing concern around the increasing number of ageing and derelict moored vessels across New South Wales has highlighted the need to more effectively manage such vessels. The bill will strengthen existing vessel registration and transfer provisions to ensure it is clear who is responsible for a vessel at all times during a vessel transaction. Under the new provisions, both the seller and buyer applications must be completed before the transfer of vessel ownership or registration can occur. That will prevent situations where the seller has notionally absolved themselves of any responsibility for a vessel and the buyer has failed to register the vessel, leaving Transport as the regulator to take responsibility. This is especially important in the case of a vessel in deteriorating condition. Transport will have stronger tools to protect people who purchase second-hand vessels, including the ability to refuse or rescind the transfer of vessel registration to protect buyers.

Additionally, by making available a register of vessels that are subject to relevant statutory notices, vessel buyers can make informed decisions and be fully aware of a vessel's condition and any liabilities before proceeding with the purchase. The bill introduces an amendment that requires any vessel in State waters to be registered, whether or not it is operated. The bill also provides an amended definition of "unsafe vessel".

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

Public Interest Debate

REGIONAL MANUFACTURING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic made New South Wales realise its dependency on manufactured imports and its vulnerability to supply chain disturbances, and its impact on the cost of living.
- (2) Notes the New South Wales Labor Government's commitment to supporting an economy with a sovereign manufacturing component.
- (3) Recognises that regional New South Wales is ready, willing and suitable to contribute to building a New South Wales manufacturing industry that supports and drives the economy and employment and will reduce cost-of-living pressure.
- (4) Calls on this House to support a regional manufacturing industry revival in New South Wales.

- (5) Notes the role of the Government and the Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement in creating a regulatory environment that facilitates and supports regional manufacturing in New South Wales.

There was a time when New South Wales and Australia could hold their own. We mined resources, value added and processed the resources onshore and made things—cars, electronics, furniture and pretty much anything anyone needed. It was not just in the cities or on the east coast; we had factories of all types across our regional areas too. We have seen more and more of the value-add and manufacturing functions being sent offshore and the industries lost to New South Wales. Through COVID-19, as international supply chains were disrupted, Australians were at the mercy of much bigger markets. Our population size and power meant that more populous countries could freeze us out and the prices of everything pretty much increased and stayed up.

This has had an ongoing impact on the cost of living in New South Wales. It is not just COVID-19. Members might remember a few years ago when a shortage of AdBlue threatened our entire agriculture and transport sectors. This was likely retaliation for some negative comments about China by the Prime Minister at the time. It was a tiny flex by China, but it exposed just how vulnerable we are. It also gave us cause to think about the other levers that countries could pull and bring Australia and New South Wales to their knees. We often hear the phrase "sovereign capability". What does it mean? Thanks to our friends in Canberra, it is defined for us pretty well:

Sovereign capability concerns the industrial, economic, logistical, research and educational capabilities required by a country to achieve objectives including safety, defence, health and wellbeing, food security, energy and key materials supply, infrastructure security, and environmental sustainability. Sovereign capability addresses what we must be able to make and do, to achieve some level of self-sufficiency in areas where it matters most.

It was originally associated with defence. Indeed, defence is the only industry with a dedicated strategy for the sector that ensures a level of self-sufficiency in this regard. But it is now applied more broadly to other products, giving the ability to process raw materials and manufacture based on market needs. Australia now has the lowest level of manufacturing self-sufficiency in the OECD. That is a sad reflection on our policy settings at State and Federal levels. We have lost manufacturing skills in regional areas. In many cases, younger people have left the regions to find employment elsewhere.

The shift that Australia attempted to a "knowledge economy" in the 1990s and early 2000s in my opinion failed to anticipate or account for global supply chain instability or for strained diplomatic relationships. This was based on the idea that we could strengthen the economy through technology and innovation. It has merit and it is important to pursue innovation and technology, but it cannot be at the expense of manufacturing. We still have to make stuff. On my Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study tour in June this year I toured the Beretta factory in Italy. Beretta is the oldest trading company in the world. It originated five centuries ago in Gardone Val Trompia, an area of regional Italy known for its iron resources and ironworkers since ancient Roman times.

The company is very proud of its history. It sold its first weapons in 1526, according to a sales receipt dating from that time that is held in a Venetian archive, and a copy of which is on display at the Beretta factory. I was keen to learn how the company has stayed in business for so long as a regional manufacturer. It is a family business—it is not owned by shareholders—and 15 generations have helped build and manage the company. Beretta now has over 50 businesses and brands, and ships products to most countries, including Australia. It also manufactures in several countries. I was fascinated to learn that the facility typically produces 100 per cent of its own energy requirements through solar and hydro generation. Beretta is heavily involved in the local community, preserving history and supporting many direct and indirect jobs. The Italian Government uses its products in defence and policing, and has done so for many years.

The company mines iron ore from nearby the factory, which it uses in production and value-adds. It has its own special blend of steel, with all metal swarf going back into new products. It partners with other local businesses like MCM, which supplies many of its automated machines. Yet Beretta still employs over 900 people in its two facilities in Gardone—many multigenerational families work for the company—and has many more employees worldwide. It also generates its own talent. One good example of that was when the company ran out of master engravers, so it created a pipeline of apprentice engravers who are now filling that void. The key ingredients seem to be government buying domestically produced products, partnering locally for support industries and using local content. That is something I would like to see more of in New South Wales and something that I have been working on in this Parliament.

What does government buying domestically manufactured goods look like? A perfect example is Felton Industries in Condobolin. Felton produces high-quality school furniture in New South Wales. It might seem obvious that NSW Education would beat a path to its door anytime it needs school furniture. But, no, Felton Industries is forced to compete with overseas-manufactured goods. That should never have been the case. I hope that we resolved this recently, but it is not guaranteed. It remains a great example of simple things that governments can do to support local manufacturing.

To make manufacturing in regional areas a reality and increase our self-sufficiency generally, we need to do a few things. Government procurement needs to buy locally manufactured goods as a priority; policy settings around planning and State-based taxes like payroll tax need to incentivise people setting up manufacturing in regional areas; and more steel, aluminium and other metals need to be produced onshore, not shipped overseas as ore and reimported as finished product. Pursuing innovation and technology is important, but it cannot be done at the expense of, or without, local manufacturing.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (17:07): I am delighted to speak on this motion. I congratulate the member for Barwon on bringing it to the House. Rebuilding manufacturing is an important part of the future of New South Wales, particularly regional New South Wales. The fact that the member for Barwon has brought forward such a constructive motion reflects the reason he is in this place: He is always looking for outcomes and not just playing politics. That is important as we go through the process of rebuilding manufacturing in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government has introduced a number of policies that will assist in rebuilding manufacturing in this State, and many of them are very applicable to regional New South Wales.

As a representative of regional New South Wales and someone who has been working in the regions for a long time, it is excellent to see the number of companies that are engaged in manufacturing on a smaller scale or in niche markets, particularly in some centres. I am familiar with some of the work being done in Griffith, in particular, where manufacturing for the food-related industry is a huge employer in the area. Indeed, food-related manufacturing is our biggest manufacturing business in New South Wales, so it is an important area. But we can also move into a range of other areas as we go forward. An important aspect of this is a whole-of-government approach in a number of areas—and it is what the Government is putting in place with the Jobs First Commission. Recently the Minister announced initiatives around leveraging our procurement dollars to support local business and local supplies.

Building a pipeline of skilled workers comes under the portfolio that I have the honour of being responsible for in order to drive productivity and jobs in New South Wales so we can start to rebuild an industry in making things here. Government procurement is key, as the member indicated. The Government recently announced four key measures. The local content policy will apply a minimum of 30 per cent weighting to New South Wales Government tenders worth more than \$7.5 million and capture local content, job creation, small business and ethical supply chains. There is a future skills guarantee with workforce targets, including that 20 per cent of the trade workforce for New South Wales Government construction or infrastructure contracts valued at over \$7.5 million are apprentices. The Minister is working with local businesses on a number of projects around the State. As the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, I particularly want to talk about the importance of engaging a whole-of-government approach on things like renewable energy zones.

They present a great opportunity for more manufacturing in New South Wales. We need to make sure that we work with industry as we go through to put in place, firstly, a base of skills development in the regions that matches future skills and, secondly, a teaching workforce to engage populations in areas that might not be engaging in that training at the moment and might have barriers to do that. The Government needs to put in place the wraparound support that goes with that. We are taking a whole-of-government approach to skills and workforce planning for those zones to put in a strong base for our TAFEs and other educational suppliers. We are also getting teachers in place, not waiting to say, "How can we catch up to this after it happens?"

That is a really important basis for working with the companies that come in. The Government is looking at working with group training organisations when projects do not run long enough to have an apprentice go for their full apprenticeship with a single project. The Government is putting in place manufacturing centres of excellence, where qualifications and training programs will be developed to link VET training with other higher education to get higher skills that might be needed for advanced manufacturing. The Government is working with the university sector to ensure that people can transition smoothly from vocational training into the tertiary sector for the advanced manufacturing skills that are needed to build a base.

Importantly, those courses need to be able to be delivered anywhere, not rooted to spots in city areas where we are going to have those manufacturing centres of excellence. I congratulate the member for Barwon on bringing the motion forward. It is about looking to the future and working constructively to ensure that the Government has policies on procurement and on the evolving skills and industries to enhance this sector and link together the proponents with skills development in New South Wales. I am pleased to be part of a government that, in just 18 months, has worked to start putting those things in place.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:12): I welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate. I start by thanking the member for Barwon for bringing the motion to the House. I appreciate his advocacy. As he is the Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development, I have had the pleasure of being able to work with him at the recent inquiry into regional manufacturing. I acknowledge

the contribution of the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education about the sense of whole of government. There are a couple of strands to draw out that I want to focus on in that regard. The member for Barwon spoke about procurement—and I know that the member for Goulburn will want to speak to that a bit further—but there are other policy areas, such as payroll tax, value add and innovation.

The Minister spoke about Griffith, and I am sure the member for Murray will speak to it too. He spoke about whole of government, but pulling water away from the Murray-Darling Basin will decimate communities like Griffith. We can talk as much as we like about manufacturing in towns like Griffith, but if we kill off the town by taking away its water, what chance have we got when it comes to manufacturing? That is what we need to be focusing on when talking about whole of government. I recognise some of the former Government's initiatives to empower and enable the competitive advantages and points of difference of manufacturing in regional areas. In Albury, there are things like the Davey Road interchange, the Ettamogah Rail Hub and the jobs special precinct for Ettamogah. All of that is about providing the right conditions to enable and empower manufacturing in regional communities. That is an important aspect to talk about when looking at a whole-of-government approach.

I particularly commend the line in the motion that "regional New South Wales is ready, willing and suitable to contribute to building a New South Wales manufacturing industry". That is certainly my experience in the Albury community, where there is a vibrant manufacturing scene. I make the point to the Government that it is about recognising that there is a diversity in manufacturing. In the Albury community, there is Albury Precision Engineering, which has just celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. Crump Spreaders are now being manufactured in Albury after 100 or so years. Malibu Boats makes some of the world's leading ski boats. I am sure the member for Barwon will concur when I talk about Corowa whisky, Dean Druce and the team there. That is another example of a vibrant manufacturing scene.

Members talk about the positives, but I also speak to the concerns. I was part of the inquiry that looked at the cessation of the Regional Job Creation Fund and the Regional Investment Activation Fund [RIAF]—funds of \$240 million and \$110 million respectively. They were ceased in April 2023 when this Government came into power. That needs to be looked at. To give a sense of the impact of that, I touch on the case study of the impact of the discontinuance of the RIAF on SunDrive Solar, a solar technology company based in south Sydney. It produces some of the world's most efficient solar cells. It invested approximately \$30,000 in making an application, including engaging a consulting firm to assist with the necessary materials. The project would have created more than 500 direct jobs in its initial phase. The company was left high and dry, as were a number of companies that were impacted when the funding program was cut midstream. Recommendation 6 of the committee quite politely says:

That the Department of Primary Industries and Regional NSW proactively communicate key updates including any delays and ceasing of funds to grant applicants and recipients.

As I said in the take-note debate at the time, we need to do much better in that regard. At the end of the day, the biggest concern that I have is that in July 2022, the key recommendation of the *Making it in NSW* report by the Modern Manufacturing Taskforce was the appointment of a modern manufacturing commissioner. Nearly 12 months ago now, that was cut. It was a significant step. The CEO of Harrison Manufacturing Company, Julie Harrison, said:

My view of the NSW Commissioner for Modern Manufacturing was she was in a great place to develop a strategy for the State – and by default, Australia ...

That is now gone.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (17:17): I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the motion before the House. He is a breath of fresh air for western New South Wales. So significant is this issue that, over the past 20 years, manufacturing in New South Wales has declined by 0.6 per cent each year. In 2021-22 Australia ranked last for manufacturing self-sufficiency amongst all OECD countries. Instead of spending its procurement dollars locally, the former Government sent billions of dollars and thousands of jobs overseas. I have brought many of those to the House's attention in the past and, if time permits, I will do so again. The New South Wales Government is committed to leveraging its precious procurement dollars to support local businesses and local suppliers, building a pipeline of skilled workers to drive productivity and jobs in New South Wales, and rebuilding the State's proud history of making things here.

Last year the New South Wales Government procured \$42 billion in goods and services. The Government wants to see more of that going to local suppliers, supporting local communities and creating local jobs. We should be harnessing our existing strengths to make our manufacturing capabilities greater. One significant statistic that everybody should understand is that for every manufacturing job created, 3.5 more jobs are created in the supply chain. One out of 16 people in the New South Wales workforce works in manufacturing. Over

28,000 manufacturers in New South Wales employ more than 285,000 people. In 2023 manufacturing contributed \$42.3 billion to the New South Wales economy, which constitutes 5.4 per cent of gross State product and over 30 per cent of our national manufacturing output.

I remind the House that on 3 September 2024 the Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement issued a ministerial direction instructing the NSW Procurement Board to mandate that government agencies engage with local suppliers before going to tender for projects worth more than \$7.5 million. The new rules require that agencies must give an explanation if a contract worth more than \$7.5 million is awarded to a supplier outside of New South Wales. That will immediately allow agencies to encourage the participation of local suppliers and workers in bidding for government work. It requires agencies to focus on value for money, including how the contract can contribute to the local economy, and not just price.

The Government will implement four key measures, including a local content policy, to apply a minimum 30 per cent weighting to New South Wales Government tenders worth more than \$7.5 million that capture local content, job creation, small business and ethical supply chains, and a future skills guarantee with workforce targets, including that 20 per cent of the trade's workforce on government construction or infrastructure contracts valued above \$7.5 million are apprentices.

We are investing \$447 million via the 2024-25 budget to extend the life of the current Tangara train fleet, keeping those trains on the tracks for the next 12 years. We are returning domestic manufacturing to the State and building the next generation of Tangara trains in New South Wales. Through our Future Fleet Program, we are investing \$17.5 million to kick-start our State's domestic train manufacturing capabilities. A robust local manufacturing industry is essential to creating jobs in New South Wales, not just for metropolitan areas but also for regional areas. Never again will New South Wales be left in the parlous manufacturing state that it has been in for the past 12 years.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:22): I contribute to the public interest debate on the importance of regional manufacturing. I thank the member for Barwon for allowing us to highlight how clever we are in the bush. People who live on the land have to be practical and self-sufficient. We need to be able to fix our own problems, especially if we are in remote areas, because sometimes we are the only ones around. That is why regional Australia has such a proud history of manufacturing. We do not sit around waiting for some foreign company or metro mob to build something we need. We use whatever is available to manufacture whatever we need.

For example, the Dalton family used to have an old Blitz truck. It was a four-wheel drive from the World War II era. For a long time it sat in the shed. An astute neighbour had his eye on the Blitz, so my father-in-law gifted the truck to him. Pretty soon he converted it into a prune shaker, and it was one of the first prune shakers around. The vehicle was then refined and manufactured. It is a heck of a lot more efficient to shake prunes out of a tree than to pick them off the tree one by one.

My dad was one of the best innovators and manufacturers in the area. He had a gift for it. In his own farm machinery workshop, which was pretty modest, he cut down an old Holden ute and used the cabin for his favourite tractor—a John Deere. It was one of the first tractors in the district in the late '60s to have a cabin. Initially people thought it was a bit strange and weird, but pretty soon it was the talk of Rankins Springs—and still is today. Tractor cabins are now a fact of life and we would never be without one. News gets around, and that is when the engineers and the professional manufacturers get involved. Soon tractor cabs were everywhere. It all started with some good old-fashioned regional manufacturing.

We have been innovating and manufacturing on the land for years. Do members remember the stump-jump plough? That was not dreamt up in the city; it was conceived and manufactured by a couple of regional farmers who were tired of breaking their backs and wearing out their beasts with a regular plough. Their names were Richard Smith and Clarence Smith. The Smiths are now regional manufacturing icons. They are proof that, if necessity is the mother of invention, then regional Australia is the motherland.

In regional New South Wales we sometimes have time to think—not often, but sometimes. As we work the land all day, we have time to imagine products that can make life easier and productivity that little bit more efficient. Once a farmer comes up with a good idea and a prototype, there is no shortage of capable engineers that he or she can take their idea to in order to turn it into a regional manufacturing success story. Other members have spoken about that in this debate. We have the engineers, the workshops, the know-how and the motivation to manufacture all kinds of miracles. In fact, Griffith's local manufacturing sector accounts for \$233 million or 16 per cent of industry value added. A lot of that has to do with water. Without water, we would not have that huge sector. Without regional manufacturing, the State's economy would be a lot worse for wear.

Those who live in the city could be fooled into thinking that innovation only comes from Silicon Valley and that manufacturing only happens in Chinese factories. If they think that, they are wrong. Regional manufacturing is home to so much innovation and productivity, and the New South Wales Government would do well to remember that. Regional manufacturing is an essential part of our State's manufacturing economy. I have no doubt that we will be innovating and manufacturing in the region for centuries to come.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:26): I contribute to the public interest debate on regional manufacturing and thank the member for Barwon for moving this motion. It is important to get the policy settings right for manufacturing, particularly for regional areas. The Government went to the election with a commitment to "increase tender weightings to 30 per cent to capture local content, job creation, small business and ethical supply chains". That change could have been made at any time by a Procurement Board direction. However, 18 months on, that policy commitment is still not in effect and there is no detail or clarity as to how it will operate.

The only announcement has been about restricting the application of the policy so that it would not apply to any tender under \$7.5 million. The current procurement framework, established under the previous Coalition Government, already requires that all tenders for goods and services valued at \$3 million or more must include a non-price tender weighting of 10 per cent for small and medium enterprise participation. Such tenders must also include a minimum 10 per cent non-price tender weighting for support of the New South Wales Government's economic, ethical, environmental and social priorities. All goods and services tenders for \$3 million or more must also include the submission of a small and medium enterprise and local participation plan, referencing New South Wales-specific content and reporting on these commitments quarterly.

Are those requirements being replaced by the new 30 per cent tender weighting or is it additional? There is no clarity from the Government on that. The new 30 per cent weighting is to cover four quite discrete matters, including local content, job creation, small business and ethical supply chains. We have no clarity yet from the Government as to whether the 30 per cent weighting will need to be broken down into those four discrete components, with a 7.5 per cent weighting each, or suppliers will be assessed on all four factors together. All New South Wales Government suppliers are supposed to have ethical supply chains, are they not? It should be a yes or no rating and not a percentage weighting.

The issue of identifying a local supplier is not straightforward. The Government has made it clear that under its proposed Jobs First Commission legislation the definition of "local content" will be any Australia- or New Zealand-based enterprise. The "if not, why not" directive, which comes into force on 1 January 2025, requires government agencies to test the market with local suppliers for contracts valued at \$7.5 million or more. The definition of "local supplier" is "a New South Wales-based enterprise". Purchasing agencies are directed to identify local suppliers by filtering the Buy NSW supplier database by location. However, that will capture any supplier with an ABN linked to a New South Wales address. That will include the New South Wales registered address of any international supplier who has or is hoping to do business with the New South Wales Government. Much more work will need to be done on refining what counts as a New South Wales-based enterprise if this policy directive is to have any real effect other than increasing the paperwork in the procurement process. It is easy to talk about building up regional manufacturing, but much more than sloganeering will be needed.

Our regional communities are ready, willing and perfectly positioned to contribute to a revitalised manufacturing sector in New South Wales and Australia. In my electorate, a number of manufacturers received funding from the Regional Job Creation Fund introduced by the previous Coalition Government. The \$1 million investment of A&I Coatings in Moss Vale was provided with \$100,000 to expand its factory and create jobs. It is a great little organisation doing great things. Hidrive in Goulburn completed a \$1.6 million upgrade to its Goulburn manufacturing facility, which was backed by \$820,000 from the Regional Job Creation Fund. Some 41 or more jobs have been created. That is what is important. If we get the policy settings right, we can create jobs and thriving regional communities by bringing back manufacturing and ensuring that businesses have a fair go in New South Wales.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (17:31): I contribute to the public interest debate and thank the member for Barwon for bringing the motion to the House. It is fantastic when members talk about regional New South Wales in this place. Regional New South Wales is ready, willing and able to assist in any manufacturing industries in this State. Today is my sixteenth day in this Chamber, and quite often I have heard Government members talking about what the now Opposition did when it was in government. What struck me about the member for Barwon's motion is that in 2022 the New South Wales Coalition announced and funded a \$225 million special activation precinct at Moree. SAPs are dedicated areas in locations across regional New South Wales that will hopefully become thriving hubs of manufacturing, trade and business.

The SAP at Moree is 4,700 hectares. For my Labor friends, that is about 17 times the size of the Sydney CBD. The Moree SAP is located in the most productive grain region in Australia and the wealthiest agricultural shire in Australia. The SAP will hopefully diversify the Moree local economy and introduce manufacturing that

will lead to jobs. The Moree community and the north-west New England community were ready, able and willing to go with the SAP. However, last year the Albanese Federal Government scrapped the funding for the intermodal bypass, which was a key component of the SAP. The bypass was to carry the road trains from the west of Moree, some no doubt coming from the electorate of Barwon west of Mallowa out near Collarenebri, and divert them around the township of Moree, away from at least three primary schools and over the Inland Rail. That has been scrapped, which has brought the viability of the Moree SAP into question.

My predecessor, Adam Marshall, the previous member for Northern Tablelands, worked very hard in this place to get Government members to pick up the phone and talk to their Federal counterparts to see if that funding decision could be reversed. The State Government did nothing. Adam Marshall then tried to convince the State Government to fund the intermodal bypass but, again, nothing happened. Regional New South Wales is ready to contribute to building a local manufacturing industry, but the Government needs to come with us and support us. At the moment, using the example of the Moree SAP, it seems that the Minns Sydney Labor Government is not ready to assist Moree in regional New South Wales to meet its ambition of becoming a manufacturing hub. We are ready, but we need the Government to help. To support manufacturing in regional New South Wales, the Government first needs to support regional New South Wales as a whole.

Regional New South Wales cannot be supported if funding is slashed. Manufacturing is not revived in the regions by slashing crucial funding programs such as the Stronger Country Communities Fund, the Community and Place Grants Program and the Resources for Regions program. The slashing of those funds makes regional New South Wales less attractive to live in. If regional areas are less attractive to live in, they cannot become the manufacturing powerhouses that they should be. The Government cannot support manufacturing in regional New South Wales if it does not understand regional New South Wales. When I was working once in a shearing shed outside of Armidale, a very weathered old shearer said to me that the Labor Party in regional New South Wales is a bit like a dog chasing a bus. It is never going to catch it but, if it did, it would not know what to do with it. I urge the Government to listen to the needs of regional New South Wales and to help it, along with the State as a whole, to become the manufacturing powerhouse that it can be. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the motion to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:36): By leave: I contribute to the public interest debate and thank my good friend the member for Barwon for bringing the motion to the House. I believe we are united in strenuous and relentless advocacy for people living in regional New South Wales. The motion's urgent call to activate and support regional manufacturing is important to the future of country New South Wales and, indeed, of the whole State. In the wake of the global pandemic, we faced unprecedented challenges which exposed our vulnerabilities and highlighted the critical need for self-reliance and sovereign capability. The motion calls for policy action to rebuild and reinforce our local economies and to create a sustainable future for our communities.

The pandemic revealed how dependent we had become on global supply chains. When the world ground to a halt, we saw firsthand the consequences of our reliance on external sources for essential goods and services. Shortages emerged, in not only medical supplies but also everyday items, leaving us to confront a stark reality. We must cultivate our manufacturing capabilities at home. Investing in regional manufacturing is not just an economic strategy; it is a pathway to resilience. By prioritising local production, we can create job opportunities and invigorate communities. We can offer employment to not only our current workforce but also future generations, ensuring they have a place in a thriving economy. Each manufacturing job created has a ripple effect, benefiting local businesses, service providers and families.

Parkes is home to one of six special activation precincts, which the Government has invested in heavily. The concept of the special activation precinct [SAP] is to bring planning and investment together, focusing on growing jobs and economic activity in New South Wales. The concept is sound, but to realise the vision and unlock the potential of the SAPs, the Government needs to attract investment and support industry to invest. Otherwise, they will be wastelands and expensive white elephants confined to history as being nothing more than a good idea. Regional manufacturing and processing are also about value adding. By enhancing our capabilities, we can take raw materials produced in our own backyards and transform them into finished goods that meet local and global demands. That not only elevates and strengthens our economy but also reinforces our identity and pride in local craftsmanship. "Made in Australia" is a badge of honour; it is about national pride and being the envy of the world.

The enhancement of a skilled workforce is another critical component of the motion. A robust manufacturing sector necessitates a talented pool of workers equipped with the necessary skills. We are tired of seeing our children leave our region in search of work and career opportunities when there is opportunity, if supported by government, for them to realise their dreams and fulfill their goals locally. We must invest in education and training programs that prepare our people for the jobs of tomorrow. By collaborating with

educational institutions and industry leaders, we can create a pipeline of skilled labour ready to meet the demands of a revitalised manufacturing landscape.

Sparkling innovation is also vital to our mission. When we focus on regional manufacturing, we encourage creativity and the development of new technologies. One such example in my electorate is Bralca 2.0, a small family-owned manufacturing business just outside Orange. It is run by clever, innovative minds. They have created high-tech, cutting-edge products that have caught the eye of interstate and international investors and marketplaces. They have partnered with university research teams and have created state-of-the-art drones and agri-technology that can transform the sector. Their drone products have been adopted in international markets. They are now on the verge of creating portable and modular green hydrogen manufacturing systems—an energy system that aligns with and potentially supports the Government's policy goals.

These entrepreneurs desperately wish to base their manufacturing in the Central West to create local manufacturing capability and a skilled workforce. However, a lack of government support may see them establish in another State that has expressed its support, interest and desire to nurture this unique industry. We are losing opportunities, which cripples our chances to grow and maximise the potential of regional New South Wales. Let us not overlook the importance of self-reliance. Strengthening our manufacturing capabilities will enhance our sovereignty, allowing us to produce what we need when we need it. We cannot afford to be at the mercy of international supply chains that are fragile and unreliable. Let us consider the broader impact on our State and national economies. A robust regional manufacturing sector contributes significantly to economic growth, stimulating local economies, increasing tax revenue and attracting investment. I urge all members to support the motion. Let us take decisive action to activate and support regional manufacturing. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:41): In reply: That was the most pleasant public interest debate I have ever participated in.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The best one ever!

Mr ROY BUTLER: I thank members representing the electorates of Monaro, Albury, Heffron, Murray, Goulburn, Northern Tablelands and Orange. I will take a moment to pick up some key points. The member for Monaro talked about local procurement, government procurement and weighting. It is a theme that will keep coming up—it has come up previously in Roads—and it is really important that we get it right. The Minister is not in the Chamber. I specifically did not talk about renewable energy zones. There is good reason for that, but I will talk to the Minister offline about it.

The member for Albury spoke about the Regional Job Creation Fund and the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the concern that was caused when they were ceased at short notice and people had spent money applying for a grant. That was captured in the recommendations and acknowledged by the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development as a problem and something we need to do better. I acknowledge the concern and hopefully we can do better in future grant funding rounds. I wonder whether the member for Heffron has put surveillance equipment in my office because he picked up a number of my key points. I see some members nodding. He talked about the multiplier effect of one job in manufacturing worth 3.5 and the whole supply chain. We underestimate just how much it means when people are spending money in the local economy.

Mr Ron Hoenig: No more Scottish whisky.

Mr ROY BUTLER: That's all right. There is plenty of good Australian whisky. I thank the member for Murray for the very real anecdotes from her family and her area. It demonstrates the ingenuity and common sense in regional New South Wales. I agree with the member for Goulburn that weighting that favours New South Wales is incredibly important and creating clarity on how that weighting is applied is equally important. To the member for Northern Tablelands, I say that SAPs are a great vehicle. We also need to consider things like manufacturing precincts, which offer an opportunity to make things easier.

The member for Orange talked about the pathway to resilience—I am surprised that I did not steal that from him—and the multiplier effect. One thing he touched on that we often overlook is the pride in producing our own goods and using or consuming something that is made in Australia—something we have produced and that we own. That has an impact on our national identity. He also talked about cracking international markets and touched on the risk of industries moving interstate. The risk is, if we do not get it right in this State, Queensland and Victoria very quickly will roll out the red carpet to manufacturers who would otherwise set up in New South Wales.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (17:45): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 26 September 2024 to provide for the following routine of business after the Speaker has taken the chair:

- (1) Giving of general business notices of motions (general notices) for up to 15 minutes.
- (2) General business notices of motions for bills for up to 20 minutes.
- (3) General business orders of the day for bills, with the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024, in the carriage of the member for Barwon, and then the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024, in the carriage of the member for Murray, to proceed through all stages.
- (4) At 11.00 a.m., question time and the associated routine of business.
- (5) Resumption of general business orders of the day for bills (if required), with the Speaker to leave the chair at either the conclusion of proceedings or 1.30 p.m.
- (6) At 2.30 p.m., the Speaker to resume the chair.
- (7) Resumption of general business orders of the day for bills (if required).
- (8) General business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills) for up to 70 minutes.
- (9) Government business.
- (10) Community recognition statements for up to 30 minutes.
- (11) Private members' statements.
- (12) Adjournment without motion moved until 12.00 p.m. on Tuesday 15 October 2024.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:46): The Opposition does not oppose the suspension of standing orders and thanks the Leader of the House for bringing it to the Opposition's attention in a timely manner.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***MARINE SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:47): The Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024 also provides an amended definition of "unsafe vessel", which includes derelict vessels and former vessels. This will help the New South Wales Government to better regulate those vessels and address any safety and environmental risks that they present. Transport will be provided with the legislative tools to regulate end-of-life vessels that are unsafe and unseaworthy as derelict vessels, and to track and monitor previously registered vessels that are still used on the water other than as a means of transportation. These changes are expected to address the potential scale of end-of-life vessel abandonment and disposal across New South Wales and prevent incidents such as the sinking of the MV *Baragoola* in 2022, which incurred approximately \$5 million in removal costs for taxpayers.

To better facilitate management of maritime-related commercial activities, the bill will allow for more flexibility in the duration of the existing aquatic licences that can be issued. That enables better regulation of commercial and non-commercial activities with different periods and conditions. Consequently, waterway commercial businesses will be provided with greater business certainty. In contrast to the current situation, where businesses have no security of tenure and cannot transfer or sell their direction notice, business owners will be able to sell or transfer their aquatic licence to a new owner. Increased investments in maritime-related commercial activities will be facilitated and a clear pathway will be provided for new entrants to the market.

The changes I have detailed will be instrumental in achieving a future with hopefully zero fatalities and serious injuries on New South Wales waterways. In supporting the amendments, members are supporting safer and more efficient waterways and ports, as well as safer management of vessels in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:49): I contribute to debate on the Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024, which seeks to amend the Marine Safety Act 1998 to support a review and update of marine safety regulation. I note that the bill proposes several reforms to marine safety regulation which grants

significant powers to the Minister and officers concerning obstructions and unsafe vessels, including removal and detention. I thank the Minister for bringing this legislation before the House. I recognise that it continues the work commenced under the former Liberal-Nationals Government in 2022-23 and that we all want to ensure that our waterways are safe.

The bill also introduces offences for unregistered vessels and changes to marine safety licences and introduces provisions regarding port bed disturbances and sea cable removal. Our beautiful Sydney Harbour is the envy of the world. We are so fortunate to live in a city that boasts such a beautiful natural environment as its crowning glory, which the member for Sydney also benefits from. Unfortunately, in many bays and coves around the harbour, derelict and dilapidated vessels are prolific as eyesores and environmental hazards. The proliferation of derelict vessels across Sydney Harbour is not a minor concern. Those abandoned boats, many of which are no longer seaworthy, are left to rust and rot, becoming hazards both to navigation and to the harbour's delicate ecosystem. The environmental damage and concerns caused by those vessels cannot be overstated.

Our harbour has such a rich and diverse ecosystem, with unique marine life and aquatic vegetation that are integral to the health of the waters and surrounding area. Yet abandoned vessels that are leaking fuel, oil and other toxic substances are contaminating the water. The materials used in some of the older vessels, in particular, such as paints, metals and even asbestos, are degrading, poisoning marine life and compromising water quality. Furthermore, the cost of removing abandoned vessels and deteriorating infrastructure is a burden that, sadly, too often falls on taxpayers. The process is costly and complex, particularly when owners cannot be traced or held accountable for their derelict property.

Those in my community remember well the sinking of the MV *Baragoola* on 1 January 2022, which resulted in over eight months of recovery and salvaging work at a cost of \$5 million to the New South Wales Government—to the New South Wales taxpayer. The salvage operations took many months, and Maritime and the Port Authority of NSW had to take extraordinary steps in order to contain and recover any pollution or debris from the vessel. They established an exclusion zone around the wreck to ensure the safety of everyone on the harbour.

I made several site visits with representatives from Transport for NSW, NSW Maritime and the Port Authority of NSW, and I can assure members that it was by no means an easy operation. Assessment dives had to be undertaken, as well as site assessments and general surface clean-ups; debris curtains were installed; a barge and excavation platform needed to be installed; and the wreck could only be removed piece by piece. Ongoing severe weather in the weeks following the sinking disrupted and delayed progress. At the same time a number of other weather-based emergencies across New South Wales stopped NSW Maritime from undertaking this work, as it worked to save lives and properties across the State.

The sinking occurred on 1 January, and it was not until early August that all the hull sections had been removed and transferred to a hardstand at White Bay, where the materials were processed for recycling when possible. Then there were the weeks of seabed cleaning by divers to remove any remaining smaller debris that had been left behind. In short, this was an incredibly difficult operation undertaken by NSW Maritime. It was an operation that could have been avoided. I recognise that people across my community, particularly in Waverton, spent many years drawing to NSW Maritime's attention the risk of the MV *Baragoola* sinking into Sydney Harbour. Yet action was not taken to address it.

I note that the bill is expected to help prevent incidents such as the sinking of the MV *Baragoola* and, in instances of a sinking, will ensure that we can work to reclaim those costs from the owners of the vessel. That is something a dedicated group of volunteers under the banner of "Save Our Sydney Harbour" has been championing. I take this opportunity to acknowledge that those volunteers are currently running a campaign and ePetition before this House to ensure that Sydney Harbour is cleared and kept clear of redundant, decaying vessels and failing structures that can pollute and degrade the environment and amenity of the harbour.

I acknowledge the work of Mary Curran, who is a local constituent of mine, a regular advocate and somebody who cares a lot about our harbour, particularly Waverton and Berrys Bay. I also acknowledge Stuart King from Balmain, who the member for Balmain has been working with on the ePetition. I have met with them to discuss the management and removal of derelict vessels and how to prevent it from happening in the future. They are both deeply passionate about keeping our harbour environmentally friendly. I thank them for their work and their passion in this space and applaud their efforts for driving change to protect our beautiful Sydney Harbour.

I turn now to the details in the bill regarding the strengthening of regulatory powers for unsafe vessels on our harbour. The bill will strengthen the regulatory powers for unsafe vessels to include derelict vessels and former vessels that are now unseaworthy or no longer meet the criteria for definition of a vessel. Under the amended definition, end-of-life vessels and increased risk vessels will be regulated under the unsafe vessel regime. An

authorised officer will have the ability to direct the person responsible for such a vessel to remove it or authorise its removal or disposal after reasonable attempts have been made to notify the person responsible for the vessel of the proposed action.

Any reasonable costs incurred in the removal or disposal of the vessel may also be recovered from the person responsible as a debt in a court of competent jurisdiction. Transport for NSW will also be provided with regulatory scope to track and account for previously registered vessels that are still used on water other than as a means of transportation. This will enable the monitoring of unseaworthy vessels before they capsize, become partially submerged or sink. The bill also introduces an increase to the maximum penalty for the operation of an unsafe vessel to deter vessel owners more effectively from operating the unsafe vessels and to incentivise them to repair or remove those vessels from the water.

In relation to heritage vessels, of which we have many that still call Sydney Harbour home, the definition of a former vessel is not intended to override any existing heritage protections or legislative requirements that may apply to vessels in relevant heritage legislation. It is intended to provide regulatory scope for Transport to track and monitor vessels previously used as a means of transportation that are no longer seaworthy or usable but are still occupying New South Wales waters. This will ensure appropriate action can be taken to prevent those vessels from capsizing, becoming partially submerged or sinking just like the MV *Baragoola*.

By enforcing stricter regulations, removing hazardous vessels and fostering greater community awareness, we can protect our Sydney Harbour for future generations. We owe it to ourselves, our city and our nation to ensure that Sydney Harbour remains a place of beauty for all to enjoy. I thank the community advocates for ensuring that we have this initiative. I recognise the many years of work that has been put in by NSW Maritime and Transport for NSW to get to this point of reforming the legislation. I recognise the Minister and her staff for their work to ensure that we have safer waterways and a more environmentally friendly Sydney Harbour.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (17:56): In reply: I thank the following members for their contribution to debate on the Marine Safety Amendment Bill 2024: the member for Shellharbour, the member for Newcastle, the member for Balmain, the member for Vacluse and the member for North Shore. I will briefly address some of the matters raised during debate. The thoughtful and interesting comments by those members about their parts of New South Wales—in particular, our harbour—have brought some focus to the bill before the Parliament. My responsibility is to make sure that vessels and maritime infrastructure are salvaged properly as part of our legislative safety responsibilities. Sydneysiders enjoy the most beautiful harbour in the world, and abandoned or derelict vessels are not what we want to see when we are out on the water.

As well as impacting the environment, abandoned vessels can create navigational hazards and other hazards to those people who want to use our waterway. To manage this, NSW Maritime works with vessel owners and other agencies to monitor vessels that are identified as being at risk because they are reaching the end of their life. In 2023-24, NSW Maritime salvaged and disposed of 20 vessels and issued 75 notices of removal to vessel owners. Because of the increased number of ageing and derelict moored vessels in New South Wales, we need to strengthen our maritime regulatory powers to effectively manage unsafe vessels, including derelict vessels and former vessels. That includes clarifying existing vessel registration and transfer provisions, and providing Transport for NSW with the authority to refuse or rescind a transfer of vessel registration in the case of an unseaworthy or derelict vessel. We must also take action to proactively regulate unseaworthy and abandoned vessels in our waters before they escalate to become a significant problem for the public and the environment.

The amendments will help our authorised officers to take action to remove abandoned vessels and items in our waterways sooner. All vessels attached to moorings are subject to mooring licence conditions, and audits are conducted each year to ensure that moored vessels are compliant with relevant marine legislation. The position of a mooring site is determined by Transport for NSW within predetermined mooring area boundaries. Transport for NSW carries out a range of assessments to make sure a site is suitable, including on its safety of navigation, environment and amenity. We want to make sure that we also conduct a review of environmental factors. We do that before granting a mooring licence and approving the occupation of a mooring site.

I make the point that the Snails Bay dolphins, Balls Head and Berrys Bay wharf are integral infrastructure owned by Transport for NSW and they form part of Sydney's working harbour. They provide necessary mooring and storage facilities for large vessels which, due to their size and load, may not be able to be berthed or located at other locations on the harbour. I am pleased to inform the House that we are progressing with make safe works for heritage-listed infrastructure like the Coal Loader Wharf, and we will continue our work to keep our beautiful harbour safe and clean for all waterway users. By improving the safety of our port operations, we can also reduce navigational hazards and uphold high safety standards for marine pilots and commercial ships visiting New South Wales ports.

The protection of our marine environment is a priority. The bill helps us manage sea floor impacts through the designation of anchorage areas located away from sensitive habitats to protect areas with high conservation and heritage value. To achieve more effective management of commercial activities affecting waterway safety and navigation, the bill will allow for more flexibility in the duration of the existing aquatic licences that can be issued. Waterway commercial businesses in New South Wales can be better regulated under conditions that best suit the nature of those businesses. The bill will provide businesses with greater certainty and facilitate increased investments in marine-related commercial activities. That is good for those businesses. It is important that we secure safe and effective management of our waterways and the vessels that operate on them. That is exactly what the bill does. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Kobi Shetty.

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.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (18:02): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2024-165D in globo:

No. 1 Condition of vessel registration certificate

Page 15, Schedule 1. Insert after line 14—

[40A] Section 31(3A) and (3B)

Insert after section 31(3)—

- (3A) A vessel registration certificate for a vessel is subject to a condition that the vessel must be covered by a form of indemnity—
 - (a) approved by the Minister, and
 - (b) for an amount set by the Minister for the kind of vessel.
- (3B) The amount set by the Minister must be no more than the reasonable costs that the Minister may recover in relation to the kind of vessel under section 48.

No. 2 Unsafe vessels

Page 19, Schedule 1[47], proposed section 44(2), line 15. Omit "considers the vessel unsafe.". Insert instead—

considers that—

- (a) the vessel is unsafe, or
- (b) the vessel—
 - (i) is in poor condition, and
 - (ii) has been unattended in State waters for a period of 12 months or more.

No. 3 Moored or berthed unsafe vessels—offence

Page 19, Schedule 1[47], proposed Division 1A. Insert after line 44—

45A Moored or berthed unsafe vessels

A person responsible for an unsafe vessel must not allow the unsafe vessel to be moored or berthed at one location in State waters without being moved for a period of 12 months or more, except with the approval of the Minister.

Maximum penalty—50 penalty units.

No. 4 Moored or berthed unsafe vessels—inspection

Page 20, Schedule 1[47], proposed section 46. Insert after line 1—

- (1) The Minister must take reasonable steps to ensure an authorised officer boards and inspects a vessel or former vessel if the vessel or former vessel has, without the approval of the Minister, been moored or berthed at one location in State waters without being moved for a period of 12 months or more.

These amendments are required to strengthen the bill and to ensure that owners of derelict and dilapidated vessels are incentivised to do the right thing and take steps to deal with vessels when they become unsafe. As I referred to in my second reading debate contribution, one of the issues I frequently hear about in my electorate is that often abandoned, unseaworthy vessels and other marine items are lawfully moored for extended periods in the harbour.

That presents a safety risk to the community as well as a risk to the environment, and those responsible should be required to take steps to manage those risks. Furthermore, they should be required to bear the costs should those risks eventuate. Vessels can be left for so long that they become unsafe, and for years my community has been calling on the department to be more proactive in managing the issue.

To that end, these amendments will require the person responsible for a vessel to indemnify the Government for the reasonable costs of dealing with the vessel under this legislation in the event that it becomes unsafe; include vessels that are in poor condition and have been unattended in State waters for a period of 12 months or more in the definition of "unsafe vessel"; prevent unsafe vessels from being allowed to remain moored or berthed at one location in State waters without being moved for 12 months or more unless otherwise approved; and require an authorised officer to inspect vessels and former vessels that have been moored or berthed in the one location in State waters without being moved for 12 months or more without approval.

I thank the Waterfront Action Group and the Save Our Sydney Harbour campaign teams for their assistance on the bill and for their commitment to a clean, safe harbour that everyone can enjoy. In particular, I thank Stuart King, George Citer and Mary Curan—who the member for North Shore also mentioned—who have engaged with me and my office on these issues over many years. I also thank the Minister and her office for their constructive engagement on the bill. I urge members to support the amendments.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (18:05): The Government opposes The Greens amendments. I acknowledge The Greens' intentions with the amendments and the constructive approach that the member for Balmain has taken. I appreciate that the amendments are about significant community expectations relating to the preservation of our harbour. I completely appreciate the way that The Greens have engaged and the importance of the safety and protection of our waterways to all of us. The amendment relating to the condition of the vessel registration certificate cannot be supported due to the potential large cost impost and the unknown impact it would have on boaters. No consultation has been conducted with boaters or the insurance industry on the implications of the amendment nor has there been an assessment of the practicality of determining appropriate amounts for different types of vessels.

There is also a potential risk of overlap with legislation, such as the Commonwealth Protection of the Sea (Civil Liability) Act 1981, which requires certain vessels to carry relevant insurance certificates on board. In the existing Marine Safety Act, section 16 (5) relating to an obstruction to navigation and section 46 (6) relating to an unsafe vessel already allow the Minister to claim back the cost of dealing with any obstruction or unsafe vessel in court. Transport for NSW can already impose an insurance requirement on a case-by-case basis under section 31 of the Act if required. A requirement for vessel insurance has previously been consulted on in the context of moorings reform and end-of-life vessels, and that did not receive support.

The bill improves the management of vessels by introducing the concept of "former vessels". That is important because it makes sure that any vessel that used to be a vessel remains a vessel and is required to be registered. The bill also broadens the concept of "owner" to better deal with vessels that are passed between custodians. The amendment relating to unsafe vessels is not supported because the term "in poor condition" is not definitive enough. That is an important point. A vessel may quite properly and lawfully be unattended for as long as the owner likes as long as it is lawfully berthed and moored and is in good condition and safe.

There are sufficient provisions to deal with vessels that are unlawfully moored or anchored for too long, including existing provisions relating to the anchoring of vessels imposed under clause 17A of the Marine Safety Regulation 2016. Vessels that are not legally berthed or moored would be subject to a notice to remove under section 16 of the Act. Section 31 (1) (k) of the Ports and Maritime Administration Regulation 2021 allows for mooring licences to be cancelled if a vessel that a licence relates to is not seaworthy or presents a risk to the environment or property, and prohibits the mooring of a vessel without a valid mooring licence.

We do not support the amendment in relation to the offence of moored or berthed unsafe vessels because it is not necessary. Transport for NSW generally requires a vessel owner to take action on an unsafe vessel in a much shorter time frame than 12 months, often 14 to 21 days, or requires owners to develop a plan of action to complete the required works within a specified period. The Government does not support the amendment relating to moored or berthed unsafe vessels, as Transport for NSW will board and inspect an unsafe vessel if required, and would do so in a period of much less than 12 months. I again thank the member for Balmain for her constructive engagement, but the Government cannot support the amendments.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:09): I thank the member for Balmain for moving the amendments. The Opposition will follow the Government's position in not supporting the amendments. The Government has provided Opposition members with an adequate briefing about the amendments, and we follow the Government's view on this matter. Taking the amendments as a whole, there are several key reasons that the Opposition will follow the Government's position. These include vessel insurance requirements, which are

complex and would preferably include engagement with the insurance industry, as only certain vessel insurance products are available in Australia; the fact that there are sufficient provisions to deal with vessels that are unlawfully moored or anchored for too long, including existing provisions relating to the anchoring of vessels; the fact that there are already similar controls in place and the amendment is not necessary, as Transport for NSW already has sufficient existing powers; and the fact that Transport for NSW will board and inspect an unsafe vessel if required, and would do so in a period of less than 12 months. On that basis, the Opposition follows the Government's position in not supporting the amendments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2024-165D be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

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

Third Reading

Ms JO HAYLEN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Speech

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:12): On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024 makes amendments to the Environmental Trust Act 1998 to increase the membership of the Environmental Trust from five members to six members, to require the additional member to be a person who identifies as Aboriginal, and for that person to be appointed by the Minister administering the Act. These small but significant amendments will change the operation of the provisions in practice by adding an additional voting member to the Environmental Trust who can make decisions. Since 2009 the Environmental Trust has been delivering environmental grants programs that support Aboriginal communities to protect and restore landscapes.

The new *NSW Environmental Trust Strategic Plan 2024 to 2029* prioritises environmental issues impacting New South Wales related to prioritising healthy country, recognising and valuing Aboriginal culture, restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, and strengthening environmental management. Aboriginal representation on the trust board is appropriate in this context. In May 2024 the trust considered the benefits of bringing an Aboriginal member to the table to assist the trust with carrying out its functions, and ultimately decided to endorse such a proposal. The Government listened to and agreed with the trust, and is now proposing to ensure there is appropriate Aboriginal representation at the core of the trust's decisions.

The inclusion of Aboriginal membership on the trust aligns with other government decision-making bodies, including many in the Environment and Heritage portfolio, such as the NSW Coastal Council, the Heritage Council of NSW and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. I turn for a moment to a wonderful example of the many NSW Environmental Trust-funded projects achieving remarkable outcomes for both the New South Wales environment and Aboriginal peoples: the Gully Traditional Owners project, in collaboration with the Blue Mountains City Council. The initiative, part of the trust's Protecting Our Places program, is dedicated to restoring the Aboriginal and environmental values of the Gully Aboriginal Place.

Located in the beautiful Blue Mountains, the Gully holds profound significance for the Gundungurra and Darug traditional owners. This land is deeply woven into their cultural, spiritual, social and economic fabric. They have a longstanding relationship with this special place. Since 2012 the award-winning Garguree Swampcare project has made substantial progress in rehabilitating that vital area, integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary conservation practices. The project includes several key activities such as bush regeneration, stream bank stabilisation and habitat enhancement around Catalina Lake.

The area has become a thriving ecosystem, which supports over 50 bird species as well as long-necked turtles, crayfish, native fish and frogs. These efforts are crucial to maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance. This collaboration between the Gully Traditional Owners and Blue Mountains City Council is an example of how integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern conservation techniques can achieve sustainable

outcomes. It demonstrates the profound impact of such initiatives in both fostering environmental stewardship and preserving cultural heritage. I acknowledge David King, a Gundungurra man and a friend I am very proud of.

The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* is a top priority of the New South Wales Government, in partnership with Aboriginal organisations, communities and people. Having an Aboriginal member on the trust will contribute to the four priority reforms, especially priority reform one, creating formal partnerships and shared decision-making within government to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All appointments will comply with the *NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines*, the Public Service Commission's *Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees*, and Premier's Memorandum M2021-07, *Appointments to NSW Government boards and committees*. The bill contains an additional minor amendment to update the reference to the "Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage" with "the Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water". I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:17): On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024, which makes various amendments to the Environmental Trust Act 1998. For the benefit of members, the NSW Environmental Trust is an independent statutory body that supports projects which enhance the environment of New South Wales. The trust was established under the Environmental Trust Act 1998 and administers grants across a diverse range of programs, including contestable grants, major projects and various New South Wales Government initiatives. As a former environment Minister, I chaired the trust from December 2021 until April 2023. I know firsthand the important work the trust does and, importantly, the outstanding secretariat that assists its work.

One specific project that I would like to mention is the Seabirds to Seascapes project, to which the trust awarded \$6.6 million in August 2022. The project's three main aims are to restore Sydney Harbour seascapes, conduct a census of little penguins along the New South Wales coast and monitor their behaviours, and conduct a survey of fur seal populations in New South Wales. This is a great demonstration of the important work the trust does. Since 2009, the trust has been delivering environmental grant programs that support Aboriginal communities to protect and restore landscapes. The bill, as we just heard from the Parliamentary Secretary, does a number of important things. Principally, it will increase the membership of the trust from five members to six members, requiring the additional member to be a person who identifies as an Aboriginal person. This person will be appointed by the Minister administering the Act.

The amendment will also change the operation of the provisions in practice by adding an additional voting member to the trust, who can make decisions about how the trust's funds are spent. The Government has advised that all appointments will comply with its boards and committees guidelines and the Public Service Commission's *Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees*. In addition, the bill contains a minor amendment to update reference to the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage with the Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. This is part of the Government's changes to the machinery of government. The Opposition has no concerns with the bill as outlined. We wish the trust, the board and its team all the best with their strategic objectives.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:20): I contribute to debate on the Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024 and the new environmental trust strategic plan, which is based on evidence and informed by stakeholders and which will ensure that the trust is investing in the most significant environmental issues impacting New South Wales. The plan focuses on prioritising healthy country, recognising and valuing Aboriginal culture, restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, and strengthening environmental management. Aboriginal representation on the trust board is vital to support the strategic priorities under the new plan and also aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. An example of one of the many trust-funded projects that have achieved great outcomes for the environment of New South Wales is the NSW Rewilding Initiative delivered by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The 10-year, \$20.3 million project is the most significant project to restore threatened fauna in the history of New South Wales.

Since 2021 the rewilding project has worked towards establishing four new feral predator-free areas across New South Wales with a total area of around 45,000 hectares. Detailed planning was done to secure the required approvals to establish the areas. Importantly, this included completing Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments and consultation for each site. The feral predator-free area in Western Sydney is in a national park, which was given its new name, Yiraaldiya National Park, in consultation with the local Aboriginal community in February 2023. This area has seen the reintroduction of the New Holland mouse and koalas, which are thriving, and the eastern bettong, which was once presumed extinct in New South Wales. The rewilding project is expected to provide economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples and businesses in the establishment and operation of the project.

Another example is the 10-year Beyond Fencing project. The \$500,000 project focuses on returning locally extinct mammals to areas where low levels of feral predators are purposely retained. This allows those threatened species to increase and improve their awareness of those predators and ultimately assists in restoring ecosystems. The project is part of a larger project, Wild Deserts, which plans to restore the desert ecosystem within Sturt National Park. The greater bilby, burrowing bettong, western quoll and crest-tailed mulgara are the species chosen for release. During the past year, the western quoll was released, and trials with the bilby will follow. So far there has been no predation by feral predators. Appointment of an Aboriginal member to the trust board will not only ensure an Aboriginal voice in decision-making but also ensure that Aboriginal peoples and their traditional knowledge, practices and connection to country are recognised and valued. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:23): The Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024 proposes, among other things, to amend the Environmental Trust Act 1998 to expand the membership of the Environmental Trust to include an Aboriginal person. I support the bill wholeheartedly. The proposed amendment to increase the membership of the trust by one Aboriginal member is both necessary and timely; in fact, it is long overdue. For too long, the trust has operated without a true connection to the First Nations people who have a deep-rooted understanding of the land and its ecosystems. The trust has supported many great initiatives. With the inclusion of a First Nation representative, it will do much better.

Since its inception in 1998, the trust has delivered \$1.34 billion to fund environmental programs on both public and private land. These have included the acquisition of seven properties with an area totalling over 93,000 hectares to expand the national parks estate in the 2022-23 financial year; funding the Bushfire Relief Fund for Wildlife Rehabilitation project, which enabled the rescue and rehabilitation of displaced wildlife during the horrific 2019-20 bushfire season; and, closer to my electorate, funding a project at Sydney Olympic Park to fight predators to boost the bell frog population. In her second reading speech, Pam Allan, then the Minister for the Environment, said:

This bill deals with the operations of the environmental trusts. Specifically, it seeks to secure the future of the trusts' programs by replacing Sydney Water's trade waste charges with a standing appropriation from the Consolidated Fund as the principal source of revenue for the scheme. The bill also sets out a range of other changes to the operations of the trusts, foremost among which is the amalgamation of the three existing trusts - the Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Trust, the Environmental Research Trust and the Environmental Education Trust - into a single trust able to perform all of the functions of the existing bodies. These changes will establish a framework within which the new trust can determine allocations of funds according to the environmental priorities of the day and not, as is currently the case, according to how much money is available in each individual trust.

The trust has an important role to play. From the outset, board members had a range of skills and qualifications to most effectively promote environmental restoration, rehabilitation, research and education, and land acquisition for the national parks estate.

The NSW Environmental Trust Strategic Plan 2024 to 2029 targets investment towards restoring ecosystems and biodiversity; strengthening environmental management; prioritising healthy country; and recognising and valuing Aboriginal people, their traditional knowledge and practices, and their connection to country. The trust is supporting the work of 15 community partner, industry and farming groups working on the 10-year River Connections Refreshing Rivers project in the Murray-Darling Basin, delivered by Murray Local Land Services. The project is delivering revegetation of riverbanks, better livestock management, fencing to protect riparian zones, and pest removal. It is supporting landholders and the community to increase water quality and river health along more than 320 kilometres of Billabong Creek in the Murray region. Funding from the trust is also supporting traditional owners to restore Indigenous and environmental values of the Gully Aboriginal place. The Gully is one of many upland wetlands in the Blue Mountains that sustained generations of Aboriginal traditional owners.

The current members of the board of the trust—the Minister, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage, a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Nature Conservation Council, and a person appointed by the Minister from a panel of three persons nominated by the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales—together all bring skills to the management of the trust. The inclusion of an Aboriginal member on the board will bring a unique perspective to the trust's decision-making processes and add to the skills of the current membership in a most important way. The new member will help to ensure that the needs and priorities of Aboriginal communities are fully considered in environmental policy and funding.

As the Minister has rightly pointed out, the Environmental Trust plays a vital role in protecting and restoring our State's natural environment. By ensuring that Aboriginal voices are represented at the highest levels of the trust, we are taking a significant step towards achieving a more just and equitable approach to environmental management. It is essential to acknowledge that Aboriginal people have been custodians of this land for tens of thousands of years. From the saltwater people of the coast to the Dharug people of my electorate to the freshwater

people of outback New South Wales, their knowledge of the country we call home should have a role in the operation of the trust. Their traditional knowledge and practices offer invaluable insights into sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation. By incorporating this knowledge into the decision-making processes of the trust, we can develop more effective and culturally appropriate environmental programs.

Moreover, the inclusion of an Aboriginal member aligns with the broader goals of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which seeks to create formal partnerships between government and Aboriginal communities and empower Aboriginal people to participate in decision-making processes. By adding an Aboriginal member to the Environmental Trust, we are taking a concrete step towards achieving that goal. The amendment will not only enhance the effectiveness of the Environmental Trust, but also send a strong message of commitment to reconciliation and environmental justice. It is a testament to the Government's recognition of the importance of Aboriginal representation in decision-making. This legislation is a critical step to ensure the trust is truly representative of the people of New South Wales and well equipped to address the environmental challenges facing our State. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:29): I make a brief contribution to the debate on the Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024, which will significantly change the way the Environmental Trust is structured and governed. First, the bill amends section 6 (2) of the Environmental Trust Act 1998 to establish a new Aboriginal trust member. Second, it amends section 6 (2) (c) of the Act to update the title and department for the New South Wales Government member. The NSW Environmental Trust plays an important role in working with Aboriginal peoples to promote history, cultural heritage and caring for country. The establishment of an Aboriginal trust member will enhance the capacity of the trust to fulfil this vital role. This is reflected in the newly developed strategy, which acknowledges the importance of prioritising healthy country and recognising and integrating the values of Aboriginal peoples.

The trust already has a long history and association with the Aboriginal people of New South Wales. It has delivered the Protecting Our Places grants program for more than 20 years, empowering Aboriginal communities to protect, conserve and restore landscapes and waterways that are important to them. In December 2023 the trust approved the creation and implementation of a new five-year strategic plan. As part of the plan's development, in early 2024 a series of stakeholder workshops were held to identify the most significant environmental issues impacting New South Wales and Aboriginal cultural landscapes, waterways, wetlands, land and soil management, and threats to native species. Through the new strategy, the trust will continue to engage and work with Aboriginal peoples to codesign projects and programs to restore healthy country.

Of course, as other speakers have mentioned, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is a top priority of the New South Wales Government, in partnership with Aboriginal organisations, communities and people. Having an Aboriginal member on the trust will contribute to the agreement's four priority reforms, particularly priority one, which is about creating formal partnerships and shared decision-making within government to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. During the stakeholder workshops to develop the priorities for the new strategic plan, which runs from 2024 to 2029, information was gathered about the importance of connection to country and understanding the linkages between Aboriginal culture and the environment. The strongest sentiment heard from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal representatives was the need to authentically recognise and value Aboriginal cultures and practices and to listen to what Aboriginal people have to say.

As a result, a key recommendation from the *Aboriginal Culture Landscapes Workshop* report was to establish Aboriginal representation on the trust. In May of this year the trust considered the benefits of bringing an Aboriginal member to the table to assist the trust to carry out its functions. The trust decided to endorse the proposal for Government consideration. We know that, in many contexts, having representation from the highest level of an organisation through to the frontline grassroots level is the only way to shift the needle and ensure that the diversity of representation results in meaningful change.

I am a former chair of the Liverpool City Council environment advisory committee, which has involvement from the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council. Incredibly significant knowledge, cultural awareness and wisdom were brought to the table by representatives of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council. During the environment committee meetings there were a number of very robust debates about the features and the importance of applying Aboriginal cultural awareness and understanding to back-burning and bushfire management strategies, especially in the national park sections of the Liverpool local government area. There was shared understanding by all members of the committee that applying Aboriginal cultural practices, knowledge and understanding to the challenges we face is the way of the future.

We can no longer separate Aboriginal knowledge and culture from the way we do things, especially for our environmental management strategies, and expect to have good outcomes. The Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council's multifaceted land management, culture and heritage team is responsible for the protection of Aboriginal culture and heritage, the management of the land council's land claims, and the development of media

communications and policy profiles. The team applies for grants and income, and liaises with networks and stakeholder groups to advocate for Aboriginal land rights and justice. As a result of the team's work, it was successfully awarded a \$60,000 grant from the Environmental Trust in 2022 for the preservation of Heathcote Ridge.

The team also works on organisational compliance and building relationships with local councils, community groups and other stakeholders. All of the team's work is in service of the members of the land council and local community and to ensure the benefits of Aboriginal land rights and Aboriginal knowledge and traditions are experienced in tangible ways by the local Aboriginal community. Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council has one full-time ranger who works alongside archaeologists, academics, local museums and council authorities to implement effective site and artefact management and preservation programs. Further to the funding to preserve Heathcote Ridge, the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council was successfully awarded funding from the Environmental Trust, Department of Planning and Environment and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to implement a ranger program.

However, non-Aboriginal projects that include application of First Nations culture and wisdom also provide a significant benefit to the broader community. One of the initiatives that I am most proud of from my time at Liverpool council is the Harris Creek Reserve Fairy Glen. In 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 lockdown, a local family created a fairy glen by placing wooden fairy doors and windows along the bush track in Harris Creek Reserve. During lockdown many people were isolated and seeking connection, and the idea caught on. Soon many families began to place wooden fairy doors along the bush track. The aim was to create some magic for local children during challenging times.

The initiative was embraced more broadly by the local community and people came from suburbs away to add their fairy doors. It inspired our youngest residents to explore the wonders of nature, provided them with a magical alternative to screen time and encouraged them to connect with the natural environment. However, applying First Nations knowledge to the initiative was important because, unfortunately, some of the fairy doors contained plastics and other materials that were not great for our environment and not very sustainable. I worked with the local community, the environment committee and council's environmental support team to run workshops around creating sustainable fairy doors and using sustainable materials to add to this wonderful initiative. Since that time, local families have embraced the initiative and continue to leave their own doors and offerings for the fairies. Recognising the value of this initiative, I drove the campaign for official endorsement of the fairy glen by Liverpool council, now known as the Fairy Council, and to rebuild a more environmentally sustainable fairy glen. Of course magic is important.

Mr Paul Scully: Does Ned subscribe to that?

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: Unfortunately not. There is not a lot of magic there. A more environmentally sustainable initiative was to the benefit of all in our community. In the fast-growing parts of Western Sydney, green space is hard to come by. In particular, some of our critically endangered green space features Cumberland Plain Woodland, of which there is only 2 per cent left. We must protect and preserve this critically endangered woodland. As a result of this, we can apply First Nations knowledge and practices in improving this. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): That was a very inspiring speech from the member for Liverpool. I really want to come and see those little fairies.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:40): I speak in support of the Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024. It makes a small legal change that has a significant policy impact, which is why I am pleased to speak to the bill. The bill will make minor amendments to establish an Aboriginal trust member. That means that the member will be able to carry out the functions of the Environmental Trust. The bill will change the operation and provisions in practice by adding a voting member to the trust, which will be the Aboriginal member. The inclusion of Aboriginal membership is an acknowledgment of Aboriginal peoples and recognises their traditional knowledge, culture and practices in caring for country, healing country and preserving country.

The bill aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which is a key priority for the New South Wales Government and for everybody in this place. It is in partnership with Aboriginal organisations, communities and people. Having an Aboriginal member on the trust will contribute to Priority Reform 1, which is about creating formal partnerships and sharing decision-making within government to empower Aboriginal peoples. We hear a lot of talk about healing and reconciliation. The bill is a practical and real way that adds to that. Every step we make adds to healing and reconciliation.

I also recognise that sometimes people in the community ask why we have to do this because they do not always understand. It is absolutely necessary for everyone to live in harmony in our country and recognise the

things that were taken, the things that were done and the intergenerational impact of that on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It behoves us in this place to do everything we can to reconcile with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and friends. The appointment of an Aboriginal member to the trust will ensure that there is an Aboriginal voice in decision-making. That is important and assures Aboriginal peoples that their knowledge and practices and connection to country are recognised and valued.

The trust approved a five-year strategic plan. As part of the plan a series of stakeholder workshops were held in early 2024 to identify the most significant environmental issues impacting New South Wales related to connection to Aboriginal cultural landscapes, waterways and wetlands, land and soil management, and threats to native species. I do not have time to go through all of those here, but we know from the *State of the Environment* report that there are a lot of issues. I will turn to that in a minute. A big event is happening in my electorate of Lismore from 24 to 26 September. It somewhat speaks to the Environmental Trust and the change.

The Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, in partnership with Hunter Local Land Services, had been leading certain efforts there around koala habitat and connectivity. Key strategies include carefully managed cultural burns, which aim to restore the core ecological health of the area while reducing wildfire risk. Weed control somewhat helps with koalas. I work a lot with farmers. They talk about mosaic burning. A lot of them, particularly some in Tenterfield shire, tell me that it is similar to cultural burns that they have learnt from our Indigenous people.

I return to what is happening at the Lismore showgrounds. It is the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience [NIDR] initiative, which is part of Monash Sustainable Development Institute's Fire to Flourish program. The co-hosts—Jagun Alliance, Koori Mail, Resilient Lismore and the gathering—brought together Indigenous community leaders and disaster resilience experts from across Australia and the world. The immersive three-day NIDR gathering has had keynotes, plenary sessions, workshops, yarning circles, on-country activities and a session on cultural burning, which involved Ollie Costello from the Jagun Alliance.

Ollie is one of my local constituents and just fabulous. He is an international expert and is now also on the climate authority. I am sorry that I could not be there, but I was well represented. Senator the Hon. Jenny McAllister, the Federal Minister for Emergency Management, and Senator Tony Sheldon, who was the Special Envoy for Disaster Recovery, were there. They got to see the cultural burn today. It is vital that we listen to, engage with and support our Indigenous community leaders. Their knowledge of country and their communities must be embraced for us to be better prepared and able to respond to and recover from increasingly frequent disasters.

The Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Emergency Services, and me as the Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery are trying to make sure that these issues are incorporated into the work that we do, particularly in preparedness. As traditional owners and custodians of Australia's lands and waters, Indigenous peoples must be central to our efforts to enhance the resilience of their lands, country and communities. I am delighted to speak to the bill. I reiterate that it is a small legal change, but it is a hugely significant policy change. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:47): On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: In reply: I am happy to speak in reply on the important Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024. As has been mentioned, the bill makes a couple of small amendments that are incredibly significant. I thank all members for their contribution to the debate and their support of the bill. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Manly, the shadow environment Minister. I acknowledge his support of the Environment Trust. He spoke about that and his time chairing the trust as Minister.

I acknowledge the longstanding advocacy and care for the environment of the member for Coogee. I thank the member for Granville for her commitment to First Nations reconciliation and her action and support of the trust. I thank the member for Liverpool for her support and talk about the new strategic plan and her outline of some of the important programs in her local area, especially relaying the story of the Fairy Council—I think the Fairy Council should be forever recorded in *Hansard*. Finally, I thank the member for Lismore. I acknowledge her many years of advocacy for the environment and Indigenous communities and her speech about respect, dignity and valuing the voices of Aboriginal people. I thank all members for their contributions.

The Environmental Trust Amendment Bill 2024 amends the Environmental Trust Act by increasing the membership of the Environmental Trust from five to six members, requiring the additional member to be a person who identifies as Aboriginal and is appointed by the Minister administering the Act. The amendment will change the operation of the provisions in practice by adding an additional voting member to the Environment Trust who can make decisions. Additional minor amendments include removal of reference to the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage, which will be omitted from the Act and replaced with a Secretary of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Environmental Trust Act 1998 to establish a new Aboriginal trust member under section 6 (2), and to update the title and department for the New South Wales Government under section 6 (2) (c). By making those amendments it will ensure that there is appropriate Aboriginal cultural representation on the Environmental Trust board and oversight of the priorities of the strategic plan and existing grant programs where Aboriginal communities and interests are involved. The update to the title and department of the New South Wales Government Trust member will ensure that the Act aligns with the Government's current structure. 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

Ms TRISH DOYLE: On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SPEED CAMERA DETECTION) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 September 2024.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:51): I make a contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I indicate that the Coalition will move an amendment to the bill. Road safety is one of the most important topics that we discuss in this place. All members hold the fear that one of our loved ones may have their life turned upside down by an accident on our roads or even dread to think of something worse. We acknowledge the great need to address our road toll in every possible way.

The road statistics of the last three years remain confronting. The 12-month period ending last night has a three-year average of 269 fatal crashes per year. As if that number it is not bad enough, because there have been crashes with multiple fatalities, the three-year road fatality average over the same period is 291. In the 2023 calendar year, there were 303 fatal crashes that resulted in 340 fatalities. As confronting as those numbers are, they are very impersonal. Those numbers represent 340 people who are sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers or fathers who were lost to our communities. So many families were devastated by the fatalities on New South Wales roads in 2023 alone.

Government experts are able to clarify further the grim statistics of our State road toll. In the 12 months ending August 2024, 127 fatal crashes involved speeding, contributing to approximately one-third of all fatal crashes in those 12 months. For those from regional communities, the fatal crash statistics get significantly darker. Not including the Greater Sydney region, two-thirds of all fatal crashes in the 12 months ending August 2024 occurred in either the north, south or west of our State in stark contrast to where the bulk of the State's population resides.

For those of us committed to regional road safety, we must be guided by those statistics. If we are to protect our sons and daughters as they live their lives using our regional roads, we must understand the danger and the fact that excessive speed is involved in more than one-third of fatal road accidents. In fact, in the 12 months ending August 2024, a fraction over 40 per cent of fatal crashes involved excessive speed. We must also remember that speeding is not just travelling above the designated speed limit but also driving too fast for conditions such as wet weather, road quality and curves in the road. Most speeding deaths occur at no more than 10 kilometres per hour over the speed limit. If we are to tackle our alarming statistics to lower the yearly road toll even further, we must accept the role that speed plays and the devastation that is caused by road deaths occurring in our regions.

The State's experts continue to guide policy by collecting root cause evidence. In 2022 there was a total of 263 fatal crashes and of those 65 were at intersections. To understand the type of roads that the remaining 198 fatal crashes occurred on, 157 were on two-way, undivided roads and 41 were on dual carriageways. Statisticians go further and state that of the 263 fatal crashes in 2022, seven occurred on the type of dual carriageway commonly known as freeways or motorways.

In addressing the bill before the House, a number of questions remain, which is why the Coalition will move an amendment to ensure that a transparent process for the trial is adopted prior to any wider State rollout. There should be nothing to hide and members from both sides of the House should be working in a collaborative manner. If it works, then it works. This policy change should be open to scrutiny by all sectors of the community to ensure that the measures are effective and applicable, otherwise the Parliament is simply wasting everyone's

time and money to facilitate an experiment by road safety academics. Therefore, the Coalition hopes that the Government supports its amendment to the bill.

One key concern with the use of average speed cameras for light vehicles is the fact that the system was designed primarily to deal with a very specific issue relating to heavy vehicle accidents. The issues that occur with heavy vehicles are vastly different to those that affect light vehicle movements. There was a network design approach to the way that the cameras would operate for interstate heavy vehicles and there are still questions about how the average speed cameras are proposed to operate across the State. Will it be point to point, as described? Or will they operate as a network whereby any camera point can be used? There is nothing in the proposed legislation to outline what the Government plan is for the cameras. It is challenging to support policy when it is so unclear how it will be applied when it cannot be assumed that it is in the best interests of the community.

The most effective speeding reduction measures are those that are supported and understood by the community. Our amendment is about being open and transparent with that information. We need to work with communities to gain their support. Where governments cannot obtain that support, it corrodes the effectiveness of any such proposed measures. We need awareness and education to change behaviour rather than the heavy hand of government. A big brother approach to compliance only produces resentment in the community, which further undermines the money that is spent on education and awareness programs.

The safety message is diluted when people believe there is an ulterior motive at play. The revenue-raising nature of this policy setting plays into the hands of all those who are sceptical. It becomes all about avoiding being caught rather than doing the right thing and that leads to an undermining of the road safety message. It is so important to be transparent with the community and that is why the Coalition has proposed an amendment to ensure that the results of any trial are clearly communicated. The community needs to come on the journey and we leave them behind at our peril. There is a serious danger that this road policy change is seen purely by the community as a revenue-raising measure. The Government did not highlight the change at the election and in many ways, it contradicts the positions that NSW Labor took on the mobile speed camera rollout. Going forward, community support and understanding is critical.

While metropolitan drivers will be affected by this policy, the burden of this revenue raising will fall predominantly on regional drivers. These are the same regional drivers that are the most disadvantaged in the State and are less able to pay fines. Regional drivers spend more time on the road and drive far greater distances and on poor quality roads. Regional drivers are exposed to more speed cameras and have a greater risk of collecting fines than metropolitan drivers. That is why there is such concern about regional speed cameras. Regional drivers' risks are higher, and their budgets are less able to take a hit from a speeding fine. It is a concern. I acknowledge that revenue from speeding fines goes into the Community Road Safety Fund, but I would like to confirm that the funds are distributed fairly.

The reality is that two-thirds of heavy vehicle average speed cameras are currently located in regional New South Wales. We therefore think it is absolutely appropriate for the Labor Government to confirm that revenue from these speed cameras will be spent proportionally on projects in regional New South Wales. I recently sent a letter, on behalf of the New South Wales National Party, to the Minister highlighting this issue and asking for Labor's commitment. I ask that the Minister respond to this request when he replies to the debate. One of our key concerns with the bill is that there is no clear description of the aforementioned trial. It simply removes the word "heavy" from all the relevant legislation. This allows for full and unlimited implementation of the policy to light vehicles. There is no mention of using an evidence-based approach to achieve good policy settings, and there is nothing in the bill that supports the Government's statement about having a trial period prior to implementation.

There is also full scope in the bill to implement the rollout of mobile average speed cameras. This is a concern as it would be a major change for the community in terms of speeding fine enforcement. That is why it is so important that our amendment sets out a step-by-step process with an initial trial and review of the data before any Government endeavour to set out on a wider implementation. The trial has a regional focus, as reported in the media releases. It does not include metro areas in the trial, meaning it will not provide a full set of data for review, and yet one-third of average speed cameras are located in metro areas. I refer members to our amendment, which addresses this issue. The amendment formalises the need for an additional metro trial site that will provide data on the impact of this policy on metro roads. This will also build community trust in the process and remove the appearance that the measure is unfairly targeting the regions.

Our cars are becoming safer than ever, but not everyone drives a brand-new, modern car. We are going through a transition where modern cars have technical gadgets to help drivers stay safe. I am afraid to say that, in my experience, regional people are more likely to have older cars with poor vehicle speed warning technology. They do not have Volvos or other flash cars with all the gadgets that assist drivers with speed control. The reality is that this technology is currently more common in metro cars than it is in regional vehicles. As a driver of a seven-year-old Hilux, I was quite surprised by my recent experience driving a brand-new hire car with lane

controls, speed monitoring and speed zone notifications. All those bells and whistles were very new to me. It certainly opened my eyes to the available technology.

I believe a broader approach is needed to address road safety in any meaningful way and must include more country policing and more funding for upgrading regional roads. Speeding fines that are sent in the mail are not the most effective policy measure to address the road toll. Receiving fines in the post two weeks after the event does not help drivers to make effective behavioural changes. More country cops would have a much greater impact on behaviour because they are able to address the issue at the time by pulling drivers over and immediately holding them accountable for their mistakes. Knowing that cops are on the road is the best behavioural change strategy of all. Our local cops know our local roads back to front. They know where the problems are and where accidents occur. That "on the ground" knowledge can never be discounted. It is far more effective at influencing the behaviour of both young and old drivers.

Recent challenges affecting our police numbers highlight the challenges in regional communities. In my local command of Hunter Valley, nearly a third of the workforce is currently on some type of leave. That is a huge reduction in the boots available on the ground. I do not have the formal data to show how that is affecting our highway patrol but, anecdotally, I know it is stretching our policing resources to the limit. If we have a third of the workforce on leave then it only stands to reason that we need to expand the workforce to compensate. This is an issue that needs to be addressed as part of the road safety plan of attack. I will now discuss road funding, as the issue that can have the greatest impact on road safety is the quality of the road itself. These road safety hotspots are where you would expect the Government to be targeting its funding, but instead it seems to prioritise its own political fortunes over road safety. This has to be called out.

Every dollar spent on regional roads is precious, which is why it should be spent in a manner that requires careful thought and analysis. It should be targeted at set criteria that produce results. I think that sounds reasonable. However, Labor's Regional Road Fund is a \$334 million Labor slush fund, with an overwhelming 87 per cent of the money going to Labor electorates. The signature Regional Road Fund policy has seen 23 of its 28 projects allocated to Labor-held seats. The assessment was based on a list provided to Transport NSW by the Premier's office. It was not based on any criteria, such as road safety or road accident data. The funds were instead directed for political purposes only. After the money was allocated and committed, the department was left picking up the pieces at budget estimate hearings by assuring members that it was completing an assurance process retrospectively. What can it assess it against if there are no assessment criteria? There is not even a business case ratio minimum requirement. It is nothing but a cosmetic dressing up by the department, and the officers know it.

I am disgusted by this approach. It is a blatant and gross misuse of taxpayer funds to prop up the Government at the next election. Any regional road funding should be allocated based on merit. This is about road safety and people's lives. The Minister was pressed on this in a radio interview recently, and she stated that she had determined the projects based on a feeling they had in the community. They talked to some councils but did not talk to others. You could say that it is all a bit of a "vibe". I wish the Government had a better vibe for addressing road safety when it comes to the allocation of funds. Having no assessment criteria or targets for addressing road safety is not the way forward for a government that is serious about regional road safety.

I will now redirect to some of the more positive aspects of the broader approach to road safety. Education is absolutely critical. It is an ongoing effort, and something that never finishes. The messages that I give to my children to make sure they drive safely on our roads are: Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you and increase the distance when travelling at higher speeds; in poor conditions drive more slowly; ensure plenty of travel time; manage your fatigue; and, if you are a passenger, speak up if you think the driver is going too fast. These are the messages we need to instil in our young people if we are ever to achieve the road to zero, which is a worthy goal. My final point is that, despite the academic advice and studies, the community still has many questions about the effectiveness and implementation of average speed cameras.

It is important that we undertake a trial to understand the data, and that data must be effectively reviewed and publicly available. The trial sites should also be spread between regional and metro areas. More country police on our roads will make a far bigger difference. We need better allocation of road funding, based on merit, not politics. It is the right thing to do. Finally, education of drivers is the best tool we have, and we can all use it. To conclude, I restate The Nationals' support for safer roads and a lower road toll. I ask the Government to support The Nationals amendments, which are fair and reasonable.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:09): I make a contribution in support of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. This bill is a crucial step in improving road safety in New South Wales. The amendment to the Road Transport Act 2013 will allow the use of average speed cameras for all vehicles, not just heavy vehicles. The amendment is necessary, fair and grounded in solid evidence that average speed enforcement saves lives. This change will expand the current legislative framework,

which applies only to heavy vehicles, to apply to all vehicles, including cars, motorcycles and small trucks. The bill also allows for consequential amendments to certain instruments, to ensure its smooth implementation.

The bill is necessary; the statistics speak for themselves. In 2023, New South Wales experienced a sharp increase in road fatalities, with 351 deaths, which was 70 more than in 2022. That is an alarming rise, from 3.41 deaths per 100,000 people in 2022 to 4.17 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023, every one of them a person with family and loved ones who are left to grieve their sudden and devastating loss. I recently attended a memorial for Ernesto Salazar and Alina Kauffman, two siblings who were tragically killed by a speeding driver just over 12 months ago. Their family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues and all who knew them still mourn the devastating loss.

Recent statistics record that 244 people have died on our State's roads so far this year. All but a few of those deaths occurred in regional New South Wales. Every one of these deaths represents a family torn apart and a community in mourning. The aim of the bill is to reduce our tragic road toll by expanding use of the proven technology of average speed cameras. This is an evidence-based approach. Local and international studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of average speed cameras. I note some of that research for the benefit of the previous speaker, the member for Upper Hunter, in particular. In Norway, a 2015 study found that average speed cameras reduced deaths and serious injuries by 49 per cent. In the United Kingdom, a 2016 study reported a 36 per cent reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes where average speed cameras were used.

In New South Wales, since the introduction of average speed cameras for heavy vehicles in 2009, there has been a 53 per cent reduction in fatalities from crashes involving heavy vehicles. In fact, 79 per cent of fatalities and serious injuries that occurred between 2018 and 2022 on New South Wales roads that have average speed cameras did not involve heavy vehicles. Many crashes could have been prevented if the average speed cameras had applied to all vehicles. Imagine the difference that would have made to the lives of the many families and communities affected by those crashes. It is simply illogical to restrict such a life-saving technology to a subset of vehicles when the evidence shows it could benefit everyone.

New South Wales is currently the only jurisdiction in the world that systematically limits average speed enforcement to heavy vehicles. New South Wales should not lag behind when it comes to road safety, especially when we have the means to save lives. Average speed enforcement is generally regarded as a fairer system than traditional spot speed cameras. An average speed camera measures a driver's speed over a long distance, capturing consistent speeding behaviour rather than just a single moment of acceleration. This will mean that drivers who unintentionally exceed the speed limit for a brief moment will be less likely to be penalised.

Instead, the bill targets drivers who deliberately and consistently choose to speed over a significant stretch of road, putting themselves and others at risk. It encourages less risk-taking, as drivers are incentivised to drive at a speed that is under the limit over a longer distance and period of time. That behaviour then becomes embedded within their overall driving behaviour. To reinforce the fairness of this system, the bill ensures that there will be clear signage warning drivers when they are entering an average speed enforcement zone. During the trial, there will be a 60-day warning letter period before penalties are enforced, giving drivers ample time to adjust to the new rules. Every life lost on our roads is one too many, and if we have the means to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries, we should not hesitate to implement them.

The expansion of average speed camera enforcement is just one part of the New South Wales Government's broader road safety strategy, which aims to reduce deaths and serious injuries by 50 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, by 2030. This ambitious target is in line with the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 and the goal of zero trauma on New South Wales roads by 2050. The bill fits into this framework by providing a practical, evidence-based solution to reduce speeding, which is a leading cause of road trauma. This bill is about saving lives. It is about using proven technology to prevent senseless deaths on our roads. The evidence is clear: Average speed enforcement works. By extending this technology to all vehicles, we can make our roads safer for everyone. I ask the House to support the bill so that we can move closer to our goal of zero road trauma in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:16): I contribute to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. We are talking today about average speed camera enforcement for heavy vehicles being extended to all light vehicles. It will start—according to the second reading speech—with a trial. It is not a real trial in the sense that if it does not work there will be a broad reconsideration of the bill. It is not a real trial in the sense that the locations have been determined based on evidence; rather they have been determined based on convenience and expediency. Regardless, Labor is determined to push the bill through in its current form. That is a shame because it is a lost opportunity to get this right. It is a lost opportunity to give communities confidence and reassurance that there is a real need that is backed up by strong evidence. That is important because broad-scale change—and this is a big change—requires that people are onboard. Otherwise they are likely to say that this is simply another revenue-raising exercise. I suspect it is partly that.

The Coalition's position on road safety has been consistent. My colleagues and I put people's lives first. While we support the bill, consistent with our values and track record, the Coalition will, in good faith, offer up amendments to improve it, to provide safeguards. At the moment, this is lazy legislation. We can do better. These reforms have travelled a long and winding road, so it is important to understand how we got here. We are here because the Government has failed when it comes to road safety. The fact is that under the former Government the road toll was consistently heading down.

Mr Clayton Barr: Oh, no.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE: This is the truth. It is unfortunate, but we need to talk about it, because since Labor has come to power the road toll has continued to increase. Up to 31 December last year, there were 351 fatalities, which is 70 more than in 2022. These are not just statistics; they are people. It is mums, dads, brothers and sisters who die on our roads, and many of them on regional roads. I grew up in the country. When you grow up in a small regional town, you get to know everyone very well—sometimes too well. When there is a tragedy in the community, you feel it deeply and you never forget it. My brother lost three of his mates in road crashes where speed was a factor. I have not forgotten those tragedies, nor have I forgotten the other road accidents that happened in my community when I was younger. In country towns, the people who turn up to those accidents are the locals. The locals are often the first responders. Too often, they know the people in the crashes. I take the opportunity to acknowledge those first responders—the local cops, the ambos and the fireies—who do incredible work under the most unimaginable circumstances.

Driving too fast is the single biggest contributor to death and injury on New South Wales roads. Each year, speeding contributes to about 41 per cent of road fatalities and 24 per cent of serious injuries. Regional people make up about one-third of the New South Wales population but, over the past five years, deaths on country roads have made up 67 per cent of the lives lost on our roads. Where we can help to save lives on our roads, we must do so. Country people have a vested interest in supporting those measures. We owe it to the people in regional communities to make sure that it is a thorough and considered approach.

When I picked up the phone to chat with people from country towns that I have lived in, they expressed concerns, like the fact that people in regional areas drive far greater distances and spend much more time on the roads. They may not mean to speed, and there is certainly no excuse for doing so, but one has to pick up a bit of speed to overtake a semitrailer. If a person from the country loses their licence, they cannot catch an Uber. That is not an excuse for speeding—no-one wants to speed; they want to protect their communities—but those things must be considered. The Government must consider improvements to our roads and consider investment in intersections that have been proven black spots. We will hear more about that tonight. When taking an approach like this, the Government needs to say, "Here is the proof. We have done the trials and we have done them properly." I am not seeing that happening.

Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory all have average speed camera programs that enforce both light and heavy vehicles. I have driven on roads in those areas, and I know that point to point cameras seem a little fairer. If a person picks up speed, they can correct their behaviour. If they overtake, they can slow down. Again, I would like to see more evidence. It is the Opposition's sincere hope and wish that the legislation saves lives. That would be an incredible outcome. All members of this place want to see that. The Coalition urges the Government and the crossbench to support practical amendments that ensure that when the legislation passes—and it should—the community has been brought on the journey too. Road safety policy works when it is consistent, clear and transparent, not when it is simply changing one word in a piece of legislation.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:22): As a regional member of this House, I speak in debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I look forward to the trials that will be implemented as part of the change in legislation. I start by addressing what the member for Vacluse said about deaths on our roads. Compared with 2020, 2021 and 2022, the road toll has gone up. Members must remember that people were not moving around as much in those years because we had the COVID crisis. The road toll in 2023 is almost to the number that it was in 2019. It is a little bit higher than it was in 2018, it is lower than it was in 2017 and 2016 and it is about the same as it was in 2015. Members should not suggest that the road toll is out of control under this Government. The road toll is what the road toll is. The road toll today is the same as it was in 2017, 2018 and 2019. It is terrible; too many people are losing their lives. Members should not mix up the numbers and suggest that this Government has somehow lost control.

There is an old saying about doing the same thing and expecting to get something different. If the Government does not do something different, the numbers will not change. If the Government wants to try to change the numbers, it must try something different. That is the point of the trials. It needs to accrue the information. They will only be at two sites. The data that comes from the trials will be public. It will not be public just at the end; it will be public progressively throughout the trials. At the end of the trials, if we want to come

back into this place and argue about what worked, what did not work, what the metrics were, what is most important and what is least important, we can have that argument. But we cannot have that argument without the data. These are trials, and they have been publicly announced as trials.

So many positions were taken in the two contributions made so far by members opposite that I am still confused about where they stand. On the one hand, they say that they want the data; on the other hand, they say that they do not want the trial. On the one hand, they say that the data from other precincts is inconclusive; on the other hand, they say that we need data from this precinct. On the one hand, they say that speeding is wrong; on the other hand, they say that people should not be punished for speeding. The many positions that have been taken are difficult to follow. I listened to members talking about speeding while overtaking as though there is a form of safe speeding. I am not a road safety expert, but the material that comes to me from road safety experts says that there is no such thing as safe speeding. Everyone knows that. If there is no such thing as safe speeding, why is the Opposition launching an argument against the trials?

The Government acknowledges that two-thirds of the deaths on roads in New South Wales are on country and regional roads. The two trials that will be undertaken are in country and regional New South Wales, where two-thirds of the deaths are. That seems sensible and practical. The Government will also implement a 60-day warning period. If people have erred on the wrong side of the cameras, they will get a warning rather than a fine. The Government is committing to those trials. I have heard the message from members opposite about needing to take the community along on reform. That is a wonderful concept. At the same time, the Opposition is stirring up hysteria in the community about the trials. Those opposite say that the Government has to take the community with it. All members are leaders in their communities; it does not matter what their political stripes are. If we are going to lead the community towards a reduction in deaths on roads, let us lead collectively on that pathway. Let us not stir up trouble and strife where none is required.

There will be two trials in regional areas, where the most deaths occur on our State roads. It is eminently sensible that there is a trial and that the data and detail is made publicly available. As I said earlier, we will not have to wait until the end. The data will be progressively provided throughout the trial. We can—collectively, I hope—take the leap and do something different. If we keep doing the same thing, we will keep getting what we have been getting. At the moment, what we have been getting is somewhere in the vicinity of 350 deaths each year. If the trials save one life, that is wonderful. We need to embrace that.

As has been explained in the House on many occasions by governments of both political stripes over the past 13 years, any money that comes from fines goes back into road safety. If we want road safety to include better intersections or improvements to level crossings or improvements to bends and turns and things like that, then that money will go to those things. But, let us face it, we all hope that nobody gets a fine. We all hope that nobody exceeds the speed limit over those average speed cameras.

The member for Upper Hunter, my neighbour and friend, made some sweeping generalisations in his contribution about how regional communities have lower quality cars and older cars without all the modern gadgets. I do not accept that, to start with. But I also say that features like cruise control, which people might like or dislike, have been around for 25 or 30 years. If a car is younger than that, there is every chance that it will have cruise control. I encourage people to use cruise control on all roads, if they are comfortable with it, not just the roads that will be trialled. Cruise control can prevent people from making the mistake of slipping over the speed limit when going down a hill. Driving to the speed limit helps to make everybody's journey a little bit better.

I finish by dispelling one inaccuracy made by the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads about some of the road projects that are rolling out now. He suggested something along the lines of pork-barrelling, which was disappointing. Of the money that is being rolled out right now, more than 50 per cent is going to Coalition electorates. The other 50-ish per cent of money is shared across Independent and Labor electorates. For the shadow Minister to suggest that 80 per cent of the money is going to Labor electorates in some sort of pork-barrelling exercise is inaccurate, and I am disappointed by that. I put that on record. I commend the bill and the trial to the House. I look forward to New South Wales bringing down the annual road death toll.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:32): I contribute to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. The standing orders of the House provide that members contributing to the second reading debate will be allowed 10 minutes to speak. However, that certainly comes with its challenges when the bill being debated is made up of just 10 lines, all of which make identical amendments to the Act, and in fact change just one word. The schedule to the bill outlines the 10 instances where the Road Transport Act 2013 is amended by omitting the word "heavy".

What makes the debate on omitting this one word even more interesting is that the Government issued a media release where the two road Ministers—Jenny Aitchison in this place and the Hon. John Graham in the other place—as well as the President of Safer Australian Roads and Highways all provided quotes for inclusion about

a bill that amends just one word. While the bill proposes to remove the word "heavy" from 10 instances in the Act, the media release issued on 8 September this year does not mention those changes but instead announces a trial for average speed cameras and road safety. I will be very clear at this point that I welcome any initiatives that increase road safety for motorists in New South Wales, particularly in regional communities. If those new initiatives save just one life on our roads, then they certainly have merit. The crux of the media release states:

NSW will trial average speed cameras to assess the road safety benefits of expanding their use from heavy vehicles to all vehicles.

The second significant aspect of the media release, which is of much interest to me as the member for Port Macquarie, is the announcement of two trials in regional New South Wales. The trials will:

... assess whether these measures reduce speeding at these locations, improving safety and preventing injuries and fatalities.

The trial areas are:

- Pacific Highway between Kew and Lake Innes (Port Macquarie) – 15kms between cameras
- Hume Highway between Coolac and Gundagai – 16kms between cameras

I note that in the media release there is a focus on the trial sites and "trial" is mentioned 10 times, yet it is not mentioned once in the amendment to the Act. That is despite the fact that the media release made it clear that:

Legislation is needed to facilitate a trial phase, or any future decision to use them permanently.

That brings me to a question I have for the Minister in this place, which I hope she will respond to in her closing remarks. Why are details of the trial phase not included in the amendments to the bill? That is exactly why the Opposition is proposing amendments to make clear the process going forward in relation to the trials and the period for which the trials will operate, including signage, the period for which the trials will be conducted and how the trials will be reviewed and reported.

I turn now to the specific sites for the trial, one of which, as I mentioned, is in the Port Macquarie electorate. It is also worth noting that the Government was provided with five options for trials but chose just two for implementation, and both are in regional New South Wales. The Opposition amendments specify that in the legislation at least one prescribed site must be in the Greater Sydney region. That is a sensible amendment, if the purpose of the trial is to gather evidence and assess the effectiveness of the average speed cameras.

Within the 15-kilometre stretch of the Pacific Highway that has been identified as a trial site is the intersection of Houston Mitchell Drive or, as often referred to in the local community, the "Ghost Road Death Trap". In that 15 kilometres in the period from 2018-22 there were 24 fatal and serious injury crashes, with a number of those at that intersection. The site was also the subject of a petition that members will remember was debated in this House in September last year, with over 16,000 petitioners calling on the Government to require design works to begin immediately for an overpass at the intersection and for construction to be undertaken as soon as planning is complete.

I acknowledge the hardworking and dedicated members of the Bonny Hills Progress Association, particularly past President Roger Barlow and committee member Kathy Regan, who was instrumental in the successful petitioning of the House and continues her advocacy on behalf of her community with vigour and diligence. I agree that the safest solution for that intersection is a grade-separated intersection, but I acknowledge that such significant infrastructure requires considerable planning and funding well before implementation. I worked alongside the community and the Transport for NSW regional manager, Anna Zycki, to secure funding for upgrades at this location.

The Liberals and Nationals in government invested almost \$3 million to make marked safety improvements for motorists both on the Pacific Highway and entering and leaving the highway at Houston Mitchell Drive. The funding from the Safer Roads Program allowed for the construction of acceleration and deceleration lanes on the Pacific Highway for southbound motorists turning left onto and left out of Houston Mitchell Drive, the widening of the road shoulders and the installation of safety barriers. As I said before, while those safety improvements were completed in a timely manner in response to community concerns, ultimately the solution that will maximise safety for motorists and all road users at this intersection is a grade-separated overpass. It comes as no surprise that, given the ongoing concerns related to that intersection, the trial of average speed cameras has been welcomed by the community. Kathy Regan from the Bonny Hills Progress Association said:

Any action that has the potential to deter speeding on the highway is welcome and would surely be appreciated by those using the "deathtrap intersection" at Houston Mitchell Drive and the Pacific Highway. Having this stretch of road nominated as a trial area suggests those making decisions are acknowledging the dangers and issues being faced by motorists in this area. We are hopeful it adds further weight to our quest for the planning subsequent construction of an overpass.

In closing, I implore the Government and the crossbench to consider carefully the sensible amendments proposed by the Opposition, which will provide transparency throughout the trial process.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:39): I contribute to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I support the trial, which will have an advertising campaign to advise drivers that cameras will begin detecting speeding offences through average speed cameras in the two trial sites. Consistent with the current policy, a warning letter period will apply for light vehicles currently not covered by the average speed cameras when the cameras first begin operating for speed offences. That is to give people every chance to do the right thing and familiarise themselves with it, or socialise it, so to speak. During that time, any vehicle exceeding the speed limit detected by the cameras will be sent a warning letter rather than a fine.

That helps those people to change their behaviour next time they get in a vehicle. However, warning letters will not be issued for speeding offences over 30 kilometres per hour in line with current New South Wales government policy. They are serious offences when people are speeding at those levels. Motorists can rest assured that average speed cameras can accurately detect and calculate speeding offences. The technology is already being used to enforce speeding in heavy vehicles, and it has been for quite a number of years. The reason the Government is bringing forward this legislation to conduct the trial is in direct response to the tragic and significant increase in the deaths on our roads in 2023. It is clear that whatever was once working in terms of road safety policies to reduce road deaths is no longer working. Let us look at the figures—and when I say figures, I mean that respectfully as they concern people who have died.

Based on the provisional data for 2023, 351 people died on New South Wales roads, an increase by 70 fatalities compared with 2022. The proportion of fatalities when speed was a contributing factor rose to 44 per cent of all fatalities in 2023, compared with 41 per cent in the previous year. That is why the Government is introducing the trial of average speed cameras as a public road safety measure. I drive a lot on country roads, as a lot of members do. The Opposition has spoken a lot in this debate about the three Rs: rural, regional and remote. I see a lot of speeding, and it is increasing. I think it is appropriate to trial average speed cameras. I know every member wants to save lives, and the Government has determined that average speed cameras are a good way to do that after taking advice and seeing how they operate in other jurisdictions.

The Government has an obligation to try it; we cannot just sit back and say that we cannot do it. New South Wales is the only jurisdiction in the world to systematically limit enforcement to a certain class of vehicles: heavy vehicles. Of all the fatalities and serious injuries across New South Wales's existing average speed camera enforcement lengths over the period 2018 to 2022, 79 per cent did not involve any heavy vehicles, which average speed cameras are detecting. International research shows that average speed enforcement for all vehicles leads to significant reductions in traffic-related injuries and fatalities. Research conducted in New South Wales from 2021 shows that community support for average speed camera enforcement for all vehicles was sitting at 68 per cent, and that is before the education campaign gets underway when the trial is introduced.

In response to the increase in road fatalities, the Labor Government has introduced a number of measures, including removing a loophole to force all motorists driving on a foreign licence to convert to a New South Wales licence within six months; the demerit return trial that rewarded more than 1.2 million drivers for maintaining a spotless driving record during the initial 12-month period up to 16 January 2024, which is popular but is also rewarding good driving behaviour; doubling roadside enforcement sites used for mobile speed cameras, with the addition of 2,700 new locations where a camera can be deployed and with the enforcement hours remaining the same; and hosting the State's first road safety forum of international and local experts. Ministers attended that, and I said it would have been good to have some MPs there as well; maybe they did attend. The first ever road safety forum brought together Australian and international experts to seek solutions. Universally, there was support for New South Wales exploring the introduction of average speed cameras for all vehicles, as is done in other Australian jurisdictions and overseas jurisdictions, which is proven to work.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Road Transport Act 2013 and its regulations so that the current legislative framework for average speed camera enforcement for heavy vehicles will now apply to all vehicles. It will allow the average speed of a vehicle recorded between detection points to be used as evidence of the actual speed of the vehicle for the purposes of speed offences. The New South Wales Government's 2026 Road Safety Action Plan includes the goal consistent with the 2021-2030 National Road Safety Strategy for zero trauma on New South Wales roads by 2050. That is a lofty goal, but everyone is committed to it and will have to work to it. The plan outlines our ambitious target on the road to zero, which is for 50 per cent fewer deaths and 30 per cent fewer serious injuries by 2030, compared with our average between 2018 and 2020. Following the forum, the New South Wales Government committed to examining the benefits and challenges of using average speed cameras to also enforce speeding by light vehicles. That is no secret; it has been made very public. Everyone has heard of it and knows about it.

Studies clearly show that average speed enforcement for all vehicles leads to significant reductions in traffic-related injuries and fatalities. That evidence has grown since the introduction of average speed cameras for heavy vehicles in 2009. Nothing has been done since then. A 2015 study in Norway found that average speed

cameras cut deaths and serious injuries by 49 per cent. Similarly, a 2016 study in the United Kingdom showed a 36 per cent reduction in fatal and serious injury crashes with average speed camera systems. Something is clearly working in the United Kingdom and Norway. Average speed programs across Australia vary in size and maturity and cover a mix of regional and urban locations. Enforcement of average speed is generally considered a fair form of enforcement as drivers demonstrate intentional speeding behaviour over a long length of road or time and not just at a single point. Research conducted in New South Wales in 2024 backed up that 60 per cent of respondents thought that average speed cameras were important in making roads safer. That is why I support the bill. I commend it to the House.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:49): I make a contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. Like my colleagues across the Chamber, including the member for Lismore and the member for Cessnock, I do a lot of driving on rural roads. I can drive 40,000 kilometres a year just for work. I spend a significant amount of time in the car and on the road and, like many drivers, I have seen the gantries with heavy vehicle average speed cameras. From my recollection of my driving years, they have been limited to heavy vehicles—that is, vehicles over 4½ tonnes. Many factors are related to road safety. They vary from the weather of the day to road design, driver fatigue, poor conditions of the road, debris on the road, mobile phones, kids in the back seat, pets in the car, speed, and sunlight at the wrong angle.

It is strange to see that the Minns Labor Government signature road safety reform will remove the word "heavy" from 12 lines of the Road Transport Act. That is it. The Minns Labor Government is calling it a trial, but there is nothing in the bill that I have read that suggests that it is a trial. When the bill comes into place it will be legal for the Minns Labor Government to switch on every single average speed safety camera across New South Wales. In its current form, this bill, policy or media release—whatever you want to call it—is not coming back to the House for review after a trial. Why is the Labor Government not telling the people of New South Wales the truth about exactly what we are debating and voting on tonight? It did not go to the election seeking a mandate. I really do question how we got to this bill compared to what we have read in media releases over the last couple of days and weeks.

Approximately 1 per cent of fatal road crashes are the result of speeding on regional dual-carriage freeways, such as the Pacific Highway and the Hume Highway. Receiving a fine two weeks after the event does not change behaviour in the immediate time. What would change behaviour straightaway is more police on the highways. While metropolitan drivers will be affected by this policy—anyone who drives on this road will be—the burden of this revenue-raising venture will fall on regional drivers. Why has the Labor Government only chosen Coalition electorates for this trial? We know that the Government was given five choices, but it chose only two Coalition electorates—not a single Labor electorate.

We will move amendments in this House to legislate three sites, including one metropolitan site. This is not new behaviour by the Labor Government. We know that the Regional Roads Fund—a Labor slush fund—directed an overwhelming amount of 87 per cent to Labor-held electorates. Assessment was based on a list provided to Transport for NSW by the Premier's office. This was not based on any criteria such as road safety or road accident data. The funds were directed for political purposes only—23 of 28 projects in Labor-held electorates and \$206 million out of \$236 million spent in Labor-held electorates. The Opposition will move amendments to fix Labor's bill. Firstly, it will make it a trial.

Ms Anna Watson: It is a trial.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Shellharbour and will address that shortly. It will legislate the trial locations and that one of them must be in the Greater Sydney region. The amendments will cover signage and notification as well as reporting back to Parliament. Unlike the member for Shellharbour, I have read the bill. The word "trial" does not appear once in the bill. The word "trial" does not even appear in the title of the bill. There is nothing in the bill about coming back to Parliament after 12 months. There is nothing in the bill about not turning these on tomorrow or the next day, whenever the bill comes into effect. All the bill does is remove the word "heavy" in 10 clauses on one page and two on the final page. Let us not pretend that this bill is to legislate a trial. The bill is to turn the speed cameras on. That is fine. The Labor Party should be honest about that with the citizens and voters of New South Wales. I conclude my contribution.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:55): I am pleased to stand in this Chamber as the Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Transport. I completely object to the previous speaker's comments about Labor's intention regarding the Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. For the information of the member for Coffs Harbour, our only intention is to save lives. If he or his party do not want to save lives, that is a matter for them. We have had 12 years of this. We are now fixing New South Wales. We are making it a better and safer place to live. I reject outright the words that the member for Coffs Harbour spoke in this place tonight. My intention is to save lives. This type of legislation has been proven in Europe, Britain and other parts of the world. It is a trial.

I am pleased to support the bill. After three consecutive years of meaningful reductions in road fatalities in New South Wales, fatal crashes and fatalities increased significantly in 2023. Based on the provisional data for 2023, 351 people died on New South Wales roads. That is an increase of 70 fatalities compared to 2022. We are now going to do something about that. Speed-related fatalities increased to 155 in 2023, a tragic increase of 41 deaths compared to 2022. That was the largest increase in fatalities in more than a decade.

In response, the Government has introduced a number of road safety measures, including removing a loophole to force all motorists driving on a foreign licence to convert to a New South Wales licence within six months, which was highlighted by the member for Lismore in her speech; returning the demerit trial that rewarded more than 1.2 million drivers for maintaining a spotless driving record during the initial 12-month period up to 16 January 2024; doubling roadside enforcement sites used for mobile speed cameras with the addition of 2,700 new locations where a camera can be deployed—enforcement hours remaining the same; and hosting the State's first Road Safety Forum of international and local experts.

We are proposing a trial to operate in two locations. It is a trial. I hope the member for Coffs Harbour is still listening. We are proposing a trial to operate in two of the current 31 average speed camera locations across New South Wales. Those two locations in regional New South Wales are the Pacific Highway between Kew and Port Macquarie, and the Hume Highway between Coolac and Gundagai. Those sites are a sample of existing locations and have been selected because they have a history of fatal and serious injury crashes involving light vehicles, and they have the technical requirements to support the trial. It is sensible. Even though there is robust evidence showing that average speed cameras are effective in reducing road trauma elsewhere, a goal of this trial is increasing community understanding and confidence in its road safety benefit.

We already know that there is support for the measure. Research conducted in New South Wales in 2024 found that 68 per cent of respondents thought that the average speed cameras were important in making New South Wales roads safer. Any member who has spoken to a parent, guardian or carer of a person who has been killed on our roads cannot tell me that this is not good legislation. Only this year we have had people visit this Parliament who have lost children in car accidents. Why would we not undertake this trial, and why would the member for Coffs Harbour say that we are wrong? We can never, ever be wrong in attempting to save the lives of people on our roads.

Of course, there will be a comprehensive communication campaign to inform drivers about the trial. We are not just going to launch it. There will be an education process. Everybody will know what is happening and what to expect at the two trial sites before the trial commences. People will know what is happening, when it is happening and why it is happening. It is expected that communication will include local stakeholder and community messages, as well as in situ communications. We want to ensure that regional New South Wales residents who live near cameras and travel the routes regularly, as well as visitors passing through, are aware and respond safely to the enforcement.

There will be a 60-day warning letter period for light vehicles prior to infringement notices being issued so that drivers have ample opportunity to change their driving behaviours and their speeds. I have confidence that regional New South Wales residents, who are more likely to be impacted by road trauma, will respond to the trial by checking their speed and making safer choices. Consistent with any other camera-detected speeding offence, fines from light vehicle average speed camera-detected offences must be paid into the Community Road Safety Fund. Again, I reject outright the comments made by the member for Coffs Harbour that this is some type of slush fund for the Labor Party. That is absolutely untrue, and I will ask the member to withdraw those comments when he comes back into this Chamber.

The Community Road Safety Fund, which includes both road safety camera fine revenue and additional investment by the New South Wales Government, is used to deliver a broad range of road safety initiatives as outlined in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. They include life-saving infrastructure safety upgrades and treatments across the network, testing and rating of child restraints, police road safety operations, road safety education programs, school crossing supervisors and the Driver Licensing Access Program. Importantly, while this initiative represents the next balanced step in camera-based enforcement in New South Wales, it does not detract from or replace the role of the New South Wales police in enforcing road safety. That is another untruth now put to bed for the member for Coffs Harbour.

Automated camera enforcement complements police activities by ensuring efficient, cost-effective detection of certain high-risk behaviours across the State to drive down the number of people speeding and the number of resulting fatalities and injuries. It also frees up police resources to focus on the enforcement of drink driving, drug driving and other high-risk behaviours that cannot be detected using cameras. Measuring average speed is generally considered to be a fair form of enforcement as drivers demonstrate intentional and consistent speeding behaviour over a lengthy stretch of road and time, not at a single point. This bill is a significant step towards exploring how average speed enforcement can further enhance road safety in New South Wales, reflecting

the New South Wales Government's ongoing commitment to reduce deaths and serious injuries on our roads. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (20:03): I make a contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Direction) Bill 2024. From the outset, I acknowledge that this month is Rural Road Safety Month. As a regional MP, I understand—as do all members in this place—the toll that a road fatality takes on a community, a family and friends. That toll is immense. The smaller the community where the tragedy takes place, the more the toll is amplified. Sadly, the road toll continues to grow, and we all acknowledge that is a tragedy. I will support good, commonsense approaches to ensure that the road toll in New South Wales is reduced.

The communities that I represent have suffered greatly from road tragedies, not only recently but for decades. Between 2008 and 2018, when I was the mayor of Clarence Valley Council, I was also the chair of the Pacific Highway Taskforce. Every council from Hexham to the Queensland border was part of that taskforce, which focused purely on the dual carriageway upgrade of the Pacific Highway. That process started out of absolute tragedy, which was the 1989 Cowper bus crash. To this day, that tragic event has a profound effect on my community. I often see ambulance officers, doctors and first responders who were called out at 4.00 a.m. that morning when a bus and a semitrailer collided at Cowper. While I support the proposed legislation—and I will support the amendments that the shadow Minister has foreshadowed—I urge the Government to be open and transparent about the trial.

Mr David Mehan: We always are.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON: We will see. This is a serious issue, and members opposite are laughing. I am talking about the road toll and talking about people's lives, and they are giggling. Fair dinkum! I urge the Government to be open and transparent about the trial, provide the figures to the Parliament for review, be open about the numbers, show the community how it is working to drive down the road toll and do it seriously. It should inform the Parliament and the community how much revenue is raised during the trial and where those funds are spent. The Government must ensure that there is community confidence in the program and that the community has confidence that this is not simply a revenue-raising process. As an example, will drivers be warned by signage that they are entering point to point locations? Will drivers be encouraged to check their speed and timing at a halfway point through the two-camera system? Will those signs be easy to see?

The trial that has been announced in the media is not being legislated in the bill that we are debating today. That is a sticking point for the Opposition. I note that the trials are not in Labor seats. I do know, however, that the trial is on the Pacific Highway between Kew and Port Macquarie and on the Hume Highway between Coolac and Gundagai. Those are good roads. We are trialling the cameras on high-quality dual carriageway highways. The trial is completely focused on rural roads and is completely silent on metropolitan roads. If the Government is honest and genuine about the trial, it should include a metropolitan site. There are six metropolitan sites in the point to point network, none of which are included in the trial.

Regional New South Wales residents are starting to be treated like guinea pigs. If the Government is serious, it should broaden the trial. It should get data not only from rural and regional areas but also from city areas. The scope of the bill allows for very limited implementation of the policy. My electorate of Clarence has three point to point sites between Harwood and New Italy, Tyndale and Harwood, and Woodburn and Wardell. They are excellent dual carriageway roads. In fact, those three sites have the newest and safest roads in New South Wales. Yet tragically, in the past three years more than 12 deaths have occurred on bush roads and rural roads in my electorate—that I know of. That is a complete tragedy. But those 12 crash locations are not covered by the trial.

This matter needs urgent attention from the Government. Every death on the road means an empty chair at the table on Christmas day. It means that someone is missing out on a birthday or an anniversary, or somebody is missing out on seeing their kids or grandkids grow older. That is a tragedy that is not lost on me. The three sites in my electorate that have dual carriageways have lower crash rates and lower fatality rates. The Minister would know that local roads of poorer quality have poorer road surfaces and have higher risk of causing accidents. Fewer police patrol those roads and there are higher counts of drink driving and seatbelt offences. All those matters play a major role in the road toll in regional and rural New South Wales.

I urge the Government to openly consider the amendment to be moved by the shadow roads Minister. Members on this side of the Chamber understand the bush. We understand what is important in our community. Each and every person in New South Wales wants to see the road toll drop as quickly as possible. All members have a role to play in achieving that objective. Driver behaviour and police also play a role. Until we all come together and are on the same page, I cannot see a way forward. I support the legislation, but I also support the

amendment that will be moved by the shadow roads Minister. I hope the Government considers it in a genuine way.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (20:11): I make a contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. When it comes to the appalling rate of death and injury on our roads, some factors are very clear. One of those is the undeniable fact that speed kills. According to Transport for NSW, every year speeding contributes to about 41 per cent of road fatalities and 24 per cent of serious injuries. That makes speeding the single biggest contributor to road trauma in New South Wales. In the regions, the toll is disproportionately high. Regional drivers make up one-third of our road users, but two-thirds of fatalities occur on country roads.

So far this year 244 lives have been lost on New South Wales roads, with the figures indicating that speed was a factor in many of those tragedies. Those are not just statistics. Each number represents an unnecessary loss of life, devastating families and loved ones and causing pain that will last a lifetime all because of a horror that could have been avoided. As an emergency physician who worked for many years in the emergency department at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, unfortunately I got to witness the impact of serious road fatalities and deaths. One does not forget the trauma caused to families as a result of the sudden loss of a life. Nor does one forget going to a roadside accident in the back of an ambulance and watching what emergency services personnel have to deal with.

Yet the great thing about Australia is that in the past 40 years we have made such an impact on road trauma. When I began my work as an emergency physician, there were nearly 1,100 deaths a year on our roads. That got down to 221 deaths during COVID, which is a tremendous achievement. Multiple factors were responsible for that—everything from seatbelts to random breath testing to better car design to safer roads. Sadly, the road toll is climbing again. I support the Government's decision to introduce this bill. It is not the silver bullet that will solve the problem because there is no one answer, but it is an important initiative. If speed kills, destroys families, leaves lifelong injuries and scars communities—and we have heard many members speak about that, including the member for Clarence and the member for Shellharbour—why should we not take meaningful action to slow drivers down and save lives? For that reason, I support the Government's trial of average speed cameras for light vehicles, with appropriate education of drivers, transparency and a grace period to allow people to adjust.

I also welcome the trial of the cameras on the Hume Highway between Gundagai and Coolac. That stretch of road is just outside of my electorate, but it is used by thousands of my constituents and millions of people from around Australia. I have travelled on that road many times. When I first went to Wagga and drove down the Hume Highway, I realised that stretch of highway was pretty primitive. It was not a dual carriageway. It was narrow and dangerous. It was a place people feared. In fact, when we went home to Sydney from the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, people used to say, "Make sure you get past Jugiong. Because if you get past Jugiong, at least when you get picked up by the ambulance, you won't be brought back to Wagga Base Hospital. You have to go to Canberra if you have a crash." That road was dangerous, but it has improved. Every time I drive on it, I am grateful for the improvements that have been made. Nevertheless, it is a frequently used road. Between 2017 and 2023, 18 crashes were reported, eight of them classified as serious. It is a perfect place to undertake the trial.

As a society we accept average speed cameras for heavy vehicles, which are operated by people who drive for a living. So why should we not apply it to cars and motorcycles? I understand New South Wales is the only jurisdiction in the entire world that does not apply the use of average speed cameras to light vehicles. Studies from the United Kingdom and Norway show that fatalities and serious injuries have been reduced by up to 50 per cent in areas where vehicles are subject to average speed cameras. It is clear that average speed cameras save lives. It is equally clear that New South Wales needs to catch up with the rest of the world when it comes to monitoring the average speed of light vehicles. The message is simple: Don't speed and you won't get booked.

This is only a trial. If it is successful, we should look at trying the system on other regional roads, many of which are arguably more dangerous. The trial will mean that initially people will be issued with warning letters rather than fines. Clearly the trial must be evaluated stringently and the results made known with full transparency. The Minister and the Government have given those guarantees repeatedly because of concerns—which have been raised to confuse this issue—that somehow this will just be a revenue grab when in fact it is a serious, well thought out strategy to reduce the road toll and save lives. The scheme should provide enough time for motorists to become used to it.

As I said, the Government has repeatedly indicated that it will be a trial. It is important that we engage with the community on the issue and that funds raised are invested in further road safety. I recognise and understand that it is a trial. But let us not pretend that that is a reason for not going ahead with the bill and that we do not need to tackle the issue. If we are serious about reducing the appalling trauma on our roads, which is continuing to rise, we need to tackle speeding. We also need to tackle alcohol and drugs and fatigue. But if we can slow people down,

we can save lives., which is perhaps the most important thing we can do. I look forward to seeing the results of the trial with full transparency so my community can see what a difference we can make.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (20:18): I make a contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I put on record that too many people are dying on our roads and far too many people are dying in regional New South Wales. Those people were friends, members of our community and colleagues. Each time one of those fatalities occurs, it is a death that could have been prevented. The statistics are quite sobering. Last year 351 lives were lost on our roads in New South Wales. According to the statistics, 244 lives have been lost so far this year. That is similar to last year; at the same time last year, 248 lives had been lost. I will share a couple of other statistics. It is important to note that half of the deaths in New South Wales were people who were not driving a vehicle. Of those fatalities, 175 were drivers, 69 were passengers, 53 were motorcyclists, 48 were pedestrians and eight were cyclists. A lot of those fatalities occurred during the day. Statistics from the Australian Road Safety Foundation indicate that 61 per cent occurred during the day and 60 per cent occurred during weekdays.

It is not only young people who are dying. It is easy to stereotype young people and say that they are the inexperienced drivers on our roads. But in a lot of cases the people who are dying are aged 40 years and over. All members of this House would have a story of somebody in their local community or area who lost their life on the road. Behind every number there is a story: There is a family that has been affected and a community that has been shattered by the loss of that life. This is not just a statistic; this is a call to action for all of us to do more in this space to ensure that we save lives on our roads in this State. We must understand that road safety is everyone's responsibility. While governments have a part to play, individuals, communities and community groups also have important roles to play.

We must all ensure that we get the message out there to everybody in our community. Every time somebody gets behind the wheel of a car, the decisions they make can have real consequences. The former Government invested millions of dollars in driver education and road safety education programs. We spent hundreds of millions of dollars on vital, life-saving road infrastructure and billions of dollars on major road upgrades across the State. I acknowledge that the current Government has continued to invest in some of those programs, and it is important that that continues to occur. At the end of the day, they are life-saving measures. I put on record that the New South Wales Labor Government has cut vital funding to a number of road projects that are needed in the regions.

We must understand that making one change in one area will not save lives. I would like the Minister to indicate the other measures that are being undertaken or that will be looked at to ensure we continue to educate people across the State about how to be safe drivers, passengers, pedestrians and motorcyclists in our communities so that everybody arrives safely at their destination. Speeding is the leading factor contributing to deaths on our roads; it also causes a large number of injuries. These road deaths send shockwaves through our communities. The member for Wagga Wagga mentioned that regional New South Wales has one-third of the State's population but accounts for two-thirds of road fatalities.

We must remember that our first responders, whether they are police, fire or paramedics, have to attend these incidents that occur on our roads. Let us spare a thought for them. They may have even attended a scene in regional New South Wales where they knew the victim. They may have known the individuals whose bodies they had to pull out of cars in their local communities. In New South Wales someone is killed or seriously injured on our roads every 41 minutes. It is important that road safety is a focus for everybody in this place, including the Government, when it comes to looking at implementing safety measures. Public campaigns are absolutely critical, but we need a better system. We need a transparent system.

We need a star rating that shows how safe our roads are. That way we will know which roads are in dire straits and which roads in New South Wales need investment. If politics is taken out of the equation, the State roads that receive funding will be those that need upgrades most. I ask that that information be made public so any investment from the Community Road Safety Fund goes to the roads that need it most and are the highest priority. The Opposition will introduce a sensible amendment to the bill at the consideration in detail stage. While there is a road safety trial, it is important to collect the data and extend the trial beyond two areas. The trial should be extended into metropolitan areas.

The more data that is collected, the more valuable that data will be in providing the information required to show the public whether the trial has been successful in turning the tide and saving lives in New South Wales. Everybody has a role to play when it comes to road safety in New South Wales. I acknowledge the work undertaken by the road safety team. They are very passionate about ensuring that safety measures are put in place. But as I said, it is not up to one organisation; it is up to everybody to make these changes so that we can save lives and protect our communities into the future.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (20:26): I contribute to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. Labor claims that this trial is about road safety and saving lives. I hope that is the case. Unfortunately, it may not effectively improve road safety. The trial appears to be a budgetary, half-hearted attempt at a trial that ignores the true needs of regional drivers. It looks like a revenue-raising bill disguised as a safety measure. I am all for making our roads safer. Everyone in my electorate wants safer roads. No-one should lose their life on our roads. Unfortunately, regional roads bear the brunt of road deaths. I bristle at a bill that disproportionately affects the regions without providing any benefits. The Labor Government is squeezing money out of the people who can least afford it—regional Australians.

If the bill was really about road safety and reducing the number of people who lose their lives on our roads, then we would have seen an entirely different approach. The trial would have been backed by rigorous studies and robust frameworks. It would have been tested across the State, not just in regional areas. If this is truly a road safety initiative, where are the control groups and proper studies to show statistical significance? We cannot switch on a set of cameras, hand out fines and call it a day. We need a control group, we need to measure road safety before and after the cameras are installed, and we need to factor in all the variables including traffic volumes, road conditions, driver behaviour and, importantly, fatigue.

The member for Shellharbour said that there was a large increase in deaths and serious injuries in 2023, and there was. But if we look at the data, 2021 and 2022 were COVID years so there was decreased travel. It stands to reason then that there was an increase in 2023 when we returned to our normal travel behaviour. Any competent researcher would have conducted a fair and unbiased trial, not a politicised dataset-gathering exercise with inherent biases towards an expected outcome. The Government has bypassed the rigorous process needed to justify installing these cameras and pushed ahead with its predetermined agenda. While the Minister's office shared some aggregated data from Transport for NSW, which I appreciate, I implore the Government to separate the data and use reproducible methods to ascertain decision-making outcomes on a larger scale.

Regional drivers spend more time on the road. They drive longer distances and often do so in older cars that do not come with the latest technology, like automatic speed warnings. These are not luxury vehicles zipping through city streets. These are work trucks, family cars and farm utes, often caked in dust. These vehicles are essential for daily life in our rural areas. One of the trial locations is just outside my electorate, from Kew to Port Macquarie. These are major regional roads, dual carriageways, where less than 1 per cent of fatal crashes are caused by speeding. Yet the Government thinks it is a good idea to target these roads with average speed cameras. Why? Because it is an easy and a convenient way to make some money from regional drivers, who are more likely to be caught out over long distances, where fatigue is as big a danger as speed.

Why is this trial being rolled out only in regional areas? Where is the metro trial? If this is such a vital road safety initiative, why is it not being tested on the M4 or the M5? Why is the Government not using more sites to extrapolate for more data? There are more vehicles and more crashes on city roads. Using fatalities as the be-all and end-all metric is flawed. We have higher speeds, worse roads, increased fatigue, less lighting and many other contributing factors. Basing road safety statistics on fatalities alone is poor science. Why would the Labor Government not protect the lives of those in Western Sydney as well? The answer is obvious. The Government knows the backlash it would face from metropolitan drivers. Instead, it comes out to the regions to quietly roll out this trial hoping that we will not notice.

Here is the real kicker: The trial is not limited to those two locations. The bill allows for full and unlimited implementation of this policy if the Government chooses. Talk about stealth versus transparency. It can be brought in immediately under the legislation. I thought this Government was focused on being open and up-front. What starts as a trial could quickly morph into a permanent fixture across regional roads, without the proper studies or consultation to back it up. I ask only that the Government put in place robust metrics that actually correlate with the information we are trying to source. Without high-quality evidence, this trial is not a genuine road safety initiative; it is the beginning of a stealth tax, a revenue-raising exercise disguised as a safety measure.

If the Government was serious about road safety, it would be focusing on the true causes of road trauma in our region: fatigue, road conditions and a lack of police presence. Where are the country cops, our highway patrol? We live smack bang in the middle of the fatigue zone. Long stretches of road, few rest stops and a lifestyle that demands early mornings and late nights all contribute to the real dangers we face on the road. But is fatigue even being considered in this trial? The member for Shellharbour spoke about Norway and the United Kingdom. I am not surprised to hear that it is easier to put up good networks there and that they make a difference. Both of those countries have much smaller distances to cover and fewer fatigue issues, making it easier to cover and cheaper to implement.

The Government is narrowly focusing on speed and missing the bigger picture. The death toll does not tell the whole story of road safety. How many accidents are caused by drivers dozing off, being under the influence, being forced to push through fatigue because of deadlines or just wanting to get home and making a poor decision?

I sat down in the Minister's office and made it clear: If we trial average speed cameras, we need to do it properly. We need robust frameworks, proper monitoring and a fair distribution of resources. We need to measure not just the immediate impact of these cameras but also their long-term effects on drivers' behaviour and road safety.

This fails to strike me as a genuine experiment. It is the beginning of a stealth tax on regional drivers, and I will not stand by and let that happen without speaking about it. After all, what is turning on average speed cameras over 31 kilometres now or 200 kilometres or so in a year going to do for the hundreds of thousands of kilometres of unmonitored road? If the Labor Government is serious about road safety, prove it. We deserve proper studies, proper trials and real solutions. It should be done in the city as well. The Government should be transparent and fair in making our roads safer.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:33): I support the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I was convinced by the arguments of the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wagga Wagga. Members would know that one reason why I stood for Parliament was to fix the Princes Highway. I have attended funerals of people, including young people, who have lost their lives on that highway. I am grateful for the time I had in government to be able to advocate for road spending and we now have an upgrade of the highway through my entire electorate, of which I am most proud. I also agree with many of the things my friends on this side of the House have said about the trials, data and investments in regional roads, but if this bill just saves one life, then it will have achieved a positive outcome: one less funeral, one less road trauma. The trauma caused not just to families but also to emergency services and frontline personnel who attend these accidents is enormous. It comes not just at a financial cost but also at an emotional cost.

We can continue to play the game of, "We want this. We want that." This is what the Government is offering. It is not perfect. We can do a lot of other things. As I said, I applaud the arguments put forward by my friends in the Coalition, but this is not a bad idea. In coming to my position not to support the Coalition's position on this bill, I thought long and hard about the implications. I think that the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads is doing the right thing. It is obvious that she has thought long and hard about it. I would like to see full transparency in relation to the report and the data. I would also like to make sure that the trial is reported and that we learn lessons from that, as well as all of the other things we have just spoken about, to make investments that save lives. But on this occasion I think the arguments are well made out. I do not see any good reason why people in my electorate would not too, other than people not liking fines.

No-one likes to be fined, but they are a good deterrent for a range of matters—speed is one of them. Speed kills. I am one of the few members in this place who does not drive because of my visual impairment. I would like to be able to drive. I have some sympathy for people who are unwittingly caught speeding. But as a legislator, as someone who must assess the bills before the House, I think that the Government is doing the right thing on this occasion. I support it because any bill that saves a life should be not only backed but also embraced.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:36): I contribute to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024, and I confirm my support for this legislation. We all recognise the need to reduce the road toll and to better understand speeding offenders' behaviours on our highways. This legislation will effectively switch on point to point average speed cameras for all vehicles across a 16-kilometre stretch of the Hume Highway, between Coolac and Gundagai, in the Cootamundra electorate, as well as a 15-kilometre stretch of the Pacific Highway, between Kew and Port Macquarie. In both locations, this will be achieved by using the existing heavy vehicle average speed cameras, a tool proven to be effective in identifying drivers exceeding speed limits, as evidenced by more than 100 drivers of heavy vehicles being fined yearly across both stretches of road.

While this bill is a positive move, it does not exist in a vacuum. We must broaden the response to road deaths to include other measures, including critical investment in our roads, bridges, blind corners, intersections, overtaking lanes, level crossings, culverts and dirt roads where the use of the word "road" is generous. Speed cameras and data collection must go hand in hand with road network upgrades, particularly those in rural areas, for reasons I will elaborate on shortly. Take for instance the William Bradford Bridge, located on Burley Griffin Way between Wallendbeen and Murrumburrah in the electorate of Cootamundra. That bridge has been a point of concern for years. Despite some incremental improvements, being upgraded barriers, signage and delineation, the fundamental issue remains: The bridge is dangerously narrow for heavy vehicles, the type of vehicles that travel along this road every day.

In 2019, a bus accident near the bridge injured 28 people. Last week, yet another serious accident occurred, involving multiple vehicles and closing the vital arterial road for hours. The William Bradford Bridge is a crucial link between the Hume Highway and Griffith, extending toward Adelaide, and its safety is paramount. My constituents and I continue to view this bridge as one of the most dangerous in the region, and we have repeatedly called for significant upgrades. Despite our sustained efforts, we have been repeatedly told by Transport for NSW

that the bridge remains "compliant" with current standards, and no funding has been allocated for widening or replacement.

Let me be clear: Maintaining the status quo is not enough. When we talk about road safety, we must also address the infrastructure that directly impacts it. Speeding is undoubtedly a major contributor to road fatalities, accounting for 41 per cent of deaths on New South Wales roads and 24 per cent of serious injuries. But unsafe road conditions and bridges that are no longer fit for purpose, such as the narrow William Bradford Bridge, compound the risks. As the member for Cootamundra, road safety is more than a policy matter to me. Every life lost while travelling to school or work or for recreation is one too many for the families, friends and loved ones of the 244 people who have already died on our roads this year.

My parents have been family funeral directors for almost 45 years, servicing small rural towns and villages. It is a special vocation, and an unenviable one in the eyes of many. Mum and Dad have helped farewell too many young people, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers and grandparents. Too many members of the community have died too soon on our roads. I have lost friends and experienced firsthand the devastation that road fatalities bring to families and small communities. Every person lost on our roads leaves a lasting impact. This year, 244 people have already died on our roads, and the Australian Road Safety Foundation reports that almost two-thirds of those fatalities occurred on rural roads.

September is Rural Road Safety Month, which is a time to focus on the unique challenges faced by rural road users. But for rural communities, road safety must be a year-round priority. We cannot debate this bill without recognising the need for broader investment in the roads themselves. There are roads that are still scarred by flood damage, years after the disaster has passed, and covered in patched potholes; and narrow bridges, such as the William Bradford Bridge, which put drivers, particularly those in rural and regional areas, at heightened risk. The Government's focus on reducing fatalities, especially in rural areas, is noted, but words must be matched with actions. Projects such as the William Bradford Bridge, which has long been a safety concern for local families, freight companies, farmers and emergency services, must be prioritised.

If we truly aim to reduce the road toll and protect lives, we need upgrades that align with our road safety goals. It is also an opportunity for the New South Wales Government to fulfill its commitment to rural road safety. I look forward to working with the Minister to secure the necessary funding for vital upgrades. While the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024 represents an initiative to address speeding, it is only a small part of the solution. We need comprehensive measures that combine technology, enforcement and, most crucially, investment in safer roads to protect lives in both urban and rural New South Wales. In doing so, we can move closer to achieving the bipartisan goal of Towards Zero, with zero trauma on New South Wales roads by 2050 and 50 per cent fewer deaths by 2030. I reiterate my support for this legislation and commend the bill to the House.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:44): I make a contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. As almost every speaker has said, all members want safer roads in New South Wales, and we all agree something needs to be done to bring down the State's road toll. One life lost is one too many, and this issue needs to be taken very seriously. But the fact is that the Government's approach is extremely narrow and, frankly, not well thought through. Whilst the Labor Party has been pushing the data that suits its agenda, fatal crashes are a statewide issue. Why are we not taking a statewide approach? Relying solely on a couple of pilot average speed cameras in regional areas is nothing more than a cash grab. It will not solve what is a much bigger problem.

This year the Labor Government handed down the highest taxing budget in the history of New South Wales—the highest taxing budget ever. Despite the revenue rainbow handed to the Minns Labor Government, it is looking to raise still more revenue from our regional residents under the guise of road safety, which, as I said, we all support. But the raising of more revenue does not sit well with people in regional New South Wales, and it does not sit well with the residents who will be forking out in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. The majority of the average speed cameras are already set up in regional New South Wales. It is only fair that those areas reap the benefits and have their roads improved.

I call on the Government to commit to putting a proportionate amount of the revenue for road safety upgrades back into the communities that are hosting the cameras. Given two-thirds of the cameras are located in the regions, regional roads should get two-thirds of the money collected under this plan. There are also questions around the locations that have been chosen. The latest Transport for NSW data reveals some interesting trends. On a broad scale, the number of fatalities for the 12 months to July 2024 showed a larger increase in metropolitan areas than in regional New South Wales. The number of fatalities in the Sydney metropolitan area, which is not in regional New South Wales, was up by 33.5 per cent. The number of fatalities in Wollongong, which is also not in regional New South Wales, was up by 89.5 per cent.

When I compare those statistics with the ones for regional New South Wales, it seems that the regions are being unfairly hit. If we go back to the statewide approach I mentioned, we should be running trials in a metropolitan area as well. The statistics show that the number of incidents is much higher. We need to gather the data to properly inform all of us. Another interesting bit of data that was reported in the media was that out of all the drivers who used the two stretches of road where the trials are being proposed, only 0.00001 per cent lost their lives. In the Cootamundra-Gundagai region, there were no reported fatalities in the final two years of reporting in 2021 and 2022. Again, it begs the question why the Government thinks that is a good place to trial the program, as opposed to other areas, including metropolitan areas.

The statistics also show that speed is not generally the main cause of serious and fatal crashes. It made up between 23 per cent and 28 per cent of the contributing factors for fatal crashes over the past five years. That also raises serious questions about what the Government is basing the decision on. I reiterate that everyone is in favour of better road safety. I turn to the actual cameras and where they are located. These point to point cameras were specifically designed to monitor heavy vehicles. It is not only me saying that; it is part of the average speed camera fact sheet that Transport for NSW had on its website. It was posted online and then taken down. The cameras were never set up in locations where speeding is a known factor for light vehicle crashes. The sites were selected by:

... using criteria developed by the Centre for Road Safety ... Site selection is based upon several factors including the frequency and severity of heavy vehicle crashes, heavy vehicle speeds and road conditions.

There is not a sausage of a mention about light vehicles—nothing. Nada! But we will just flick them on and see what happens. When the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads was questioned about the data during her most recent budget estimates hearing, she could not provide a substantial answer. She just kept saying, "It's about evidence," but that only left us with more questions.

We have foreshadowed moving an amendment to ensure that all of the trial data is released to show whether these measures have made a difference in reducing accidents or deaths. It should be an open and honest process where we can all see how much money has been raised using the cameras and then the difference it has had on our roads. It is also interesting how much Labor has changed its approach. When Labor was in opposition in 2021, then shadow Minister for Roads, the Hon. John Graham, said:

The Opposition supports speed cameras but contends that a more effective way to curb speeding is by having warning signs and police on the roads.

I could not agree more. Another quote from him at that time that is worth reflecting on is:

This is not a debate about whether people should slow down on the roads; it is a debate about how best to do that. Is it best to do that with warning signs and high-visibility policing at the time—in real time, as people are on the roads—or is it better to get a fine in the mail two weeks later?

Interestingly, the Minister for Finance, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, also seems to agree with that sentiment. Just last week she said that drivers cannot change their behaviour if they do not know they have received a fine. When the Premier was asked about the use of average speed cameras during the Bush Summit, he said the plan is not about targeting regional residents but it would also target city drivers going on holidays. If that was really the case, why is this trial running at other times and not only in holiday periods?

Minister Aitchison also would not commit to rolling out the trial in other parts of the State and has not committed to rolling it out in metropolitan areas. The problem many of us have is that it is clear that this trial is a ploy by Labor to rip money from the pockets of regional residents and, without making some changes, it simply does not stack up. As I mentioned earlier, we are completely supportive of road safety, but we are moving an amendment to achieve a more statewide approach that is based on real data. I hope that we can all agree on that.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:52): I speak on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I confirm that the Opposition will not oppose the bill. It includes additional suites and measures that can potentially be put in place to help keep people safe. I echo the words of every member who has spoken before me tonight: Any suite put in place that saves one life is worth it. What I have seen on the Central Coast in the past 12 months alone has been nothing short of staggering. Eleven people were killed on roads in the Central Coast local government area with a further 264 seriously injured, 315 moderately injured and 149 with minor injuries. As other members have said, every single death means someone is not going home to their loved ones.

Some of the most recent road death figures are very concerning. In January this year a 70-year-old pedestrian was killed. A 56-year-old driver was killed at Mangrove Mountain. A 29-year-old driver was killed in February. A 29-year-old driver was killed in April. A 22-year-old motorcyclist was killed in June. A 17-year-old passenger was killed in July. Sadly, and most recently, my region woke up two weeks ago on a weekend to find out there had been another horror night on the Central Coast roads, with two people killed and five injured in separate crashes. Every single one of those lives in regional areas is usually somebody that someone knows. Sadly,

the 22-year-old woman driver of one car, who died at 8.30 p.m. at the scene of a two-car collision in Empire Bay in my electorate, was a staff member at the local cancer centre. Our local community has been rocked by someone so young losing their life in such a tragic way. But no matter what the age or the reason, losing a life in a road accident is a senseless waste.

The Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill is important because it starts collecting that additional data. It is known that a contributing factor of 24 per cent of all accidents in the Central Coast local government area involve speed, which is well above the State average of 19 per cent. The bill is not just about trials and money. It is also about educating people so that they understand that when they drive a car they have an enormous responsibility to others, whether they are in the vehicle with them or on the roads around them. Drivers are in control of a machine that can cause serious damage or death to anybody. Having a driver's licence is a privilege, not a right. These days way too many people think it is their right to drive any way they wish to, whenever they want to. Sadly, that attitude is being reflected in the increasing road toll, where people going about their daily business are either victims of or involved in an accident that takes their lives or the life of another loved one.

As members who have spoken before me have said, the bill proposes amendments to the Road Transport Act to enable light vehicles, or cars, to be eligible for average speed camera enforcement. I note that the two areas for the trial are in the electorates of Cootamundra and Port Macquarie. Both of those members have spoken in debate on the bill this evening. The member for Upper Hunter will move an amendment, but I also say that this trial should be expanded. My understanding is that there were at least five roads put forward for the Minister's consideration, and one of the highest areas of accidents is around Picton Road. It is a 17-kilometre stretch of road that has had 14 fatal crashes since 2018. That is 14 people that will never see their families again because they have been involved in a tragic fatal accident.

It does not matter whether it is one life, 14 or 24. Fatal accidents have devastating effects not only on families and loved ones but also on local communities and our frontline responders. Those people have to turn up to horrific events, which they will never be able to unsee. As I have said in this place before, I spent a night out with the local police. The Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes commands do an outstanding job looking after the people of the Central Coast. Nothing frustrates them more than reckless driving that causes needless accidents. It is the men and women of the Police Force, the ambulance service and the Fire and Rescue service who have to pick up the broken bodies at those devastating scenes, which can be truly horrific. Then they have to make the death call to the families of those people who have lost their lives. Those duties have traumatic effects on frontline workers. That is the reason that as legislators we are beholden to do everything possible—to run every trial and collect every piece of data and other information that can help make our roads safer. More importantly, we must continue to send the message that our driving behaviours need to change.

When I was first elected to this place, I was lucky enough to sit on the Staysafe traffic committee. Most members in this place have had the privilege of being on that committee and working with the Office of Road Safety and Transport for NSW. It is just as frustrating for them when there is needless loss of life because people do not follow the road rules. Speeding, fatigue and inattention are the greatest causes of death on our roads. The bill is important. The amendment being put forward by the member for Upper Hunter is very important. It ensures that the Government collects the data, puts it on the table at the end of the trial and says, "This is what we have collected so far based on the 12-month trial," or however long it might be. That will help to make informed decisions about what to do next. Everything that the Office of Road Safety and Transport for NSW does is data driven. That provides hard proof and evidence for how to move forward and informs legislators on necessary reforms that may need to be made in this Chamber in the future.

It is important that the outcomes of the trial are made public so that the public and members of this place are informed so that we can make informed decisions collectively. No member wants to have to talk in this place about a 20-year-old healthcare worker who lost her life on a weekend on what should be a normally safe stretch of road. That is the other thing. Not all accidents happen on dirt tracks in the middle of nowhere. Empire Bay Drive is a main road in the Central Coast. It is a major thoroughfare. It was a relatively normal evening, yet that young lady will never go home again. That is why we must work collectively to ensure that we provide the best long-term outcomes, collect the data that is required and make sure that we do the right thing by everybody on the roads in New South Wales, whether that be in Cootamundra, Empire Bay, the Upper Hunter, Wahroonga or Auburn. It does not matter where people are dying on our roads; we need to stop it.

There is no silver bullet, but we must work collectively to do the right thing to make the best, informed decisions to protect people. No-one wants to get a knock on the door at night, open it and hear the police saying that their son, daughter, mother, father, aunt or uncle is not coming home because they have been involved in a fatal car accident. I can think of no worse way of losing a loved one than in a tragic circumstance like that. It does not discriminate between postcode, age or anything else. I commend the Minister for bringing the bill to the House.

More importantly, I thank the shadow Ministers in both places for working constructively on a sensible amendment that provides the necessary clarity so that we can see the outcome of the trial and help keep the people of New South Wales safe moving forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (21:02): On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: In reply: I thank the member for Liverpool, the member for Cessnock, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Lismore, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Vacluse, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Clarence, the member for Bathurst, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Oxley and the member for Kiama for their contributions to the debate. I address some matters that were raised during the debate. The Government agrees with the member for Bathurst about the need for a bipartisan approach. Both sides of this House have agreed to implement average speed cameras. The cameras were built to measure speed for all vehicles, but some members opposite have stopped the cameras being used for their intended purpose.

I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his leadership and decision to support the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. As one member of the crossbench said, if the bill saves just one life, it will have been worth it. Sadly, I am disappointed in the approach of a number of Opposition members, like the member for Terrigal. Their approach to the issue has been disjointed. From some members, we heard of concern about deaths on our roads. Others focused more on the number of words used in legislation. There was a bizarre Big Brother conspiracy theory, and pets are apparently causing a whole heap of crashes. It is a shame that no member of the Opposition asked for a briefing on the bill. The member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Oxley and the member for Upper Hunter said that more cops is the answer. This Government inherited more than 1,500 vacancies in the Police Force—a legacy of the previous Government's mismanagement of police recruitment and retention.

The member for Vacluse failed to mention that since 2013, when her party was in government, the highest annual number of deaths on our roads was in 2017, when there were 389 deaths. There may have been fewer had the former Government trialled average speed cameras. Other members tried to suggest that the Government's Regional Road Fund projects will not improve safety in regional communities. Twenty-eight projects have benefited from the Regional Road Fund so far. More than half of the projects that got funding were in Coalition-held seats when they were announced. Some of those projects have been on the books for years. Which projects do The Nationals now want the Government to cancel?

The member for Port Macquarie spoke about the intersection of Houston Mitchell Drive and Pacific Highway being in need of a road safety upgrade. However, she failed to mention that the Government has just announced a \$500,000 investment in that intersection to start planning short- and long-term upgrade options. Many members opposite said that there was not enough detail in the bill. When legislation was introduced by the former Government in 2018 to enable a trial of mobile phone detection cameras, there was no restriction on operation or sunset provision specified in the legislation. That enabled the program, following a successful trial, to be rolled out and start delivering road safety benefits as soon as possible. Restricting a trial to 12 months and requiring the operation of the technology to be subject to parliamentary approval means turning on and off cameras and truncating the benefits that camera enforcement is almost certainly going to provide. I note that the member for Upper Hunter wrote to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads earlier this week suggesting that any funds raised from fines issued at average speed camera trial sites be spent in regional New South Wales. He wrote:

Currently two-thirds of the average speed cameras are located in regional NSW so two-thirds of this road safety spending should be spent in regional NSW.

I am pleased to advise the member for Upper Hunter that, of the programs that have been tracked in terms of a metro-regional split over the past five years, from 2019 to 2024, the regional share of funding for road safety spend has stood at approximately 78 per cent. Adding the Towards Zero Safer Roads Program funding announcements that the Government has made recently, the road safety funding share for the regions has increased to 79 per cent over that time. In fact, looking at the figures since we came to government, that figure has risen to 84 per cent on the figures that I can disaggregate at this time. If members require it, I have a table that I will seek leave to table for the benefit of the House.

I note the concerns raised in the Auditor-General's recent report into road safety funding and the disaggregation of data, both in terms of targets and funding. The Minns Labor Government has been a champion of better data on roads, leading the charge at the national level to get road data reported and investing \$390 million into regional roads to ensure that they are safer after the past decade of neglect and five years of drought, fires and wet weather. One of the issues that the Minister has raised with the secretary of Transport for NSW is that she wants to see more transparent reporting of regional versus metropolitan programs across the transport portfolio in the annual reports. Given that was not a priority of the former Government, it will take some time to get it right.

But we cannot improve what we do not measure. This reporting is vital so that we can try to improve outcomes for people in the bush.

To more directly answer the member's concerns, around 80 per cent or so of funding has been spent in regional areas. As most regional members would know, Minister Aitchison has not left one square inch of regional New South Wales unvisited. I am concerned that The Nationals appear to believe that 66 per cent would be a more appropriate number. That is from the party that had trouble ensuring that one-third of funding from Snowy 2.0 would go to the bush. It is easy for those opposite to focus on numbers alone. They choose their own statistic and run with it. Calling for two-thirds of funding to go to the bush, when safety infrastructure upgrades are already at around 80 per cent and growing, is a good campaign call but not good policy. There are no winners between the bush and the city when it comes to road deaths and road trauma. I note the comments made by Transport for NSW when asked for an opinion on the idea. It said:

While 25 of 31 camera locations are in regional areas, a significantly higher number of vehicle checks are conducted in metro areas.

It went on to say:

While more fatalities occur in regional New South Wales, around two thirds of the approximately 10,000 serious injuries each year in New South Wales occur in metro areas and total cost of serious injuries is double that of fatalities because of the volume.

I also note recent comments made by the Leader of The Nationals and member for Dubbo, who appeared to encourage speeding while overtaking. According to the Centre for Road Safety, over the past five years crashes caused by overtaking on our roads has resulted in 33 deaths. Speed was a factor in more than half of those crashes and 82 per cent of those crashes occurred in regional New South Wales. That underscores the need for further changes, such as those our trial will look at. In addition to feedback from members, I share some of the broader community feedback the Government has received, including from courageous advocates who, in the face of incredible heartbreak, have dedicated their lives to saving the lives of others. Founding member of the Road Trauma Support Group NSW, David Vidal, who lost his son Aaron to a reckless driver, has welcomed the news of the trial. A representative of the Road Trauma Support Group said:

This measure could be a game-changer in our fight against road trauma.

Peter Frazer, the founder of the Safer Australian Roads and Highways advocacy organisation, also known as SARAH in honour of his beloved daughter, said:

If a driver or rider is speeding upon entering a point-to-point zone, they have the opportunity to slow down while passing through, allowing their average speed to fall within the legal limit and by slowing down, avoid a fine. But more importantly, by removing the perceived advantages of speeding, these cameras promote safer driving habits by encouraging drivers and riders to stick to the speed limit. This not only lowers their risk of being involved in a serious crash but also protects the lives and well-being of everyone on the road ahead.

The NRMA's policy director, Robert Giltinan, said:

It's not unreasonable to investigate the opportunity to reduce the incidence of light vehicles speeding.

The Australian Trucking Association has welcomed the Government's policy. Road Freight NSW CEO Simon O'Hara said:

Our members tell us that excluding cars from average speed camera enforcement is unfair, because cars and other light vehicles make up the bulk of traffic on our roads.

I reiterate that this Government is committed to improving safety on our roads. Every death on our roads is a death too many. There is more to be done. After we came out of the COVID pandemic, fatal crashes and fatalities increased significantly in 2023. As the first step to address that problem, the Government hosted the Road Safety Forum in February this year, which was attended by over 150 experts and stakeholders, and where compelling evidence was presented of the safety benefits of using average speed cameras to enforce speeding by light vehicles. Other Australian jurisdictions and many European countries with leading road safety results use average speed cameras to monitor the speed of all vehicles as part of their automated enforcement strategies. Studies clearly show that average speed enforcement for all vehicles can be effective. That evidence has grown since the introduction in 2009 of average speed cameras for heavy vehicles in New South Wales.

Before closing, I thank Bernard Carlon, Sally Webb, Dr Ralston Fernandes, Louise Higgins-Whitton and their teams from Transport for NSW for the work they have put into developing the trial and for their ongoing advocacy to improve road safety. I thank the Minister's staff, including Christine, Pam, Wendy and Ryan, for the work they have put into advancing this legislation. I also pay tribute to my ministerial colleague the Hon. John Graham from the other place and his team, including Katie and Tori, for all the work they have put into reducing deaths on our roads through many different initiatives, including this one.

The New South Wales Government's proposed trial will provide the opportunity to explore the safety impact of the technology in the New South Wales context and understand community feedback. It will be

supported by clear communication and help inform decisions about the ongoing role of average speed cameras alongside other enforcement. The trial will also provide an opportunity for the community to better understand that technology and its broader safety benefits. As with speed camera fines and mobile phone and seatbelt detection camera fines, every cent from fines from speeding offences during the proposed average speed camera trial will go directly into the Community Road Safety Fund. The bill represents the first significant step in exploring how average speed enforcement can further enhance safety in New South Wales. Together with its partners, Transport for NSW will closely monitor the trial and an independent review will be commissioned to clearly document the outcomes. That will include the measurable effect on drivers' speeding behaviour and an analysis of offences. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Dave Layzell.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): 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 DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (21:17): I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-163:

No. 1 **Trial for light vehicles**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 4—

[1A] Section 127A

Insert after section 127—

127A

Trial for light vehicles

- (1) This division must not be used in relation to a light vehicle except as provided by this section.
- (2) The regulations may prescribe 3 locations (the *prescribed sites*) at which a trial may be conducted for the purposes of assessing the use of this division in relation to light vehicles.
- (3) At least 1 prescribed site must be in the Greater Sydney Region.
- (4) A prescribed site must be clearly identifiable to the driver of a light vehicle by signs that warn the driver that the average speed of the light vehicle may be used for the purposes of establishing a speeding offence.
- (5) The signs must be placed—
 - (a) at each gantry or other place at which the cameras used for the trial at the prescribed site are located, and
 - (b) a reasonable distance, but no more than 1km, before the prescribed site.
- (6) The trial may be conducted at the prescribed sites for a period of up to 12 months.
- (7) The trial period starts on the day specified by the Minister by notice published in the Gazette.
- (8) The Minister may extend the trial period by a single additional period of up to 2 months by further notice published in the Gazette.
- (9) The Minister must ensure that no later than 3 months after the end of the trial period—
 - (a) an independent review is conducted of the trial, and
 - (b) a report is prepared about the review and its findings, and
 - (c) the report is tabled in each House of Parliament.
- (10) The review must consider the following—
 - (a) the effectiveness of the trial, including in relation to road safety,
 - (b) the cost of conducting the trial,
 - (c) the revenue raised from offences involving light vehicles that were detected because of the trial.
- (11) The reasons used to justify the selection of the prescribed sites must be—
 - (a) considered as part of the review, and

(b) included in the report about the review.

I thank the leader of the House and all members who contributed to debate on the bill. Given the bill we are considering tonight, this amendment is fairly straightforward, fair and reasonable. A number of Government members suggested that there is no reason for members to object to the legislation because it is only a trial. That is not the case with this legislation. There is no provision in the legislation that requires it to be a trial only. The legislation allows for the full implementation of average speed cameras. Therefore, it is only right and fair that we undertake a trial, which the Opposition fully supports. We can then debate the information collected from the trial before moving onto the next level of implementation.

The amendment also requires that a trial be undertaken in an additional location in the Greater Sydney region. Again, I think that is a very fair and reasonable request that could improve the piece of legislation and the Government's plans by prescribing where the trials will be. With two trials in regional areas and no information collected from the Greater Sydney region, how can the Government possibly make a sensible decision on the implementation? The three prescribed locations detailed in the amendment are an improvement to the bill. The amendment also provides for signage to be put in place, which I think is important. The community believes signage is important. I do not see any reason why the Government should oppose proper signage and proper ways of communicating with drivers.

Finally, the amendment refers to the independent review. It refers to collecting full data in a transparent manner, which is the appropriate course to see the effectiveness of the trial. It will look at issues such as the cost of the trial, what revenue has been raised and how many fines have been issued. Those are important things and need to be on the public record so that we can bring the community along with us. To date, even the selection of the trial sites has been not clear. While a number of members have said the information will be provided in a transparent manner, to date we have not seen that, even in the selection of the trial sites. We are still unsure why the two sites were selected out of the five proposed by Transport for NSW. It was not even clear why those five were selected. I believe the amendment is good and fair and will continue to make sure road safety is improved in this State. We should reduce the road toll using any measure we can.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (21:22): The Government opposes the amendment to the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024 proposed by the Opposition on sheet c2024-163. As has been clearly outlined in the debate, the purpose of the bill is to enable the established legislative framework that we have in place for heavy vehicle average speed camera enforcement to apply to light vehicles. First, I emphasise that the New South Wales Government has been very open with the New South Wales community about the reasons for our decision to implement the average speed camera trial. We have also already committed to a range of measures to make the trial measured and transparent.

The amendment proposed by the Opposition would restrict the operation of the reforms in this bill to a trial of only 12 months, with the option for a two-month extension. Further legislative amendments would then be required for enforcement to be made permanent or expanded to other locations. That would limit the opportunity to continue enforcement should it be found to improve safety, and that may mean that enforcement at the trial locations needs to be turned off ahead of additional parliamentary processes. It is likely that if the enforcement is having the positive effect on driver behaviour that we expect, turning off enforcement would result in a return in speeding behaviour and crash risk at the locations.

When legislation was introduced by the previous Government in 2018 to enable a trial of mobile phone detection cameras, there was no restriction on operation or sunset provisions specified in legislation. That enabled the program, following successful trial, to be rolled out and start delivering road safety benefits as soon as possible. The bill is consistent with the former Government's approach in this area. I note that the average speed camera provisions are well established and robust. They have been in place for 15 years and have supported heavy vehicle speeding prosecutions over that time. There is no current expectation that further legislative changes will be needed to support efficient prosecutions. That will be monitored and confirmed throughout the trial.

The Opposition has also proposed the addition of a further trial site. The New South Wales Government considers that the two current locations proposed will provide a fair opportunity to assess the benefits and challenges of light vehicle enforcement. An additional site would result in an additional cost to Transport for NSW to conduct the trial, including any required hardware upgrades and site changes. There would be additional infringement processing costs for Revenue NSW. It may also have an additional cost to the courts, as additional court-elected matters would be expected. I turn to the part of the Opposition amendment related to warning signs. From the outset, I make clear that the New South Wales Government has committed to the enforcement being clearly notified to motorists through warning signs. I remember the Coalition's approach to mobile speed cameras. Who removed the signs? Members opposite did.

Ms Robyn Preston: I put them back in the inquiry.

Mr RON HOENIG: They were forced to put them back by an angry community that knew they were revenue raising and not dealing with road safety. Those opposite were embarrassed by it, and so they should have been. Warning signs are already in place at average speed camera locations across New South Wales where heavy vehicles are subject to enforcement. Transport for NSW will be reviewing the signs at the trial locations to ensure it is 100 per cent clear to passing motorists that light vehicles are subject to enforcement. The trial will also be supported by a communications campaign. The amendment proposed by the Opposition would require each site to be "clearly identifiable to the driver" by warning signs. Current signage requirements for any automated camera enforcement program were not legislated by the former Government. Signs are provided as a matter of policy put in place by the former Government. According to the former Government's mode of reasoning, which it continues to assert in opposition, signs are there as a courtesy to drivers.

Transport for NSW has robust procedures to ensure that signage is put in place, and it maintains the signs. However, there is no requirement for signs to be in place for a driver to see them for infringements to be valid. There are very good operational and safety reasons for that. Introducing a requirement into the legislation means that the validity of infringement notices could be questioned if signs were damaged, missing or a driver claimed they were not visible. In pursuing a prosecution, Transport for NSW would need to ensure the sign was in place and seen by every passing driver on every occasion a speeding offence was detected. What is clearly identifiable to one driver may not be as clear to another. That is a significant barrier to efficient prosecutions and is not supported by the Government.

The requirement could also result in a perverse outcome where we see an escalation of signage vandalism or drivers stopping in unsafe locations to obscure signs as a mechanism to invalidate offences. Finally, I note that the Opposition amendment proposes several additions in relation to a review of the trial. While we are not supporting the amendment as drafted, I welcome the comments by Opposition members. We have made it clear the trial will be conducted transparently and we are committed to sharing outcomes with the community. The Government opposes the Opposition amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-163 be agreed to. A division has been called for. I remind members of the resolution of the House this day that, from 7.30 p.m. today, any divisions called during Government business will be deferred until 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 26 September 2024. In accordance with that resolution, the division is deferred until tomorrow.

Community Recognition Statements

PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (21:30): Some 75,000 year 12 students across New South Wales are about to embark on a major milestone as they start their HSC exams, signalling the end of 13 years of primary and secondary education. As the HSC students of Parramatta near the end of high school, I hope more doors open for them to pass through to an even better and brighter future. I make special mention of those students sitting exams in languages other than English, especially those who attend community language schools. Understanding and speaking multiple languages is an incredible skill that will set them apart from others in their future endeavours, particularly in our increasingly globalised world. Good luck to all HSC students living and studying in Parramatta, especially those at Arthur Phillip, Cumberland, Pendle Hill and Concord high schools, Macarthur Girls High School, Parramatta Marist High, Catherine McAuley, Maronite College of the Holy Family, Our Lady of Mercy College, St Patrick's Marist College of Dundas, Parramatta High School and GOAL college.

TURRAMURRA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:31): It was my pleasure recently to attend the Turramurra High School Leadership Investiture Ceremony as we farewelled the outgoing student leadership team and welcomed the new team for 2024-25. The new school captains are Angus Lloyd, Thomas Reeves, Sophie Robinson and Jaya Singh. The senior prefects are Ella Bladen, Emilie Coe, Hayley Dinnis, Ani Kemmis, Angus Lloyd, Georgia Orlovich, Tom Reeves, James Robertson, Sophie Robinson, Jaya Singh, Bethany Tate and Rachel Yeung. The co-curricular music team includes Ryan Larkin, Ananya Prakash, Edward Tustian, Sofia Garofalo-Stock and Stephanie Berg. The new social justice group captains include Bethany Tate, Mayher Singh, Emily Carter, Naomi Bayl and Anneka Booth. Leo's Club leaders include Keshav Krishnan, Jaya Singh, Shinden Orie Chow, Jackson Shinfield and Bethany Tate. Congratulations to all of the students on their achievements. I look forward to seeing the wonderful work they do for Turramurra High.

CENTRAL NEWCASTLE RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (21:32): They will be talking about this one for

years. Let me set the scene. It is a beautiful spring Sunday afternoon and there is a faithful crowd at Charlestown's St John Oval. The teams take the field. For 80 minutes of the match the lead goes back and forth. In the end, the game is decided by a try in the closing seconds. It has been called a thriller. It has been called a nailbiter. I call it well deserved. The mighty Central Newcastle Rugby League Club—the mighty Butcher Boys—triumphed 30-20 over The Entrance in the preliminary finals last Sunday. They have broken the drought. After 61 years, the Butcher Boys are going to the grand final! My congratulations to coach Adam Betteridge, captain Cameron "Spider" Anderson, the players who took the field—with a special shout-out to Travhon Lemalama for that last-minute blinder—and all the officials, volunteers and supporters who made the day so special. What a fantastic game—an all-timer for the 114-year-old club. The grand final is at McDonald Jones Stadium this Sunday—I will be there—against the Maitland Pickers. Go Butcher Boys!

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I can feel the excitement!

TAMWORTH ASSOCIATION OF MALAYALEES

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (21:33): I celebrate the Tamworth Association of Malayalees which, on Saturday, gathered to celebrate Onam—the festival of harvest. Tamworth's Malayalee community continues to grow, showcasing its culture, traditional dress and food in our great city. The community now exceeds 500 people and their presence enriches us, improving our way of life, and adding diversity and culture to our community. Tamworth is proud to be a multicultural, modern city that celebrates more than 100 nationalities who call our city home. It was an honour to be with our Malayalee community over the weekend to celebrate Onam. The food was incredible, the dance was spectacular and the traditional dress was stunning. We are incredibly thankful to the members of the Malayalee community who choose to come to Tamworth, many of whom work in our health system. We thank them, we welcome them and we wish them a very happy Onam.

TONY AND MINA FAVOTTO

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (21:34): I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Tony and Mina Favotto on the fiftieth anniversary of Punchbowl McDonald's. On Saturday 10 August our community came together to celebrate this milestone with burgers, fries and entertainment. Tony and Mina's journey began 43 years ago when the teenagers met at their local Campsie McDonald's. Tony knew instantly that Mina was the one for him and four years later they married. Now they are the proud owners of five McDonald's restaurants, including Padstow, Punchbowl, Menai, Lakemba and Milperra. Punchbowl McDonald's was the twenty-third store established in Australia, and it happens to be where Tony first took on a management role at the age of 18. It is also the first Australian McDonald's restaurant to offer halal options. When you go past one of their stores, you can often find Tony or Mina working alongside their team. Indeed, when I was a local principal they often helped me find jobs for young students. Over the past 20 years, the Favottos have raised more than \$500,000 for charities close to their heart. They are a community-minded couple who often give back. Tony and Mina's leadership and community involvement reflect their generosity and love for our community. Congratulations to Tony and Mina on Punchbowl McDonald's fiftieth anniversary. I thank them for all they do for our community.

BOWRAL TENNIS CLUB

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (21:35): What a pleasure it was to be in the Southern Highlands on the weekend to officially open the Bowral Tennis Club's recent upgrades. I was joined by tennis great and former Federal MP John Alexander, Bowral Tennis Club president Colin Windeyer, and members and tennis enthusiasts to tour the upgraded clubhouse and test out the newly resurfaced tennis courts. Resplendent in Australian Open blue, the courts look impeccable and are ready to welcome people to participate in coaching or games. The clubhouse now has heating and cooling and new furniture, and a shed has been built for storage. The club put on a very welcoming event with games, coaching sessions and a sausage sizzle. Despite my best efforts at a winning serve, it was my chief of staff Louise Edgecombe who walked away with the prize for the women's fastest serve, proving she is just as formidable on the courts as she is in the office. That was just one of the enjoyable activities organised by the tennis club committee and its goal of encouraging more young people to start playing tennis was rewarded with a large number of children participating on the day.

ST MARKS ANGLICAN CHURCH

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:36): I congratulate St Mark's Anglican Church in Sadleir on its long-awaited reclassification as a full parish. St Mark's in Sadleir opened in 1963 to meet the needs of residents moving into the Green Valley housing estate as it rapidly took shape. Since then, the church has been a source of comfort and support for many people to express their faith and seek spiritual counsel. The longest serving parishioner and Synod representative, Norma Esler, reflects that the area has evolved significantly since St Mark's was originally opened as a church plant from St Luke's in Liverpool. It has now taken on a much more

multicultural flavour, but St Mark's continues to be a source of faith and heart for many in the local area. St Mark's has now finally achieved a status reflecting its local impact. I congratulate the entire faith community of St Mark's, with special mention of Reverend David Morgan. He has a genuine commitment to faith and community service and has brought so many groups together. I share his hope and prayers that the church will continue to be sustained for years to come.

CRESTWOOD LIONS CLUB

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (21:37): I recognise the thirtieth anniversary of the formation of the Lions Club of Crestwood. Lions clubs are such important organisations and make a real difference in our society. Crestwood Lions contribute to our community through many projects. Crestwood Lions raise funds to help others through projects such as gift wrapping, Bunnings barbecues and the sale of second-hand books and DVDs. The community support provided by Crestwood Lions in many areas is commendable. One of the projects coordinated by Lions John Ebbott, OAM, and Kathy Ebbott is the food drive to support Foodbank NSW. In the past four years Crestwood Lions have delivered to Foodbank 14,390.5 kilograms of food valued at \$117,071.13. Another project coordinated by Lion David Duffield is support for North West Disability Services through Friday nights' disco barbecues and the monthly Table for Eight dining nights. The charity and unwavering commitment to helping others is the foundation of the Crestwood Lions. I thank the Crestwood Lions for 30 years of helping others in most need.

AUTISM EXPO AUSTRALIA

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (21:38): Autism Expo Australia was a groundbreaking event dedicated to supporting autism families at every stage of their journey. The expo, hosted for the first time in August this year, was attended by approximately 600 people, fostering a collaborative and supportive atmosphere. It featured workshops, a sensory room and a Q and A panel, showcasing a comprehensive array of resources and support services. The panel featured professionals including Melissa Vallorani, Lindel Sibanda, Jessica Otter, Ebru Deliktasli and others. Created as an extension of Help You Cope, the event was organised by dedicated carer volunteers, led by directors Joline George and Racheal McDonald. I thank Joline, Racheal and the many other volunteers for their incredible dedication to our community, and I look forward to joining them for another successful expo next year.

TONY BALDING

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (21:39): I congratulate Wagga Wagga's Tony Balding, whose dedication to the housing sector has been recognised with life membership of the Wagga Housing Industry Association [HIA]. It is a fitting tribute to Mr Balding, who has devoted more than 20 years to the local building and housing industry, including two stints as branch chair. As one of the founding members of the HIA in Wagga, Mr Balding has become only the tenth member of the HIA's Australian Capital Territory and southern region to be awarded life membership. He has been instrumental in driving growth and advocating for improvements to Wagga and is described by the HIA as a "fearless voice on behalf of the industry". As the owner of the Building Supply Company, Tony has done much to create jobs and investment in Wagga but says his award is recognition of the work done by the entire team at the HIA. He has thanked team members Peter Hurst, Marty Keogh and Paul Eady for their contributions. I have been privileged to work with Tony on advocacy at State and local level, and the results of his passion and determination speak for themselves. I thank Tony and congratulate him on the well-deserved recognition.

SALAMANDER EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (21:40): Mr Assistant Speaker, meet my friends, Cracker and Duffy. They belong to the awesome kids at the Salamander Early Education Centre. For over two years now, Cracker and Duffy have been going on amazing adventures with the children and families from the centre, sharing how they help look after the environment. Their adventures are recorded in a journal so that everyone can share the fun. This is early ed at its best, teaching our littlest learners about their world and the importance of caring for our environment. It is something that happens every day at this beautiful service, where the kids walk out the back door and explore the amazing Mambo Wetlands. Cracker and Duffy are hanging out with me in Parliament this week. They will be returning to their friends with many more adventures to tell. I thank the caring team and the terrific kids at the Salamander Early Education Centre for letting Cracker and Duffy have an adventure with me and for reminding us all in this place what is important: We are here creating a brighter future for the next generation.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Thank you, Cracker and Duffy.

LORN BUTCHERY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (21:41): It is official: The Upper Hunter has the best bacon. Lorn Butchery team of Darren, Pete, Jai, Drew, Gabe and Chloe were recognised as the best of the best for their bacon at the 2024 Australian Charcuterie Excellence Awards. Lorn Butchery's short cut middle rasher was crowned Australian champion in the bacon category, gold for their bone-in-leg ham, silver for boneless soccerball ham, silver for their chilli beef jerky, and six bronze medals for plain beef jerky, kransky, chorizo, kabana, pepperoni and cabanossi. Lorn Butchery had tough competition, with an impressive 835 entries across 10 distinguished classes and 35 categories. The awards hosted by the Australian Meat Industry Council, in partnership with Australian Pork Limited, recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of Australia's smallgoods manufacturers.

AUBURN REVIEW AND CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN TORCH

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:42): Our community has lost two longstanding local newspapers that were the heart of the local community. August saw the last *Auburn Review* and *Canterbury Bankstown Torch* fly off the presses. The *Canterbury Bankstown Torch* has been part of the community for over 100 years, while the *Auburn Review* has served the community for nearly 60 years. Both these local papers were a vital source of news, covering everything from local politics and sports to cultural celebrations and community achievements. Financial challenges faced by local print media in today's economic climate are becoming a common occurrence. These papers were more than just newspapers; they reflected our community's spirit, documenting our lives and times. Their closure is a significant loss for the people of the Auburn electorate. The shutdown of the *Auburn Review* and the *Canterbury Bankstown Torch* raises serious concerns about the future of local journalism in Western Sydney. Local newspapers have been crucial for fostering community engagement and ensuring residents stay informed. While digital media offers new opportunities, it cannot replace the unique value of local print journalism.

PAULEEN WEST

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:43): Today I congratulate Hawkesbury local Pauleen West, who received the North Western Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year award at a ceremony on 20 August 2024. The award recognises Pauleen's commitment to providing support and joy to many seniors in the Hawkesbury region. Pauleen's background in psychology and counselling has no doubt aided her in connecting in conversation and companionship to the many residents of the RSL LifeCare Ron Middleton VC Gardens at North Richmond. She was a volunteer there for 10 years and ran the book club, assisted with church services and regularly visited residents who had received unfortunate news or were in palliative care. Pauleen is now a resident of the Riverside Gardens retirement village, where she continues to improve the quality of life of her fellow residents. Once again, I extend my congratulations to Pauleen on this achievement. On behalf of the Hawkesbury community, I thank her for her volunteer service.

THE PONDS HIGH SCHOOL HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (21:44): I congratulate the 304 students of The Ponds High School class of 2024 on completing high school. These students have worked incredibly hard over the past 13 years, especially in the past few months as they completed their trials in the lead-up to the HSC exams. I really believe that the students of the Riverstone electorate are the very best that New South Wales has to offer. I look forward to hearing of their successes as they start their new journey in life. Whether it be pursuing tertiary education or entering the workforce, I am certain that these young people will do incredible things. It is only possible thanks to the remarkable teachers at The Ponds High School. I thank each and every one of them for their dedication and encouragement of the growth of their students. I also acknowledge the outgoing school captains, Derell Akrong and Leeya Alves, and vice-captains, Lachlan Boyd and Ana Zastavnikovic. They have done an incredible job representing their cohort and have left big shoes to fill. I am sure that this is the start of their time in leadership positions, and I wish them all the very best.

COWRA UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:45): I congratulate the Ukrainian Women's Association [UWA] on celebrating 75 years in Cowra on 21 September. Established on 13 September 1949, the UWA has been a vibrant part of the local community, preserving Ukrainian heritage and supporting families. UWA president Luba Kaye led the celebrations, planting a kalya tree, Ukraine's national flower, symbolising the enduring relationship between Ukraine and Australia. Through cultural and social activities, the UWA has raised substantial funds for education, medicine and war relief, while fostering community unity. Its commitment to sharing Ukrainian traditions, especially during these challenging times, is truly admirable. I congratulate all involved.

SECONDBITE FOOD RESCUE ORGANISATION

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (21:46): I recently joined SecondBite for a special delivery to Penrith charity Christ Mission Possible. Located in Penrith, SecondBite is an Australian food rescue organisation dedicated to reducing and avoiding food waste in our communities and ensures that edible surplus food is saved and delivered to people in need across New South Wales. Since January SecondBite has delivered almost four million kilograms of food to charities across New South Wales. It is distributed through school lunch programs, hampers and community dinners, and 278,785 kilograms of this food has been distributed throughout the Penrith electorate. Earlier this year the NSW Environment Protection Authority granted SecondBite \$410,570 to ensure that good food destined for waste reaches people facing hunger and insecurity. I was able to see firsthand the impact that the grant has had on supporting individuals and families experiencing food insecurity across Penrith. I thank Kingsley from SecondBite for inviting me to join the delivery.

AVOCA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:47): I am delighted to acknowledge the incredible work of the Avoca Beach Public School P&C and all the amazing volunteers. It was a true pleasure to recently attend the school fair organised by the P&C, and what a fantastic day it was! The local community truly came together. It was heartwarming to witness the overwhelming support for our school. I take a moment to recognise the incredible dedication of the amazing school P&C volunteers. Their tireless efforts have a profound impact on the lives of students and the entire school community. From organising events to raising much-needed funds, their contributions directly enhance the educational experience and help provide vital resources. This year's fair was a resounding success, raising over \$68,000, with more than \$32,500 coming from some very generous local community sponsors. These funds will be used to create a unique student wellbeing space—a safe, quiet environment where students can take time to emotionally regulate, recharge and find some support when needed. Once again, I thank the Avoca Beach Public School P&C.

LOCAL SERVO TABULAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:48): I congratulate Sanchit and Pallavi Passi on opening the Local Servo Tabulam on the Bruxner Highway at Tabulam today. I also thank journalist and news proprietor Susanna Freymark for her reportage on this on [indynr.com](https://www.indynr.com), which delivers local news across Kyogle and Richmond Valley. Susanna reported that the first customer at the pumps this morning was Shaun Dunwoodie, a local. He and his family live at nearby Ewingar. I know that fuel was and is available at the Tabulam rural store but the opening today of Local Servo Tabulam means locals and travellers—given that Tabulam is on the Bruxner Highway between Casino and Tenterfield—will be able to get fuel and other supplies seven days a week from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. on weekdays and 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. on the weekend. I congratulate Sanchit and Pallavi on working with the local businesses in the community.

UMBERTO DI NALLO

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (21:49): I congratulate Umberto Di Nallo on his contributions to our community over the 70 years since his arrival on our shores from the village of Cassino in southern Italy. The second wave of post-war immigration arrived in the fifties and 18-year-old Umberto was amongst that group. He did not speak English and was travelling alone. His ship, the *Castel Verde*, docked in Sydney on 20 October 1954. Umberto landed his first job with *Reader's Digest* in Rozelle, commuting from his one-bedroom flat in Bondi Junction. He then decided he wanted to go into business for himself. He opened his first mixed business on New South Head Road, Rose Bay, in 1957, selling everything that a good corner shop should sell for a community. His next business was opened in 1961 behind Vaucluse Public School and he remained trading for the next 28 years. I congratulate Umberto and thank him for the many contributions that he has made to our community.

PENRITH BROTHERS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (21:50): Penrith Brothers Rugby League Football Club is setting the bar high for next season after securing this year's Sydney Shield. The Brothers secured their first major title after destroying Wentworthville United in an impressive 43-18 win in the Sydney Shield Grand Final at Leichhardt Oval. After falling short to St Marys in 2022, the Brothers worked hard and fought their way to victory. The premiership triumph for the Brothers completed a remarkable run that saw them remain undefeated since round 19 to clinch fifth spot on the Sydney Shield ladder. I congratulate Brothers five-eighth and goal kicker Donovan Boney on his stellar performance, which named him player of the match. Penrith Brothers, initially formed in 1968, is notable for being completely run by volunteers. The club is now a fully fledged development club, with its players benefiting from a recently formed pathway with the Penrith Panthers. I congratulate Penrith Brothers president Troy Cooper and all the coaches, volunteers and athletes on a fantastic 2024 season.

DR JOHN MAMOOTIL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:51): I acknowledge Dr John Mamootil, a distinguished member of the Albury community, whose life's journey exemplifies resilience and determination. Overcoming the challenges of dyslexia in his younger years, Dr Mamootil faced immense difficulties in reading and writing. Despite setbacks and repeated attempts to complete his high school studies, his perseverance led him to study at India's Calcutta Dental College before embarking on a journey nearly 25,000 kilometres from home. With the financial support of his family, Dr Mamootil travelled to the United States to complete a rigorous five-year dental program, later pursuing a master's degree. In 1975 he migrated to Australia, the lucky country, with wife, Molly, and five children, where he made a lasting impact. He founded the Albury Wodonga Indian Australian Association and served with the Lions club. Now at 98, Dr Mamootil continues to inspire others with his belief that "difficult does not mean impossible", writing his fourth book and sharing his remarkable life lessons through his memoirs. I thank Dr Mamootil for his invaluable contributions to our community. Well done.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN BULLDOGS

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (21:52): I congratulate the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs on making the 2024 finals series. It was very exciting that, after eight long years, the Bulldogs made a return to finals football. Even though the results in the end were not what many fans had hoped for, it has been an outstanding year for the club, with strong performances built off hard work and perseverance. Special mention goes to the amazing players, captain Stephen Crichton, head coach Cameron Ciraldo and general manager Phil "Gus" Gould. They have all done a remarkable job in returning the Bulldogs to glory. Well done to the board, president Adam Driussi, JK, Aaron Warburton, Diane Langmack, the wonderful staff, the fans and Canterbury League Club. In my electorate the Bulldogs have ignited a sense of pride and excitement within the heart of our local community. Burwood Road, Belmore, has been so exciting. It is fantastic. It has been great to have families there. The year 2025 will be the Bulldog's year!

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Hooray.

MOREE BOARS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (21:53): I recognise the achievements of the mighty Moree Boars Rugby League Football Club team, who took out the Group 4 Rugby League grand final recently. The Boars beat the Boggabri Kangaroos 40-18 in our first home grand final in Moree in over 22 years. I congratulate the players on a hard-fought comeback after being down 14-12 at half-time. They got the score back to 18-all. Then the Boars wasted no time and in six minutes scored a further three tries before captain and coach Michael Watton angled back on an inside run to beat three would-be tacklers and score under the posts. Michael converted six goals from seven attempts to complete a fantastic finish for the Moree side. I commend the team for a great year on the field and for all the hard work and dedication that they have put into their season. A special thank you goes to club president Todd Mitchell for his huge involvement and leadership, as well as the hardworking committee for promoting the Moree rugby league club and its players.

FRIENDS OF TENTERFIELD AERODROME

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:54): The Friends of Tenterfield Aerodrome is a not-for-profit community association. The small group of committed locals are determined to seriously upgrade the Tenterfield airport. I shall share a few highlights from its member newsletter of August 2024 sent to me by president Rob Evans:

News in short

- Completed cut and fill of 4000 sq m taxiway and apron, plus 360 sq m concrete hardstand.
- Installed two culverts for taxiways — pipes and headwalls donated by community members.
- Preparation under way for construction of machinery (multipurpose) shed.
- Cleaned up rocks and debris to provide areas for parking and club visits.
- Repaired a major washout near the runway.
- Enquiries from NPWS, LifeFlight and RFDS regarding use of aerodrome.

It is a real community affair. I congratulate the Friends of Tenterfield Aerodrome.

FUTURE FOOTPRINTS PROGRAM

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:55): I acknowledge the Personnel Group's Future Footprints program, which has successfully provided valuable workshops for Aboriginal youth aged 14 to 17 in Albury,

Griffith and Wagga Wagga. As part of the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Aboriginal partnerships program, the workshops equip participants with practical job skills, expose them to local industries and career paths, and enhance their confidence in seeking employment. On 23 August I met with participants at the Albury Tigers football club, presenting them with their certificates of completion. I was certainly inspired by witnessing their contributions on the day. I also extend my gratitude to the following local business owners and speakers who participated and provided invaluable contributions to the workshops: Clontarf Foundation, Boys to the Bush, Albury City Council, On-Country Pathways, Indigeekare Services, South Cali Cantina and MP Training and Recruitment. I thank Ken Howe, the Personnel Group's development and retention coordinator, and Jasmine Williams from Williams Consultancy Mob for their dedication and efforts in organising the workshops.

LIVERPOOL MULTICULTURAL SOCIAL HUB

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:56): For a number of months many constituents have spoken with me about the need for more seniors programs in Liverpool, especially those that cater for our diverse multicultural and multilingual community. Those programs help people connect with others, maintain skills and interests, and can help give people a sense of purpose and meaning to their time, especially when family members may have other commitments. So it was a real delight to represent Minister Kamper at the grand opening of the Liverpool Multicultural Social Hub at the Hilda M Davis Senior Citizens Centre. The hub is an expansion of the support that the AASHA Australia Foundation provides to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly our seniors. It incorporates AASHA's core values of compassion, care, collaboration, culture, trust and inclusion. It now has nine such hubs across Sydney and provides a much broader range of services, including a multicultural seniors concert in Parliament. I congratulate Percy Vij and Bijinder Dugal for organising a successful launch. Their commitment to our local community is appreciated.

AUSTRALIAN FLEECE COMPETITION

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (21:57): I recognise the achievements of Walcha's Glenburnie Merino and Poll Merino Stud for taking out the grand champion title at the 2024 Australian Fleece Competition in Bendigo. The competition is in its twenty-third year and is the largest fully measured fleece competition in the world. I congratulate father and son duo Paul and Bateson Pittman on taking out the impressive accolade in just their second attempt. Stud principal Paul Pittman has attended Australian sheep and wool shows in Bendigo for the past 15 years. The win came from their 19-micron two-year-old stud ewe fleece, which scored 96.2 points, with the ewe exhibiting exceptional fleece weight and quality and staple length, and having great coverage underneath. I commend Paul and Bateson not only for winning this prestigious title but also for their contribution to the wool industry and to Australian agriculture generally.

PENRITH DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION GRAND FINALS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (21:58): I congratulate the Penrith District Netball Association and all coaches, volunteers and teams on their grand final day last Saturday, which was held under a beautiful Penrith sky at Jamison Park. It was great to see the aspiring Diamonds and New South Wales Swifts in action, and it was a great weekend for netball. Last Friday at Parliament House we hosted an event to celebrate the start of the journey for the Netball World Cup, which will be hosted in Sydney in 2027. The Netball World Cup was last held in Australia in 2015. No doubt we will defend our 2023 Netball World Cup win. I am pleased that the Minister has announced \$1.5 million in funding for a legacy program and a new Netball Infrastructure Strategy. With 20 million netball players worldwide, all eyes will be on New South Wales come 2027.

Private Members' Statements

ST PETERS STATION ACCESSIBILITY UPGRADE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (22:00): I draw to the attention of the House the enormous benefit that residents of St Peters have received by electing a Minns Labor Government. In October 2020 the former Government told my residents in St Peters that it was thinking about upgrading the railway station and providing improved access. I am not sure if members can guess where this story is going, but it is a doozy. Fast forward to 2022 and, after two years of waiting, Transport for NSW finished installing two elevators. Despite the apparent improvement, the station remained almost as inaccessible as before for parents with prams, cyclists and people with mobility devices. The St Peters community was quick to point out the project's absurdity. As it turned out, the elevators were not very accessible given that those who needed to use them had to either navigate the stairs or take a 180-metre detour.

In the weeks that followed, hundreds of signatures were collected for a petition entitled Restore Step Free Access to St Peters Station, calling on the former Liberal-Nationals Government to reinstate a simple ramp from Goodsell Street to the lifts—the most logical and safe access point for residents. I cannot think of a more perfect

example of failure in government than the utterly farcical case of the Liberal-Nationals Government's so-called accessibility upgrades. Why would the former Government remove a compliant ramp under the guise of improving accessibility, and why are commuters stuck with elevators that cannot be reached by those who need them most? It does not take an engineering genius—or even a political genius—to realise that it all comes down to community engagement.

When the former Government consulted with commuters to seek feedback on their plans, they treated it like a tick-a-box exercise. In doing so, they treated my residents in St Peters with contempt. That was exacerbated when the Government ignored the community's petition and brushed off my repeated representations. Scam artists call that move the "bait and switch". Essentially, the former Liberal-Nationals Government told the community one thing and delivered another. The Government did not even communicate clearly with commuters at the time to let them know that it had changed its mind. That same disdainful attitude towards community consultation underpinned some of the worst decisions to come out of the former Government in 12 years, including several rounds of cuts to local buses and, finally, their privatisation.

Like in those instances, it is now left to this Government to fix the problem. At my request, Labor's dedicated Minister for Transport instructed the St Peters station upgrade project to be independently audited. Unsurprisingly, the panel found the original process to be a shambles. The Minns Labor Government is now moving forward with a solution that should have been delivered from the start. In collaboration with Inner West Council, Transport for NSW is constructing a fully accessible, step-free route from Goodsell Street through May Lane to St Peters station.

The plan finally addresses the needs of those with prams, bicycles and mobility devices, ensuring that everyone can navigate the station without the struggle of stairs. Work has already started and is expected to be completed in mid-October, weather permitting. This Government is committed to building a city where everybody, regardless of their ability or circumstance, can move freely and confidently. More importantly, we are committed to listening to our community so that shambles like this do not happen again.

ALBURY WODONGA REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (22:05): Since being elected to this place 5½ years ago, my advocacy for the health needs of our cross-border community has been focused and resolute. It is advocacy that has consistently addressed the challenge of navigating two State governments and health departments, knowing that progress demands constructive engagement. This approach has delivered our community real results. In 2019, we placed our health challenges firmly on the agenda of both State governments. This led to funding for master planning, a renewed intergovernmental agreement and funding for the intensive care unit and Nolan House.

In October 2022 we saw a historic and unique moment: the Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria, from opposite sides of the political spectrum, standing together in Albury to secure a \$558 million commitment to the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital. It included \$20 million from the Commonwealth, noting earlier unsuccessful attempts by the New South Wales Government to secure additional Federal involvement. It was a larger investment than was provided for Wagga Wagga Base Hospital over three stages. Almost two years later, my advocacy continues to be strong and focused on ensuring we do not risk that funding, whilst moving forward and acknowledging that further health funding is crucial.

When it comes to site location, my advocacy has always been pragmatic. The Border Medical Association made its position clear in an April 2021 letter to the community, seeking a new hospital at either the current site or a new one. At the time, senior clinicians voiced similar sentiments that the deciding factor should not be whether the hospital is developed on a greenfield or brownfield site. The 2021 master plan reinforced that position by stating that both brownfield and greenfield developments were viable. It noted that brownfield construction involves staging to navigate existing infrastructure, while greenfield offers a single-stage build. The preference was for greenfield, but it is important to highlight that crucial factors like funding and a start date were not considered in that recommendation.

The master plan also stated that, from a patient's perspective, a greenfield or brownfield location would make little difference to the quality of care they would receive. What did matter was avoiding construction delay, which the master plan warned increases the risk of clinical service failures. My message for our community remains clear: The \$558 million secured is only the beginning. Our community must keep pushing for more. Since the October 2022 announcement, I have not let up in my advocacy to the States and the Commonwealth for additional hospital funding for Albury Wodonga Health and for other critical health needs, like the implementation of an electronic medical records system.

Just last week, I wrote to State health Ministers to seek assurances on activity funding for the Albury campus of the Albury Wodonga Health short stay unit, which is set to open in early 2025. Despite lobbying efforts

from the Federal members for Farrer and Indi, the Albanese Government has yet to provide additional funding. With an election on the horizon, our community has a new opportunity to seek further funding for our region. To truly deliver the health care the region deserves, the Commonwealth must step up and contribute further. The 2021 master plan estimated that a greenfield hospital would cost \$1.165 billion, excluding land acquisition. Three years on and without accounting for land, we would need to secure an additional \$600 million to \$700 million to contemplate a greenfield build. That means that greater involvement by the Commonwealth is non-negotiable. It is not just an investment in infrastructure; it is an investment in the health and future of our entire community. My advocacy for our health system will continue.

Whether it be for buildings or service activity, mental health and eating disorder services, improvements to the interface with aged care or the much-needed electronic medical records system, I will continue to urge the State Government to increase its funding and to call on the Commonwealth to commit to contributing to our hospital. The Federal Government has shown that it can act swiftly, as it did with maternity services in Yass. My community needs that same urgency, not uncertainty. We need a steadfast resolve from the governments of New South Wales and Victoria, and of the Commonwealth, to ensure additional funding for the long-term vision of health care for our region. The stakes are too high for inaction. The opportunity of the Federal election aside, we cannot afford to tarry. The 2021 master plan made it clear: Delays increase the risk of clinical service failures.

PENRITH HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (22:10): I speak tonight about a truly inspiring group of individuals in my electorate: the Penrith Hospital Auxiliary volunteers. Their dedication and selflessness are shining examples of the power of community spirit, and it is both my privilege and my pleasure to acknowledge their incredible contributions to Nepean Hospital and the Penrith community. For 92 years the Penrith Hospital Auxiliary has worked tirelessly to raise funds and provide essential equipment for our hospital. From helping returned soldiers during World War II to fundraising for some of today's most needed medical equipment, the members of the Penrith Hospital Auxiliary have forged many friendships and done much for our community.

Although most of the auxiliary's members are over the age of 70, that has not stopped their efforts in any way. The women's volunteering efforts have directly improved the lives of patients, staff members and families who rely on the hospital's care. Just this year alone, through their monthly craft stall and various other fundraising initiatives, they have raised an outstanding \$30,000 to support the hospital. Their past donations have included vital equipment like mobile defibrillators for the emergency department and therapeutic bracelets for the mental health unit and dementia ward. Those may seem like small gestures to some, but they profoundly impact the quality of care provided to patients in their most vulnerable moments.

I draw special attention to a new initiative that the auxiliary has begun, which exemplifies its continued drive to address real needs as they arise. Recently, the auxiliary's president, Trish Faint, launched a project to provide hygiene packs to patients in the mental health unit at Nepean Hospital. That initiative was born out of a simple request from the hospital for 30 hygiene packs each month to support patients in the unit. The packs include essential items like soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste—simple necessities that, for many patients, can restore a sense of dignity and comfort during their stay. Last week the auxiliary donated its first 30 hygiene packs to the hospital. That achievement of Trish Faint and the auxiliary was made possible through not only the tireless work of the members but also the assistance from the Lions Club of Parramatta, which generously donated items no longer required by local women's shelters.

The Lions club has committed to continue its support, but Trish and the auxiliary are calling on the Penrith community to step up and contribute. Every small donation, from soap to toothbrushes, helps ensure that the monthly delivery can continue and that patients in the mental health unit can experience the basic comfort and care they deserve. This initiative is just the latest example of how the Penrith Hospital Auxiliary responds directly to the needs of Nepean Hospital. While providing hygiene packs may seem like a simple gesture, it carries immense importance for those who are going through challenging mental health treatments. Something as small as a hygiene pack can provide a sense of normalcy and dignity, reminding patients that they are valued and cared for. The Penrith Hospital Auxiliary is more than a fundraising group. Those women are the heart of our community's care for its most vulnerable. Their work ensures that no patient is left without the equipment, care or even basic hygiene items they need during their stay in hospital. But they cannot do it alone.

I encourage all of our residents to consider contributing to their efforts, whether through donating just one hygiene item, offering financial support or simply spreading the word about their important work. Items that most of us take for granted—like soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes—are invaluable in the hands of a patient in need. Donations can be dropped off at my office, and every bit helps to ensure that the auxiliary can continue delivering monthly hygiene packs and supporting the hospital in these very challenging times. I thank Trish Faint and the incredible women of the Penrith Hospital Auxiliary for all they do and have done over many years. Their dedication and compassion make a real, tangible difference to the lives of many, and their latest hygiene pack

initiative is yet another example of how they continue to meet the needs of our community with grace and generosity.

NATIONAL WATER AGREEMENT

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (22:15): The draft National Water Agreement is currently under Commonwealth consultation, and communities in my electorate hold considerable concerns about the NWA. For the good of regional communities in New South Wales, the Government should not sign the agreement in its current form. People's eyes understandably glaze over when members mention water law and policy in this place. Most members think water law and policy is far too complicated to understand, but those of us from regional New South Wales have seen the impacts of bad water policy. Water is a vital social and economic resource. As someone who has been involved with water law for just under 20 years, I warn the Government about the impacts of signing the NWA. It will replace the 2004 National Water Initiative, which was the result of 10 years of thorough consultation between the States, the Commonwealth and stakeholders. It had broad support and provided a clear and practical guide to water reform that held Australia in good stead for over 20 years.

In contrast, the current Federal Government is attempting to rush the NWA through in a matter of months and bully New South Wales and the other States into signing it by the end of this year, in a poor attempt to meet one of its election commitments from 2022. The NWA is complex and will introduce significant changes that weaken secure, sustainable and productive water use in New South Wales. Our State's resources and finances will end up shouldering an increased burden to deliver the Commonwealth's wish list—a cost that inevitably will be passed on to water users under the current rural pricing model, which in turn will harm communities in my electorate of Northern Tablelands. The rushed consultation has not given industry and other stakeholders enough time to fully comprehend the proposed changes or flow-on implications for consumptive water users and regional communities. State-based peak bodies have also been excluded from Commonwealth roundtable meetings on the NWA, despite their members being the ones that are most affected.

The draft NWA will burden water users in my electorate and across New South Wales by weakening the risk assignment framework; granting legal status to rivers that will give a river the same legal rights as a person; creating conflict between basic lawful water property rights and competing interests; weaponising the precautionary approach to override legitimate concerns about reforms; and allowing Commonwealth declarations to assert more control over State water management. Before committing to the NWA, the Government must require the Commonwealth Government to publicly release the full NWA document outlining the objectives, principles, schedules and funding arrangements. The New South Wales Government should conduct State-based consultation on the full draft NWA principles. A full regulatory impact statement should be undertaken so we can fully understand the regulatory and legislative implications of the NWA. A financial impact analysis should be undertaken so we can fully understand the budgetary implications of the NWA for water users and regional communities.

As currently drafted, the NWA places New South Wales at a disadvantage. It hands more control over our State water to the Commonwealth at the expense of New South Wales communities. There is also a very likely risk that the additional costs incurred under the NWA will be unfairly passed on to water users, many of whom are in my electorate. I urge the State Government to take a firm stance for not only regional communities but also all of the State. The New South Wales Government should advocate for a more balanced and consultative approach. Further rounds of consultation are necessary on this significant change to water law and policy in New South Wales and Australia. The NWA needs to be refined to ensure sustainable water management and protect the interests of all stakeholders, including irrigators in the Northern Tablelands and across regional New South Wales.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE COMMUTER CAR PARKS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (22:19): I have got some serious questions that warrant serious answers from Transport for NSW. Quite a while ago—in fact, back in 2019—I commissioned concept designs for multi-level commuter car parks at Morisset train station and identified that Fassifern and Cardiff train stations were in need of multi-level car parks. That action was in direct response to growing community frustration about the severe lack of parking at major commuter hubs in my electorate. I had some very productive conversations with the then Minister for Regional Transport and Roads about the need for more parking at these strategically located stations, and he was very supportive.

In the 2021-22 budget, it appeared the proposed multi-level commuter car parks were progressing under the Commuter Car Park Program. *Budget Paper No. 3 - Infrastructure Statement* stated that funded projects included "business cases to support additional car spaces at Morisset, Fassifern and Cardiff stations." What happened to those funded business cases is anybody's guess. I have not seen them and do not know if they were completed. If they were completed, where are they? If they were not completed, why not? And where did those

taxpayer funds get reallocated to? What is even more concerning is that since those business cases were funded, there has been zero progress on building multi-level car parks at any station in my electorate. In fact, building commuter car parks at Morisset and Fassifern stations seems to have disappeared from the Government's agenda.

Make no mistake, this Government is continuing to fund and build commuter car parking stations under the newly named Safe Accessible Transport program. That is fantastic for those areas. But the Morisset and Fassifern commuter car parks have apparently disappeared off the agenda. That makes absolutely no sense. Lake Macquarie is one of the State's major growth areas, with some 219,000 people calling the local government area home. Lake Macquarie is the third largest regional city in the State, and our population is predicted to grow by 39,000 by 2041. I suspect it will be more than that. The electorate of Lake Macquarie has been identified for multiple transport oriented development [TOD] precincts.

Morisset itself has been identified as a TOD precinct and the town is identified in the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 as a strategic centre and growth area. It makes sense to have the infrastructure needed to support this planned growth in place before it happens. According to Transport for NSW's business paper entitled *Delivering sustainable transport options*, dated November 2023, the department aims to improve accessibility to reduce reliance on cars. The paper also talks about the benefits of commuter car parks at Revesby and Riverwood. It mentions the installation of rooftop solar panels and climate-resilient designs, with electricity generated from the solar panels powering the stations' lifts and lights, with the capacity to support future EV charging infrastructure. Multi-level car parks at Morisset and Fassifern would be in line with Transport for NSW's goals of reducing road congestion, improving the environment and supporting our community. The paper also states:

This expansion of parking availability encourages more passengers to park their private cars and switch to public transport, effectively reducing their car travel time, road congestion and enhancing air quality by reducing car emissions.

I could not outline my goals any better than that statement. A *Newcastle Herald* article written in April 2021 reported that Lake Macquarie City Council and Transport for NSW spent a combined \$520,000 on resurfacing existing car parking spaces at Fassifern, as well as the installation of a new bus shelter. Whilst that is a welcome improvement, it is a bandaid solution to a much bigger problem. That money would have been better spent making more car parking spaces available, not just improving the surface of existing ones. My constituents are getting increasingly frustrated by the daily difficulty they face trying to find a place to leave their cars so they can catch a train to work. Many do not even bother trying and choose to drive their private vehicles to work instead. That is leading to another problem, with the build-up of peak-hour traffic between the M1 and the township of Morisset becoming a huge bugbear in the community.

As the Government asks the community to accommodate greater population, surely it is not too much to ask for not just answers to the questions but also for actual investment in the clear shortfall of enabling infrastructure. It is unreasonable to propose significant population increases in areas already under population pressure without planning to provide supporting infrastructure. I call on the Minister to provide answers to these inherently reasonable questions. What happened to the business cases that were funded and why has any discussion on such sensible infrastructure seemingly disappeared?

ELDER RIGHTS

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (22:24): As our population ages, we must ensure that our seniors age with dignity and free from abuse. Data from the elder abuse hotline shows that financial abuse is the most common form of elder abuse. Such abuse is most likely to be inflicted by a family member, and four in 10 perpetrators of financial abuse have an intergenerational relationship with their victim. Often, financial abuse is perpetrated by misuse of the power of attorney. Although the power of attorney is intended to benefit and protect an individual, it places them in a vulnerable situation and there is an inherent risk of the appointed person misusing their power.

Recently my office was contacted by Dr Bob May, a retired veterinary surgeon and small business owner from Liverpool. After having a stroke in January 2021, he was hospitalised for some time. He returned to hospital for a urological procedure in June 2023 and returned home that August. That same month, Dr Bob's wife was appointed as his guardian and financial manager by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. In March 2024, under the guise of attending a medical check-up, his youngest son wheelchaired Dr Bob into a care facility. Although the family had never discussed that prospect previously, Dr Bob has been stuck in a care facility for the past six months. He wishes to leave the nursing home and regain his power of attorney.

After contacting the Seniors Rights Service, Dr Bob was referred to a solicitor. However, as his wife had control of his finances, he had to request permission to access his own money. That request was denied. Thankfully, following a loan from a friend, he was able to cover the legal fees. Unfortunately, earlier this month NCAT reappointed his wife as his guardian and power of attorney for a further 12 months, and the application for a review or revocation of the financial order was denied. That process beggars belief. How can someone be

prevented from accessing their own money to seek legal advice to advocate in their own interests, which is the fundamental purpose of a power of attorney? There is something deeply distressing and broken about this system.

Dr Bob's neurophysical reports and medical assessments make for bleak reading. A nursing report outlines his experience of being admitted to the aged care home against his will and with no prior knowledge, and that his mental health is suffering as a result of his prolonged stay in residential aged care. In that report, the nurse stresses that Dr Bob has good rapport with the staff, who describe him as pleasant. He is oriented to time, place and person and his memory is clear and cognisant. That has also been my team's experience when Dr Bob calls. Since August he has contacted my office at least eight times to give periodic updates on his situation, amongst other topics. He has given us fun facts about horses and greyhounds. He discusses American politics and his daily exercises at the centre, which he always dreads. He reminisces about his youth. He has even given us his top five recommendations for dog breeds as a long-time veterinarian, which is sage advice indeed.

In all dealings, Dr Bob is pleasant, friendly and sharp as a tack. It is unfortunate to see him feeling trapped and without the freedom to recover and spend his retirement on his terms. It serves as a reminder to forward plan for these events. Dr Bob's situation underlines the fact that everyone needs to have comprehensive discussions about care arrangements when appointing an enduring guardian. An enduring guardian is legally appointed to make decisions on a person's behalf should they become incapable. By pre-planning, a person can ensure that they carefully consider who they trust with the responsibility to care for them in the way they wish to be cared for when they are vulnerable or incapacitated. I urge everyone to have that conversation, as uncomfortable or unnecessary as it may seem.

If no enduring guardian is listed, a court or tribunal may need to appoint someone, which may lead to stress and anxiety. That is the case with Dr Bob. A lawyer is able to draw up an enduring guardian document. Alternatively, a person can apply to the NSW Trustee and Guardian for one. For those in Liverpool, many of whom speak English as their second language, the NSW Trustee and Guardian has translation services. Let tonight's story show that, while it may seem like a small thing, people may one day be grateful for their foresight. It also speaks to the fact that these conversations are important not only to put on the agenda with family how someone would like to be cared for but also to avoid complicating factors after the fact.

LIZARD ROCK DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (22:29): On Saturday 21 September many in the Wakehurst electorate became all too aware of just how vulnerable we are to bushfires. At around 1.30 p.m., a scheduled hazard reduction burn at Meatworks Avenue in Oxford Falls escaped containment lines and quickly gathered pace towards homes in Cromer Heights. As smoke filled the sky, many across the northern beaches wondered if everything was okay. It was not. The situation quickly escalated and, by 3.00 p.m., residents in Cromer Heights were being told that it was too late to leave and they needed to actively monitor their properties for burning embers and put out spot fires. Luckily, no lives or properties were lost, and the fire was quickly contained.

As always, I give a massive thank you to all our firefighters—almost 300 in total and many of them volunteers—and a special shout-out to Beacon Hill and Belrose rural fire brigades from my electorate. Out-of-control bushfires threatening lives and property can seem incongruous with comfortable suburban life in metropolitan Sydney. But on the northern beaches, where there are significant urban-bushland interface areas, the threat is very real. History teaches us this much. There have been numerous bushfires on the northern beaches over the years, including in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1990s. The most damaging in recent history was in 1994 when 37 homes were destroyed. While the past is instructive, we know it is no longer an accurate indicator of future conditions. In a rapidly warming world, we are now in uncharted territory when it comes to bushfire risk. And conditions will be more challenging, not less.

Greg Mullin, AO, was the Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner from 2003 to 2017 and is a leading voice on bushfire management and risk. He is also a local and has been a volunteer firefighter on the northern beaches since the 1970s. He lays it out like this: Bushfire risk in the area is worsening as a result of climate change, and the effectiveness of traditional mitigation tools such as hazard reduction burning, asset protection zones and construction standards are limited because of the increasing intensity of bushfires. Greg was out with the crews on the weekend and emphasised to my office just how difficult the job for firefighters is now. Just two weeks ago, it was too wet to burn; this week there was a runaway fire. So the window for hazard reduction burning is now small and getting smaller. When speaking with us, Greg said, "Saturday was 24 degrees. Can you imagine a day of 44 degrees and gale force winds?" The reality is we have to confront the likelihood, perhaps inevitability, of that scenario.

I draw attention to the fire on the weekend and the future intensifying bushfire risk on the northern beaches to highlight the profound recklessness of the proposed Lizard Rock/Patyegarang planning proposal. The proposal would see a whole new subdivision of at least 450 low-rise homes—with additional granny flats, no doubt—

surrounded by bushland in Oxford Falls, very close to where the fire got out of control on Saturday. Greg Mullins' submission to the Lizard Rock/Patyegarang rezoning proposal states:

If established, the new homes will adjoin Garigal National Park and other contiguous areas of bushland comprising coastal heath and dry sclerophyll forest that is highly flammable and results in fast-burning, intense bushfires that produce burning embers that can travel significant distances under the right weather conditions to ignite homes, gardens, and other areas of bushland. There will only be a single lane, narrow road for egress, and this would be rapidly cut off by intense flames in the event of a fire, as it was in 1979 and 1994, preventing evacuation of residents and fire services from entering.

In no uncertain terms, he also states:

The Patyegarang proposed development should not proceed due to extreme, and worsening, bushfire risk and lack of suitable evacuation paths for residents.

I continue to be steadfast in my opposition to the Lizard Rock/Patyegarang rezoning proposal. I share the frustration of many in the community that the proposal remains live in the planning system and that decision-making for the proposal has been so slow. It is almost a year since the rezoning proposal went on public exhibition in November 2023. Over 1,500 public submissions were received by the department of planning. The original gateway determination stated that the rezoning should be finalised by June 2024. Instead, I learnt through questions on notice that the proponent is being granted an extension to prepare their response to the issues raised by the public and other government agencies during the consultation.

Once they have prepared their response to submissions, the proposal will again go to the Sydney North Planning Panel for a decision. The indicative time frame given for this is towards the end of 2025. This week I have asked further questions on the timeline from here, including when the community submissions and government agency comments on the proposal will be released. In light of all the evidence, further demonstrated on Saturday, how can we possibly, in good conscience, put the lives of residents and firefighters at such risk? This reckless, bushfire trap of a development must not proceed.

TRIBUTE TO UNCLE WES MARNE, AM

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (22:34): Uncle Wes was a Bigambul man, a storyteller and a poet. He lived for over 40 years on the lands of the Darug people, where he gave so much to many. Growing up on the banks of the Macintyre and Weir rivers in southern Queensland, he would later say that the happiest times of his life were spent on the banks of those rivers. He was a born storyteller and an effective advocate for country. In an interview with *The 100 Project*, he shared how, in the 1920s, his grandfather taught him to conserve nature, not overuse resources and be thankful for what they had. Sadly, at the age of nine, Uncle Wes and his family were walked off the riverbank to Deadbird Mission in Ashford, northern New South Wales. It was a journey that took three weeks. I can only imagine how traumatising and difficult that must have been for a nine-year-old.

Uncle Wes and fifteen other children were made to attend school in a bough shed, a structure with no walls and a roof made of tree branches, located on the edge of the school grounds away from other students. He would later say that he had only attended school for one day. His family was forced to not practise cultural ceremonies and forbidden from speaking its language, a traumatising experience during a shameful chapter in our nation's past, the impact of which is still being felt today. Uncle Wes began work at the age of 11 delivering water to forestry workers. He lost most of his teeth as a boxer before working in a tannery and a chicken factory and picking and packing tobacco. He worked as a drover and a miner, and he served Australia in the Korean War.

Uncle Wes and his late wife moved to Sydney in the '60s so their children could have a better education. At the time, Uncle Wes was not allowed to tell his stories in schools, so he hosted a gathering of local Aboriginal families to tell stories in his backyard. Shamefully, he was imprisoned for two days for doing so. Eventually, some of the discriminatory barriers were removed and Uncle Wes was invited into schools to share Dreaming stories. In time he could also speak about the Stolen Generations and the massacres endured by his people. Sadly, Uncle Wes outlived four of his children. One baby died from cot death, two were killed in a car crash and another drowned. Despite all of the trauma he faced, Uncle Wes never stopped speaking out and advocating for his people when they were experiencing difficulty with Centrelink, the Department of Communities and Justice and what is now Homes NSW. He was also a regular visitor to prisons.

He was a founding member of the Mount Druitt and District Reconciliation Group, which has organised an annual reconciliation walk and concert for the past 22 years. He advocated for the establishment of Murray-Toola Damana preschool for Indigenous children in Mount Druitt. He was honoured with the Department of Education's Nanga Mai Love of Learning Award in 2011 and the Western Sydney University Community Award in 2012. At 94 he had his own sold-out show, *Fire Bucket*, premiering at the 2016 Sydney Festival. Every Friday, Uncle Wes could be found at the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre connecting with community. In 2022 I was honoured to host a 100th birthday party for Uncle Wes and to celebrate the launch of his book of poetry, *Through Old Eyes: Poems by Uncle Wes Marne*—truly a feat that most people could only dream of accomplishing.

Uncle Wes passed away on 31 August aged 102. As a fitting tribute, I will end my speech with his poem, *Grandfather*:

His face was strong but gentle
His voice was smooth and clear
His hands were big and supple
His eyes were brown and clear.
He was old and bent when I knew him
His race was nearly run
He liked to sit and tell me
Of the days when he was young.
He always smiled to greet me
Always had a kind word to say
He always had something to tell me
To help me on my way.
He liked the warmth of the summer
But when the winter winds blew
He'd pull his blanket around him
As the warmth of his fire grew.
Then the time came when left us
His Spirit went in the night
His weary body could take no more
He had lost the long last fight.
I still think of him as special
And as the seasons go and come
I know that he is happy
In his place in the warmth of the sun!

I have a wonderful memory of Uncle Wes. He performed a smoking ceremony at the opening of an Indigenous war memorial in Parramatta. He was 100 years old at the time. As he reached down to get his fire bucket, sitting beside me on a plastic outdoor chair from Kmart, he swayed and fell. I thought, "This 100-year-old man is going to die on my watch," but he lived to tell that tale, and we laughed about it many times after that. May Uncle Wes rest in peace.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Parramatta. That was a touching, poignant tribute to Uncle Wes. I am sure that Uncle Wes, if he was able to hear it, probably would have disputed some of it. He seemed to be a man of great humility. I thank the member for Parramatta for bringing that contribution to the Chamber.

OVARIAN CANCER

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (22:40): This evening I speak about an issue that affects the health and wellbeing of women not just in the Myall Lakes, not just in New South Wales, not just in Australia, but across the world: ovaries. Talk about them. We all come from ovaries. We all love someone with ovaries. I am advocating for greater awareness, better education and more funding for research to tackle the silent dangers that threaten them. The "Ovaries. Talk About Them." campaign was created by Camilla and Marc Freeman, Australian luxury fashion brand designers. The movement addresses the urgent need for early detection of ovarian cancer. It is the deadliest of all female cancers, yet it still lacks an early detection test. Each year, over 310,000 women worldwide are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Sadly, more than 75 per cent of those cases are detected too late. By 2050, it is expected that over half a million women will be diagnosed annually, with death increasing by almost 70 per cent. Those numbers are alarming.

Camilla and Marc lost their mother, Pamela, to ovarian cancer more than 30 years ago, when she was just 42. Their story is the same as too many others. Far too many women are lost too soon because early detection remains out of reach. In the Myall Lakes, my dear, beautiful friend Chelsea Brown from Forster has been faced with the reality of ovarian cancer. Diagnosed with ovarian cancer just one week after her twenty-first birthday, Chelsea, now 25, is battling cancer for the second time. Her story reminds us that ovarian cancer does not discriminate and can affect women of any age. While it is uncommon in those under 40, it can still devastate the lives of young women like Chelsea.

Chelsea's battle has not gone unnoticed. Her strength has inspired many in our community. Recently, the Forster Tuncurry Hawks Rugby League Football Club held a fundraiser to support Chelsea and her young family, raising an impressive \$6,380. Chelsea has a one-year-old daughter, despite the odds. Ninety per cent of women do not even know the four main symptoms of ovarian cancer. We must raise awareness so that women of all ages can recognise the warning signs. They include increased abdominal size or persistent abdominal bloating; abdominal or pelvic pain; feeling full after eating a small amount; and needing to urinate often or urgently. Those symptoms are often mistaken for less serious conditions, making it easy to overlook the possibility of ovarian cancer.

For 30 years, the statistics for women with ovarian cancer have barely shifted. Gynaecological cancers remain underfunded and under-researched. Camilla and Marc's initiative has already raised \$1.7 million, all of which supports the UNSW Gynaecological Cancer Research Group, led by Professor Caroline Ford and Dr Kristina Warton. The funds are helping to develop a world-first DNA-based early detection test, a breakthrough that could transform the future of ovarian cancer. In the past year, the group has made important progress by finding potential markers in the blood that indicate the presence of cancer. That brings it closer to starting clinical trials and, hopefully, creating an early detection test that could save many lives.

The "Ovaries. Talk About Them." campaign calls for a more urgent focus on ovarian cancer and gynaecological diseases more broadly. Every woman and family affected by ovarian cancer deserves hope. Hope comes through innovation and support, which is why I fully back the campaign. Its mission to make early detection a reality within the next two years is crucial. We cannot stay silent and we cannot afford to wait while more women are diagnosed too late. By buying a T-shirt like the one I have been wearing today, making a donation via camillaandmarc.com, or simply starting a conversation, we can make sure future generations do not suffer the same fate. For the women in our lives, for those we have lost and for those yet to be diagnosed, let's talk about ovaries and let's support a future where early detection is possible. I encourage members to support this campaign and advocate with me for the funding, awareness and urgent attention that ovarian cancer needs. Ovaries. I have talked about them. Will you?

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for raising awareness of ovarian cancer. I think most of us have known someone who has been touched by this wicked disease. I wish Chelsea Brown all the best.

SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (22:45): This weekend will be very sad because the last ever train to the city will leave Birrong and Yagoona stations. It sounds like it could be a Cold Chisel song, but it is not. Unfortunately, as a result of the Bankstown line conversion, Yagoona and Birrong will lose forever their direct connection to the city. Fortunately, our Minister for Transport has ensured that both Birrong and Yagoona will retain a rail service, with the T6 line running between Lidcombe and Bankstown. In good news for other stations in the Auburn electorate, the T3 line will return to Regents Park and Berala travelling through Lidcombe to the city. Buses will replace trains between Lidcombe and Bankstown for approximately three weeks from Monday 30 September. After that time, the new T6 Lidcombe and Bankstown line will be introduced. Passengers will be able to interchange at Regents Park for the T3 service, or Lidcombe to access trains to the city.

Everyone in my local area has been talking about the last train to the city. All the trainspotters—ex-Birrong boys, ex-Birrong girls and all nostalgia buffs—will be looking for those last trains. Having grown up in Birrong, I remember with great fondness those trains, but not just the train into the city. When I was a kid there was a train from Penrith through Birrong, Yagoona and Bankstown to Cronulla Beach. Every Saturday and Sunday it would leave early in the morning and come back at about three o'clock in the afternoon. My friends and I would get to Cronulla station, roll out of the train and wander up to Wanda Beach. Back in those days in the '70s there were a few catcalls of "Go home, Westies." Most of the crew from our suburbs were wearing the Wests Magpies jersey, so they could spot us pretty easily. But, of course, we never did go home.

For the information of those in my electorate, on the evening of Sunday 29 September the last train from Circular Quay to Liverpool via Bankstown on the T3 Liverpool line departs Circular Quay at 12.06 a.m. and gets to Bankstown at 12.51 a.m., Yagoona at 12.54 a.m., Birrong at 12.56 a.m., Sefton at 1.00 a.m. and Chester Hill at 1.02 a.m. before travelling through to Liverpool. If people want to go the other way, the last train from Liverpool to Circular Quay via Bankstown departs Liverpool at 10.36 p.m. and will arrive at Bankstown at 11.07 p.m. before travelling through to the city. The last train from Lidcombe to Circular Quay via Bankstown departs Lidcombe at 11.37 p.m., Berala at 11.40 p.m., Regents Park at 11.42 p.m., Birrong at 11.46 p.m., Yagoona at 11.48 p.m. and Bankstown at 11.52 p.m. People can jump on that one and go through to Circular Quay. The last train from Circular Quay to Lidcombe via Bankstown departs Circular Quay at 11.51 p.m., Bankstown at 12.36 a.m., Yagoona at 12.39 a.m. and Birrong at 12.41 a.m., before terminating at Lidcombe just before one o'clock in the morning.

If anyone wants to take one of those trains, the most popular is likely to be the 12.06 a.m. service departing from Circular Quay. There will be a lot of the New South Wales train service staff onboard as well as a lot of history buffs. In particular, there will be a lot of people wearing the Western Suburbs Magpies jersey, although that is not compulsory. We will sorely miss the trains to Birrong and Yagoona. When I was elected to Parliament there were two trains each way to and from the city. After 12 years of Liberal Government, there are none. Fortunately, we are retaining the train services from Lidcombe to Bankstown so that people can join the metro.

WILLIAM BRADFORD BRIDGE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (22:49): I bring urgent attention to a critical safety concern in the Cootamundra electorate—the William Bradford Bridge, located on the Burley Griffin Way between Harden-Murrumburrah and Wallendbeen. The bridge is not just a local issue but affects a vital transport and freight route linking communities from the Hume Highway in the east to Griffith and beyond in the west. Unfortunately, the bridge has been the site of accidents, near misses and continued safety risks to road users for decades. Since my election in 2017, I have advocated for addressing those safety concerns with successive directors of Transport for NSW as well as through formal representations to and meetings with successive Ministers.

In 2019 a bus accident near the bridge injured 28 people. In response, Transport for NSW upgraded the barriers, signage and delineation. While those steps were necessary, they did not address the fundamental issue at hand—the bridge's dangerously narrow width, which remains an ongoing hazard. Despite those upgrades, my constituents and I still consider the William Bradford Bridge to be one of the most dangerous in the region. I have met with members of the Hilltops Freight Industry Group, some of the most frequent users of the bridge, and their concerns mirror those of the community. Over the years I have also met with mayors and general managers of the nine local government areas that are directly or indirectly linked to the bridge. I have also met with emergency services personnel, who have the unenviable task of responding to incidents at the bridge.

Those community leaders share a unanimous concern that the William Bradford Bridge is unsafe. We need substantial action to prevent future accidents. I stand in the Chamber today representing their voices, and those of families, commuters, freight operators, tourists, holiday-makers, schoolchildren and emergency service personnel who are calling for a widening of the bridge. Unfortunately, despite those sustained efforts, Transport for NSW has repeatedly informed me that the bridge, while narrow, is considered compliant under current standards. What is more concerning is that no funding has been made available for any meaningful upgrades, be it widening or replacement.

Compliant or not, the bridge remains a site of frequent accidents and near misses, which speaks to a larger issue of how we define "compliance" versus real-world safety. Recently there was a livestock truck rollover in the vicinity of the bridge. Just last Friday there was another serious accident involving a car, a caravan, a utility and a sedan, which affected multiple motorists. With the Burley Griffin Way closed in both directions, traffic, including heavy vehicles, was banked up for over 10 kilometres in both directions as our already strained local emergency services teams worked hard to clear the scene. My community is asking how many more accidents it will take before we see decisive action.

I acknowledge Minister Aitchison's public commitment to improving road safety across New South Wales. The Labor Government has made it clear that reducing fatalities on rural roads is a priority, and rightly so. But projects like the William Bradford Bridge are precisely where this commitment must be actioned. The bridge is not just a link between towns; it is critical for families, local businesses, farmers and freight companies. Its safety is not optional; it is essential to preventing further incidents. The bridge remains narrow, hazardous and a constant danger to road users. This project is not just about maintaining the bridge; it is about preventing future accidents and ensuring the safety of everyone who uses this key route. The widening or replacement of the William Bradford Bridge is a project that cannot wait. Every day we delay, we risk further accidents.

This project is an opportunity for the New South Wales Labor Government to stand by its commitment to improve rural road safety and prevent unnecessary fatalities. It is time we prioritise the lives of the people who use this bridge and take the necessary steps to ensure their safety.

GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY HOME FOR THE AGED

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (22:54): Tonight I acknowledge the exceptional work of the Greek Orthodox Community Home for the Aged in Earlwood. Since its opening in 1992, the home has provided outstanding quality care for elderly residents, particularly those with a Greek background. I have had the pleasure of visiting the home on many occasions, and am extremely impressed by the dedication, compassion and respect that the wonderful staff provide to the residents. I recently visited the home with Councillor Clare Raffan, and the Labor candidate for the Canterbury ward of the Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Con Vatsis. We visited the home to acknowledge the prestigious award the home had won, as well as to see the residents and thank staff for their exceptional work.

The home is designed to ensure that it feels like home while providing a social green space. Residents are well supported with culturally appropriate care and services. This exceptional work has recently been acknowledged through a number of awards and grants such as the prestigious Aged and Community Care Providers Association Excellence Award. I congratulate them on their receipt of this important award. The home

also received a Community Building Partnership grant of \$42,238, which went towards repairing the entry area with concreting and replacing intercom access to enhance the accessibility of the home and the safety of the residents.

The Federal member for Barton, Linda Burney, who was the former member for Canterbury in this place, also provided very important support not only to the residents but also through a series of grants. Those grants supported the specialised dementia unit of the home. Those recognitions highlight the unwavering commitment of the home to provide exceptional residential aged-care services, and its dedication to improving the lives of seniors in the community. For context, the home is but one example of the excellent array of work done by the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW which is based in Lakemba in my electorate. I acknowledge the president of the organisation, Harry Danalis, for his dedication.

I also acknowledge the work of the vice president, Ourania Karteris, who is also the chair of the Greek Festival of Sydney. The Greek Orthodox Community of NSW is one of the oldest Australian organisations representing Greek and Cypriot migrants. The organisation operates afternoon Greek schools, places of worship in and around the inner city, kindergartens and homes for the aged and also provides a wide range of migrant-related social services, including whole-of-life cradle-to-grave health services for the wider Greek-Australian community. The venture to establish the home was a culmination of community advocacy. It was led by members of the Greek Orthodox community and supported by funding from the State and Commonwealth governments. The campaign began in 1987 and construction commenced in 1991. The home was completed in early 1992.

As many members know, many migrants can often feel homesick and nostalgic. One of the most notable aspects of the home, as well as a number of other aged-care facilities in my electorate and across the south-west region, is its commitment to cultural and linguistic sensitivity and supporting culture, language and religious traditions. Whether it be through cooking particular food, having onsite places of worship, providing access to particular TV programs and entertainment activities or having foreign language-speaking staff, which is very important, residents are able to stay connected to their ancestry and how they used to feel when at home.

RICHMOND ROAD UPGRADE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (22:59): I acknowledge the frustration of tradies, truckies, essential workers, business owners, mums, dads, seniors and schoolchildren who face lengthy travel times every day on Richmond Road as they travel to and from Hawkesbury and beyond. In February 2023, the Liberal-Nationals Government dedicated \$385 million towards the upgrade of Richmond Road in two sections. As part of the first stage, a 2.2-kilometre stretch between the M7 motorway and Townson Road would be widened to six lanes, with a new off-ramp bridge to be built to connect Richmond Road to Westlink M7. Section two involves the widening of a section of approximately 1.5 kilometres of Richmond Road between Elara Boulevard and Heritage Road to four lanes, widening the central median to allow for an expansion to six lanes in the future, and new traffic lights 800 metres north of Elara Boulevard. Not only would the upgrade see travellers endure less travel time, but the arterial road would service the growth in and around the area that the Labor Government is wanting to foster.

Western Sydney is a rapidly growing area. If the key route is upgraded, it will ensure families and workers connect efficiently to areas of employment and education, shopping centres, hospitals and medical facilities. The upgrade will also provide an evacuation route for those living in the Hawkesbury-Nepean flood catchment. By the end of 2029, according to the New South Wales Government's Planning website, Hawkesbury is expected to see an additional 1,300 homes. That housing growth will further impact Richmond Road. Add to that the enormous growth around Marsden Park, Jordan Springs and Riverstone, and the strain that places on the current Richmond Road is ridiculous.

I acknowledge the advocacy of the shadow Minister for Transport and Roads, the Hon. Natalie Ward, in the other place. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has remained dedicated to the project since it was announced as part of the \$5 billion WestInvest program. We will advocate together to accelerate the road upgrade. People have a right to leave work and arrive home in the evening at a reasonable time so they can sit down at the dinner table and share a meal with their family. There is no guarantee of that when travelling on Richmond Road. I would be interested to know whether Premier Minns has received any feedback from the Deputy Premier and member for Londonderry, Prue Car, about the traffic queues she sees on Richmond Road whilst being chauffeured home. Why is she not standing up for her constituents to fast-track the upgrade of Richmond Road? And where is the member for Riverstone on this matter? He is conveniently silent, which is a shameful position to take when his constituents are relying on him to prioritise the project as a local member of the Government.

According to the Transport for NSW website, the upgrade of Richmond Road will not even commence until mid-2026. Further to that unacceptable start date, the New South Wales Labor Government does not expect

to finish the upgrade until the second quarter of 2028 at the earliest. I remind the House that the last major upgrade of Richmond Road was at Marsden Park, which saw a five-kilometre stretch of Richmond Road widened to a four-lane passage in 2016, delivered by the Liberal-Nationals Government within budget, and opened to traffic four years ahead of time. If only the Minns Labor Government could get its act together and prioritise the project so that it stays within budget and well ahead of the forecasted completion date.

Hawkesbury does not have a metro. The journey to the CBD by train can take more than an hour and a half one way, which is why many people rely so much on road transport. It is not good enough, having to sit in a traffic queue on Richmond Road. I wonder whether the Premier has ever ventured from his Kogarah electorate to come out to Western Sydney and experience the pain that Richmond Road users go through every single day. The cost to families is too great. Warm dinners are going cold, parents are missing their toddler's first steps, while the elderly are robbed of quality time with their grandchildren, all because our travellers are sitting bumper to bumper on Richmond Road. Business owners are being impacted as customers avoid the area. Truckies are spending more time on the road than they should be. I am calling on the Minns Labor Government to fast-track the upgrade of Richmond Road. Hawkesbury residents and other road users have been promised this vital link and deserve to have it delivered ahead of schedule. Let us get shovels in the ground before 2026.

INSURANCE AND NATURAL DISASTERS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (23:04): I am going to talk about insurance, an issue that is of deep concern to people in my electorate, the broader Northern Rivers region and, I am sure, many other places in New South Wales. It is not a new issue, but one that is now in sharp focus following the 2019-20 bushfires, and particularly the 2022 floods that devastated the Northern Rivers and other parts of New South Wales. The Insurance Council of Australia produces an annual insurance catastrophe resilience report. Those reports are essential reading. I have kept up to date with them. They provide handy statistics and insight. The latest report, *Insurance Catastrophe Resilience Report 2023-24* has recently been released. It states:

Flood is Australia's most costly natural peril, and it's estimated that around 1.2 million properties face some level of flood risk.

It is further reported that 230,000 properties face a one-in-20 risk of flooding each year, and 420,000 properties face a one-in-50 or one-in-100 risk of flooding each year. After the 2022 floods in the Northern Rivers area, the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation [NRRC] was established. It commissioned Professor Paula Jarzabkowski and other professors from the University of Queensland with particular expertise in this area to conduct an insurance status review and provide recommendations for the Lismore local government area in particular, but I directed that the report also needed to speak to the broader region—and indeed it does.

I recommended to the then NRRC that the review should be submitted to the Federal House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics inquiry into insurers' responses to 2022 major flood claims. That is how the review became a submission to that inquiry. I appeared before the inquiry, as did other MPs from the Northern Rivers area. The submission was made on behalf of the Community Leaders Forum, comprised of the seven mayors of the Northern Rivers region, four New South Wales MPs and two Federal MPs. We might not have agreed with everything in the review, but we were in agreement that something should be put forward that laid out some of the options that were possible.

I have also had the benefit of studying a lot of insurance products, processes and programs worldwide and have become quite familiar with them. Section 5 of the report contained a recommendation that we need a new insurance ecosystem for Lismore. It said, "For Lismore in particular ... there is no single or simple insurance solutions at the forefront of what would be needed, but it will involve both public and private provision, alongside traditional and new insurance products." It explained what that might look like and offered six key recommendations about the potential for a new insurance ecosystem. It noted that much of Lismore falls within certain areas where flood frequency, severity and uncertainty compound the effects on insurance pricing. A lot of Lismore does not fall within the zone for affordable private sector insurance. They talk a lot about a national insurance or reinsurance risk pool, which is a tested method for providing insurance that would otherwise be increasingly unaffordable. Flood Re in the United Kingdom has led to premium reductions of 50 per cent or more. I have had a closer look at it, and it is not perfect either. It was one system. They said:

A national risk pool is a tested solution that, when well-designed, could support affordable insurance in Lismore—

I will add, by extension, other areas—

... providing it is accompanied by a medium and a long-term program of risk reduction including relocation.

That is one of the big learnings, worldwide: Any program of insurance mitigation has to be accompanied by risk reduction.

UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (23:10): Mr Speaker, I am glad that you are sitting in the chair tonight as this may end up on your desk at some stage. This serious topic is in regard to the renewable energy rollout, which I have spoken about at length. The project I speak about tonight is the Maison Dieu solar factory. This is the third time I have raised this issue in this House. A few weeks ago, I made a number of comments in a private member's statement, which irked a number of the developers. So much so, I have received a letter from them today highlighting their displeasure with some of those statements.

The Maison Dieu solar factory is a development on the western outskirts of Singleton. It is being developed by RATCH-Australia Corporation through Terrain Solar. I have said that this project, unfortunately, is a terrible example of how the energy rollout is not working for residents. The project is potentially in the right place, but the companies are taking completely the wrong attitude towards residents in the area. They are not being fair in their approach. The project is wrapping around residents in that location, and the companies' approaches have been pretty poor in trying to resolve the neighbourhood agreements with the project.

The project is well and truly running through the planning system at the moment. It is currently on public exhibition and looking for determination early next year, only six months away, with planning to be operational in 2026. This is a well-developed project that has not finalised neighbourhood agreements with the poor people who live in the houses where the solar farm will be right up to their boundary. These are large, tough corporations. They have a lot of legal power, obviously. The letter that they have sent me is perfectly fine in tone—very friendly, sorting every conversation and correspondence between us to date—but the approach is clearly threatening. They are asking me to retract all of my statements, delete posts on my Facebook account and remove things from the parliamentary *Hansard*. Unless I do that, they will be referring these serious breaches of parliamentary process to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I am afraid to say to those companies, with all of their lawyers and all of their superpowers, that I shall not be doing that. I will not back down from trying to help with what I think is a very unfair, unbalanced situation for those people who are living in the area at the moment. This is a situation where I absolutely know that those companies have been trying to lock those people into non-disclosure agreements. I can only judge those companies by actions that I know they have taken. I know that the original offering was to plant some trees on their boundary to try to stop the view of the solar panels from their backyard. There has been no agreement on compensation. Indeed, the companies have not even made an offer of acquisition for these properties, which I think is appropriate. They say the reason is they are foreign companies and cannot acquire the residences. They cannot even make an offer, which I find very hard to believe.

It is important to realise that the people who live in these houses have coalmines on three sides of them. They have transmission lines next to them. These people do not have large legal teams working for them. They are people who are just trying to live in the location. They have the solar factory on their doorstep and this company is trying to drive it through the planning system. I will not back down. I will stand up for these people. These solar companies have to do the right thing.

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES SOCIETY

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (23:15): It is my pleasure to thank the Chinese Australian Services Society. I recently attended the Indonesian activity group to celebrate the Moon Festival and present an award to one of our local volunteers. I congratulate and thank the Chinese Australian Services Society for all the important work it does. It was great to celebrate the Moon Festival, which represents family reunion and happiness. The festival is widely celebrated in Asia, and this year it fell on 17 September. It is an opportunity for the community to spend more time with friends and family, and of course enjoy nice moon cakes, which symbolise reunion.

More importantly, on the day that I visited I presented the NSW Government Community Service Award to Ms Kwai Chun Yeung. The award recognises individuals in New South Wales who help to improve the quality of life of members of their community. Ms Yeung has been a volunteer for the Chinese Australian Services Society for over 30 years. In particular, she devotes a lot of time to assisting and caring for the elderly. Ms Yeung is humble, dedicated and hardworking. I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition. Only two awards are given to members of Parliament to present to our community members. It was my great honour and privilege to recognise Ms Yeung for her very important work in our community and society. I thank the Chinese Australian Services Society for its wonderful work. Honorary president Henry Pan, the board, the staff and the volunteers do exceptional work. They have been pillars in our local area, providing assistance to our multicultural communities for over 40 years. Once again, I congratulate them and wish them all a happy Moon Festival.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 23:17 until
Thursday 26 September 2024 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

KEMPSEY BUSINESS WINS OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS AWARD

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Finding Grace Wellness and Sustainability, a thriving small business in the Macleay Valley, is making an incredible contribution to our community, and I am delighted to congratulate them on their well-deserved win of the Outstanding New Business Award at the 2024 Mid North Coast Business Awards! The young Kempsey business owner, Grace Gorman, founded Finding Grace Wellness and Sustainability with the desire of promoting sustainable and healthy living. By partnering with Australian brands and offering eco-friendly, health-focused products, Finding Grace Wellness and Sustainability is not only helping people in the Macleay Valley make better choices, but they're also supporting local producers and keeping money in our communities. With a commitment for both people and the planet, Finding Grace Wellness and Sustainability captures the spirit of innovation that the Mid North Coast community thrives on. It's fantastic to see one of our local businesses getting the recognition they deserve for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to watching Grace's continued success as her business thrives and leads the way toward a brighter, healthier future for our region!

MALCOLM WEBSTER SHINES AS HASTINGS PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2024

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The South West Rocks Marlins Rugby League Football Club has a truly remarkable achievement to celebrate with Malcolm Webster being named Player of the Year for the Hastings District Rugby League Competition. Malcolm's exceptional performance, highlighted by an impressive 14 tries, is a vivid illustration of his skills and strategic ability. His speed and agility on the field are matched only by his sharp instincts and game intelligence, making him an invaluable asset to any team. Beyond the statistics, Malcolm's presence on the field has been nothing short of inspiring. His ability to turn the tide of a game and his relentless drive have elevated the Marlins' performance and boosted team morale. His dedication has made him not only a standout player but also a beloved teammate and a symbol of excellence for the club. Malcolm Webster's achievement as Player of the Year is a proud moment for the South West Rocks Marlins, celebrating not just a season of outstanding performance. Congratulations, Malcolm—you've brought immense pride to the South West Rocks Marlins Club.

INSPIRING DREAMS

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The Yuwa Nyinda Dream Academy recently held a heartwarming festival on August 28 and 29, designed to reignite hope and inspiration among local youth. Organised by Learning the Macleay, this event emerged from heartfelt discussions within the Macleay Valley, highlighting a concern that many young people had lost their sense of dreaming due to various social challenges. The two-day festival was a beacon of positivity, offering a platform for youth to reconnect with their aspirations and engage with a variety of supportive individuals and organizations. On August 28, Chappel Park transformed into a vibrant hub of activity with a free community concert, cultural festivities, and interactive games. The event was a celebration of creativity and unity, providing a joyful escape and a chance for the community to come together. The festival's goal was not only to entertain but to empower and uplift young people, helping them to rediscover their dreams and potential. By fostering a sense of belonging and providing access to inspirational role models, the Yuwa Nyinda Dream Academy's festival served as a powerful reminder of the community's commitment to nurturing the next generation's dreams and ambitions.

TRUNDLE BUSH TUCKER DAY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr speaker, I would like to congratulate the committee of Trundle Bush Tucker Day on another successful community event. Trundle lore has it that Bush Tucker Day started in 1987 when two mates challenged each other to a 'campie' cook off back in the late 1980s. A small group of enthusiastic people realised it was a great way to raise funds for local charities and organisations, while bringing the community together and it's now grown to a fun-filled family day. Since its incorporation in 1995, Trundle Bush Tucker Day has had two objectives, the first of which is to promote goodwill and community among residents and the second was to distribute surplus funds from the one-day social event to a local charity or community group. I am informed that almost 30 years later, these guidelines remain entrenched with the Trundle Bush Tucker Day committee, which has distributed almost a quarter of a million dollars to organisations vital to the small community. Trundle Bush Tucker Day also offers an opportunity to experience traditional bush foods

and cooking methods and earn about Australian culture. I congratulate president Tamilla Bolam and her committee on another wonderful event.

ORANGE PURLERS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to congratulate the Orange Purlers on their recent consignment of work which is on its way to warm people battling trauma. By August this year, the Purlers had hand-knitted 392 wraps which have been distributed through the Orange Vinnies Van Service and a local aged care facility, while a large number have also been sent to the charity Wrap With Love will distribute the items to those in need. Mr Speaker, I am very supportive of the Purlers, who come together regularly for fellowship but also provide a great service. Their collaboration with Wrap With Love has been instrumental in providing warmth and comfort to those in need within our community and across the globe. They have worked to produce thousands of blankets and beanies, distributing them to over 85 organisations, including local entities such as Housing Plus and our hospital, as well as overseas disaster areas. Their work offers long-term benefits to the community, embodying the values of compassion, support, and resilience. The Orange Purlers have a great skill that they use to help others less fortunate and I commend them for their generosity.

ANGUS BARRETT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the outstanding contributions of Angus Barrett Saddlery & Leather Goods, a leader in Australian manufacturing and a proud local business in Orange. Under the leadership of Angus Barrett, this family-run business specialises in high-quality saddlery and leather goods, all crafted with exceptional skill and dedication. Angus Barrett Saddlery is renowned for preserving traditional craftsmanship while embracing innovative manufacturing techniques. Their products, including saddles, bridles, and other leather goods, are a testament to their commitment to excellence and the Australian way of life. Not only do they produce premium equestrian gear, but they also contribute significantly to our local economy by manufacturing right here in Australia. Angus Barrett Saddlery stands out for its sustainability initiatives, with the entire business running off-grid. This impressive commitment to environmental responsibility complements their mission of maintaining and advancing Australian manufacturing. I commend Angus Barrett and his team for their dedication to quality, innovation, and sustainability. The business not only reflects our cultural heritage but also strengthens our community. Let us continue to support and celebrate local businesses like Angus Barrett Saddlery, which exemplify the best of Australian craftsmanship and ingenuity.

RESCUE AND REHABILITATION OF AUSTRALIAN NATIVE ANIMALS (RRANA)

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—After 35 years voluntary service to the community, Rescue and Rehabilitation of Australian Native Animals [RRANA], has made the difficult decision to close its doors. RRANA was a group of volunteers dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured, or orphaned native animals and birds. RRANA was based in Broken Hill, they cover a huge geographical area reaching from the Queensland border and ending halfway between Broken Hill and Mildura including several far-west communities of Tibooburra, Darnick and White Cliffs. This small group of dedicated volunteers spent their time making a difference to the lives of countless injured animals and I am certain that their amazing work will not be forgotten.

DENIS TODD

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Denis is a retired farmer from Baradine. Recently he celebrated his 80th birthday. Denis had a total of 280 guests join him to celebrate this milestone. Denis had requested that rather than a gift, he asked if the guests would consider a financial donation, which would then be given to community groups. A total of \$18,360 was raised. At an official presentation, the Baradine Aged care, Memorial Hall committee and the Baradine Hospital Auxiliary each received \$6,000 and the remaining \$360 went towards the purchase of a BBQ at the new accommodation units for medical staff. This is not the first time Denis has opted for donations over gifts. For his 60th birthday, \$14,000 was raised, which went to the Royal Flying Doctors and for his 70th birthday \$8,000 was raised which went to the Baradine Memorial Hall. I would like to thank Denis for considering such important community organisations.

NSW SES BROKEN HILL UNIT

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—The Broken Hill Unit of the State Emergency Service is celebrating 40 years of emergency and rescue service to the community of Broken Hill and its surrounding areas. This volunteer-based organisation has provided 24 hour, 7 days a week, 365 days per year assistance to the community. Responding to calls for help during extreme weather events and disasters, as well as assisting other SES units across the state during catastrophic flood and storm events have been a part of this SES unit's history. Communities all over the electorate of Barwon rely on the efforts of the SES and other voluntary emergency service agencies to respond, often during their darkest hour. This group is often at every community event spreading the word about their service and making sure that the community is prepared in the event of an emergency. Volunteers are

the life blood of many small communities across Barwon and NSW, I commend the work of the Broken Hill SES Unit and its members. Congratulations on this amazing milestone and thank you for your service to our Far West communities.

ILLAWARRA ONAM CELEBRATIONS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—Over the past few weeks the Illawarra has been witness to all of the colour, movement and culture associated with the celebration of Onam – the annual harvest festival mostly celebrated by the Keralan community. Wollongong has become home to a growing Indian diaspora, with a large number from Kerala. According to the last Census, India ranks among the top five countries outside Australia as the country of birth for Wollongong residents. On 31 July the Illawarra Kerala Samajam hosted hundreds of people at the Dapto Ribbonwood Centre for an afternoon and evening of celebrations coupled with performances and food. This was followed by the Illawarra Malayalee Association Wollongong hosting their Onam celebrations on 7 September. Again hundreds of people came together to mark this ancient festival in celebration of harvest and prosperity. These significant events attracted Bollywood celebrities and performers from India who were warmly welcomed to Wollongong. Congratulations to Illawarra Kerala Samajam and the Illawarra Malayalee Association Wollongong on organising yet another wonderful Onam Festival. Thank you for being so welcoming and for always making me feel like part of your extended family whenever I attend your events and celebrations.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 2024 – AUDREY STORER

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I would like to wish a heartfelt congratulations to Audrey Storer, 2024's Youth Volunteer of the year! Audrey is being recognised because of all the time she has dedicated to the Addi Road Youth Collective and Addi Rock Festival at our very own Addison Road Community Centre! Audrey has dedicated countless hours and days to her volunteering. She has been the driving force behind the iconic Addi Rock Festival as an amazing way to help bands get on stage and find their audience, as well as a way for people of all ages to enjoy more live music. Audrey has also been a massive part of the Addi Rd Youth Collective where her work has helped bring together more than 300 young people under the age of 18 to collect food to make and distribute hampers for people in need. Audrey's work is incredibly important and so inspiring. Thank you, Audrey, for all the work you do, and congratulations on this amazing recognition of your hard work and commitment!

ASHBURY NETBALL CLUB

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—Congratulations to Ashbury Netball Club on completing a hugely successful 2024 netball season. Ashbury Netball Club is a professional and innovative club where the community can come together to play or participate in netball in a safe and friendly environment, respecting each other's differences and celebrating each other's achievements no matter how small and at all levels. Ashbury is mighty local club who this year saw a total of 13 teams make it through to the finals, with 6 teams making it all the way to the Grand Final. It was exciting to see the Koalas (10/2), Atoms (14/4) and Saints (15/3) come runner up in their respective Grand Finals. The Club took home 3 titles, with the Wrens (Cadet 5), the Aces (Cadet 4) and the Emeralds (A1) all taking out the premiership. The Emeralds are the first Ashbury team to win the A1 title since 1993. Local sporting clubs are driven by dedicated volunteers – thank you to all the families, supporters and club volunteers who contributed to this successful season. Congratulations to Club President Lesley Evans, Vice-President Anne Tait and all the 2024 Committee. Congratulations Ashbury Netball Club!

PAINT INNER WEST READ

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I was excited to recently join the team at Paint Inner West REaD at Marrickville Pavillion to celebrate the birthdays of their mascots Garranga Bumarri (pelican) and Gadi (dog). Paint Inner West REaD takes a whole community approach to read, talk, sing, rhyme, play and draw with children from birth so that they will be ready for reading and writing when they start school. Literacy is a key skill that enables not only academic success, but also advanced contributions to society later in life. Endeavouring to build a foundation of a love for reading through accessibility and enjoyable story times throughout our community, Paint Inner West REaD contributes to carrying successful outcomes into school. Established in 2016 Paint Inner West REaD is still going strong holding regular story time sessions across the Inner West. Congratulations and thanks for your dedication, Lindy Alwis, Neha Jain and all involved with Paint Inner West REaD.

SYDNEY CHINESE SCHOOL 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—Last weekend I attended the 50th anniversary celebration of the Sydney Chinese School. Established in 1974 with just eight students, for the past 50 years the Sydney Chinese School have fostered the richness of Chinese language and culture, watched generations of children blossom, and

built lasting friendships amongst its now 400 strong student cohort. The school's dedicated teachers and staff have inspired generations of students, fostering not only academic success and camaraderie but also a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage. I acknowledge the leadership team of the Sydney Chinese School – Chairman Kin-Chung Fok, Deputy Chairman Eric Yuen, Treasurer Selina Wong, Director Angela Leung, Secretary Carol Yuen, and Director and Principal Meggy Sin. I commend their dedication and passion to ensure that language remains a core link to their cultural heritage and history. I was privileged to present the Gold Diamond Honour Award to seven volunteers, recognising their significant contribution over the past 30 years. Congratulations to the Sydney Chinese School on this remarkable milestone. May it continue to thrive and serve the Chinese Australian community, and those without Chinese ancestry but wishing to learn Chinese language, for many more years to come.

BOCHASANWASI SHRI AKSHAR PURUSHOTTAM SANSTHA (BAPS)

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—Last weekend I attended the celebrations for the 91st birthday of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj at the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha [BAPS] temple at Rosehill. BAPS is a global socio-spiritual organisation within the Swaminarayan tradition of Hinduism, headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. It was founded in 1907 by Shastriji Maharaj (Shastri Yagnapurushdas) as a branch of the Swaminarayan sect. BAPS places strong emphasis on spiritual, cultural, and social development, guided by its core tenets of worshiping both Akshar (the divine abode) and Purushottam (the supreme God). It was a privilege to address the 1,200 strong assembly on the evening, and I thanked the congregation for the wide range of community outreach and charitable activities that they undertake and the contribution they make to the rich multicultural tapestry of Sydney. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to His Holiness (BAPS's spiritual leader) and the BAPS community on this auspicious occasion.

LILLI PILLI FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Lilli Pilli Football Club on winning an amazing 11 titles, the most of any club in the recent Sutherland Shire Football Association grand final weekend. The 'Berries' had 19 teams contest grand finals from under 12s through to the over 45s. The W12B, 12B, W12D, 13A1, 14D, W15A, 15C, W16A, AL3, SWH and O45B teams all tasted success in what the club describes as an incredible weekend. Lilli Pilli FC says its eight teams who came up with runners up medals can also reflect on great seasons. As the largest club in the Shire, Lilli Pilli had more than 1800 players competing in 175 teams across the 2024 season. President Greg Storey said the executive committee had a "gazillion" people to thank: "a football club of our size can only have this kind of success off the back of the hundreds of volunteers who help out week after week". I also recognise all of the club's volunteers for their hard work and dedication to making it an enjoyable season for players and families and congratulate all Lilli Pilli FC players on representing the club so proudly in 2024.

CONGRATULATIONS TO REROC

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I want to congratulate those who have, over the past 30 years, been instrumental in enhancing the lives of the local community through their involvement in the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils. Members past and present recently came together in Wagga to celebrate this incredible milestone. Since its inception, REROC has significantly improved service delivery and community representation in the eastern Riverina region of NSW, making a profound impact on the lives of local residents. The members of REROC include the councils of: Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Greater Hume, Junee, Lockhart, Temora along with Goldenfields Water. REROC covers an area in excess of 28,447 sq. kms and a population of approximately 48,260. The voluntary aspect of the Organisation is a testament to the commitment of its members. They only participate in a REROC project if they believe it will generate positive outcomes for their council and the community. I commend the past and present members of REROC for their unwavering commitment to implementing projects that harness the growth of regional New South Wales.

RUOK - CWA AND THE MEN'S SHED GUNDAGAI

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—In Gundagai the RUOK awareness was always championed by Lizzie Britt who passed at 54 in 2022. The Gundagai CWA and Men's Shed have taken up her advocacy for this valued campaign and whilst it is a campaign it has and continues to have an impact on our community. The bakeoff, a brave move by the Men's Shed against the CWA, produced the most amazing morning tea as only three slices of each entry were sent to the judges table. Kim Powell, CWA President said they were thrilled to partner with the Gundagai Men's Shed in organising the event and it was great to see Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre, Gundagai SES and Mawang Inc. also joined in the fun. Lesley Kingwill took two trophies on the day for her Chocolate Potato Cake in the "Weird, But in a Good Way" section and also for her Potato Chip Clusters in the "Looks Gross, Tastes Gorgeous" category. Sue Spicer won the "You Put What in That" category confessing that

she put a tin of condensed tomato soup in her cake and Peter Hayes' sausage roll won him recognition in the "Nailed It" category.

RIVERINA SCHOOLBOYS CARNIVAL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—The 79th Annual Riverina Schoolboys Rugby League Football Carnival, held in August at the renowned Laurie Daley Oval, saw participation from 154 teams, including players from across NSW, the ACT and Victoria. Founded in 1942, the Riverina Schoolboys Rugby League Football Carnival has grown to become one of the largest sporting events in the area. The increasing number of participants each year, now including competitions for both girls and boys, is a testament to the event's growing popularity and bright future. However such a large event means you need all hands-on deck, this includes over forty referees, many officials, including individual people who volunteer their time to help, whether in the canteen, ground announcers, parking attendants are just some of many jobs that make the day go as smoothly as possible as well as sponsorship from the many Junee business who support the carnival. The assistance from Junee Shire Council staff and GEO Group in preparing the grounds for the carnival is not just appreciated, but it is also a crucial part of the event's success. Congratulations to everyone involved in ensuring the event if run smoothly and is enjoyed by all.

BIGGEST MORNING TEA HOSTED BY SPEAKER HON. GREG PIPER

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 19 June 2024 I had the pleasure of attending Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, an inspiring event organized by Cancer Council NSW and hosted by the Speaker, Hon Greg Piper MP. This gathering was not just a social occasion but a powerful reminder of the collective effort needed to combat cancer. With the statistic that 1 in 2 people will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85, it is crucial that we come together to support research and raise awareness about this pervasive and deadly disease. Events like Australia's Biggest Morning Tea play a vital role in generating the funds required to advance research and ultimately find a cure. The event was filled with meaningful conversations and a strong sense of community, highlighting the dedication of everyone involved in the fight against cancer. The involvement of the many volunteers along with the efforts of Cancer Council NSW, make a significant impact in our quest to eradicate cancer. I am grateful to have been part of such an impactful event and remain hopeful for a future where cancer is no longer a major threat to our health.

AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURAL FASHION EXHIBITION 2024

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 28 July 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the 5th Edition of the Australian Multicultural Fashion Exhibition [AMFE], an event that truly celebrated diversity and creativity. The exhibition was a vibrant showcase of multicultural fashion, featuring an array of stunning parades that highlighted the rich tapestry of cultures represented in Australia. Each fashion display was a testament to the unique styles and traditions that different communities bring to the multicultural landscape. The event was further enlivened by a series of dynamic musical performances that added an extra layer of excitement and cultural richness. The performances complemented the fashion displays beautifully, creating a lively and immersive experience for all attendees. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Rox G Molavin and RGeM Promotions and Management for their kind invitation. Their dedication to organizing such a memorable and impactful event is greatly appreciated. The AMFE not only provided a platform for showcasing multicultural fashion but also fostered a greater understanding and appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage. It was a privilege to be part of such a significant and interesting celebration.

SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 20 June 2024, I had the pleasure of meeting students participating in the NSW Parliament Student Leadership Program. This program invited Year 12 students to the NSW Parliament House to gain insight on constitutional and parliamentary proceedings and develop their understanding of our government system. Students learnt about the role of the Governor and received the opportunity to visit Government House to meet with Her Excellency. Students received invaluable experiences of viewing live, in-person proceedings and were granted the opportunity to meet with Members of Parliament to ask questions regarding our roles. This is an effective learning opportunity for our future leaders. Schools within my Electorate that participated in this program were Bonnyrigg and St Johns High Schools. I would like to congratulate Nidhi Sharma and Savvas Touma from St Johns Park High School and Nia Hagarty and Natalie Mak from Bonnyrigg High School for their participation. These students demonstrated their commitment to academic excellence and the development of their leadership skills. Thank you to Ms Jeannie Douglass for extending the invitation. I am grateful to be in the position to share my experience with the next generation of leaders.

MR JEFF GOODWIN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I thank and commend Mr Jeff Goodwin for his donation of two defibrillators to Mulgoa Valley Cricket Club. The donation was a thank you to the club after a teammate, Mr Thomas Finlayson provided CPR and saved Mr Goodwin's life, after Mr Goodwin collapsed during a cricket match. I thank and commend Mr Finlayson for his lifesaving actions, as well as teammate Mr Mick George, who worked in turns with Mr Finlayson to keep the compressions going, and others who were present at the match and assisted by calling 000 and guiding paramedics to the scene. Mr Finlayson is a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Australian Air Force and was awarded a Gold Commendation at a ceremony in RAAF Richmond for his lifesaving response. I thank Mr Goodwin for his generous donation. I wish all involved the very best.

MR STEVE GAULT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—On behalf of the Electorate of Badgerys Creek, I would like to congratulate and commend Glenmore Park local Mr Steve Gault on his continued success in the field of woodcraft. Mr Gault competed and exhibited his work in this year's Hawkesbury Show, where he entered two projects in the disability category. His Labrador inlay box achieved First Place, Best in Show and Champion in Show. He also exhibited a Boxer Bone Plaque which was highly commended. Mr Gault plans to compete in the 32nd Wood Show and Scroll Saw Exhibition scheduled to be held in Shepparton this October. He has also completed numerous projects for charity organisations, which the Badgerys Creek community and I are extremely grateful for. I wish Mr Gault success in the 32nd Wood Show and Scroll Saw Exhibition and beyond.

ADRIANA BORG

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I was delighted to meet with Adriana Borg to present her with three NSW State Representative Awards in Athletics. Adriana has represented NSW 3 times in the past 2 years for Athletics NSW in national competitions where she has competed in Triple Jump and Long Jump events. At the 2024 Australian Athletics Championships, she took home the Silver Medal for the Girls Under 17 Triple Jump! I congratulate Adriana on her extraordinary accomplishments and wish her continued success in all her endeavours. I have no doubt we'll be hearing more of her success in the future.

MURWILLUMBAH ROWING CLUB'S NEW LAUNCHING RAMP

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I officially opened the Murwillumbah Rowing Club's new launching ramp, providing improved access to the mighty Tweed River. The February 2022 flood event severely eroded the riverbank adjacent to the rowing club with its former launching area lost entirely. NSW Office of Sport funding of \$382,182 through the Essential Community Sports Asset Program 2022-23 has helped deliver a new purpose-built launching ramp that will allow rowing boats, dragon boats and similar craft to be safely launched. The ramp design also supports launching capability for water safety craft and coaching support boats. Made from FRP, the durable fibreglass-reinforced plastic structure requires no maintenance. Michael 'Millsy' Mills designed the original concept on the back of an envelope, which was realised by contractors Scavenger Supplies and their subsidiary Grating FRP Australia. I congratulate Murwillumbah Rowing Club President Robert Gee and his fellow club members, who were a joy to work with, and project managers Tweed Shire Council, represented by Director Naomi Searle. I want to thank everybody, and the NSW Office of Sport has also been terrific. So many groups will use this launching ramp, which will go far beyond the club as we know it now.

NIMBIN'S UNCLE GILBERT LAURIE A KNOWLEDGE HOLDER

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to acknowledge the important work of Nimbin-based artist Uncle Gilbert Laurie in sharing knowledge passed down by his Elders as a way of improving understanding between First Nations people and non-indigenous Australians. This knowledge holder or cultural man belongs to the Widjibal and Yaegl tribes of the Bundjalung nation with the Laurie, Roberts and King families his ancestral bloodline. For more than a decade, he has been committed to working in partnership with the broader community, sharing his traditional knowledge of and respect for Country. Uncle Gilbert conducts Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies at public events and is in demand as a teacher of Bundjalung language in local schools. He says he was fortunate that his Elders or old people chose to pass down language and Dreamtime stories to a select group of boys and girls, including himself. This had risks as government policy at the time forbade people living on Aboriginal missions from speaking in their native tongue. There are 27 recorded languages within the Bundjalung nation, according to Gilbert. "I try to be inclusive; to respect each other as we walk on this big planet together," Gilbert says.

THE VILLAGE HALL PLAYERS' OLIVER, A GREAT LIVE SHOW

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I recently attended opening night of The Village Hall Players' latest production, *Oliver*, at the Kyogle Memorial Hall and what a great live show it was. There were the stars of the show: *Oliver* and the Artful Dodger were played by the delightful pair, Lietta McElligott and Elke Dundler; Ian McLean was revelling in his role as Fagin; Cameron Clarke was a sinister Bill Sikes; and the professional talents of Jasmine Phillips as Nancy lit up the stage. Congratulations to Stage Manager Ian McLean, Musical Director Jenny Strever, Choreographer Jasmine Phillips, Co-Director Jill Runciman, Assistant Producer Linda McPherson, and all volunteers in the production crew. A big congratulations and thank you to the Director/Producer Lynette Zito, who in 2010 co-founded The Village Hall Players with Gordon Hook. The following year, Lynette started the Drama in Rural Towns program for 8 to 16-year-olds, to ignite a passion for theatre in young people. The DIRT program has developed the skills and confidence of so many young people over the years, including the confident young stars who graced the stage as actors, singers and dancers in *Oliver*. Thanks also must go to business sponsors.

ANGELA BYRON

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Angela Byron, Principal of Oak Flats High School, for being awarded the Secretary's Award for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at the Public Education Foundation's Public Education Awards in Sydney Town Hall on 5 August 2024. This award recognises Ms Byron's unwavering dedication to maintaining high expectations across Oak Flats High School and its community. By passionately advocating for Aboriginal students through diversity, inclusion, and belonging, she has forged genuine connections within the community, making Oak Flats High School a place that brings everyone together. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Angela on this well-deserved Award.

KATRINA DAVIES

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement Katrina Davies, Dapto High School counsellor, for receiving the Premier's Anika Foundation Youth Depression Awareness Scholarship as part of the 2025 Premier's Teacher Scholarships. Ms Davies proposed a study on how to improve mental health inclusivity by exploring best practices for supporting LGBTIQ+ youth in school communities in Europe, New Zealand and Australia. Katrina's inspiration comes from supporting LGBTIQ+ youth with their unique challenges in her role as a school counsellor. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Katrina and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

LACHLAN MACKAY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Lachlan Mackay, from Stella Maris Catholic Primary School, who competed at the Australian Primary School Swimming Championships on the Gold Coast from 27 to 28 July 2024. Lachlan finished the week with a Gold medal in the 100 metre Breaststroke, a Silver medal in the 50 metre Breaststroke and was a finalist in the freestyle relay. Lachlan recorded personal best times throughout the meet in all of his events. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Lachlan on his wonderful achievements and wish him all the best in his future swimming endeavours.

MICHELLE WRAITH

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Michelle Wraith of Albury, who is breathing new life into forgotten treasures using her creative flair. It's truly inspiring to witness Michelle transforming vintage silver cutlery into stunning one-of-a-kind jewellery pieces. Rather than allowing these vintage spoons (forgotten treasures) to end up in our land fill, Michelle has found a way to honour their history and give them a new purpose. Thankyou Michelle for sharing your vision, showing us the power of imagination, and using your creative talent to transform antique spoons into stunning final pieces.

TUMBARUMBA HIGH STUDENTS MAKE STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS TAG TEAM

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Grace Finnimore and Hannah Rankin from Tumbarumba High School, who have been selected to represent the school in the Combined Affiliated League Tag State Championship Country Team. The selection follows a rigorous trial process, where they competed against 36 talented young women over two intense evenings in Albury. The Affiliated State Championships, an annual rugby league competition is organised by the Australian Rugby League and will take place at Broadmeadows in Melbourne. Grace and Hannah play for the Tumbarumba Greens team, and will continue to balance their demanding Year 12 studies while training with the team in Albury each week. Grace and

Hannah, I wish you both continued success as you navigate the challenges of balancing competitive sports with your Year 12 studies. Your achievements are an inspiration to other regional students and youth.

ROUGH NIGHT RAISES THOUSANDS FOR HOMELESS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Xavier High School and the community for their recent Vinnies Sleepout campaign, which raised an impressive \$21,000. On August 31, over 40 individuals participated in the sleepout, spending the night outdoors with only a piece of cardboard to simulate the harsh conditions faced by those experiencing homelessness. This event was not only an eye-opener but also a powerful way to connect and educate participants about the realities of homelessness in the Albury region. The funds raised will directly support the Nagle Centre, providing emergency food, accommodation, and essential services to those in crisis. The event was designed to educate participants about the harsh realities of homelessness in the Albury region, I would like to thank St Vincent De Paul's Tailored Support Coordinator Shantelle Lidden, Xavier High School's Heath Neville and students such as Shinead Kilroy and Gloria Elenjikkal for your significant efforts to address homelessness in our community.

ST PIUS X CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL UNANDERRA KIDS INVENT LIFE-SAVING DEVICE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—I am honoured to recognise a group of students from St Pius X Catholic Primary School, in my electorate, who designed a potentially life-saving device to combat a health concern that has claimed 10 lives within the last five years. This group of students from Unanderra have created a device, the ThermoTrack, to alert drivers when a child or pet has been left unattended in the vehicle. When the temperature in the vehicle rises above 40 degrees and it can detect movement within the vehicle, the ThermoTrack will send an alert to the driver's phone. This device was presented amongst several amazing inventions that students from the Illawarra had created for the Innovate for Impact event, a partnership between the Department of Education and Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong [CEDOW]. I would like to extend my congratulations to Rome Golfo, Isaac Iera, Pj Pardon, and Isaac Llamas for their hard work and initiative in creating this device. You all have identified a pressing issue in the community and created a viable solution, which is something to be very proud of.

NORTHERN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 - BASHA AUTOHAUS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Basha Autohaus of West Ryde for their outstanding achievement at the Northern Local Business Awards 2024, where they took home the award in the Automotive Services category. This well-deserved recognition is a testament to the exceptional service and dedication Basha Autohaus has consistently provided to the local community. Basha Autohaus has long been a trusted name in West Ryde, offering expert automotive repairs and maintenance. Their commitment to excellence has ensured their customers' safety and satisfaction and fostered a strong sense of community in Ryde. They have built relationships with local residents and businesses, supporting local initiatives and providing quality employment opportunities. Their success at the Northern Local Business Awards highlights small businesses like Basha Autohaus's vital role in Ryde's social and economic fabric. We are fortunate to have such a committed and capable business in our community. I congratulate Basha Autohaus on this prestigious award and thank them for their ongoing contribution to Ryde.

NORTHERN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 - KOI DESSERT KITCHEN - TOP RYDE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Koi Dessert Kitchen - Top Ryde for their outstanding achievement in winning the Bakery/Cake Business category at the 2024 Northern Local Business Awards. Koi Dessert Kitchen, based in Ryde, has been a pillar of the local community, not only for their exceptional cakes and desserts but for their ongoing contribution to Ryde's vibrant business landscape. Their commitment to quality, creativity, and customer satisfaction has made them a beloved fixture in Ryde, drawing visitors from across the region and helping to support the local economy. Beyond their delicious creations, Koi Dessert Kitchen has regularly contributed to community events and celebrations, offering sweet moments that bring people together. The recognition they received at the 2024 Northern Local Business Awards is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and the high regard in which they are held by the community. Their success reflects the strong entrepreneurial spirit in Ryde, and I am confident they will continue to inspire and delight us for many years to come.

NORTHERN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 - EVOLUTION LASER CLINIC AT TOP RYDE CITY SHOPPING CENTRE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Evolution Laser Clinic at Top Ryde City Shopping Centre for their well-deserved win in the Beauty Services category at the Northern Local Business Awards 2024. Evolution Laser Clinic has made a significant contribution to the community of Ryde, not

only through their professional services but also by fostering local employment and supporting the well-being of residents. Their commitment to delivering high-quality beauty treatments has set a standard of excellence, enhancing confidence and self-care for countless individuals. As a business based in the heart of Ryde, Evolution Laser Clinic has actively engaged with the local community, offering a welcoming space where clients feel supported and valued. Their dedication to customer service and innovative beauty solutions has earned them recognition, and their success is a testament to the thriving small business culture within our area. We are fortunate to have such a business in Ryde, one that not only excels in its field but also contributes positively to the local economy and community spirit. Congratulations once again to Evolution Laser Clinic for this outstanding achievement.

HILLS KNIGHTS FOOTBALL CLUB, 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I recently attended the Hills Knights Soccer Club, 50th Anniversary Celebration. The club was founded in 1974 when Sister Margaret Jones encouraged the St. Michaels Primary School Parents and Friends Association to assist with setting up a sporting activity for the boys. St. Michaels Soccer Club was then born. The club fielded four teams in its first year playing in the Church's Competition. In the early 2000s the club changed its name to 'The Knights'. In 2008 the club entered the Granville and District Soccer Association. The Club later rebranded its name to be 'Hills Knights' to reflect its growth and community spirit in the local area. The club now is one of the largest clubs in the Hills Football Association with approximately 1,100 players registered. The Club now fields teams in all divisions from U8 to O45 in the mixed competition and juniors with dedicated female teams throughout the club. I recognise the dedication of all who have served to make the club a sporting success story in our local area. I thank the current President David Gutwenger, Vice President Rodrigue Khoury and all Committee Members for your service to local sport.

CASTLE HILL ART SOCIETY AWARDS, 2024

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—Castle Hill Art Society Awards, 2024. The Castle Hill Art Society recently held the Annual Art Show and Awards. The Art show is part of the Hills Shire Council Annual Orange Blossom Festival. I attended and viewed the fantastic art on display. There were some great displays from many local artists. The overall Best in the Show winner was Richa Panicker for 'Divine Within'. Best Oil Painting winner was Patrick Oa for 'Portrait of Lia'. Best Acrylic winner was Jun Velasco for "Tranquil Waterslide." Best Watercolour winner was Sushella Girl for "Powerful". Best Pastel & Work on Paper winner was Jayne Bowman for "Maggie". Best Contemporary winner was Sandra Daley for "Blue Waters". Best Small Painting winner was Madeleine Szymanski for "School Morning". The Art prize for an artist over 60 years of age was given to Colina Grant for "Boardwalk thought the Mangroves". Finally, the Member's Award winner was Caroline Pullinger for "Bush Dance." This years Art Awards was another success. I recognise and thank Birgitta Horst, Jill Bluzmanis and the Castle Hill Art Society for organising another fantastic art show this year.

GLENBURNIE MERINO STUD WINS NATIONAL FLEECE COMPETITION

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Walcha's Glenburnie Merino and Poll Stud, for taking out the grand champion title at the 2024 Australian Fleece Competition in Bendigo. The competition is in its 23rd year and is the largest fully measured fleece competition in the world. I congratulate father and son duo Paul and Bateson Pittman, for taking out this impressive accolade in just their second attempt, with stud Principal Paul Pittman attending the Australian Sheep and Wool Shows in Bendigo over the past 15 years. The win was with their 19 micron two year old stud ewe fleece, which scored 96.2 points out of 100, with the ewe exhibiting exceptional fleece weight and quality, staple length, whilst having great coverage underneath. I commend Paul and Bateson not only on winning this prestigious title, but also on their contribution to the wool industry and to Australian agriculture.

COOPER COLLINS GUIDES YOUNG MINDS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Armidale Secondary College student Cooper Collins, who will soon finish his HSC with a qualification, after spending the last two years in a traineeship as a School Learning Support Officer [SLSO]. I congratulate Cooper on this accolade and for taking up the traineeship opportunity. The road to success began with Cooper being inspired by his mum a SLSO herself, followed by a week of work experience in 2022, where he helped guide the budding young minds of Armidale City Public School's kindergarten children. Then in 2023 the Anaiwan-Kamilaroi teen officially took up a traineeship, as part of the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant. I commend Cooper for his hard work and dedication to his studies. Special thanks to Miss Tina Rubie and her Year 2 class at Armidale City Public School, where Cooper has been learning the skills needed as an SLSO. Thank you also to Principal Sarah Travis and staff of Armidale Secondary, for supporting Cooper in this wonderful accomplishment.

GLEN INNES POWERLIFTER FACES WORLDS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Mr Mitch Therle who finished 2nd in the 120kg+ division at the Australia Powerlifting Titles in July this year. I congratulate the 37-year-old from Glen Innes who took out second position at the competition. Therle can squat and deadlift more than 200kg, with a 120kg bench press. Mitch will now compete at the World Powerlifting Championships in a three-day event at the Sydney International Convention Centre later this year. I commend Mitch for this accolade after four years of hard work and training. A special thank you also to Kings Gym and Fitness for their training and sponsorship to Mitch, which helped with travel and training costs. Mitch will also attend the Oceania Powerlifting Championships in New Zealand to round out the year and we wish him every success at this event.

GEORGE BRENNAN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—A big thank you to Rutherford's George Brennan who has raised \$20,600 for Braille House. Over the past two years, George has cashed in 206,000 bottles at Return and Earn, to raise the funds. George a former highway patrol sergeant, customised 40 council sized wheelie bins for homes and businesses across the city. When the bin is full, George collects it and pours the bottles and cans into his custom-made trailer, and cashes them in. George originally used return and earn money to purchase supplies for his 11 grandchildren, but after hearing about Braille House he made the switch to fundraising. Braille House is an Australian not-for-profit free lending library which loans out Braille and Moon type books to people who are blind or have low vision. To convert books, Braille House places thick, clear stickers over the writing on books which has the words in Braille. For children who are learning to read, this allows them to read the Braille at the same time as an adult who is reading the text aloud. Congratulations George and thank you for ensuring children who are blind or have low vision to have access to reading materials.

HUNTER LOCAL BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—It was an outstanding night for Maitland businesses at the recent 2024 Hunter Local Business Awards. Beam Bookkeeping's Debbie Mirisch and Katie McCool were named winners in the Outstanding Professional Services award. Bridgestone Select Tyre and Auto at Greenhills took out best Automotive Services. Elements Morpeth won best new business, and Hunter Barbers were named best barber shop. Hunter Legal and Conveyancing won their category and Katachi Hair & Spa were awarded best in beauty services. The pet care category went to Kaysadale Farm and Southon Styles at Rutherford won for fashion. Stephasaurus Cleaning won the award for a sole trader and the butchery award went to the ever popular Telarah Butchery. A special congratulations to Sensai Jenna Stevens from Guy's Karate School who won the most outstanding youth award. Congratulations to all the business winners from across Maitland.

MAITLAND MUSICAL SOCIETY 60TH BIRTHDAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Maitland Musical Society who are celebrating their 60th birthday this year. And what other way would a musical society celebrate other than to host a spectacular concert featuring 22 vocalists and a 20-piece orchestra. The celebration will have two performances and will feature a huge range of popular musical theatre numbers from the society's long history. Members past and present have volunteered their time and expertise to collate a historical display showcasing images and memorabilia from 1964 to 2024. It will also be a chance to reconnect with old friends and enjoy some great music. The society was originally Maitland Gilbert and Sullivan so the concerts will feature a song or two from Pirates, Pinafore, Trial by Jury. There will also be music from Little Women, Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Nonsense, Seussical, Cinderella and much more. Congratulations to Maitland Musical Society and all involved for their profound contribution to the Maitland community over so many years. Happy 60th Birthday.

MARINE RESCUE ULLADULLA

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate Marine Rescue Ulladulla for their exceptional contribution to our community. Their dedicated volunteers work tirelessly to ensure the safety of everyone on our waters, from local residents to visitors exploring the South Coast. Marine Rescue Ulladulla provides an essential service, responding to emergencies, conducting search and rescue operations, and offering assistance to vessels in distress. Their ability to act swiftly and their deep knowledge of our waterways make them a crucial part of keeping our marine environment safe. Beyond their lifesaving efforts, Marine Rescue Ulladulla plays a vital role in promoting boating safety through education and awareness programs. Their commitment to preventing accidents and ensuring safe boating practices is invaluable. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a committed team of volunteers serving our community and I extend my

sincere thanks to Marine Rescue Ulladulla for their selfless service and the peace of mind they bring to everyone who enjoys our waters. Their efforts truly make a difference in keeping our waters safe for all.

MILTON ULLADULLA LIONS CLUB

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate the Milton Ulladulla Lions Club for their outstanding contributions to the local area. For decades, the Lions Club has been a pillar of support, tirelessly working to improve the lives of people across the region. Their selfless dedication to service is truly inspiring. From organising local events to supporting charitable causes, the Milton Ulladulla Lions Club plays a crucial role in strengthening community spirit. Their projects, such as the Jindalara Respite Cottage demonstrate their commitment to making a lasting positive impact on the South Coast. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Lions Club is their unwavering passion for bringing people together, whether it's through community events, health screenings, or youth development programs. Their efforts foster a sense of unity and pride within our community. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers making a difference in the lives of so many. I extend my deepest thanks to the Milton Ulladulla Lions Club. And I look forward to working with you on your future initiatives.

MILTON ULLADULLA VIEW CLUB

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate Milton Ulladulla VIEW club for their remarkable contributions to our community. This dedicated group plays an essential role in empowering women and supporting the education of disadvantaged children through their partnership with The Smith Family. Milton Ulladulla VIEW club members work tirelessly to raise funds and provide educational opportunities for children in need, helping to break the cycle of disadvantage. Their ongoing efforts, from organising events to fundraising initiatives, highlights their deep commitment to making a lasting difference in the lives of young people. Beyond their educational focus, Milton Ulladulla VIEW club fosters strong connections among its members, providing a space for women to come together, share ideas, and contribute meaningfully to local causes. Their work strengthens both the individual lives they touch and the broader community as a whole. We are incredibly fortunate to have Milton Ulladulla VIEW club as a vital part of our region, and I extend my sincere thanks to them for their ongoing dedication. Their positive impact on the Shoalhaven is truly appreciated.

HARLEY BUNYAN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to congratulate Harley Bunyan on receiving the MidCoast Council Youth Week Community Award! The award was presented at the Manning Entertainment Centre, and what a well-deserved recognition this is. Harley's contributions to the Manning Valley community are extraordinary. From helping organise TasteFest, refereeing for the Manning Valley Hockey Association, being a Young National, and working as a Teacher's Aid at St Joseph's, to his role as Secretary and Road Safety Ambassador with Hannah's Blue Butterflies Road Safety Awareness Inc., Harley is making a huge difference in our area. And if that wasn't enough, he's managing all of this while undertaking his senior studies. At just 17 years old, Harley has the world at his feet. His commitment, leadership, and passion for community service is such an inspiration. Congratulations once again, Harley.

JUNE DENCE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise June Dence for her 'Local Identity' feature in the Forster Fortnightly newspaper. At 102, June has dedicated much of her life to helping others. During World War II, she delivered goods to soldiers and later spent over 40 years volunteering with Meals on Wheels. June's craft skills, including knitting, crocheting, and sewing, have supported various causes, such as making trauma teddies and items for the Alannah and Madeline Foundation. Since moving to Evermore in Forster in 2016, she has continued to share her skills with others. Throughout her life, June has faced challenges, including personal loss, but she has always been committed to community service and making connections within her local area. I thank June for her contributions and the positive impact she has made on so many lives.

MIDCOAST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise the students at MidCoast Christian College for their production of Seussical Jr. With a cast of over 60 students from years 4 to 7, this show brought Dr. Seuss's characters to life, showing off talents in acting, singing, and dancing. It's great to hear the enthusiasm from students like Oli Storrie, who played Horton the Elephant, and Summer Blair, one of the Bird Girls, which shows the positive experience this production created. The collaboration between staff, parents, and students was key to the success of the show. From the costumes to the performances, it really captured the joy of theatre. Congratulations to everyone involved, including co-directors Mrs. Lisa Donnelly and Mrs. Naomi Allan for their roles as choreographer and musical director.

SPRINGFEST FAMILY FUN DAY 2024

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Every year the Willoughby Public School community host a fantastic Springfest and 2024 was no exception. On Saturday 21 September, I was delighted to take my family along to this wonderful community fair which offered bucketloads of fun for the whole family. Attractions included rides, entertainment and live music, face painting and ballooning, a magic show, a physio performance, a gaming truck, a petting farm, rock climbing, market stalls, and food trucks selling delicious meals and snacks. The Springfest attracted hundreds of families who soaked up the beautiful Spring sunshine and festive atmosphere. Its success was a real credit to the hard work and community spirit of the dedicated Parents and Citizens Association of Willoughby Public. I would also like to thank the sponsors including, Di Jones, Broadlands and Stockspot for their support of the Springfest Family fun day. It brought a lot of joy to my family and our community, and I am very proud of its success.

AUSTRALIA CHINA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION MOONCAKE FESTIVAL DINNER

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—For my local Chinese Australian community of Willoughby, the Mid-Autumn Festival is a special time of year. Also known as the 'Moon Festival', it is celebrated during the northern Autumn when the moon is believed to be its brightest and fullest size, coinciding with peak harvest time. With a 3,000 year history, it is one of the most important holidays in Chinese culture and is typically celebrated with the lighting of lanterns and eating of mooncakes. These symbolise the light that guides people's path to prosperity and good fortune. On Sunday 15 September, I had the joy of celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival with members of my community at Sydney Town Hall. Featuring traditional Chinese dancing and delicious food, the celebration was hosted by the Australia China Charity Foundation. I would like to thank the Foundation for organising such a fantastic evening and I wish everyone in Willoughby and beyond a very Happy Mid-Autumn Festival!

JAPAN MATSURI FESTIVAL, CHATSWOOD MALL

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Willoughby is home to a large Japanese-Australian community the largest in NSW, and it was wonderful to see so many of them showcase their rich and ancient culture at the annual Matsuri Festival in Chatswood Mall on Sunday 14 September. Offering a smorgasbord of cultural samplings, the Festival featured authentic Japanese street food and delicacies, origami making, ikebana flower arranging, calligraphy and tea making. In addition, there were information stalls providing insights into Japanese language and history, together with travel tips and cultural exchange opportunities. The appreciative crowds at the Festival were entertained by live performances of matsuri music, traditional dances and drumming. The Festival really brought the spirit of Japan alive right in the heart of Chatswood, treating locals to a cultural extravaganza. I thank the organisers of the Matsuri Festival particular the Japan Club of Sydney and Willoughby Council for staging such a vibrant display of Japanese culture, food, art and music.

ANNE BARWICK

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Anne Barwick, who has been a familiar and friendly face at the Macquarie Regional Libraries for an incredible forty years! Anne's journey with the library began in 1984, one of her tasks involved travelling between branches with a 16mm film projector, screening movies for local children. As times and technology rapidly changed, so did Anne. She adapted, learned new skills, and embraced change with open arms. Anne understood the importance of being part of a team, growing with the library, and staying at the forefront of innovation. Her dedication and willingness to learn have been key to her success. Today, Anne works behind the scenes in the Regional Office based in Dubbo, selecting and cataloguing the books, CDs, and DVDs that so many of us enjoy from the Macquarie Regional Library. Her work is not just about keeping the shelves stocked but about curating collections that inspire educate and entertain our community. It's people like Anne – passionate, committed, and dedicated – who make our libraries the lifeblood of our communities. Congratulations once again on your remarkable achievement, Anne! Your dedication over the past forty years has made a lasting impact.

THE WILLNERS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the contribution of two dedicated individuals who have been instrumental in the success and growth of the Dubbo Junior Rugby Club - Adam and Nikki Willner. Adam is President of the Club and has been a key figure in shaping the club's vision and direction. His involvement also includes coaching and refereeing, as well as extending beyond the club, with contributions to Central West Rugby and the NSW Rugby Foundation. Whether it's setting up, packing down after home games, or lending a hand on gala days, his dedication is unwavering. Nikki, too, has been an invaluable asset to the club. She has held several committee positions, including Treasurer, and is currently serving as the club's Registrar. Often working behind the scenes, Nikki plays a critical role in ensuring everything runs

smoothly—from rostering canteen duties on home games to organising gala days. Her tireless work in stocktaking kits, planning for future seasons, and communicating essential information to coaches keeps everything running like clockwork. Thank you, Adam & Nikki, for all you do for Dubbo Junior Rugby, ensuring the success of the club and providing opportunities for the kids!

MOTORFEST

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate the Dubbo Motorfest committee on their extremely successful event on 31 August 2024. Their inaugural event was held in 2023, and it is a credit to the organising committee. The phenomenal efforts they have put in after thoroughly evaluating their first event and considering constructive feedback ensured the success of 2024, is commendable. With more than eight thousand people entering the Dubbo Showground gates to enjoy a day of activities including show n shine vehicles and bikes, vehicle displays, motorcycle musters, and elite vehicles and bikes it was a motor enthusiasts heaven! It really was a family event, with entertainment, food vendors and traders all contributing to the incredible vibe. Putting an event like this together is no mean feat, not only on the day, but the countless hours the volunteers contribute in the lead up. It is an absolute credit to the committee members and their sub committees. With no rest for this hard-working bunch, the ideas are already flowing with plans being worked on for Motorfest 2025. As the event continues to go from strength to strength, I look forward to seeing what they come up with next year!

AUSTRALIAN DARTS CHAMPIONSHIPS MICHAEL, SARAH AND MELISSA HARRISON

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge three Clarence valley locals, Michael Harrison, his wife Sarah and his sister Melissa, who all recently qualified to represent NSW at the Australian Darts Championships in Victoria. It is a testament to their dedication that this is the third time they have succeeded in qualifying to represent our state at the National level. In particular, I would like to congratulate Sarah Harrison who competed in the Australian mixed doubles title with her fellow NSW team member Shannon O'Brien and took out first place. I am told it's been quite some time since NSW won this title, so this is a fantastic achievement. Sarah has also now been selected to play for Australia in an upcoming test match against New Zealand, and I wish her the very best in this competition. Well done to Michael, Sarah and Melissa, terrific work consistently showcasing the talent of the Clarence at a National level, we are all very proud of you and wish you every success in your future endeavours.

ANN AND JOHN MCLEAN - CONGRATULATIONS

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge the remarkable dedication and tireless volunteer work of Ann and John McLean of Iluka who are embarking on a new journey and soon to be leaving the area. Ann and John dedicated many hours to successfully establishing an Ambulance station in Iluka. They have since been advocating for medical services in Iluka and were instrumental in attracting Dr Anthony Anachuna and his wife Dr Stella to establish a General Practice in the town. Both critical facilities certainly enhance the health and safety of residents and provide a sense of security and well-being that will be felt for generations to come. Such wonderful achievements that you have both been fundamental in achieving. Thank you and congratulations on all of the wonderful achievements you have made over the years, and I wish you both all the very best in your future adventures.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS WALK FOR CASINO

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I acknowledge Amie Weekes of McKees Hill who organised the second 'Out of the Shadows Walk for Casino' held at Albert Park on 8 September as part of World Suicide Prevention Day. The event was an opportunity for the community to come together to raise awareness on such a critical issue. Suicide impacts far too many Australians, with over 3,000 lives lost each year. These are not just numbers – they represent our family members, friends, and loved ones. This event is a powerful reminder that through connection, compassion, and hope, we can support those facing emotional distress and work together to prevent further tragedies. By walking in memory of those we have lost, or in support of those struggling, we break down the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide. Every step taken in this walk is a step toward ensuring that no one feels alone in their darkest moments. The funds raised go directly toward providing crisis support and vital suicide prevention services, making a real difference in saving lives. Thank you Amie and all participants for shining a light on this important issue and for fostering a stronger, more supportive community.

GUMLY'S - GOLDEN GIRL

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The close-knit community of Gumly Gumly on Wagga's eastern fringe has many champions, but none have served so long and so well as "Gumly's Golden Girl", Martha Lamprey. Mrs Lamprey, who has called Gumly Gumly home for 90 years, was recently presented with a Crown Lands Service Recognition Award for her 37 years of volunteering for the Gumly Recreation Reserve. With her fellow volunteers, she has been instrumental in delivering new netball facilities and a community hall – the latter a reward

for fifteen years of fund raising. Mrs Lamprey has also been active in charity work, raising \$25,000 for the cancer ward at Wagga Base Hospital. She is a life member of the East Wagga Koorringal Hawks football team, and, on a personal note, my son is a former EWK player and as a family we spent many happy hours being part of a remarkable sporting community. As one of the oldest residents, Mrs Lamprey is part of Gumly's heart and soul – Lamprey Avenue was named in her family's honour and nearby Argus Avenue was named after her mother's family. Congratulations and thank you to Mrs Lamprey for doing so much for the vibrant village of Gumly!

WESTERN SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I was pleased to attend the Western Sydney Academy of Sport Annual Awards at Wentworthville Leagues Club on 13th September 2024. One of 11 Regional Academies of Sport across NSW, the Western Sydney Academy of Sport provides high-quality and all-rounded development programs for talented young athletes in our community. From Blacktown to Fairfield and everywhere in between, the Academy are developing our local athletes into the next generation of Olympians and Paralympians. Athletes from 11 sporting disciplines were recognised for their talent, leadership, dedication and commitment to their sport throughout the 2023/24 season. I give special congratulations to Athlete of the Year Matthew Engesser, Indigenous Future Star of the Year Lara Hodges and our first Para-Sports Athlete of the Year, Sam Blade. I also congratulate the dedicated coaches who received Service Awards for ten and twenty years of consecutive service. During the Awards, I was thrilled to learn that the Western Sydney Academy of Sport has found a new place to call home – at Wentworthville Leagues in our Prospect Electorate. I extend my congratulations to Chairman Rod Glover, Academy partners, volunteers, coaches, athletes and parents for an outstanding 2024 season!

WENTWORTHVILLE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Sunday 22nd September, I was delighted to meet with volunteers and parishioners from Wentworthville Anglican Church and present them with a Community Building Partnership grant. Wentworthville Anglican is a wonderful faith-based community located in the heart of our local Prospect Electorate. Established in 1919, they run English and Tamil language church services on Sunday and operate numerous services, including language classes for new migrants. Their community garden caters especially to refugees with a history of trauma and marginalised individuals from culturally diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds. This year, Wentworthville Anglican successfully applied for a Community Building Partnership grant of \$31,664 to fund heating and security lighting upgrades, including replacing dated heating units inside the church nave. This grant will ensure that parishioners attending church services will no longer have to endure through the colder months. It was inspiring to join the Wentworthville Anglican family during their Sunday service to join them in prayer and to connect afterwards during morning tea. My thanks go out to David Misztal, Pastor, and all parishioners and volunteers at Wentworthville Anglican Church on serving as a wonderful beacon of hope for our local Prospect community.

UNMASKING COERCIVE CONTROL FORUM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On September 12th I joined my Parliamentary Colleague, Stephen Bali MP and NSW Women's Safety Commissioner Dr Hannah Tonkin to address the LEAD Professional Development Association and the Harman Foundation Unmasking Coercive Control: The Hidden Abuse Forum in Rooty Hill. LEAD Professional Development Association has facilitated opportunities to enhance the knowledge and resources of our community workers for over forty years. The Harman Foundation supports our local community through volunteer-run initiatives, with a special focus on assisting women escaping domestic violence. With the recent criminalisation of coercive control in NSW, I am immensely grateful to these organisations for creating a safe and open space for survivors and for our community to learn more about the signs and implications of coercive control. I hope that with further collaboration, we can work towards a future free from domestic violence. I was moved to hear from Kyra Quinlivan and Jasjeet Kaur, two brave survivors who shared their stories and lived-experiences of coercive control. I would like to thank Sharmily Nagarsekar, the CEO of LEAD and Harinder Kaur OAM, the CEO and Co-Founder of Harman Foundation, for providing a platform to discuss this crucial issue facing our Western Sydney community.

CENTRAL SYDNEY WOLVES AWARDS BANKSTOWN DISTRICT AMATEUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION DINNER

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Every year, Football Clubs from the Bankstown area come together to celebrate their achievements and sportsmanship at Bankstown District Amateur Football Association's [BDAFA] Annual Dinner. This year, Central Sydney Wolves Football Club left the dinner with various trophies which show their dedication to local community sports. I would like to congratulate President of the club, Ola El-Zahab, on being awarded the BDAFA 2024 Umbro All Age Division 1 Gold Medal Player of the Year and Bill Karafotias, head coach and life member, was awarded with BDAFA Club Volunteer 2024 award.

The top scorer of the competition, Marvis Oyanoghafo, received the BDAFA 2024 Umbro Bankstown Premier Leagues Golden Boot. Congratulations also to Laurie Warner for receiving BDAFA's Life Membership. Their dedication, sportsmanship, and passion, that they consistently bring on and off the field shows their commitment to sports in our community. On behalf of our community, we cannot be prouder of these amazing people. These awards add to the rich legacy of sporting achievements in our community. They truly deserve the recognition, and we wish the Wolves a successful season in 2025!

RHONDA HAY RETIRES

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Rhonda Hay has recently retired from Wollondilly Anglican College after 18 and a half years of dedicated service. As the Headmaster's Personal Assistant, Rhonda consistently exemplified professionalism, grace, and humility in her work, becoming a beloved figure within the College community. Her commitment to excellence in everything she did has left an indelible mark on the College, and her presence will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of working alongside her. Throughout her time at the College, Rhonda's attention to detail, kindness, and grace made her a cherished colleague. As Rhonda embarks on her well-earned retirement, the entire Wollondilly Anglican College community reflects on her immense contributions and the positive impact she has had on countless students, staff, and families. While she will be missed, her legacy of dedication and excellence will remain a lasting part of the College's history. Thank you Rhonda, I wish you all the best in the next chapter.

CONGRATULATIONS MRS FAKHOURI, MRS WASSIF AND MS SIMUNDZA FOR 30 YEARS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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 Mrs. Fakhouri, Mrs. Wassif, and Ms. Simundza on incredible milestones, 30 years of dedicated service to NSW Public Education! Your commitment to fostering a love of learning and supporting countless students has made a lasting impact on our community. Over the past three decades, you have exemplified the qualities of outstanding educators. Your passion for teaching, dedicated support for students, and collaborative spirit have inspired both colleagues and many students. You have not only communicated knowledge but also infused confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging in every child who has walked through your classroom doors. Through your innovative approaches, you have adapted to the ever-changing education landscape, ensuring that every student can thrive. Your dedication to professional growth and community involvement is truly commendable. As you celebrate this remarkable achievement, we thank you for your tireless efforts and the positive influence you have had on so many lives. Your legacy will continue to shape the future of education in our community. Here's to many more years of success and inspiration to your students!

RFS SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS HAZARD REDUCTION BURNS AND GET READY WEEKEND

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Firefighters from the Southern Highlands RFS were joined by Fire and Rescue NSW to conduct a successful hazard reduction burn at Mount Alexandra in Mittagong, in early September 2024. These burns are a vital step in reducing fire risk in the area and essential for keeping our communities and bushland safe as the fire season approaches. The Southern Highlands RFS, alongside units across the state, will also participate in the Get Ready Weekend on the 21st and 22nd of September. With warmer days signalling the approach of summer, now is the ideal time to prepare for the upcoming bushfire season. The RFS can assist in creating a bushfire survival plan, understanding fire danger ratings, and ensuring your home is ready for potential fires. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Wollondilly electorate RFS members. Your dedication, time, and effort in caring for our bushland and protecting our community are truly invaluable. Your hard work plays a crucial role in ensuring our safety and preserving the natural beauty of the region.

BECCI FOWLER AND THE TEA COLLECTIVE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Novocastrian Becci Fowler who has just opened a flagship store for her business, The Tea Collective, in Sydney's Queen Victoria Building. From her Mayfield West warehouse, Becci not only blends her own unique tea blends, but also hand-blends her own bath soaks and candles. From a small enterprise on Darby Street to opening her own flagship store in Sydney and selling her tea blends throughout Australia and the world, Becci is a tea-riffic example of Novocastrian entrepreneurship. Becci has also ensured she has added some Newcastle and Hunter Valley touches to her flagship store to pay homage to Newcastle as her 'stomping ground'. This is an amazing achievement, and I can't wait to see where The Tea Collective goes next!

STUDENTS ENJOY - MINI OLYMPICS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Students at Bankstown South Infants School hosted

their own spectacular Olympics that allowed students to dress up in their cultural colours and show off their skills in different sports. An opening ceremony introducing all the countries the students' families represented, was followed by a torch relay led by Mrs Derbas before the cauldron was lit. The children participated in a range of different sporting events including hurdles, jumping sack races, egg and spoon races, parachute games, basketball, handball, gymnastics, and soccer. Mrs Derbas and the staff wanted to provide the students with a powerful platform for enriching learning about the Olympics. By allowing an Olympics Multicultural Day, allowed for a celebration of inclusivity, unity, and determination. This was an effective way to reflect the value of teamwork, respect, and joy that the students experienced through this Olympic day. It was also a day of learning, connection and celebration which reinforces the school's commitment to a welcoming and inclusive educational environment. I would like to thank the Bankstown South Infants School Principal, Mrs Leyla Derbas, and all the teachers for making this day amazing. Thank you for your amazing work and keep it up.

LOWLANDS BOWLING CLUB

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I would like to wish beloved Cooks Hills establishment, Lowlands Bowling Club, a happy birthday for turning 132 on 21 September. Founded in 1982, Lowlands Bowling Club is now the oldest active registered club in the greater Newcastle region. Over the last century, Lowlands Bowling Club has become an integral pillar within the community. Representing the many cross-sections of our community, the club fulfils important social and sporting roles, including hosting functions, charity events and their youth development program 'Youth Bowls @ Lowies'. I'd like to thank Lowlands Bowling Club for their ongoing commitment to the community, and look forward to celebrating their 133rd birthday next year!

NSW SES BALLINA UNIT YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM GRADUATES 2024

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the NSW SES Ballina Unit 2024 Youth Internship Program Graduates. This year's cohort, aged 15 and 16, were nominated by Principals of 4 local schools as outstanding candidates to gain work experience with our local SES. The students this year immersed themselves in a specially developed program, learning about the commitment required in a community volunteer service. They impressed in their dedication to experiencing the various vital operations within the SES and developed teamwork and leadership qualities. Over ten weeks, the twelve participants covered first aid and casualty handling, volunteering and careers in emergency services, radio communications and storm damage repairs and were honoured with a graduation ceremony at the NSW SES Ballina Unit. I extend my congratulations to Mikayla Cairns, Omar Mant, Sean Dein, Ethan Byrne, Matilda Brooks, Sachi Brooks, Jayden Heyhoe, Makayla Fox, Archie Cook, Sunny Gao, Dakota Pettingill, and Indi Peachey, as well as the NSW SES Ballina Unit that mentored them. I commend their commitment and look forward to them putting their learnings to positive effect in the community.

SYDNEY KINGS' JUNIOR BASKETBALLERS CLINIC IN NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding success that was the Sydney Kings' Junior Basketballers Clinic in Newcastle. It was a great trip, not only for the juniors who participated in the clinic, but also for the purpose of growing the sport in our area. Newcastle has a strong basketball culture, and it was wonderful to see the high level of participation for the clinic. One example of this strong basketball culture is Sydney Kings forward and Newcastle local - Kouat Noi - who attended the clinic, giving back to the area he grew up in. It was great to meet Kouat, and to welcome him back to Newcastle. Thank you, to the Sydney Kings, Kouat, and all that attended and participated for making the clinic a wonderful experience and success.

MR BRYAN SIDGREAVES OF HUNTERS HILL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr Bryan Sidgreaves of Hunters Hill for winning 1st Place with the Best Overall Garden with help in the 2024 Hunters Hill Spring Garden Competition. Mr Sidgreaves' garden won for a dynamic use of colour and form to create an interesting and inviting garden space.

MR DANIEL MICHAEL OF HUNTERS HILL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr Daniel Michael of Hunters Hill for winning 1st Place with the Best Native Inspired Garden in the 2024 Hunters Hill Spring Garden Competition. Mr Michael's garden won for a fabulous collage of native style planting hedged and pruned with a sense of rhythm and artistic interest.

MRS LYNN METCALFE OF WOOLWICH

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mrs Lynn Metcalfe of Woolwich for winning 1st Place with the Best Streetscape Garden in the 2024 Hunters Hill Spring Garden

Competition. Mrs Metcalfe's garden was judged 'a bold use of colour and repeated planting material to achieve a wonderful patchwork effect in an exposed difficult planting site.'

BYRON BAY JUNIOR BASKETBALLERS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the achievements of Byron Bay basketball players (the Beez) in their successful run in the Northeast Junior League competition. The teenagers are to be congratulated for claiming two championships in the finals held at the Port Macquarie Stadium and entering the State Cup. In the U/14 boys' Division One category, the Beez, captained by Henry Howell, defeated Tamworth Thunderbolts twice, including in the grand final. The U/18 boys' Division One side, captained by Jye Barlow, beat the Central Coast Rebels 113-77 in the preliminary final, and trounced Port Macquarie 103-56 in the grand final. The Beez U/18 girls, with Lilly Short as captain, also had a great season, winning 12 of their 14 regular season games. Congratulations are also due to the young players who have been selected to join the D-League, which identifies talented players and assists with their development: Under 14 Country Boys, Ori Agam Rom; U16 Country Boys, Arthur Anderson; U18 Country Boys, Billy Blair; and Under 18 Country Girls, Stella Parsonage. A huge congratulations to the players and all members of the Byron Bay basketball club for their dedication to the sport and their success.

YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2024

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—Last month, I had the privilege of meeting with participants from this year's Youth Parliament cohort, organised by the Y NSW. For more than twenty years, this program has been a cornerstone in fostering civic engagement and leadership among young people, and it continues to inspire and empower our future leaders. As a passionate advocate for civics education, I am delighted to support the Y and had the pleasure of meeting with participants here in Parliament. Their enthusiasm, insight, and commitment to shaping our community's future are truly commendable. I would also like to extend a special congratulations to Aarushi Duggal, the Youth Member for Londonderry. Aarushi, your passion and dedication are evident, and your future is incredibly bright. Your contributions and the energy you bring to Youth Parliament and your community are a testament to the positive impact of this program. I look forward to seeing what you choose to pursue. Thank you to the Y NSW for continuing to provide such an invaluable platform for young voices. Together, we are nurturing the leaders of tomorrow and strengthening our democracy.

SCREENWORKS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the incredible contribution to the film and television industry and to creatives in our region and across Australia by Screenworks. In particular, their Regional Crew Pathways Program developed in partnership with Netflix is an exciting initiative for our community. The initiative provides six film and media graduates with the opportunity to get their first professional paid crew role. The two-step training includes an 'On set on boarding' course followed by paid placements in early entry crew roles for six selected participants (two from the Northern Rivers). The program provides training and screen industry career pathways for regional people and directly addresses below-the-line skill gaps in addition to building screen production capacity in regional areas. The program started in Northern NSW and is just one of the initiatives that Screenworks has provided to nurture the vibrant film industry in the Northern Rivers and to mentor and support employment within the Australian film industry, and the success of our film and television industry globally.

SUNNYFIELD SERVICES - ST MARYS HUB

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I am thrilled to extend my deepest appreciation and congratulations to Sunnyfield Services at their St Marys Hub. Sunnyfield has long been a pillar of support for individuals with disabilities, and their St Marys Hub exemplifies their commitment to creating inclusive and empowering environments. The dedication and compassion of the team at Sunnyfield are truly inspiring. Their work not only enhances the lives of those they serve but also strengthens our community by promoting inclusivity and respect. Their skills for life program equips individuals with the experience and skills needed to live independently, such as planning a menu, road safety and budgeting. A special thank you to everyone at the St Marys Hub for their tireless efforts and innovative approaches to supporting individuals with disabilities. Your commitment to providing high-quality care, personal development opportunities, and community engagement is making a significant difference in the lives of many.

ELLA HURTIS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the athletic success of Ella Hurtis from Goulburn High School. Ella's recent success at the NSW Interschools Snowsport Championships is a testament to her skill and dedication to her sport of skiing. Placing second in the Division 1 Slopestyle Ski with an impressive

score of 80/100 is a remarkable achievement that showcases her talent and determination. As she prepares to represent Goulburn High School at the Interschools Nationals, Ella continues to demonstrate her commitment to excellence in skiing. Her participation in the Thredbo Triple Crown Series, where she competes in the women's open division, further highlights her ambition and passion for the sport. Ella's achievements serve as an inspiration to her peers and the entire school community, proving that with hard work and perseverance, remarkable success is within reach. I wish her all the best in her future competitions and look forward to celebrating her continued success.

ELLIE DRAYTON

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I am delighted to extend my sincere congratulations to Ellie Drayton, a Year 11 student from St Paul's Grammar School for her outstanding performance as a featured soloist at the NSW Department of Education's Training Awards. Ellie's rendition of 'A Million Dreams' was exceptional. Ellie's performance was a testament to her hard work, dedication, and the strong support she receives from her family, school, and community. To perform at a state-wide event to a packed Sydney Town Hall at the young age of seventeen is a testament to her courage and her talent. I am delighted to see schools in my local electorate nurturing and fostering young potential. Ellie's accomplishments not only highlight her individual success but also bring pride to her school. Please join me in congratulating Ellie Drayton for her remarkable performance and wishing her the very best in all her future endeavours.

MULWAREE HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the basketball success of Mulwaree High School. The Mulwaree High School Under 15 girls' basketball team's recent triumph as South Coast champions is a testament to their skill, teamwork, and dedication to the sport. Finishing first in the regional competition is a significant achievement that reflects the hard work and commitment of each team member and their coaches. Their success has propelled them into the next stage of the competition, where they will compete for the title of State Champions. This remarkable accomplishment is a source of pride for the entire school community and serves as an inspiration to other students. The team's journey exemplifies the values of perseverance and collaboration, and I wish them continued success as they strive for the state title.

ST GEORGE SALVOS

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 a group of organisations who came together to celebrate 'International Day of the Older Persons'. This event was organised by Rockdale and Hurstville Salvos, alongside Salvation Army services located in the St George area, Moneycare, Doorways, OASIS, Family and Domestic Violence services, and the Rockdale Salvos Store. More than 80 Seniors from the St. George region gathered to celebrate and honour the wisdom that our older persons bring to our community. The theme of 'Remember when...' gave attendees the opportunity to reflect upon their lives and remember all they had achieved, and to share wisdom they have lived by writing it down for the 'Wisdom Tree'. A delicious morning tea was shared, a singalong of classic hymns and tunes was enjoyed by all, engaging conversations were had, and new friendships formed. I commend the Salvation Army of the St. George area who continue to have such a positive impact on the community.

ADRIAN PRIEM

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the efforts and achievements of Mr Adrian Priem of Binalong. Mr Priem's recent role as assistant coach for the Australian Deaf Rugby team in South Africa is a remarkable achievement that highlights his dedication to both sports and inclusivity. His ability to facilitate communication while also fulfilling traditional coaching responsibilities demonstrates his exceptional commitment to the team and the sport. Under his guidance, the team secured impressive results, placing second in both the Rugby 7s and Rugby 10s. This achievement is not only a testament to his coaching skills but also his ability to inspire and lead in a diverse and challenging environment. Mr Priem's contribution to the Australian Deaf Rugby team is a shining example of how sports can transcend barriers and foster unity and understanding. His efforts have brought great pride to both Yass High School and the wider community, setting a powerful example for others to follow. I celebrate Mr Priem's outstanding achievements and look forward to seeing his continued success.

LIVERPOOL HOSPITAL PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—A Palliative Care Volunteer is a very special person who has chosen to give their time to assist clients and their caregivers. The volunteer's role is to strengthen the ability of the ill person and their family to live as richly and fully as possible. The compassion and kindness

displayed by these volunteers can provide comfort to people during what is often an emotionally and practically challenging time. However, the impact of these volunteers in palliative care is so important and often not forgotten by those whose lives have been touched. To demonstrate how grateful our community is for the work of these wonderful volunteers, I invited some of the hard-working palliative care volunteers from Liverpool Hospital to NSW Parliament for a tour and lunch. Thank you to Paul Hayes, Salam Dandachili, Debbie Gannell, Barbara Chapman, and Volunteer Manager Keira McEvoy for joining me in Macquarie Street and sharing your stories with me. The difference you make in so many lives is inspiring, and Liverpool is a better place for the important work you all do.

SANDY LOUISE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Independent Newcastle musician and singer-songwriter Sandy Louise McNaughton is a mother of two sons and has always been keen for them to see how important it is to follow one's dreams as she has followed hers - singing and songwriting reflect her experiences, heart and soul. Sandy's new album is titled *Live for Today*. "Good to be Free", written about her dad, was voted #1 Most Requested song in April 2024 at the top of the country music charts. Sandy works in childcare, but her real passion is music. She releases her own songs and plays several shows a week around the Hunter, pursuing her own dream to be a musician but also supporting others. Music has always been part of her life – in school and church choirs, high school band, playing guitar and songwriting at 18, gigging solo years later. Her first single was released in 2013 – and she hasn't stopped music-making since. Sandy is Regional Coordinator for the Australian Songwriters Association and runs open mic and song writers' nights for original music at Wax Lyrical and also coordinates Songwriters Sing at the Gal. Congratulations, Sandy!

MARSDEN ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL DEBATING

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—Debating is both a skill and artform. We know that being able to construct an argument, work as part of a team, articulate your perspective and consider alternate points of view are all integral to supporting constructive discussion and social cohesion in our society. The Premier's Debating Challenge helps develop these skills from the earliest opportunity. Marsden Road Public School's debating team, Marsden Road Legends, recently won the round 2 regional finals of Premier's Debating Challenge. The topic was 'that schools should teach Year 5 and 6 students' life-skills like cooking, sewing and how to fix things'. According to the adjudicator, the team presented cohesive and highly persuasive arguments, as well as extremely detailed rebuttals. Earlier this year, the Marsden Road Legends also won rounds against Bonnyrigg Public School, Edensor Park Public School, Mount Pritchard East Public School and against Marsden Road's other debating team, the Superstars, to make it into the knockout round. I extend my congratulations to Legends' team members Emily, Liyanna, Sashe and Marija on their recent success, and I wish them well in the upcoming competitions as the Premier's Debating Challenge progresses.

STEVE FERNIE OAM

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Self-employed plumbing contractor Steve Fernie has been a member of the Scouting movement since joining as a Cub in 1962. As a youth member he completed the Queen's Scout, Baden Powell and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards, becoming a Leader at 18. Steve has held various positions over his time with Scouts, including Group Leader of 1st Wallsend; District Commissioner, West Newcastle District for 16 years; Deputy Regional Commissioner, Hunter and Coastal Region for two years; Regional Commissioner, Hunter and Coastal Region for 20 years, and is now an Honorary Commissioner. Steve's mantra is "the only place success comes before work is in the dictionary". He is committed to the notion of group effort and that there is no monopoly on wisdom, always trying to improve and getting things right. For Steve, there are three sorts of people: those who make it happen, those who watch it happen and those who say "what happened?" Clearly, he is among the first category. Well done on a great career, Steve.

SNAPPAROO OLYMPIC GALA DAY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—Anyone who's ever navigated Saturday morning traffic knows how important community sport is in Australia. We also know that community sport is at its best when it is inclusive for people of all abilities. That's why the inaugural 'Snapparos' Football Gala Day was such an important initiative. It was a 'Football 4 All' event hosted by SNAPP Football in collaboration with Liverpool Olympic FC and Southern Districts Football Association. 'Football 4 All' was established in 2008 to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to play football and to enable a support network for their families and coaches. Currently, there are over 20 programs operating throughout NSW, including one in Liverpool. The Gala Day enabled enthusiastic competitors to show off their skills and love of the game in front of their families and coaches, and included a raffle draw, medal ceremony and player's lunch. To see so many players and families attending is a testament to the fact that sport is a great connector. Congratulations to SNAPP Sports, the event

sponsors and volunteers on organising a successful event, and I look forward to building on this successful foundation to improve sporting opportunities for people of all abilities.

TAYLA JORDYN PREDEBON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—In five years, 23-year-old Newcastle Knights forward Tayla Predebon, originally from a farm near Gloucester, went from having almost no interest in rugby league (more Little Athletics and netball) to winning four premierships. At 16, Tayla organised a gala day team for a day off school. They won, and the rest is history. She played a few games for Taree in a 9-a-side summer comp and in some regional representative teams. In 2018, she made her way into the 13-a-side game for CRL Newcastle, travelling twice a week to train at Dudley and to Newcastle and Sydney for weekend games. She was committed, despite the quizzical responses of her friends. Tayla played for the Central Coast Roosters, winning two titles, then the NRLW started to take off, heralding a professional career in sport with the Sydney Roosters NRLW, winning the premiership in 2021. She wanted to return home and currently studies physiotherapy at UoN and running her own personal training business. Tayla loves making an impact on the game and will play with the Knights until at least 2026. Well done, Tayla. Go the Knights!

PUBLIC EDUCATION WEEK 2024

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the incredible work of our local public education teachers and staff who were recently recognised during Public Education Week 2024. This year's theme, 'Proud to Belong,' reflects the heart of our public education system. NSW Public Education welcomes all, embracing diversity and doing the 'heavy lifting' in educating students with additional needs, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive. I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the dedicated school staff and families who make our school communities a place of belonging and excellence. A special congratulations to Terrigal Public School with Trisha Payne, a member of the P&C, and Amanda Hough, a dedicated Support Unit Teacher, for receiving their well-deserved Public Education Awards of Appreciation. Your outstanding contributions to the school and the broader public education system are deeply appreciated. I'd also like to recognise school administration officer Nicole Barry. Nicole's journey through public education, from Terrigal Public School and Terrigal High School to representing Australia at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, is a true testament to the opportunities and success our system offers. Thank you all for your commitment and passion!

JUDI SANDILANDS-CINCOTTA

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the incredible volunteer work of Judi Sandilands-Cincotta and her therapy dog, Ollie, who have brought comfort and support to countless people across our region. After retiring from a successful nursing career, Judi became a Guide Dogs NSW volunteer, and since 2018, she has dedicated thousands of hours to raising and training labradors. Judi's work with her five-year-old labrador, Ollie, is nothing short of remarkable. Together, they visit high schools, courts, police stations, and even libraries, offering much-needed smiles and emotional support. Judi and Ollie's weekly visits to Warilla, Kiama, and Bomaderry High Schools have been life-changing for students struggling with mental health challenges, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19. The staff and students at these schools describe Judi and Ollie as "superstars," a testament to the profound impact of their work. Judi's background in nursing and her creative approach to maintaining dog training during lockdown, including setting up a mini training course in her garage, highlights her dedication. I commend Judi and Ollie for their ongoing commitment to improving the wellbeing of our community. Thank you, Judi, for making a difference!

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Well, it's official! A new Guinness World Record has been awarded for the largest aqua-aerobics class, which was held right here on the Central Coast at Mingara Recreation Club on 21 May 2023. What a tremendous achievement! I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the brilliant organisers of this event—Sarah Ferman and Twynette Dickinson. Sarah and Twynette, your tireless efforts and commitment brought our community together in a truly inspiring way. Thanks to you, we didn't just meet the previous record of 270 participants—we surpassed it with 285, including myself! This event was not just about setting a world record, but about raising funds for a cause that's deeply meaningful. Both Sarah and Twynette have been personally affected by cancer, as many of us have, and their determination to support the Central Coast Cancer Council speaks volumes about their compassion and leadership. I also want to acknowledge the incredible volunteers who, though not in the water, made this day possible with their invaluable help. From the bottom of my heart, thank you Sarah and Twynette, for creating such a spectacular event and bringing our community closer for a cause that touches us all!

DEBBIE KEARNS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the incredible Debbie Kearns of Como who was recognised with the Sutherland Shire Football Association's Merit Award for her ongoing dedication to the Georges River Football Club. By way of background, Debbie's connection with Georges River Football Club began in 1981 when her eldest brother Kevin joined the team. This inspired three of Debbie's children, Billy, Allie and Zac to wear the yellow and black and Debbie becoming team manager of Billy's 7I team after just one season. Since that time, Debbie has managed a further 14 teams and has become synonymous with the Georges River Football Club. Since joining the Tigers' executive in 2016 as secretary, Debbie can regularly be found at Oyster Bay during the week. As secretary, Debbie has been successful in securing a number of grants for the Club for changerooms, goals and cages and even the highly successful Female Football Night. Whilst Debbie Kearns is not one to seek recognition, I was pleased to present her with Sutherland Shire Football Association's Merit Award to highlight her exceptional service to George River Football Club and football in our local community.

SHOALHAVEN HEADS PUBLIC SCHOOL SPRING FAIR

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the incredible staff of Shoalhaven Heads Public School for their outstanding efforts in organising a phenomenal Spring Fair on 21 September. A special mention goes to Principal Sarah Baker and staff member Andrea Martin, whose leadership and dedication were key to the success of this wonderful event. The Spring Fair was a resounding success, raising significant funds for the school, with every single member of staff pitching in to help. Their hard work and enthusiasm created a fantastic day out that has been the talk of the town, with many people sharing their praise on social media. The community spirit on display was heartwarming, and the day showcased the school's commitment to providing an enriching environment for its students. I thank the staff, families, and everyone involved for making the Spring Fair such a memorable occasion. Shoalhaven Heads Public School has much to be proud of, and I have no doubt the funds raised will go towards enhancing the learning experience for all students. Congratulations to Sarah Baker, Andrea Martin, and the entire school community for a job well done!

GAIL KEANE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the incredible Gail Keane of Bonnet Bay who was recognised with the Sutherland Shire Football Association's Merit Award for her involvement with the Como Jannali Football Club. For over 40 years, Gail has been a passionate advocate and ambassador for female football, having played for Como Jannali Football Club since the Sutherland Shire Football Association's introduction of a women's competition in the 1980's. During this time, she has served on the Club's management committee, the Club's social committee since its inception and was recognised with life membership in 2017. As a committee member, Gail has played a key role in the smooth running of many of the Club's events ranging from junior and senior presentation days to Mother's Day raffles and comedy for a cause events. In addition, she has also helped with registration open days, assisted in the running of the bar, provided support to the uniform officer, and served 15 years as Canteen Manager – a role she recently stepped down from. Whilst Gail Keane is not one to seek recognition, I was pleased to present her with Sutherland Shire Football Association's Merit Award to highlight her exceptional service to football in our local community.

ILLAWARRA BUSINESS AWARDS 2024 – BERRY PHYSIOTHERAPY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Berry Physiotherapy as the winner of the 2024 Shoalhaven Business Award for Outstanding New Business and finalist for the Outstanding New Business category at the 2024 Illawarra Business Awards. Since its establishment, Berry Physiotherapy has quickly become a cornerstone of the local health community, providing top-tier rehabilitation and physiotherapy services. This success is thanks to the outstanding work of Directors and physiotherapists Luke Hogan and Brady Warren. Their leadership and commitment to patient care have earned them widespread respect, and their hands-on approach has been instrumental in fostering a supportive and effective environment for recovery. Known for their dedication to empowering patients, the team at Berry Physiotherapy not only focuses on treatment but also on providing the tools and education for long-term well-being. Their recognition at both the Shoalhaven and Illawarra Business Awards is a testament to their hard work and innovative approach to healthcare. I congratulate Luke Hogan, Brady Warren, and the entire team at Berry Physiotherapy for their remarkable achievements. I am confident they will continue to thrive and provide exceptional service to the community.

CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—For over 100 years, the incredible members of Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club have been cherished and quintessential part of life in the Sutherland Shire. Cronulla's selfless volunteers are an invaluable part of our beach culture and give our community confidence to enjoy the natural

beauty of our local area. During the last season, Cronulla beach welcomed more than 76,000 visitors requiring Cronulla members to conduct 15 rescues, provide first-aid to 44 individuals and take over 535 preventative actions, including education and early intervention to keep everyone safe both in and out of the water. Importantly, the vigilance, skill and professionalism of these volunteers resulted in zero drownings once again. Our volunteer surf life savers are an essential part of the fabric and culture of our local community. I recognise the 2024-25 Executive Committee, namely Matt Aitken, Kieran Day, Glenn Carter, Pat Bourke, Michael Banister, Annalyse Crane, Ken Rosebery, Scott Phillips, Jana Meresova, Scott Jackson, Greg Oldfield, Richard Hedley, Chris Barber, Daniel Wood, BronessaSmith, Isabella Turner, Daryn Metti, Robert Walker, Jack Robertson, Kasey Diver-Tuck and Ian Goode OAM. I thank all Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club members for their continued dedication to protecting local beachgoers.

PAUL CORBITT

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to a well-known and highly respected hairdresser in my electorate of Manly, who has determined it is time to 'pass on the scissors'. Paul Corbitt has been operating a highly successful business in Fairlight for more than 17 years. His motto, 'Hair is our passion, hair is our art' is backed by his website's amazing photo gallery of diverse hair styles, showcasing the artistic flare of the Paul Corbitt Salon. Paul has been in the hair industry for over 30 years and was previously an art director for Toni and Guy in Berlin, creating masterpieces for fashion shoots and competitions. In Fairlight, Paul has repeatedly demonstrated his artistic passion and desire to bring out the unique beauty in everyone. From customising a haircut and recommending a hair colour that will enhance skin tone and eye colour, through to informing customers of great styling options, Paul repeatedly delivers. It is not surprising that among Paul's many achievements, his Salon was awarded the 2013 Local Business Award for Hairdressing. I wish Paul the very best for the future and thank him for his excellent service to the community of Fairlight and beyond.

INNER WEST GREENS COUNCILLORS

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today, I would like to thank my hard-working former colleagues on the Inner West Council. Together, we formed a progressive voice that challenged business as usual on Council, advocating for greater community consultation, stronger action on the cost of living and climate crises, and an equal and safe community. I want to congratulate my former Greens colleagues for implementing a ban on advertising and sponsorship of fossil fuels, winding back the destructive and unlawful tree policy put forward in the last term of Council, providing more safe, well-lit and accessible walkways and cycleways, improving community consultation on NSW Housing Reforms and heritage protection, and unyielding support for human rights. Throughout challenging Council meetings, the Inner West Greens team worked hard for important local outcomes for our community and I'm very proud to have shared the council chamber alongside you all. I want to congratulate Liz Atkins, Justine Langford, Marghanita da Cruz and Dylan Griffiths for their hard work on Council and wish them all the best in their future roles.

MANLY RED CROSS – REIMAGINE THE RUNWAY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, The Australian Red Cross is a volunteer-based organisation that exists to reduce human suffering. With 110 years' experience and a community of 20,000-plus members and volunteers, the organisation seeks to act locally and connect globally to deliver what is needed, when it is needed most. Recently, the Red Cross Shop in Manly staged an amazing fashion event, to raise funds to support the most vulnerable in our community and beyond. In collaboration with first year students from the Fashion Design Studio at Ultimo TAFE, the 'Reimagine the Runway' event gave students an opportunity to express their artistic flare, while inspiring the fashion-conscious public and raising valuable funds for Red Cross. The students were asked to make a top, which was then styled with Red Cross clothing from its pre-season, summer collection to produce some fantastic fashion statements. Almost 150 people attended the event, which was also supported by 60 volunteers as well as local businesses through the provision of prizes. I congratulate the Red Cross Shop, Manly for a most successful event and look forward to similar events in the future.

LEIGH BERWICK

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today, I would like to congratulate the 2024 Mid-Western Sydney Adult Volunteer of the Year, Leigh Berwick. A Leichhardt resident and President of the Wests Boomers Baseball Club, Leigh assists with managing grounds, equipment, uniforms and maintenance. He is also a volunteer coach and umpire for the club. With no job too big or too small, his efforts have helped to bring parents and families together and has been instrumental in increasing female participation across the sport. The 2024 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards celebrate the impacts of people who give their time to help make Sydney's Inner West a better place, and certainly, Leigh's tireless efforts at the Wests Boomers Baseball Club have had a tremendous impact on the sport and in our community. Congratulations Leigh, for your commendable efforts for the inner west community and for Wests Boomers Baseball Club.

HSC STUDENTS 2024

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Today I would like to recognise all Year 12 students in my electorate of Manly as they prepare for their upcoming HSC exams. It has been an absolute pleasure visiting various local schools over the year and I know how hard so many of them have been working in preparation for this exam period. For all of these students, their earlier years of high school were disrupted by the unforeseen challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am confident that these challenges, although difficult at times, will stand them in good stead for their future when they are similarly confronted with unforeseen changes that so often form a part of everyday life. I wish all year 12 students in the Manly Electorate the very best for their upcoming HSC examinations and as they approach the final hurdle of their secondary schooling. While this can be a stressful time, to all the Year 12 students, I encourage you to look back on how far you have come, and to be proud of the skills you have developed and the relationships you have forged. Good luck!

BUSINESS HUNTER AWARDS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—For more than forty years, the Business Hunter Awards have recognised the important contributions, achievements, and entrepreneurial spirit of businesses in the Hunter. At the Gala Ceremony held on Friday 13 September, a number of Charlestown electorate-based businesses received commendations. Dynamic Business Technologies, an IT service company based in Warners Bay, received a commendation in the Employer of Choice (Under 20 employees) category. Scent Central, an innovative marketing company based out of Charlestown, received a commendation in the Excellence in Small Business category. Adamstown resident Isaac Brambley from software company SAPHI was commended in the Outstanding Employee category. Outgoing Lake Macquarie mayor Kay Fraser was awarded Business Leader of the Year in the twenty-one and over employees category for her work steering Lake Macquarie City Council. Congratulations to all those who took home awards and commendations, and to all nominees. The hard work and innovation of Charlestown electorate businesses is always inspiring.

LANI WALLER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Lani Waller, who has been awarded the prestigious title of Youth Athlete of the Year at Surf Life Saving NSW's 2024 Awards of Excellence. Lani has had an unparalleled season, demonstrating exceptional talent and dedication across state, national and international surf lifesaving competitions. Her dominance on the field has set a new standard of excellence, showcasing not only her remarkable athletic abilities but also her commitment to the sport and the value it represents. This recognition is a testament to Lani's hard work, perseverance, and outstanding performance throughout the year. Congratulations Lani. With these achievements this season, you are truly deserving of this award. I eagerly anticipate your continued success and look forward to seeing what the 2024/25 season has in store for you.

NSW CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Two young athletes from the Charlestown electorate have achieved extraordinary results in the NSW Cross Country Championships. The Championships, hosted at Willandra Cross Country track near Nowra, saw talented cross country athletes from across the state come together to match their skills, and I am pleased to acknowledge Frankie Westcott and Charlotte James on their achievements at the event. Frankie, a student at New Lambton South Public School achieved fifth place on a time of 11:18.5 in the Primary 11 Years Girls event, which covers a two-kilometre-long course. Charlotte James, a student at Charlestown South Public School came third in the Primary 12/13 Years Girls event, on a time of 10:57.6 over a three kilometre course. It is so inspiring to see girls and young women engaged in sport and testing their skills with one another in a friendly and well-contested tournament. My congratulations to Frankie, Charlotte, their coaches and supporters, and all the other competitors, on what I'm sure was a fantastic championship. Great work!

ROLLER SKATE REVIVAL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Tonight, I'm excited to acknowledge and congratulate a new social group in the Gosford electorate, the Roller Skate Revival, Ettalong Beach. The members of this fabulous group meet every Sunday afternoon at Lemon Grove Park, Ettalong Beach to get together and learn new dance moves or tricks and the most important thing is to have fun rolling on skates! I'm so pleased to see how active our beautiful community members are. We are spoiled with options as there is always something for someone to enjoy! Currently, the group has more than 150 members joining online, and I can see that they are gaining interest from roller skaters of all levels and age groups. This group brought back so many wonderful memories from the 70s

where roller skates, music and happy vibes took a special place in my heart. Thank you to everyone involved in Roller Skate Revival, Ettalong Beach for your positive contribution to our gorgeous community, and I'm certain that our Coasties will have a blast joining your group.

LAKE MACQUARIE AND NEWCASTLE SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—On 7 September, the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle Suicide Prevention Network hosted a Health and Wellbeing Expo. An opportunity for the community to link with mental health, wellbeing and associated services across the region, the event at Newcastle Racecourse was the largest free expo in the Hunter's history—and a fantastic display of the Network's important work. The Network has been operating for fourteen years across Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, delivering health promotion activities, community events, social media promotion, educational seminars and an online resource hub aimed at reducing the impact and incidence of suicide in the area. My congratulations to CEO Bradley Dunn, support officer Rachel Cairney, media and project officer Ruby Davis and volunteer coordinator and project officer Kate Johnson for organising the event, and to all those who contributed. The mission of reducing the impact and incidence of suicide is so vital. They are always open to new members and volunteers, and I encourage anyone who may want to assist to get in contact.

SHANELLE PAN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Tonight, I am delighted to acknowledge Shanelle Pan, an upstanding citizen who is contributing in various ways to the lives of the students at Brisbane Water Secondary College [BWSC]. Shanelle is well known within the school community for helping young people grow in their resilience, joy and hope as they explore faith in scripture at BWSC. On top of that, Shanelle's dedication to the school community is clear as she happily organises Christmas hampers and donations from Grace church to give to families in need at BWSC in 2023. There is no job too big or too small for Shanelle as she continues to assist in breakfast club and help in gathering donations to the breakfast club through the Grace Church. I thank Shanelle for her marvellous contribution to the school community, and I hope Shanelle's actions can inspire and make the BWSC community stronger.

FAREWELL MARINA KAZZI

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Sending a sincere thank you and best wishes to Marina Kazzi, who will be retiring from Catherine McAuley Westmead College after an incredible 28 years of dedicated service. During her time at the college Ms Kazzi has worked as an administrative assistant, audio visual technician, personal assistant to the principal, enrolments and census officer, school receptionist and as the administrative assistant to the Leader of Learning Curriculum. Ms Kazzi has always lent a helping hand, doing the job that needed to be done with humility and pride. She embodied and characterised the values of Catherine McAuley Westmead College - the values of mercy, justice, excellence, integrity, courage, and hospitality. On behalf of the wider community I extend my best wishes to Ms Kazzi and her family. I know that the staff and students of Catherine McAuley are deeply disappointed to lose such a crucial member of staff. Ms Kazzi will be missed and will be a great loss to Principal Mary Refalo and her hardworking team. May Ms Kazzi enjoy spending more time with her family and the lawn bowling club and know that she will always be considered a valued member of the Parramatta community.

RENO SPARES

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Reno Spares has made to the people of Oberon. Reno Spares sources and sells a range of appliances and renovation materials for locals at discounted prices. They have everything from kitchen, bathroom and laundry accessories to tiles, appliances, and more. Reno Spares was built from a successful renovations team who came across a lot of renovation spares that would be ideal for another home. They are saving materials and appliances from going to waste as well as saving the dollars of hard working locals looking to spruce up their homes. The heart of the family owned and run business rests in their hometown of Oberon and they continue their promise of exclusive sales just for the Oberon community working off the basis that if it's good for their home, then it's good for yours. I was pleased to present Reno Spares with the Outstanding New Business award at the 2024 Oberon Business Awards. Congratulations to Lilian, family and all team members of the business for this well-deserved accolade.

FO GUANG THREE ACTS OF GOODNESS YOUNG ARTIST AND WRITING AWARD

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—The Nan Tien Temple in Parramatta recently hosted their annual Fo Guang Three Acts of Goodness Young Artist and Writing Award ceremony that this year attracted over 600 entries from across the country embodying the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy living

and promote well-being for all at all ages". The 2024 theme highlights the importance of peace, physical and mental health in daily life by doing charitable deeds, speaking good words, thinking good thoughts. Congratulations to all who made this event possible and to everyone who received an award for their work. Thomas Chen, Irene Liu, Riely Li, Celina Chen, Yanice Goh, Mina Park, Olivia Zhu, Shu Ting Xu, Mabel Leung, Isabella Wang, Lilian Gao, Cheah Yi Qing, Alegra Kuru, Marina Chen, Evelyn Tan, Giselle Huang, Asher Chen, Thor Seow Sin, Ivy Zhou, Kara Xu, Hazel Leung, Tan Xi Tong, Dara Zhang, Emma Cai, Slynn Wang, Qiu Xuan Law, Mia Zhou, Tina Lin, Maxwell Tan and Jenny Zhang.

RILEY ROBINSON

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Riley Robinson has made to the people of Bathurst. Riley Robinson is a third-year apprentice at Devro, a local manufacturing company in Bathurst. Riley secured an apprenticeship with Devro when he was seeking to leave school and enter the work force. He never thought he would take on a trade but has enjoyed every moment of his career choice since. It's clear Riley's skills and level of workmanship have not gone unnoticed with team members at Devro and the community coming out in support of the young man and his accomplishments. This award highlights Riley's dedication and excellence in his trade, making him a standout in the local community. Riley's achievement is particularly noteworthy as it reflects the strong support he has garnered from the people of Bathurst, who voted for him as their favourite tradie! Congratulations to Riley for this well-deserved accolade.

GIG BUDDIES WELCOMES GIGI THE CAR

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I welcome Gigi the Fiat 500 to the North Shore. Gigi is an assistance vehicle for the Gig Buddies organisation, an initiative of the not-for-profit ACL Disability Services. In 2022 I was excited to provide Gig Buddies with the funding to purchase an assistance vehicle. Now, Gigi is out on the road making a statement, flaunting bold artwork symbolising the work Gig Buddies does. I met Gigi for the first time down at Neutral Bay Wharf last month and she looked stunning. Gig Buddies partners volunteers with an adult who experiences mild to moderate autism and/or has a learning disability who wants to make new friends. The buddy system pairs volunteers and participants who have similar hobbies and interests. Once paired, the buddies meet up once a month for a year. Some pairs choose to meet up more often or keep meeting up after the year is done. Gig Buddies is such a positive force, and I have enjoyed watching them flourish over the years. I thank Carol Smail, CEO of Gig Buddies Sydney, for facilitating my meeting with Gigi, and for all the amazing work you do for our community.

DAISY JONES

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Daisy Jones has made to the people of Bathurst. Daisy brings so many skills and attributes to enhance the service provided at Bathurst Little Learning Centre. Daisy has built wonderful relationships with stakeholders, her fellow educators, as well as the children and families who use the centres services. These relationships have contributed to an incredibly positive workplace, marked by a sense of fun, enjoyment and professionalism. The children that come to Bathurst Little Learning Centre are taking their first steps in the education journey and it is these foundations that set the next generation up for a successful and enriching life. It is inspiring to see young, eager professionals like Daisy contributing to this education journey. Daisy's hard work and accomplishments in the learning centre were recently recognised by her winning 2024 Apprentice and Trainee of the Year at the Carillion Business Awards in Bathurst. Congratulations to Daisy for this well-deserved accolade.

AUSTRALIA INDIA BUSINESS COUNCIL

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise the Australia India Business Council [AIBC]. Established in 1986 by both the Australian and Indian governments, the AIBC helps shape policy and promote the bilateral business corridor, trade, and investment between Australia and India. I note the AIBC played an important role in the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement [ECTA], which is a landmark agreement. It has seen over 85 per cent of Australian goods exports by value to India now being tariff free. In October, I look forward to attending their annual gala that aims to bring people together to discuss new bilateral trade opportunities in New South Wales. I recognise the National Board led by Jodi McKay, Ravneet Pawha, Irfan Malik, Ashok Mysore, Tony Fraser, Deepa Matthew, Rob Thomason, and Tim Regan. I also recognise the NSW Board led by Irfan Malik, Poornima Menon, Javed Khan, Tim Regan, Hemant Babbar, Kate McGrath, Amit Chaubey, Hayley Saddington, and Suryansh Gupta. Thank you for your efforts in maintaining and promoting the bilateral relationship between Australia and India.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SUPPORT

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise Community Health Support, an organisation that works with communities to better equip them with the skills needed to combat a medical emergency. Since being established in 2022, they directed helped over 2,500 people and have collaborated with 38 other community organisations. In addition, to providing accessible first aid training, they provide medical services to community organisations that includes a 24-hour hotline that people can call for medical advice. I am proud to support this amazing organisation with a NSW Government Community Building Partnership grant of \$12,500 for a vehicle that will be used by trained and equipped Emergency Medical Response volunteers to respond to local medical emergencies whilst awaiting an ambulance. Thank you for applying for this grant. I recognise Executive Director Jesse Lenn and his team Lynne Berson, Adina Feiglin, Ezra Israel, Jasmin Sekel, Hadley Shapiro, Elan Shilansky, and Gila Weiner. I also recognise Board Directors Darren Chait, Lauren Ehrlich, Dr Jeff Engelman, Joshua Frank, Melaine Lindenberg, Michelle Malek and Clinical advisors Aiden Baron, Prof. Michael Boyer AM, Dr Susan Hertzberg, Dr Rachelle Silver, and Dr Sasha Symonds. Thank you for your ongoing hard work to keep our community safe.

ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH IN GORDON

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise St. John's Anglican Church in Gordon. The Anglican parish of St John the Evangelist was built following a petition by local residents in 1872, and the church was designed by Edmund Blacket, designer of the University of Sydney and St Andrews Cathedral. The church grounds also includes a cemetery, the final resting place of many locals, including JJC Bradfield. Over the years, St John's has been a welcoming community, and I have been privileged to visit. I recognise the clergy led by Father Robert Happer, Father Ernest Chau, Bishop Michael Hough and Jen Lum. I recognise the wider St John's team, Cynthia Keithly, Graham Boswell, Gareth Baard, Cliff Cowdroy OAM, Jan McLachlan, Prakash Pillai, James Winter and the Parish Council Carl Ackland, Oliver Barry, John East, Elizabeth George, Jan Kneeshaw OAM, Alicia Lennon, and Barbara Ward. Thank you for all the work you do to help bring our community together. May God Bless you.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Congratulations to the Winners of the Southern Highlands Small Business Awards including the Business of the Year winner Lenenergy. The presentation held at Mittagong RSL on 18th September was a joyous event, recognising the vibrant businesses that contribute so much to our community. Congratulations to the following businesses located in Wollondilly: Capital Chemist, Mittagong - Outstanding Pharmacy; Colosseum Pizza & Ribs, Bowral - Outstanding Fast Food/Takeaway; Compagnoni Accounting, Mittagong - Outstanding Professional Services; Dirty Janes, Bowral - Outstanding Antiques, Art, Crafts and Gifts; Dust N Ranch Outfitters, Bowral - Outstanding Fashion; FS8, Bowral - Outstanding Fitness Services; Gumnut Patisserie, Bowral - Outstanding Bakery/Cake Business; Highlands Property - Outstanding Real Estate Agency; Holiday Rental Specialists, Bowral - Outstanding Tourism Services; Interchange Australia, Bowral - Outstanding Not For Profit; Invigorate Health & Performance, Mittagong - Outstanding Health Improvement Services; Ireland's Machinery Braemar - Outstanding Specialised Retail Business; ProRider Powersports, Mittagong - Outstanding Automotive Services; Sheer Serenity, Bowral - Outstanding Beauty Services; Suds Hub, Bowral - Outstanding New Business; The Techery Southern Highlands, Bowral - Outstanding Specialised Business; Wild river photography & events, Mittagong - Outstanding Sole Operator and Williams Quality Meats, Mittagong - Outstanding Fresh Food.

CONCORD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge the efforts of our local residents who are members of the Concord Community Garden. The Concord Community Garden is located behind Concord Community Centre. I recently had the pleasure to visit the Garden and meet many wonderful members at their annual Open Day which was held on 8 September 2024 and was a great success. The Concord Community Garden is a flourishing communal garden growing fresh produce and beautiful flowers. The Club regularly holds working bees, teaching new members life-long gardening skills, and educating the community on the importance of sustainable practices. We know that gardening has many benefits as it promotes physical and emotional wellbeing and that is why the Concord Community Garden is such a valuable and important service. I sincerely thank all of the volunteers who have dedicated countless hours to this community project. Your efforts in developing the garden and proving a welcoming and inclusive community environment is truly commendable. The Concord Community Garden is an outstanding example of how our community can come together to make a difference. Thank you to everyone involved in making our local area a more sustainable place.

LOCAL HERO MICK WATTS SAVES A LIFE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I want to recognise the heroic actions of Marine Rescue Middle Harbour crew member Mick Watts. Earlier this month, Mick spotted an apartment on fire in Balmain. He called for an ambulance, Fire and Rescue and the police before entering the apartment complex alone. Mick managed to locate and enter the ablaze apartment. Astoundingly, amidst the smoke and chaos, he was able to crawl through the apartment to locate and rescue the semi-conscious occupant. On top of saving a life, Mick's quick thinking meant he was able to evacuate all other residents in the complex and shut the power off to avoid further disaster. Mick Watts embodies the definition of a local hero, and for that I commend him. I want to thank all our first responders for keeping us safe. I especially want to thank Mick Watts for his bravery and selflessness in the face of disaster. The Marine Rescue Middle Harbour crew continue to do a wonderful job keeping our local community safe while out on the water, and they should be immensely proud of Mick and all his efforts.

RHODES MOON FESTIVAL

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge the success of the Rhodes Moon Festival which was held on 7 & 8 September 2024. The Rhodes Moon Festival is a celebration of the traditional Mid-Autumn Festival and is organised by the Rhodes Multicultural Community Association. The event is an outstanding display of culture with colourful art installations, traditional performances, and delicious cuisine. Every year I look forward to the 100-person Dragon Dance Parade which welcomes all attendees to join in the celebrations. The success of the day is a testament to the diversity and unity we are so privileged to have in Rhodes. I offer my sincerest congratulations to Rhodes Multicultural Community Association President Yiping Zhang, Secretary Chengrui Lee, Treasurer Huidong Le and all members of the RMCA executive for such an outstanding celebration of culture. The RMCA does such wonderful work in our community, run by passionate volunteers who are to be recognised. I extend my sincere to all the volunteers who helped facilitate the festival. Your hard work and dedication is truly commendable. Thank you to everyone who made this year's Rhodes Moon Festival a remarkable celebration of Chinese culture and I look forward to attending next year's celebration.

UNISERVE FOR CANCER

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—On Sunday 15 September, I attended the Uniserve for Cancer Annual Gala Luncheon. Uniserve for Cancer was established in 2021 to support individuals diagnosed with cancer and their families. I was deeply moved to hear the testimonials from doctors and individuals who have been supported by Uniserve for Cancer. These success stories are a testament to the quality of support provided by the foundation and the importance of their work. I would like to acknowledge Uniserve for Cancer Chairman Cav. Salvatore Campione, Executive Directors Stefano Ragatzu and John Idotta as well as Committee Members Maria Campione-Portelli, Nancy Giarratano, Vittorio Giudice, Angela Filippelis, Antonino Isgro, Tony Alcuri, Cinzia Marotta and Martina Destro for their tireless dedication to supporting patients, families and loved ones affected by cancer. Cancer touches us all and their advocacy takes us closer to finding a cure. I would like to thank all attendees and those involved in supporting the Gala Luncheon held by Uniserve for Cancer. I wish the organisation all the best.

SUSAN SUKKAR

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise Susan Sukkar for her nomination for the 2024 ARIA Music Teacher Award. For forty years Susan has taught music and music education to teachers and students across NSW. When we received notice of Susan's nomination not one but two of the Newtown Electorate Office team said they had been taught by Susan – a testament to her impact on an entire generation of public-school students in the inner west. As the Assistant Principal of Creative and Performing Arts at Petersham Public School, Susan teaches music to the school's 250 pupils and oversees 11 music ensembles and 2 choirs. Susan has also provided music performance opportunities for students, including as an organiser of the Festival of Instrumental music for the past 25 years. That Festival performs annually at the Sydney Opera House and involves over 5,000 students every year. The only artist that has sold out the Sydney Opera House faster than the Festival (and Susan) is Michael Bublé. I congratulate Susan for her ARIA nomination and commend her for her ongoing commitment to supporting music education for every public-school student in NSW.

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate, I would like to congratulate Redfern Legal Centre for 47 years of service to the community providing free legal advice and casework, legal education and law reform. Since opening their doors in 1977, Redfern Legal Centre has supported thousands of community members navigating legal systems and has championed access to justice for all members of the community. Last week the RLC community gathered to celebrate the vital work of the Centre. I extend my

congratulations to the Redfern Legal Centre Board of Directors, their staff and volunteer team, and CEO Camilla Pandolfini. I would also like to acknowledge singer-songwriter Emily Wurramara, a Warnindhilyagwa woman from Groote Eylandt, on her performance at the event. I commend Redfern Legal Centre for their steadfast and ongoing commitment to improving access to justice for people experiencing vulnerability and look forward to continuing to support their vital work.

GET READY WEEKEND

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—The Tweed Electorate marked the very important Get Ready Weekend last weekend in order to help local residents prepare for the upcoming bush fire season. Tweed Coast Rural Fire Brigade in Pottsville opened their doors to the public to provide valuable information and resources to ensure Tweed residents are aware and ready for bush fires. Attendees were able to learn about creating a Bush Fire Survival Plan, maintaining a defensible space around property and understanding Fire Danger Ratings. I commend the NSW Rural Fire Service for organising Get Ready Weekend and thank you to the Tweed Coast Rural Fire Brigade for providing this important opportunity for Tweed residents to prepare themselves for bush fire.

CHINDERAH ARMY DEPOT

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—I had the recent honour of attending the official opening of the newly-constructed Gordon VC multi-user depot at Chinderah in the Tweed Electorate. This new state-of-the-art facility houses the Australian Army's A Company, 41st Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment and 225 Army Cadet Unit. The 41st Battalion is a reserve unit which has provided natural disaster relief support during the 2019-2020 bushfires and the 2021 and 2022 floods in Eastern states. The fit-for-purpose facility includes the multi-depot, storage, ablutions, vehicle parking and associated infrastructure. The depot provides a critical role in supporting the Australian Defence Force's operational readiness, force posture and structure and ensuring personnel and staff who live, work and train on Army bases are provided a safe and maintained location. It was a pleasure to attend the official opening and see first-hand this contemporary new depot in the Tweed.

DAFFODIL DAY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Nerida Dean is a very recognisable face within the Tweed every August when we mark Daffodil Day. A Cancer Council NSW Board Member, Nerida proudly dons a bright yellow wig to sell daffodils and Daffodil Day merchandise in Kingscliff each year. This year the Daffodil Day stall was stationed in the brand-new Tweed Valley Hospital, raising money for cancer support, transport to treatment, research and survivorship. Nerida is a driving force within the Cancer Council NSW and has been a Board Member since 2018, re-elected twice. Her passion for making a change for cancer patients and their families is inspiring. I commend Nerida for her long-standing commitment and dedication to the Cancer Council in NSW and the Tweed community. Thank you Nerida, and all the Cancer Council NSW volunteers, for all that you do.
