

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 26 September 2024**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATUTORY CONDITION) BILL 2024**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Kobi Shetty, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (10:18):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of the Greens, I introduce the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing Statutory Condition) Bill 2024. In moving the bill, I acknowledge the hard work and strong advocacy over many years of my Greens colleagues, in particular our housing spokesperson, the member for Newtown, who has been leading the charge for sensible and meaningful reform to deliver housing justice for renters and those on low incomes in New South Wales.

The bill is complementary to The Greens' Environmental Planning and Assessment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024 that the member for Newtown introduced and that members have debated in the House. I also acknowledge the member for Ballina for her important work towards proper regulation of short-term rentals in her electorate, which has come into effect this week after years of advocacy. It will have a significant impact on the availability of rental housing in her community. That locally based approach must be rolled out to other areas where renters are competing with tourists for a place to call home. This work is important because we are in the midst of a housing crisis that is crushing our communities. Rents are soaring as we see the loss of low-cost options like boarding houses and older, less well-appointed homes make way for expensive apartments that we are expected to believe will somehow make housing suddenly affordable.

Public housing estates like Waterloo south are being demolished, waiting lists are blowing out and government land like the former WestConnex dive site in Camperdown is being privatised. Some 30,000 renters are evicted each year without a good reason—and let us not even get started on the affordability challenges faced by anyone who has tried to buy their first home in New South Wales over the past 10 years. It is tempting to say that our housing system is broken, that it has failed and needs to be fixed. Certainly, that is one way to look at it. That is what has motivated me to introduce this bill to the House for consideration today. But as the member for Newtown reminded us when she introduced another affordable housing bill in this place, our system has been nurtured towards this outcome. The member for Newtown is in the Chamber. I will quote her, because there's simply no other way to put it:

The decades-long gutting of funding for public housing, inadequate protections for renters, outsourcing of housing delivery to the private market and prioritisation of solutions that prop up private investors—like negative gearing and Commonwealth Rent Assistance—have all contributed to the incredibly dire housing landscape our communities are forced to navigate today. Homes have become a vehicle for investment and profit rather than a safe, secure place for people to live, and we in this place have a responsibility to reckon with and rectify this problem. We must take the profit motive out of housing and restore the social safety net by funding a massive increase in public housing.

I will add to that the longstanding practice of developers using planning instruments that provide a density bonus to give the impression they care about affordable housing. In reality, those instruments have just encouraged and rewarded them for pushing against established local planning controls to build at higher densities than were considered and approved by local authorities, while allowing them to defer their profits on the sale of dwellings for 10 or 15 years. That was particularly egregious where the instrument, such as the old State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing), allowed developers to apply a density bonus but did not in fact

require the additional dwellings to be rented at affordable rates. I frequently contended with that during my time on Inner West Council. It is one of the primary reasons for the lack of trust that local communities have in the planning and assessment process, and it is why there has been scepticism about affordable housing as a notion from within the community.

That instrument has now been repealed and its provisions incorporated into the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing), with some amendments to close off this loophole. But, of course, now there are new pathways for developers to achieve the same end, and not all of them require new homes to be delivered as genuinely affordable housing. This is all predicated on the notion that delivering more private market housing without further market intervention will somehow deliver affordability. This is widely held and, indeed, it is supported by the NSW Productivity Commission. It is the basis on which Labor has embarked on its plan to override local planning controls—including in my own electorate, where the implications are significant—with its transport oriented development policy and low- and mid-rise housing policy. Those policies will allow buildings of up to six storeys—or even higher, with density bonuses applied—in places where local authorities have determined that such heights and floor-space ratios will be inappropriate.

That view is widely but not universally held. Indeed, The Greens do not believe the way to solve a deeply entrenched housing crisis, which has been created by allowing private market forces to prevail, is by turbocharging those same market forces through further deregulation. Other interventions are needed. But if members are not prepared to take our word for it, I encourage them to look at a recent paper produced by the NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service entitled *The economics of housing supply: key concepts and issues*, written by economics professor Rachel Ong ViforJ and property and housing economics professor Chris Leishman. Their paper explores how housing supply responds to demand and considers implications for affordability. It draws attention to some commonly overlooked themes and unpacks assumptions about factors that affect housing supply. The paper provides an outlook on current evidence and offers insights into the dynamics of housing supply. I encourage everyone to read this paper. It draws some interesting conclusions. In particular, it states:

While it is necessary to ensure new housing supply flows are sufficient to meet demands from population growth, it is likely the case that the impact of the new supply on prices and rents will not emerge in the short-run. Hence, alongside supply policies, other measures that address short-run affordability concerns for low-income households are important.

A rent cap springs to mind, or perhaps changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax settings to ensure wealthy investors are not given priority treatment through our tax system. I am pleased to hear that those options are being considered at the Federal level. But closer to home, one of the ways we need to address short-run affordability for low-income households is by ensuring a reasonable share of properties for rent at below market levels—that is, a proportion of homes that are not entirely subject to the whims of the private market. We need to make massive and ongoing investment in public housing, and we need to build the continuous delivery of affordable housing, at scale, into the very fabric of our housing system.

I acknowledge that under Labor's transport oriented development policy there will be some requirements for the provision of affordable housing within the tier 2 precincts. I am pleased that these meagre amounts of affordable housing arising from within those precincts will be required to be held in perpetuity. This is a step in the right direction. But we need to go further, and we need to get there faster. We need to build more genuinely affordable housing. We need more than a measly 2 per cent or 3 per cent of our newly constructed housing to be set aside for sub-market rents, or—here is a novel idea—for the rent to be set in such a way that low-income households are not put into financial stress in order to pay it. That is widely accepted as being 30 per cent of a household's income for those in the lowest 20 per cent of household incomes.

It is worth talking about the transport oriented development policy a little more. The concept of building housing around transport infrastructure is widely recognised as sound urban planning. It has long been established as best practice, helping to limit urban sprawl and reduce environmental damage. Importantly, it ensures communities remain well connected to essential services. However, it is not just about location; housing must also be affordable. Relying on the fluctuating housing market is not enough because the market is not designed to deliver affordable housing. The market is designed to enrich property developers and investors at the expense of renters and first home buyers. If we are going to assume market forces will be the primary element that unwinds this terrible housing crisis, I am sorry, but we are dreaming. Mandatory affordable housing requirements must also be introduced.

As I have already mentioned, the transport oriented development policy mandates only 2 per cent affordable housing in tier 2 precincts and up to 15 per cent in tier 1 precincts. But there has already been pushback on that 15 per cent target in the tier 1 consultation process. Shelter NSW recently raised the alarm on that. If we are to create truly inclusive cities where people can live near critical infrastructure, we need to ensure much higher affordable housing targets. International cities like Paris, New York, London and Barcelona—cities that we hold in as much esteem as we do our city—already require between 20 per cent and 40 per cent of new housing to be

affordable, without negatively impacting their local housing supply. The point is that we need the right kind of supply. We need to build housing that is truly and genuinely affordable for those on the lowest incomes.

I turn now to the substance of the bill. It will do two things. First, it will amend section 7.32 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to remove the requirement for a State environmental planning policy [SEPP] to identify a need for affordable housing within an area before an affordable housing contribution scheme can be established. The requirement is a hangover from days gone by. State Environmental Planning Policy No. 70, established in 2000, allowed councils to levy development contributions specifically for affordable housing in designated areas experiencing high housing stress. Originally, it applied only in the City of Sydney, Willoughby and the former Leichhardt council area. In 2019 it was expanded to include Randwick, inner west, Canada Bay, Ryde and northern beaches council areas. The policy was expanded again in 2019 to include all New South Wales councils, giving them the authority to develop local housing schemes and require developers to contribute to affordable housing.

SEPP 70 was also incorporated into the broader housing SEPP in 2021. But now, five years on from the expansion of the policy to include all parts of New South Wales, there is no longer the need for the SEPP to be referenced as a limiting factor in the legislation. In fact, given the broad consensus that affordable housing is now needed right across New South Wales, it is dangerous to leave the application of section 7.32 to a SEPP, which can chop and change at the whims of a Minister. It is time to bring the requirement under the Act itself.

Second, the bill will insert new section 7.32A into the Act. The new section will operate in tandem with any scheme developed under the existing provision to create a statutory condition requiring all residential development projects that will result in the construction of 10 or more dwellings, other than developments being carried out by or on behalf of the Aboriginal Housing Office, the Land and Housing Corporation or a registered community housing provider, to set aside 20 per cent of the residential floor space for affordable housing. The reason for that is simple: Despite local councils having had five years or more to develop their local housing strategies and introduce affordable housing contribution schemes, we are still not seeing satisfactory growth of affordable housing as a proportion of our overall housing stock.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** It being 10.30 a.m., in accordance with the resolution of the House on 25 September 2024, debate is interrupted to allow the House to proceed with the deferred division arising from the consideration in detail of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

## **ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SPEED CAMERA DETECTION) BILL 2024**

### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration resumed from 25 September 2024.**

*[Deferred division]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! The House will now proceed with the deferred division on the question: That Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-163 be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....49  
Majority.....17

#### **AYES**

Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Butler, R  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dalton, H  
Davies, T  
Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J

Hannan, J  
Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kemp, M  
Layzell, D  
Moylan, B  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Saunders, D

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

## NOES

Bali, S	Haylen, J	Quinnell, S
Barr, C	Hoening, R	Saffin, J (teller)
Butler, L	Holland, M	Saliba, D
Car, P	Hornery, S	Scully, P
Catley, Y	Kaliyanda, C	Shetty, K
Chanthivong, A	Kirby, W	Smith, T
Cotsis, S	Leong, J	Stuart, M
Crakanthorp, T	Li, J	Tesch, L
Daley, M	McDermott, H	Vo, T
Davis, D	McGirr, J	Voltz, L
Dib, J	McKeown, K	Ward, G
Donato, P	Mehan, D	Warren, G
Doyle, T	Minns, C	Washington, K
Finn, J	O'Neill, M	Watson, A
Hagarty, N (teller)	Park, R	Whan, S
Harris, D	Piper, G	Wilkinson, K
Harrison, J		

## PAIRS

Coure, M	Kamper, S
Lane, J	Atalla, E
Williams, R	Aitchison, J

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I seek the leave of the House to conclude the remaining proceedings on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Speed Camera Detection) Bill 2024 forthwith.

**Leave granted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** 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**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
STATUTORY CONDITION) BILL 2024**

**Second Reading Speech****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (10:38):** I resume my speech on the second reading of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing Statutory Condition) Bill 2024. We are still seeing too much pushback from the developer lobby and others who seek to profit from the housing crisis. The process for developing an affordable housing contribution scheme can be slow and laborious and can be easily delayed by those who know how to work the system. A clear statutory condition requiring developers to set aside 20 per cent of new residential floor space in projects that will result in 10 or more new dwellings would resolve that.

A significant proportion of affordable housing will also be delivered for every new large residential development, other than the developments delivering housing for those on the lowest incomes, such as the Aboriginal Housing Office, the Land and Housing Corporation and registered community housing providers. The Greens are open to further discussion about the thresholds. The trigger point of 10 dwellings is designed to be high enough to not capture smaller scale developments with a lower capital investment value, including those in regional areas that are pursuing appropriate levels of development. At the same time, it will ensure that the

feasibility of larger scale developments will factor in the mandatory provision of affordable housing, putting downward pressure on the price investors will pay for new sites for development. But there may be a better trigger point than 10 dwellings. Let us have that conversation and get on with it.

I am sure many people with vested interests will turn up to that discussion, ready to cry poor at the thought of contributing 20 per cent of their floor space for rent at affordable rates to ensure that people on the lowest incomes are able to find affordable homes. Again, this approach is already common practice in many jurisdictions, including international cities such as Paris, London, New York and Barcelona. Sydney developers need to get with the program. I make the point to anyone getting ready to side with those with vested interests that the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act includes 10 objects at section 1.3, and one of those objects promotes the delivery and maintenance of affordable housing. Nowhere does the law say it has been designed to guarantee a certain rate of profit to private developers. In the midst of a deep and worsening housing crisis, and in the interests of a housing system that is founded upon social justice outcomes, The Greens know what our planning legislation needs to do. We need more affordable housing. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (CONSULTATION STANDARDS) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 20 June 2024.**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (10:42):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I thank the member for Barwon for introducing the bill to the House. The Government values consultation and is committed to supporting stakeholder engagement in regional and remote communities. I acknowledge the concerns raised by the member for Barwon about the need for quality consultation in regional communities. Like the member for Barwon, I live in a regional community, and I hear about which consultations have been effective and which have not. I have taken note of the issue for many years, particularly around the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which this Parliament does not cover. Implementing strong consultation standards across government will clarify how agencies are expected to undertake consultation with regional communities. Legislated requirements will hold all future governments to a minimum standard, so the voice of regional communities is embedded in future policy and program delivery.

The Government supports the bill, and I foreshadow that the Government will move amendments during the consideration in detail stage. This Government is committed to best practice engagement with regional communities and is focused on undertaking high-quality consultation. The bill addresses challenges for consultation in regional and remote areas, including distance and poor digital connectivity. The bill introduces a standard to prescribe how consultation with a regional community should be carried out by or on behalf of the State, a government agency or a statutory body representing the Crown. As currently drafted, the bill will prescribe the *Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement*, published by the International Association for Public Participation in May 2015, but also allows for a regulation to be developed that would supersede that standard.

The bill does not apply to consultation that is required to be carried out in a specific way by another Act. The bill also states that failure to comply with the standards will not affect the validity of a consultation. These provisions take a sensible approach to setting a consultation standard and ensure that the bill does not unintentionally serve as a hindrance to government action. The Government supports the bill because it provides a clear signal about how consultation should occur, which is something we support.

As I said, the Government will move amendments to the bill during the consideration in detail stage. The key amendment will require agencies to have regard to a "Consultation with Regional Communities" guide when consulting with a regional community on a proposal primarily directed to or impacting the health, cultural, economic, educational or other wellbeing of persons in that community. This amendment will update the bill so that rather than requiring agencies to comply with the current prescribed standard, agencies must have regard to the guide when consulting a regional community.

The amendment will exclude agencies not subject to ministerial direction and control from the scope of the bill. The guide will be issued by the Premier and published in the *Government Gazette*. Changing the standard that is prescribed by the bill will ensure that there is fit-for-purpose guidance about consultation with regional and remote communities. The guide is drafted to make it easy for agencies to understand what is required of them to comply during consultation. Similarly, it will be easier for regional stakeholders to understand how they can expect the Government to consult with them.

Overall, the guide will facilitate a flexible and tailored approach to ensure stakeholders in regional and remote communities are properly heard. The amendment will strengthen the outcomes of this bill as the guide can be tailored to unique situations within the community. In contrast, the standard proposed in the current version of the bill is not fit for purpose. While it does provide useful principles for best practice consultation, it is not intended for use in this context and does not provide specific guidance on the various unique circumstances that arise when undertaking consultation in regional New South Wales.

The next amendment the Government intends to move excludes agencies not subject to ministerial direction and control from the scope of the bill. Importantly, that ensures that agencies that are intended to be independent of government, such as ICAC, remain independent. To be clear, the amendment does not preclude those agencies from adopting best practice consultation guidance from the guide where appropriate. But it does ensure that the independence of those agencies is maintained. The Government also intends to move an amendment for the bill to commence on proclamation rather than on assent. That will allow time to develop the proposed consultation guide and ensures that it provides the flexibility and detail needed to inform regional and remote consultation. The amendment also ensures that the bill does not impact consultation processes that are currently underway.

Once the guide is developed, the bill will be commenced by proclamation. We expect that process to be completed quickly so it will not take long for the new standards to come into force. I reiterate the Government's support for the intent of this bill. I understand the concerns raised by the member for Barwon about the need for regional communities to be consulted appropriately. I appreciate him for introducing this bill to the House. I understand that the member has had discussions with the Minister for Regional New South Wales and her office. I thank Minister Moriarty and her team for their work on the amendments and providing me with guidance on the response to the bill. I agree with the member for Barwon that guidance for agencies is important. People in regional communities have given a number of examples where they feel there has not been appropriate consultation. The guide will give communities and agencies a basis to make a judgement on whether the consultation has been adequate.

Consultation does not always mean that everyone gets their own way, of course. I often hear people say that there has been no consultation on this, when actually they just did not get what they wanted out of it. We all recognise there are occasions where that will happen. But it is important that communities have a basis to know whether the consultation that was engaged in has met the expectation that the Government has of its agencies in undertaking that work. The bill will take important steps to address those issues by providing clarity around how regional and remote stakeholders will be consulted. The bill, once it is amended, will ensure that a benchmark for best practice consultation is available to inform decision-making. That is why the Government supports the bill with the amendments foreshadowed. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:50):** I contribute to the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024, introduced by my good friend the member for Barwon. In his bill, unsurprisingly, the member brings commonsense and practical solutions to redefine how the Government interacts with our regional communities. As a strident advocate for regional communities, I echo the virtues of the bill for the people living in regional communities. It emphasises the value of their beliefs, experiences, opinions, wants, needs and, importantly, the provision of reasonable accessibility for members of country communities to contribute to consultation processes with government agencies on the issues that affect them.

Decisions that impact the lives, livelihoods and landscapes of country communities have often been made without meaningful input from those who know their communities best. The bill aims to change that by setting a standard for consultation that prioritises transparency, inclusiveness and respect. The bill establishes a framework for how consultations should be conducted. It requires that any engagement with regional communities by government agencies or statutory bodies must adhere to a prescribed standard of practice. This means that consultations will no longer be mere formalities or box-ticking exercises. Instead, there will be structured, purposeful dialogue that genuinely seeks the input of those affected. These communities understand their challenges intimately, be it in education, health, infrastructure or environment. They hold the key to solutions that can only emerge from genuine collaboration.

The bill is also a step towards restoring trust between government agencies and the communities they serve. We must acknowledge that mistrust was built over years of disengagement and ineffective communication. By setting standards for consultation, we signal our commitment to fostering an environment where regional voices are not only heard but valued. We send a message that their insights will directly inform decision-making processes, ensuring that policies are relevant and effective. The bill also provides clarity on what constitutes an effective consultation. It lays out the expectations and best practices that government agencies must follow, which can include timely notifications, accessible information and genuine opportunities for feedback. This is about

creating a system where community members feel empowered to participate, knowing that their contributions matter.

Effective consultations lead to better outcomes—outcomes that are tailored to the needs of communities and ultimately lead to greater satisfaction with government services. When communities feel heard and respected, they are more likely to support the initiatives put forth by government agencies through a collaborative spirit. My understanding is that this legislation will not interfere with consultations already mandated by existing laws. It is designed to complement those requirements, ensuring that the essence of community engagement remains a cornerstone of governance. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (10:53):** I contribute to the debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting positive social and economic outcomes for regional New South Wales. The Government is investing in what matters to those communities. It is bringing back essential workers, rebuilding hospitals and delivering a massive regional roads package. Since we on this side came into government, we have shown a strong commitment to listening to communities and investing in regional New South Wales. We see this private member's bill as a way to strengthen the connection between government and regional and remote communities. Stronger stakeholder engagement processes are essential to deliver successful outcomes for regional New South Wales. We support any measures that give the community certainty about how they can expect the Government to interact with them.

I will speak about an example of a thorough regional consultation that this Government has recently undertaken and why the Minns Labor Government is happy to support a bill that sets a consultation baseline for governments into the future. In September 2023 the Government commenced a review of the Regional Development Act as part of the New South Wales Government's Regional Development Roadmap. The review was informed by extensive consultation, including a public consultation process that resulted in 232 written submissions responding to an issues paper; and nine round tables held by the Minister for Regional New South Wales that were attended by more than 200 stakeholders in Bega, Bourke, Broken Hill, Casino, Coffs Harbour, Maitland, Narrabri, Orange and Wagga Wagga.

It is clear that this Government takes consultation seriously. That extensive consultation directly informed the modernising of arrangements for the Regional Development Trust and the first round of government investments from the trust. This is just one example of the effort that this Government is making to undertake proper consultation with regional and remote stakeholders in New South Wales. The Government is supporting the bill today, which provides a clear signal about the way the Government expects consultation to occur. As to the Government's investment in regional New South Wales, since coming to government we on this side have shown dedication to regional spending for the social and economic benefit of our regions. Some of those achievements have been in my electorate of Shellharbour.

In May, the Minister for Regional New South Wales announced the first \$35 million funding allocation from the \$400 million that was allocated to the Regional Development Trust. This initial investment will support a package of initiatives to boost the long-term resilience of regional New South Wales. The announcement included \$15 million to deliver airstrip improvements in rural and remote New South Wales, including airstrip surface upgrades, exclusion and safety fencing, lighting and the installation of fuel infrastructure; a \$5 million Aboriginal Economic Development Package to support Aboriginal businesses and organisations in regional New South Wales to expand and reach their potential; a \$10 million Western NSW Workforce Activation Package that will provide funding to increase workforce participation in western New South Wales by supporting increased childcare availability and upgrades in Bourke, Broken Hill and Cobar; and a \$5 million low-interest loans pilot program to enable eligible small and medium enterprises in the food and beverage manufacturing sectors to apply for loans of between \$100,000 and \$1 million to increase productivity and create jobs in regional New South Wales.

This is just the start of a series of deliberate and sustainable investments that will come from the trust, targeted at supporting the social and economic development of our regional communities. Regional New South Wales will experience the benefit of this funding for years to come. To continue delivering great outcomes for regional New South Wales, there will need to be an ongoing focus on understanding what our regional and rural communities actually need. Only through extensive and meaningful consultation can we ensure that we are capturing the most accurate information from our valuable stakeholders.

The bill before the House was introduced by the member for Barwon, the largest electorate in the State. Some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in New South Wales are in that electorate. This Government understands why the bill has been introduced and recognises that it needs to make sure those communities are listened to. I congratulate the member for bringing the bill to the House. Our regional and remote communities deserve to be properly consulted on the topics that matter most to them. I again acknowledge the great work that the member for Barwon is doing. The Government shares his interest in supporting best practice

consultation with regional and remote communities. The bill will enhance the work the Government is doing in pursuit of social and economic outcomes. I urge members to support the bill, as consultation is crucial to all of our communities in regional New South Wales. Their voice matters. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** It being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to the resolution of the House of 25 September 2024, debate is interrupted for question time and the routine of business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Membership**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That Mr Barrett be appointed as a member of the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Mrs Maclaren-Jones.
- (2) That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by the House.

#### *Members*

**MEMBER FOR LEPPINGTON**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTH COAST**

**MEMBER FOR MYALL LAKES**

**MEMBER FOR GOULBURN**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for Leppington—not Lamington, although I believe it is quite likely that one day his electorate could be renamed; I think it is a much sweeter name—the member for South Coast, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Goulburn all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have wonderful celebrations planned.

#### *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery guests of the member for Wollondilly, students and teachers from St Gregory's College Campbelltown. I also acknowledge the guest of the member for Coogee, Maria Clara Tavares. I welcome to the front row of the Speaker's gallery Ms Chiu Pao-yu, the mother of Shu-Fang Wei, who works for me in the Speaker's office; Ms Wei Shu-fen, the sister of Shu-Fang Wei; and Mr Bian Wei Wei, Shu-Fang's brother-in-law. They are visiting from Taiwan. It is lovely to have them here.

#### *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*

### **SYDNEY METRO DRIVERLESS TRAINS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:04):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union says that the south-west metro will have "a member on every train who is qualified and competent to drive". Will those qualified drivers, on driverless trains, be employed as customer journey coordinators under the Metro Sydney Automated Passenger Services Agreement or, instead, as qualified train drivers under the Sydney Trains enterprise agreement?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:05):** The answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question is simple: They will be Metro Trains Sydney [MTS] staff, just like the staff on the current metro. While those opposite have put out leaflets about designing, building and funding the metro, it does not seem that they know how to actually run it. If they did their homework, they would understand that the very



hardworking, highly trained and welcoming staff on every single train and platform of the new city section of the metro are highly trained MTS staff who are able to assist not only the millions of passengers who are loving the metro each and every day but also in emergencies, which is very rare on the metro. It is running at a 99 per cent level of reliability, which is excellent for passengers and for our city. That reliable and frequent public transport service is great for passengers, and it is also taking pressure off other parts of the public transport system. In those rare circumstances when something goes wrong, the best thing is to have someone on board the train who knows what to do.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order while I hear the point of order. The member for Upper Hunter will come to order.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** It is under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was specifically about which agreement those people will be employed under, not who the employer is. The Minister is not answering that question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has been directly relevant. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** If those opposite were not so busy organising fundraisers or trying to get their paperwork together, they would understand that MTS staff are employed by Sydney Metro. They are not government employees; they are MTS staff. In a circumstance where a family is separated when catching the metro, when a kid gets on board the train and the parents do not, those staff members can reunite that family. That has happened in the past, and we have given out community information to passengers about that. Those staff members are also trained to communicate with the operation control centre. I say to those opposite that it shows their complete ignorance about how a public transport system that moves more than one million people a day is run. It relies on the thousands of public transport workers to make that system work. The presence of public transport workers improves passenger confidence and means people can catch public transport more often.

#### ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE PILL

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:08):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Government is boosting access to the contraceptive pill in pharmacies across the State?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:08):** I announce to the House that it will now be easier and more affordable for thousands of women across New South Wales to access the oral contraceptive pill. The Government has decided that the 12-month trial in New South Wales pharmacies for women to access the pill will be permanent in this State. In addition to that, the Government has announced it will expand patient age restrictions from 18 to 35 years to 18 to 49 years, which includes a greater number of women and allows a larger cohort to access the contraceptive pill in New South Wales without first visiting a GP. That is a commonsense, necessary change.

The Government negotiated with the Pharmacy Guild and pharmacy organisations in the State for the simple but important premise to ensure that there is safe, reliable, effective and affordable access to oral contraceptives for women in the State. That is important. The Government has also made permanent in pharmacies existing treatment for urinary tract infections. That trial has taken place over the past year, with 18,000 consultations occurring at New South Wales pharmacies, and it has worked.

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Premier will be heard in silence.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Government has taken a commonsense and practical approach to ensuring that women in New South Wales have access to fundamental, basic health care. I respond to criticism of the Government's decision today by those representing GPs in New South Wales. The accusation was made that the changes were politically advantageous or motivated by politics, but they were not. The changes were motivated by the need to help women in this State. I reject that criticism, and believe the changes are important. I make it clear that the latest Bureau of Health Information Healthcare Quarterly results showed a dramatic net decrease in the number of GP attendances in New South Wales, from 681,000 to 653,000, and the number of GPs available to members of the New South Wales community dropped from 9,700 to 9,485.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** Women's health is an important issue. I request additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** An extension of two minutes is granted. The Premier will be heard in silence. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber, particularly among Opposition members, and it is disrespectful.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The reforms will ensure that those who need access to fundamental health care are able to access it. The Government has also been working with the Pharmacy Guild and pharmacy representatives to ensure that minor ailments are able to be treated in New South Wales pharmacies—for example, middle ear infections, outer ear infections, acute minor wound management, acute nausea and vomiting, gastro, oesophageal reflux, mild to moderate acne and mild acute musculoskeletal pain. Those are similar to a range of conditions that have already been trialled in Queensland and the Northern Territory. We cannot allow someone who is in urgent need of health care to present to a pharmacy or chemist, where they can see treatment for their pain directly behind the counter, and be turned away because they have not been able to see a GP first. We want to see rates of GP use and bulk-billing in New South Wales increase, and we have made changes to tax law to encourage that. The management or rationing of health care cannot be, "Sorry, it's simply unavailable."

### **SYDNEY METRO DRIVERLESS TRAINS**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (11:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Given her previous answer about drivers on driverless trains, what is the Government's policy for whether the Sydney Metro Southwest will shut down if there is a general Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] strike?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:13):** It is disappointing to see the lack of flexibility in the tactics of members opposite. Unfortunately, they did not listen to my last answer. I made it very clear that the staff on the metro now and the staff on the future south-west metro are MTS staff—Metro Trains Sydney staff. They are not government employees. I encourage the member who asked the question to perhaps speak to some of those staff members, ride on the metro and do a little bit of homework. Over six million people have already ridden the metro, and they are loving it.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Our commitment is to take the metro to Bankstown and to the communities that have been promised that service for a long time. That is exactly what we are doing. I have spoken in the House before about the difficulty that this presents. It requires closing the T3 line, which will start on Monday, and moving some 60,000 passenger trips a day to alternative transport arrangements. That is going to be a difficult and painful period for those communities. That is one of the reasons we are making replacement bus services free. We recognise that it is going to be painful.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In the end, it is going to be worth it because the magic of metro will be taken to the communities of the inner west and Canterbury-Bankstown. As a result, more services across our network, whether they be heavy rail, bus or light rail, will have less pressure and be more frequent and reliable so that more people will be able to catch public transport. That is a good thing.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relating to direct relevance. The question was will the south-west metro shut down if there is a general RTBU strike? The Minister has not answered the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of Opposition Business. The Minister has been directly relevant.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** They do not seem to get it. They do not understand how the public transport system works.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Yes or no?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister cannot be required to answer yes or no. The Minister has been relevant. I will not enter into an argument about my ruling.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** This line of questioning shows that members opposite had complete disregard for transport workers and refused to speak with them.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** They sought conflict over solution every time. On this side of the Chamber, we will find solutions for the passengers of Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

### SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (11:17):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is delivering school infrastructure in the State's fastest growing communities?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:17):** I thank the member for Camden for that important question. I know that this subject is close to her heart. She was elected for many reasons, but she has already delivered a high school for Gregory Hills. At the heart of this Government is the unwavering belief that every child, in every suburb and in every town across New South Wales has the right to access fee-free public education where they live. It is in our Labor DNA. We are proud of it. It is a defining difference between members on this side of the Chamber and members opposite. We inherited a situation where, in growing areas, the lack of school infrastructure investment was driving families away from public education because there were simply no public schools to attend. Members opposite can go on all they like about this, but the facts tell the truth.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** When we came to government we had to fast-track schools across New South Wales, particularly in south-west and north-western Sydney in Gregory Hills, Marsden Park, Jordan Springs, Schofield and Tallawong, where last week, with the member for Riverstone, we announced a site for a brand-new high school. In Box Hill, workers are about to go onto the site, with more work happening this school holidays than ever happened under the Liberal-Nationals Government. It is no wonder that when a journalist asked the member for Hawkesbury, "What happened to the schools in Box Hill that were promised to that growing community?" her answer was, "I just don't have an answer." That is refreshing honesty. "I'm only the local member of Parliament," she says, "It's only my job to advocate for basic services for families who move to these areas and build their homes on brand new blocks of land."

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is no laughing matter for the families of Box Hill because they have taken out huge mortgages to build their dream homes. We are finally building the schools that they deserve. One hundred and fifty people have already expressed an interest in the school that we will be delivering at Box Hill. *[Extension of time]*

**Ms Robyn Preston:** When?

**Ms PRUE CAR:** When? The member for Hawkesbury would like the date of when we are delivering this Box Hill primary school. It will be earlier than the 12 years that they had to deliver the school.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** They do not have a leg to stand on when it comes to building schools in growing areas. We even had to do our own enrolment growth audit to show that the projections of those opposite were so wrong. But they kept telling those communities, "We don't need these schools in growing areas. Don't worry that you build homes and you have babies and they have to go somewhere. We'll just drive them away from public education." That was the plan. This Government has a different plan. This Government has a plan to build the schools where people live so we can deliver on our moral objective of providing public education for every child in New South Wales.

The examples are endless, and even broader than Western Sydney. In the member for Wollondilly's patch in Picton, the geniuses opposite spent \$112 million to build a school where the classrooms have no walls. How did that turn out, member for Wollondilly? Really good. I do not know if those opposite have ever met a teenager, but that does not work. It is not going to work. The former Minister said, "No concerns were raised with me." Because she made a living out of not listening to teachers, I can sort of understand how that could have happened. The Government is committed—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** And should be.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We are. We should be, and we are doing it, unlike the Opposition. We are going to be opening all those new schools that the Coalition refused to build.

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

### MARINE RESCUE NSW

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (11:22):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Given the remarkable work of Marine Rescue NSW, which operates as the only emergency service

organisation without access to the Public Safety Network radio communications, will the Minister consider funding to bring Marine Rescue onto the network so that it can continue its essential work?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:23):** I thank the member for Ballina for her question, and for her interest in and support for the activities of Marine Rescue NSW. In July, I was with the member for Ballina and the member for Lismore in Brunswick Heads for the commissioning of the new *Brunswick 30* vessel. The member for Ballina's passion on that day was absolutely fantastic. I also thank her for the excellent advocacy she does for her community, particularly in the work that Minister Scully and I have done around the Reconstruction Authority. She is passionate about her community and always advocates for it. Better still, after the Deputy Premier's answer, she is a very proud public school teacher. That is an added bonus. I better start the answer. I might need a time extension.

Marine Rescue NSW provides vital volunteer search and rescue, communication and boating education services to the communities of New South Wales. The agency also supports other emergency services during disasters. The member for Ballina is absolutely correct to call out its remarkable work. This last financial year 3,500 volunteers have responded to almost 4,600 emergencies and other rescues across the State, rescued more than 10,000 boaters, and managed almost 250,000 radio calls. We often speak about rescues in the emergency services space, and we are grateful for them. All of those rescues, the 10,000 boaters, were tragedies that were averted.

Through our Rescue Capability Grant, the New South Wales Government is providing Marine Rescue NSW with \$72.8 million over four years. That is the largest investment they have ever received, and I am really proud of that. I was with the police Minister and the member for Newcastle when that was announced in Newcastle. That helps fund the vessels, facilities and resources it needs to keep the people of New South Wales safe. The funding includes an allocation for Marine Rescue to: maintain and operate its own VHF radio communications infrastructure to broadcast safety messages to all vessels operating along the New South Wales coastline, like warnings about navigation hazards and weather forecasts; allow the boating community to log on and log off voyages with Marine Rescue, which we want them to do; and maintain a 24/7 listening watch on the international marine band channel on the New South Wales coastline and seawards. [*Extension of time*]

The funding also supports Marine Rescue NSW to operate its own VHF discrete radio network for communications between its vessels and radio bases, so we have that communication element. However, we are always looking for ways to improve, and Marine Rescue NSW is all about continuous improvement of capability and communications. I am advised that Marine Rescue NSW and the NSW Telco Authority, which also falls under my remit, have conducted a trial of 30 repurposed Public Safety Network [PSN] radios in day-to-day operations. I am really pleased with that. They were initially put into service at the Brunswick and Nambucca Heads Marine Rescue units and on jet skis. Following the success of the trial, the PSN radio trial has been extended to units in the Northern Rivers, Hunter Central Coast and Monaro regions.

I advise the member that the Premier's Department and the Telco Authority are working closely with Marine Rescue about the potential transfer of their radios to the PSN. We are committed to supporting our emergency services organisations, and we are delivering an unprecedented level of support to non-government and volunteer organisations, which do an incredible job. We will continue to provide support to organisations such as Marine Rescue NSW to help equip them with the tools they require. I know the member for Ballina will join me in thanking all of our volunteers for their ongoing efforts, especially as we approach the busy season, not only in boating but also with the weather. I thank the member for the question, and I hope I have been able to set her a little bit at ease with the information about the trial and that we are looking at other ways.

### PRIMARY HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:28):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please update the House on the ways in which the Government is taking pressure off the primary healthcare provider network?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:28):** I thank the member for Blue Mountains. I think all members will agree that she is a terrific advocate for her community, not just for her local hospital but in particular, from my perspective, the fantastic women's health service in her region. I know that she has been a strong supporter for a long time. This week, the Government has outlined a range of challenges, and what the evidence and data are showing about access to GPs. This morning, the Minister for Women, the Premier and I announced, as the Premier has already outlined, the extension to make permanent the oral contraception pill for women to enable them to get better access to health care. Importantly, from our perspective, it also takes some pressure off our primary health network and off our GPs.

It is harder to get into GPs at the moment. The waits are longer, and when people can get in, the bulk billing levels are also down. That brings up a real challenge in terms of primary care. This Government has decided to invest like no other government has invested before to take pressure off primary care and to take pressure off our emergency departments. Today I will outline what our urgent care services are doing and what the data is showing that we have been able to achieve. In the past 12 months, we have avoided 235,000 trips to an emergency department through the 1800 022 222 healthdirect line. People can call that number to get access to urgent care services, virtual care services, geriatric outreach services and a range of different other support services and health services without having to go to an emergency department. Those people still need treatment, and they still need access to health care.

We have opened up a pathway that is diverting close to a quarter of a million people away from busy emergency departments—often even away from primary health care—towards another avenue of health care. I encourage members in this place to make sure that their community is familiar with that 1800 022 222 healthdirect line. Our urgent care services across the length and breadth of New South Wales are making a massive difference. In the past month, 31,000 people have utilised our urgent care services and avoided a trip to the emergency department. In places like Gregory Hills, about 500 people have used the service. In south-western Sydney, around 1,000 people have used the geriatric outreach service. Similarly, in south-east Sydney around 1,000 people have used our geriatric outreach service. Older people not having to go to our emergency departments is taking pressure off primary care. [*Extension of time*]

Another innovative solution is our virtualKIDS program run out of Westmead. Some 1,400 families and parents and carers have used that service. They did not have to take their children to an emergency department. They sought help over the phone and spoke to a nurse, a nurse practitioner, a GP or an allied health care professional and accessed the convenience of health care across the board. A lot of people from the Mid North Coast have a real interest in this, where around 2½ thousand people have avoided a trip to the emergency department because we have been able to provide an urgent care service in that part of New South Wales. We understand the pressure on our primary health network at the moment. We understand that the community is struggling to get access to GPs, so we have decided to make a once-in-a-generation investment into an area of public health that is not the core responsibility of the State.

We are doing that because we are a government that cares deeply about the provision of health services across New South Wales. If we do not do it, people will continue to delay treatment or utilise the emergency department in a way that is not effective for them, the staff or the system. People who are sicker than ever before will continue to present to our emergency departments because they have not accessed primary care. For the first time, we are also investing in the payroll tax rebate, which has been so well received. If it provides an incentive for our GPs to maintain high rates of bulk-billing, that is good for them, and it is good for the system. Most importantly, it is good for the health care of the communities across New South Wales.

#### PORT OF NEWCASTLE PROTESTS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (11:33):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter. Last year the Minister said, "I applaud people for getting involved," when the Port of Newcastle was blockaded by so-called Rising Tide protesters when 109 people were arrested. Does the Minister applaud this year's proposed 50-hour blockade of the Port of Newcastle?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:34):** I will update the House on what my understanding is at this point in time. Police have refused the form 1 that was submitted by the event organisers on safety grounds. I understand that Rising Tide has indicated that it will be submitting another form. The police have not received that form at this point in time, but obviously they will assess it on its merits and then make a decision. What the member omitted to tell the House is that I also said that anyone who breaks the law faces arrest, and the Government does not walk away from that. People are entitled to protest, but if they break the law, then they will be arrested.

I bring to the House's attention the recent Newcastle rail protests and the police response. I thank the police for doing an incredible job keeping our streets, our cities and our communities safe. They had to police a challenging parcel of land of 80 kilometres to keep those protesters from killing themselves or, indeed, injuring or putting at risk our first responders, which would have been irresponsible and selfish of the protesters. One hundred per cent of those who were doing the wrong thing got arrested. I applaud the New South Wales police for doing their job. We are in safe hands. I do not know why members opposite keep bagging the cops in the State. That is all they do. The cops love question time, where all they hear is bagging from those opposite. Our cops know that the Minns Labor Government has their back. We back them 100 per cent. They are the best cops in the world, and the New South Wales Labor Government cannot sing that song from the streets loud enough.

## HOSPITALITY AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (11:36):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is ensuring that hospitality and entertainment workers have a safe workplace?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (11:37):** I thank the member for Penrith for her question, for her undoubted support of those amazing workers who keep our night-time economy running and for particularly being interested in their safety while they do their job. Sexual harassment or violence towards staff and patrons in venues is completely unacceptable. Allegations highlighted in recent media reports relating to some large hospitality venues are extremely concerning and are being investigated by the appropriate agencies, including the NSW Police Force and SafeWork NSW.

As a government, we are committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive and vibrant hospitality sector and a night-time economy for both patrons and workers. Managers and owners have a fundamental duty of care to employees who work in their workplaces. As a government, we are determined to do our part, and one of our key priorities in the New South Wales Government's new 24-Hour Economy Strategy is amenity and safety for our night-time workers. We are working closely with venues to ensure safety, respect and inclusiveness are the highest priorities. The Government is looking at a range of options for specialised sexual harassment and prevention training for staff at licensed venues across New South Wales. All staff and security personnel who work at licensed premises are already required to undertake responsible service of alcohol [RSA] training. The RSA training course has been recently updated to provide further information on what steps bar staff and security personnel should take after an allegation is made or a drink spiking incident is witnessed.

The Government recognises the vital role played by advocacy groups in raising awareness of safety issues in licensed venues and calling for expanded RSA training to reduce the risks of drink spiking, sexual harassment and sexual assault. A further update to RSA training to include advice on sexual harassment and sexual and gendered violence is now being considered. That update will make it abundantly clear that everyone who works in a licensed premises—from licensees, owners and managers to bar staff and cleaning staff—has a role to play in creating a safer working environment for all. We are making sure that any work we undertake on the RSA training handbook undergoes a targeted consultation with key stakeholders who have the expertise and interest in public health and safety. One of the key responsibilities of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner is to ensure that safety is at the heart of a vibrant and inclusive night-time economy by working with others. [*Extension of time*]

Supporting and putting in place protections for our night-time workers is essential to delivering positive and vibrant experiences for patrons. I understand that the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner regularly meets with key people and groups involved in keeping workers safe, including the Women's Safety Commissioner, as well as sector leaders such as the Australian Hotels Association, ClubsNSW and Business NSW, who are part of an industry taskforce convened by the Night Time Industries Association. It is everyone's responsibility, including industry and employers, to ensure safe working environments in the hospitality sector that are free of discrimination, harassment, assault and gendered violence. Just as all patrons expect a safe night out, hospitality and entertainment workers deserve a safe workplace, which is why the training programs and handbooks are so important.

I am proud to be a Minister in a Labor government that puts workers first. We have scrapped the unfair and miserly wages cap installed by those opposite. We have delivered public sector workers their biggest pay rise in over a decade. We have passed legislation to create an offence for industrial manslaughter. We have toughened penalties for serious work health and safety breaches, and we have committed to restoring SafeWork NSW as a standalone regulator. Members on this side of the Chamber believe that everyone deserves a safe and respectful workplace. It does not matter which industry or which role they work in, everyone deserves to feel safe in their workplace. The Labor Party is clearly the party of workers.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:42):** My question is directed to the Premier. With the Government rejecting Federal Labor's offer to increase its funding of the Schooling Resource Standard from 20 per cent to 22.5 per cent, will the Premier now honour his pre-election promise to "make up the difference"?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:42):** I am proud to report to the House that the New South Wales Government will have 75 per cent Schooling Resource Standard [SRS] funding two years earlier than the previous Government did. That is a fundamental investment in public education in New South Wales. It is hugely important for taxpayers and for the future of the State. That is what people get under a Labor government. For the first time in a decade, there is investment in public education. For a long time we saw the previous Government

preside over a situation where frontline workers in public education were encouraged to leave the profession. There was an unprecedented number of people leaving.

Under the leadership of the Deputy Premier and education Minister, we have introduced a regime in New South Wales where more than 15,000 teachers and support staff have been offered permanent positions in New South Wales schools. I will put that in perspective, because it is important. Under the previous Government, teacher vacancies reached 3,220 in November 2022, which was a record high. Two-thirds of schools had vacant permanent positions. One-third of schools had between two to five vacancies. Just 60 per cent of teachers were permanent. Under Labor, 80 per cent of teachers are permanent.

**Mr Justin Clancy:** Point of order: My point of order is direct relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Albury will resume his seat.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Under the previous education Minister there were 1,854 resignations in 2022, the highest ever recorded. Worse than that, 19 per cent of early career teachers were resigning each year, which represents a quadrupling of the number of resignations. What does that say? By the numbers, the former education Minister was the worst education Minister the State has ever had. I cannot grade on a curve. I do not want to say it. I do not want to give her an E or a fail. But how can you look at these numbers any other way?

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the point of order?

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Premier has made an outrageous accusation.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat.

*[Interruption]*

I direct the member for Dubbo to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for two minutes.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 11:45.]*

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get a deal for New South Wales public schoolkids. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. These are 10-year funding agreements. If we get this wrong, our kids are out for 10 years. We will not compromise on public education for New South Wales schoolkids and we demand our fair share from the Federal Government.

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Port Macquarie on three calls to order.

### ESSENTIAL WORKERS

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (11:46):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Minister update the House on why removing the wages cap is so important to enabling the Government to rebuild essential services after 12 years of neglect?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:46):** I relish the question. It is a shame that members opposite have not asked it. I thank the hardworking member for Newcastle for that very timely and important question. The Minns Labor Government was elected with a mandate to scrap the wages cap, and we are doing that.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** For 12 long years the former O'Farrell, Berejiklian, Baird and Perrottet governments deliberately suppressed the wages of 400,000 essential workers. Let me be clear: I am talking about nurses, police, child protection workers, firefighters, cleaners and emergency service workers. Those opposite were suppressing their wages. The absolute insult to this injury was the fact that, during the global pandemic, when our essential workers were putting themselves in danger on the front line every day to help protect the people of New South Wales, the former Government said thanks by giving them a zero wage rise.

The other day the shadow Treasurer put on record that that was a very good decision. In other words, if given the chance, they will do it again. They voted against removing the wages cap a year ago. That is because it is in the Coalition DNA to remove wages and conditions and to make sure that they go backwards. That is exactly what those opposite did. Make no mistake, a future State Coalition government will bring back the wages cap. That is how much those opposite value our essential workers. During those 12 years, there was a deliberate wage suppression strategy.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Even after 18 months of our Government, we are still dealing with the utter chaos and destruction that they caused, because we are doing our homework.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** We are doing a lot of work. They did absolutely nothing. It is actually insulting, because we are doing the work.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Port Macquarie that she is on three calls to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I was there at the table. You did nothing for 12 years. You did not even open the books.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order—

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** That was absolutely disrespectful to those workers.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Minister is pointing across the Chamber at the Opposition and not directing her comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. The Minister will continue her answer.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I am insulted for the 400,000 workers whose wages were suppressed. The former Government did not even do its homework. It did not go through the awards. It did not go through the classifications. It did not go through it all line by line. The Government is doing that. [*Extension of time*]

I will remind the House of the outcomes achieved by those opposite. Nurses were leaving in 2022. Some 12.6 per cent of our nursing workforce left. That equates to 7,678 nurses. Again, for the first time ever, in 2022 teachers resigned at a faster rate than they retired. Some 19 per cent of teachers did not even make it to five years of service. I know that because I have young constituents in my electorate who came out of uni and went into our schools, but after two or three years they said, "We've had enough." We have lost great students and uni graduates from our schools. They have said "That's enough" because those opposite did not care. It was a similar story for police. Recruitment rates did not keep up with attrition.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Thank goodness for our police Minister. She has made that change and is paying those students down at Goulburn. Bus services were cancelled under the former Government because it could not be bothered to run a proper recruitment process.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** This is the legacy of wage suppression. That is why the Government is passionate about this. We are doing the work left behind by those opposite. We are rebuilding public services. Our wages policy is about fair and reasonable wages for public sector workers. We are doing the work. Last year we boosted public service wages by 4.5 per cent. We are in good, constructive negotiations. This is not easy by any stretch at all because we are doing the hard work and we are having those robust discussions. The Minns Labor Government truly values our State's essential workers, and we always have. We will back them to make sure they provide those services to the people of New South Wales, because that is the Labor way. That is in our DNA.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Terrigal that he is on two calls to order. I remind the member for Port Macquarie that she is on three calls to order. Members will come to order.

#### **NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (11:52):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. How many unions have accepted the 10.5 per cent pay increase proposal?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:52):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for that very important question. The new member does not have the history of some of those opposite, who sat on this side of the House under Mr O'Farrell, Mr Baird, Ms Berejiklian and Mr Perrottet with their arms crossed and allowed the wages cap to continue. The Government and our Premier made a commitment to the people of New South Wales to remove and scrap the wages cap; bring in a framework to sit down, work through, bargain and negotiate; and bring back the industrial relations court to ensure that there is an independent umpire.



**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was how many unions have accepted the 10.5 per cent pay increase proposal? The Minister has not answered the question.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** The Government put forward 10.5 per cent and we are in negotiations with a number of unions. We are having very important discussions, unlike those opposite.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** For Opposition members to ask questions about industrial relations after their terrible record and the mess they left us—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Which member wishes to leave the Chamber? Is it the member for Dubbo? What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being directly relevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I have already ruled on that point of order. I have instructed the Minister to be directly relevant. I cannot prescribe how the Minister answers the question. She returned to the leave of the question and was directly relevant. Therefore, I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I ask the member for Coffs Harbour, who took that point of order, how many times he represented the nurses, teachers and firefighters in his electorate—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** —and how many times he got up to say that they needed a pay rise—he didn't!

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** They are going to bring back the wages cap. We have removed the wages cap.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** They support a wages cap. We removed the wages cap. That's in your DNA.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister does not need to resume her seat. She will leave the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for five minutes. The Minister may return to the Chamber after that. She cannot overtly defy the Speaker and flout the standing orders. I understand she is excitable about these issues, but the Minister will leave the Chamber for five minutes. The member for Goulburn will be removed from the Chamber if she continues to interject.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** I apologise to you, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate that. I accept the Minister's apology.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 11:55.]*

**The SPEAKER:** There is a little more time remaining in question time. I will have more members removed from the Chamber if they do not come to order.

#### STOCKTON CENTRE

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:56):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion. Will the Minister please update the House on the future use of the Stockton Centre and former residential service for people with disabilities?

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (11:57):** I thank the member for Wallsend for that really important question and her enduring commitment to helping those most in need. As the member and all of my Hunter colleagues know all too well, the Hunter region is no stranger to the housing and homelessness crises. We cannot always see homeless people on the streets in our part of the world. They shelter in the bush, they shelter under bridges, they sleep in cars and they couch surf across the region. When Labor was in opposition, we tried hard to work with the former Government to find commonsense solutions to the crisis in the Hunter. I know there is a housing crisis across the State, but it was felt acutely in the Hunter. We offered opportunities to help the former Government assist people experiencing homelessness. In fact, we pleaded with the former Government to stand up the Stockton Centre to

support those most in need. But the former Government—that lot over there—refused to listen. Worse still, they made up excuses for their complete inaction.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Wahroonga that he is on three calls to order.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** They claimed the Stockton Centre was not suitable to meet this urgent need because the sewerage, water and power infrastructure had apparently deteriorated in the two years since they decommissioned the site. But that did not stack up. One of the first things I did when I became Minister was to inspect the Stockton Centre with the member for Newcastle. Lo and behold, when we visited the site we found ourselves in brick buildings that appeared to be in good condition. Perfectly good houses had been sitting idle and empty because the former Government could not even be bothered to look.

The Minns Labor Government has taken a very different approach. When it comes to putting roofs over people's heads, we will not leave any stone unturned. We have not only explored the option; we have acted, contracted, and we will soon be standing up homes for families who may otherwise have nowhere to go. We have awarded a \$1.8 million contract for the upgrade and restoration of seven houses at the Stockton Centre for meanwhile use as short-term crisis housing for families, starting from January next year. The planned upgrades will result to homes with four, five and even six bedrooms, perfect for families fleeing domestic violence, who otherwise might find themselves in single motel rooms for weeks or months on end. With the support of an excellent local housing provider, Home In Place, families facing the most difficult of times will have somewhere safe to stay with the supports that they need to move on. But we are not stopping there. While we are addressing the homelessness crisis now, we are also tackling the housing crisis into the future. *[Extension of time]*

Since coming into government last year, we have been pulling out all the stops to make more housing available for those who need it. I am pleased to update the House that the Stockton Centre will deliver hundreds of new homes following our audit of New South Wales Government-owned properties. We will work with Landcom to determine the site's future, which could see more than 500 homes on the site, with the mix of social, affordable and private housing to be determined. Unlocking the Stockton Centre will make a huge contribution to our Government's commitment to deliver up to 30,000 new homes across the State. The Hunter will be pulling its weight.

Importantly, when we are planning for the future of the site, we will ensure that the history of the Stockton Centre, as a former residential service for people with disabilities, is not forgotten. Like many people in the Hunter, I have a long and personal connection with the Stockton Centre. The member for Newcastle does and you, Mr Speaker, do, too. I was closely involved, as many were, when former residents with complex disabilities were being moved out with undue haste by the former Government. I helped support families and staff members, as did many, seeking transparency and care from the former Government, which too often just did not care. Going forward, our Government will be representing and respecting the past by ensuring that consultation continues with disability stakeholders like Hunter Circles, which I met with recently.

The Stockton Centre is an iconic Hunter landmark. Many of us in the Hunter know it well and drive past it often. We have all struggled to understand why it has been sitting idle for years, when we know there are people who desperately need roofs over their heads. Unlike the former Government, we do not ignore the needs of people across the Hunter and the State. We are a government determined to find practical solutions to local problems. All families, especially those in crisis, deserve the safety and dignity of roofs over their heads. Every single member of our Government is working every single day to improve the lives of those we represent and to build a better New South Wales.

## EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:02):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus parents, teachers and students, as well as the broader northern beaches community, about progress on delivering the new multipurpose sports hall at Cromer campus, announced in the 2024-25 State budget?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:02):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for that important question. After many years of being taken for granted, the community that the member represents is being well served by him as a strong local voice for that community. I pay tribute to the school community at the Northern Beaches Secondary College Cromer Campus, who made the case for this upgrade, alongside the member for Wakehurst. This school has been through quite a lot in the past. But under the principal, Justin Hong, it is well and truly hitting its stride. We are really proud of what is happening there. I particularly recognise the under-16s boys basketball team, who won this year's State championships.

For more than a decade, the school's calls for upgraded local facilities that the member referred to fell on deaf ears. But, under this local member, this Premier and this Labor Government, those calls have finally been heard. As part of our record education investment, the Cromer campus is receiving \$1 million towards the new multi-sport facility. This will deliver critical planning work and set us up to deliver the upgrade. The member has been briefed on this work, making sure his community's voices are heard. I can confirm that site investigations are underway. We will soon be moving to the next stage, where architects and engineers will be appointed to develop concept designs. We share the member's ambition for this facility to serve the broader sporting community in the region. I can also advise that, later this year, the department will hold a briefing to update the school community on these plans.

I know that schools on the northern beaches are proud to have strong local voices advocating for them. When we came to office, the science labs at Killarney Heights High School were falling apart, to the point of being shut down. Upgrades were promised for Narrabeen North Public School in 2018 but still had not started five years on. Media reports described the facilities at Narrabeen Sports High School as being Third World. I think that, no matter our politics, we can all agree that that is unacceptable. Those communities were completely taken for granted. Following the advocacy of local Independents, like our own Michael Regan and Sophie Scamps, we are working hard to rebuild public education on the northern beaches.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** It is hard for those opposite to hear this, but we are working hard because local members are advocating for their communities and schools to get the facilities they deserve. What a novel idea! [*Extension of time*]

We are proud to be delivering record funding for maintenance and local upgrades. We are fixing every last science lab at Killarney Heights High School. We have completed upgrades at Narrabeen North Public School, six months ahead of schedule. We will continue delivering millions in upgrades for Narrabeen Sports High School, and I have asked the department to work closely with the principal as additional works are planned and delivered. And we will be proudly improving the facilities at both Pittwater and Davidson high schools, including critical electrical upgrades. I pay tribute to the member and local Independents who have brought a breath of fresh air to the northern beaches, advocating for local upgrades. We cannot wait to work with local members in the future to deliver these upgrades on the northern beaches.

**The SPEAKER:** There was a little flurry from members at the end of that answer. Members will come to order and listen to the question from the member for Cabramatta.

#### SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (12:07):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the upcoming speedway racing season following the reopening of the Sydney International Speedway?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:07):** I thank the member for Cabramatta for his question. I know he is revved up about the speedway season because, as the old ad goes, it is time for people to get their backsides trackside for the 2024-25 speedway season. Speedway racing has made a glorious return to Sydney. It was watched by thousands of fans last year, after years of absence under the previous Government. Members would recall that the former Government left the industry, and the fans, a car crash of a racetrack. It was ridden with defects and over budget, and there was no racing in sight. They could not get even the shape of the track right. But Labor has brought speedway racing back to Sydney. Labor is the party of the speedway racing fan.

Whilst those opposite delivered a dodgy track, Labor has been getting on with the job of delivering a racing experience that fans deserve. The Greater Sydney Parklands and Sydney Metro have together worked to fix over 105 track defects. Earlier this year, we were able to finally get cars back on the track and fans back in the stands. Thousands turned up, and thousands more are looking forward to this year's season, the first full season of speedway racing in Sydney in five years. I acknowledge the hard work and leadership of motor racing great Garry Wilmington, without whom Sydney speedway racing would not be in the position it is in today. Twenty-five race events are already scheduled between now and May next year, with street cars, wingless cars and V8s ready to race. This season will attract some of the best local, interstate and international driving talent.

The Speaker has to enforce rules and order to make sure the Parliament operates properly. He encourages members to become familiar with the rules of the Chamber and Parliament. Given it has been such a long time between races, in preparation for the upcoming season, members should brush up on some of the racing rules for the track. I do not know if the member for Bathurst is entering his tricked-up Kia in any of the races. He should be looking out—he is always on the lookout for warning signs. The Government takes trackside safety very

seriously. I remind members of some of the flag rules on race day. One of the key trackside signals is the black flag with the white stripe, which means the driver is subject to an inquiry by the chief steward and may be penalised for an infringement. The member for Wahroonga will be looking out closely for that flag. [*Extension of time*]

When a car is not firing all cylinders or has misfired—like the member for Dubbo did earlier in question time—it is likely to attract a black flag with a white spot, indicating a mechanical defect. The yellow flag with a diagonal stripe is the noise flag. The Hon. Wes Fang better look out for that one. The red flag means stop immediately or cut across the infield. There are a few members opposite who have cut a few corners lately. Robbo is not here. He has obviously gone straight through the infield and back home.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I will hear the point of order from the member for Hawkesbury.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 75. The member should be referred to by his proper title, not "Robbo".

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order and admonish the Minister.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is sad that Opposition members cannot even enjoy speedway racing. No wonder they kept the track closed for five years. The flag the Leader of the Opposition most needs to look out for is the blue flag, which is a warning sign he is about to be lapped. The member for Vacluse is sitting on his bumper, ready to take over—sorry, I mean overtake—whenever there is an opening. On Saturday night, racing fans will be able to sit trackside to watch the late model legend cars race around the track. The Government is also keeping its commitment to make sure Wakefield Park is ready for racing again. While this Government is speeding ahead with the delivery of more housing, teachers back in classrooms, fun and vibrant communities, and addressing the cost of living, the Opposition is a handbrake on New South Wales.

#### *Documents*

### **INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL**

#### **Reports**

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I table the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Energy Sustainability Schemes – 2022-2023 Energy Security Safeguard, Report to the Minister*, dated July 2024.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following ePetition signed by fewer than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

#### **Eurobodalla Shire Indigenous Housing**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to urgently address Indigenous housing issues in the Eurobodalla shire, received from **Dr Michael Holland**.

#### *Bills*

### **REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (CONSULTATION STANDARDS) BILL 2024**

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:14):** The Opposition supports the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I foreshadow that the Opposition will move some amendments during the consideration in detail stage. The fact is government consultation is never perfect. Some agencies do it well, while others have plenty of room for improvement. Members of Parliament have a key role to play to ensure we are consulting with our communities and giving them a voice before decisions are made in this place. Unfortunately, in the past 18 months or so, a concerning pattern has emerged. The current Labor Government has stopped consulting with regional communities and is instead imposing actions on regional communities. The decisions are too often based on politics or deals with the unions, instead of considering what is best for our communities. When the Government stops asking our residents what they need or think about things, they suffer the consequences.

There are a number of examples of a lack of consultation occurring, including for the botched rollout of renewables. There has not been anywhere near enough consultation with the communities who will be most

impacted and literally have these projects in their backyards. The Government has not taken the right approach and people are rightfully angry. I have experienced that firsthand in my own electorate in response to the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. When people do not know what is going on, are kept in the dark and are not taken on the journey, it creates a lot of angst. Renewables projects are being forced onto and into our communities, but the genuine consultation is not there, the right to object is not there, and the compensation for affected landholders is not enough or happening in the right way.

Another example of a lack of consultation is the sudden decision by the Minns Labor Government to slash coastal harvestable rights. That move completely blindsided farmers, who had the amount of water they can capture on their own properties reduced overnight from 30 per cent to only 10 per cent. There was no consultation or consideration for the fact that farmers were going to be left less resilient, which was particularly concerning at the time because we were heading into yet another drought. The Government's decision was extremely short sighted and not based on any kind of logic or science. It stripped local farmers of a right they had worked hard to achieve for more than 20 years. That was a tough time for farmers.

The same lack of consultation occurred with the Great Koala National Park. In 2016 Labor promised the park and lost the election. In 2019 Labor promised the park again and lost the election. In 2023, when Labor scraped across the line in the city, the Minns Government suddenly imposed a so-called mandate for the Great Koala National Park. There are major concerns around the park, which Government members should be well aware of and working with the community to fix. Instead, they focus on themselves. Communities such as Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley and Oxley did not vote for the koala national park. Government members need to accept that fact. Those areas are not represented by Labor members. The timber industry on the Mid North Coast will suffer as a direct result of the Government's decision. The more than 5,000 affected workers and their families did not get a proper say.

Another example from that region is the small community of Ulmarra in the Clarence Valley, which recently had its ferry service cancelled by the Government. Residents in the town rely on that ferry to cross from one side of the river to the other. Now, for the first time in 74 years, they will not have access to that service. What should be a 10- to 15-minute trip to work, the shops, the hospital or a medical appointment will become a 40-minute commute each way. Locals did not get consulted on the decision. The community even launched a petition against it, but the Government refuses to listen. There are so many examples of the Government thinking it knows what is best instead of getting advice from those on the ground.

The Opposition supports any action that will give our regional communities more of a say about the issues that affect them. However, in its current form, the bill does almost nothing to improve the situation. It needs to go much further. The amendments foreshadowed by the member for Monaro do not go far enough either. It is clear that Labor does not want actual consultation on issues like renewable energy zones or water because it does not want the headaches. This is another tokenistic display from a government that pretends to care about regional New South Wales.

With that in mind, I will be moving an amendment to proposed section 4 (2) to require the Government to undertake a statutory review of consultation standards in other Acts to ensure they meet the requirements set out in the bill, and to make this legislation dominant to other conflicting legislation. I will also move an amendment to proposed section 4 (4) to make the prescribed standards (a) to be a minimum set of standards which require regulations under (b) to go further. With these improvements, the Government will be required to undertake genuine consultation with our communities, and that is something the Opposition will always get behind.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:20):** I contribute to the debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing this important bill to the House. As a regional Labor MP, I know that the Minns Government is committed to the future prosperity of regional New South Wales and that the Government values consultation processes that support proper stakeholder engagement in regional and remote communities. That is why the Government supports the bill, which seeks to enshrine a consultation standard in legislation to give people in regional communities certainty in how the Government will engage with them on the issues most important to their lives. Improving the standard of regional consultation is a principle the Government wholeheartedly supports.

In the context of the bill, I will talk about the things we on this side have done since coming to government that show our strong commitment and dedication to our regions—something that the member for Dubbo obviously overlooked. Last year we announced a \$350 million initial investment into the Regional Development Trust. In this year's budget, we committed to a further \$50 million to the trust. This money will support sustainable and transformative investments in regional development. But the trust is not the only way we are investing in regional New South Wales. Our recent budget saw several investments in essential services and infrastructure to improve service delivery and quality of life in rural and regional communities.

This included the announcement of \$1.4 billion for regional education infrastructure, including the upgrade of many schools on the South Coast that had been left for years by the previous Government; \$196.5 million to fund ongoing regional hospital redevelopments at Eurobodalla, Temora, Moree, Cessnock and Shellharbour, as well as the Shoalhaven Hospital Redevelopment; \$200 million in health worker housing, to support health services in regional and remote areas to get essential workers to our regional areas who, under the previous Government's wages cap, were leaving regional and rural areas in droves to cross the border; and \$945.7 million to address biosecurity threats.

The Government's track record speaks for itself. This Government is delivering for the future of communities in regional New South Wales. It is not investing in sugar hit investments that do not deliver practical benefits. Instead, it is supporting communities through investment in long-term, practical changes. It is investing in the new hospitals communities need, the essential workers to ensure communities are safe and looked after, and the roads and transport connections to connect them to the rest of the State. The \$400 million in the Regional Development Trust will deliver real and meaningful investments for people living and working in regional New South Wales.

The Minister for Regional New South Wales has already announced a series of initiatives showing the type of deliberate and considered investment that regional communities can expect to see from the trust. The Government announced a \$15 million package to deliver airstrip improvements in rural and remote New South Wales, a \$5 million Aboriginal Economic Development Package, a \$10 million Western NSW Workforce Activation Program, and a \$5 million low-interest loans pilot program. These are examples of what the Regional Development Trust will be delivering for regional communities under this Government. These are investments to make sustainable improvements to regional communities—not pork-barrelling, not sugar hits, not fake fossil museums, but real investments.

The Government is also focused on making sure these investments in regional New South Wales are going to where they are needed most. It is with this same focus that we on this side welcome the bill from the member for Barwon. I note the amendments that are proposed by the Government to improve the bill and ensure it delivers on its intended outcome, which is to address challenges related to government consultation with regional and remote communities. One of the key amendments is to replace the *Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement* currently prescribed in the bill with a fit-for-purpose "Consultation with Regional Communities Guide".

The standard currently prescribed in the bill, which is also known as the IAP2 standard, is a standard published by the International Association for Public Participation. It outlines international best practice principles for community engagement. This guidance is useful but not practical for government agencies to use as a minimum standard. The guide proposed in the Government's amendments will take the IAP2 advice one step further by providing practical guidance to agencies on how to effectively engage with regional communities. The guide will be developed by the Premier's Department and issued by the Premier.

It will include things like minimum notice periods to advertise drop-in sessions, as well as how to best advertise these, including posters on community notice boards, local newspaper advertising and promotion at local events, in addition to relevant social media. In developing the guide, the Premier's Department will hold a range of listening sessions with regional stakeholders, including regional members of Parliament and local councils, to hear directly about what the current consultation challenges are in their regions. Once developed, the draft guide will be tested with key regional stakeholders prior to finalisation.

The Government knows that the needs of communities vary greatly across New South Wales. We on this side also know that we have a responsibility to really listen to what communities are telling us they need. That is why since coming to government we have had a strong focus on listening to and supporting regional New South Wales. That is clear. With that in mind, we will support the bill before the House. Supporting the bill provides a clear signal about the way we expect government agencies to undertake consultation with regional and remote communities. Regional New South Wales matters to us. That is why appropriate and considered consultation is central to this Government's policy and program delivery in regional New South Wales. The bill put forward by the member for Barwon is well intentioned and will be beneficial in giving certainty to regional communities about how government will interact with them. It is for those reasons that I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (12:27):** I make a short contribution to the debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I appreciate the member for Barwon seeking to set a standard on how the Government will engage with regional communities, as those communities experience limitations with access, transport and engagement. I listened to the debate, but I am not really interested in what people have or have not done previously; I am interested in making improvements going forward. Stakeholder engagement in regional communities is often a piecemeal approach. Often there are no newspapers to advertise to; the internet

and telephone connection is limited; and there are wide distances for these communities to travel for services—if in fact they have the ability to travel on public transport.

It may surprise members in this place that there are communities that are remote but are just a few hours drive from the city. How is it possible that communities have no access to town water, have dirt roads and are not serviced for most things provided by council and State? This is the case for Wollondilly, yet it is classified in some regards as metropolitan and part of Greater Sydney. That is my concern with the bill. There is a long history to this provision. It began before I even moved to Wollondilly and before the Wollondilly community even had a State seat of our own returned to us. Until recent times we were a community split between three or four separate State districts.

On 7 March 1989 the then planning Minister, the Hon. David Hay, who was elected to represent his metropolitan community of Manly, signed the declaration of a schedule of the Sydney region to include the outer areas of the shires of Baulkham Hills, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Sutherland, Warringah, Wollondilly and Wyong. That took away our regional status. The effect of the declaration changed how the Government allows provisions to come to our region. Sometimes we are eligible for funding, being in a metro area; other times we are not eligible, due to the regional focus of grants. Those paper maps and lines do not change the reality of the situation. In reality, Wollondilly is a peri-urban area, a community forced to travel for work and school. We live in paradise but are not provided the same opportunities as other regional communities.

It takes four hours for me to visit the residents of Yerranderie, a remote mining town that is cut off because the previous access through the Burragorang Valley is inaccessible through Warragamba Dam. The rural roads that service the town are accessible only with a four-wheel drive and are often closed. The Government has told residents that they are unable to use the airstrip that was gifted to the Government by the previous owner, Val Lhuede. Only recently some of my towns and villages got access to town water and sewerage, yet there is an expectation for the Wollondilly community to accept 30,000 homes. Adding to the complexity, half of my electorate is counted as being metro while the other half is regional.

The answers to Wollondilly's issues are not in this bill, but I support any improvement to engaging with regional communities, including the provisions that the bill supports through best practice. The Government needs to set boundaries sensibly and not rely on old decisions; otherwise, the remote and regional communities that are geographically closest to Sydney will continue to miss out, as always, on the funding intended for them.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (12:31):** I speak in support of the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I recap how I saw the bill come about. The member for Barwon made a private member's statement about this very issue while I was in the Chamber on table duty. I responded very well to the member for Barwon and agreed with him. I said that I prefer the word "conversation" to "consultation". Consultation in the technical sense is not a bad word, but it has become sullied because of the lack of consultation that has happened. There is often a contest in this place about who did or did not do something and, "Mine's bigger than yours," and all of that rubbish. I am not particularly interested in that.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Janelle would always lose.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** I would always lose. I am interested in how we can best engage with communities, and that is everywhere. I call it the "triple R"—regional, rural and remote. That is what we mean. We need to make sure that people have a say. We live in a representative democracy. I have said before that that is our architecture, but we have communities that want deliberative democracy. Therein lies the challenge with the architecture that we have. The bill is a change of architecture. It might seem small, but it is quite a significant change to getting towards that deliberative democracy. Members can talk about whether it is good enough or not, but it is a good start. Let us get it underway and then develop it. I engage with a whole range of great public servants, particularly in my disaster recovery role, but I have never seen the standard. There is the IAP2 standard as a guideline, but it is not quite the same. That will prevail until such time as the standards prescribed under the bill come into effect. That is okay but it is not a guideline coming out of government or coming out of the Premier's Department.

I took note of what the member for Wollondilly said. When we define boundaries, sometimes people can miss out or fall either side of the boundaries. Once the bill is introduced, it should apply everywhere, because it is the way we need to engage in our communities. I took umbrage with what the member for Dubbo said about the renewables rollout. That is a difficult rollout. All members support renewables in some way and know that we have to do that. It is about how we do it in communities. When the rollout started in my area—and I have said this before in this place—I shared a border with the then member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis. There was the battery, and then I had the wind farm, the solar and everything else. That was done under the electricity investment framework that was established under Matt Kean and the previous Government. There was no architecture. There was no procedure. I have to take umbrage with the member for Dubbo on that.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Don't take umbrage.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** I do. The member for Dubbo was wrong on that.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** What was I wrong about?

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** The renewables rollout. It did not just start in 2023.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The consultation stopped.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** The consultation has increased. That is the only point that I will have a crack at. We have to get it right with everything that we do, including waste incinerators and everything else that people want to do, particularly in regional New South Wales. I thank the member for Barwon. He talked to me about the bill, and I advocated for the bill quietly—and now not so quietly. It is great. I speak in full support of the bill and thank the member for Barwon for bringing it to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:36):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I thank the member for Barwon for bringing the bill before the House. I echo the comments of the member for Lismore around conversations, not consultation. All of our communities have a sense of the connotations associated with consultation. All communities have been put through various consultation processes over time. The word consultation probably sends a shiver down the spine of many communities. I recognise that the member for Murray is in the Chamber. My first introduction to government consultation was before I was elected to this place, when I was attending a "consultation" in Jerilderie about water. That was at the height of a drought. People like Councillor Ruth McRae and John Scarce at Murrumbidgee Council and Tanya Thompson at the Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council would literally tear their hair out when we spoke about consultation.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** They still do.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** And they still do, as the member for Murray has just said. I note that the member for Wagga Wagga is in the Chamber. We share journeys when it comes to Transgrid, whether it be EnergyConnect to the west of my electorate or HumeLink to the east. Whilst we have touched on HumeLink, EnergyConnect, Transgrid and water, the other point that I raise is around Inland Rail. I note that the member for Barwon is the Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development, a position that I was fortunate to hold in the previous Government. The committee held an inquiry into Inland Rail. I vividly remember being involved in discussions with communities around Curban, north of Gilgandra, and the sense of absolute distrust and lack of confidence in the consultation process and the hurt that stemmed from that.

I bring to the attention of the House some findings from that inquiry because often inquiries are held and then the findings and recommendations are lost. Chapter 4 from the report of the inquiry dealt with Inland Rail alignment and engagement and paragraph 4.1 outlined community concerns. It stated:

The Committee received a number of submissions from communities along the Inland Rail route expressing concerns with the project. While not exclusive, many concerns were focused on the Narramine to Narrabri project (N2N project) ...

For members who are not familiar with that, the N2N project is 306 kilometres of new track running from Narramine to Narrabri. In that regard, there were submissions from the Country Women's Association and from the NSW Farmers Association. Finding 7 from the report states:

The Committee found that a number of stakeholders were dissatisfied with the Australian Rail Track Corporation's consultation process.

Recommendation 9 from the Government response to the inquiry states:

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government develop an engagement strategy that details its clear expectations in relation to communication and consultation between proponents and stakeholders for State-significant infrastructure projects ...

Paragraph 4.16 in the report highlighted:

... a lack of transparency and an avoidance by the ARTC to listen to local knowledge or provide documents to support decisions.

Paragraph 4.17 in the report stated:

Adrian Lyons from the NSW Farmers Association commented that the ARTC speak in 'platitudes' and do not provide answers to simple questions.

That was about the issue of local knowledge, which goes to the contribution of the member for Lismore. The reason I raise this is that the government response—and I acknowledge that it was our Government—noted:

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has a comprehensive set of community engagement guidelines that outline the protocols for proponents ...

The *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* specifically address community engagement and consultation.



Whilst I commend the member for Barwon for bringing the bill to the House and whilst I support it, one of the real challenges for all members in this place is how we ensure that the implementation is along the lines of what our communities expect. That is not to say anything against the bill; that is one of the challenges moving forward. If we put these conditions in place, how do we ensure that our government departments and agencies that are acting on behalf of members and communities actually engage in those guidelines in good faith?

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** That's right.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** I acknowledge the member for Goulburn in that regard. Finally, I recognise that this is not just about consultation with government departments; it is about consultation with a number of agencies, whether it be organisations such as Transgrid or the Australian Rail Track Corporation. I thank the member for Barwon. I raised this matter with him just before the debate. His understanding is that the bill will apply for any consultation driven by or for the State Government. It should, in intent, capture organisations like Transgrid. That is important. It is a bit like trying to get Telstra on the phone. For some of those large organisations it is very hard to find out who to contact.

If part of the Government's focus and intent is not just its own departments or State owned corporations but also some of the other large organisations to make sure that they are responding and engaging with community, as the member for Lismore suggested, then that is a step forward. I commend the member for introducing the bill, and I support it. The real challenge for all members is making sure that, when these guidelines are in place, there is genuine engagement by all that are called to task.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:43):** I contribute to debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I commend the member for Barwon for bringing the bill before the House. I appreciate the contributions to debate made by other members today. As a rural Labor member, I am proud to confirm that the New South Wales Government is working closely with our regional communities to ensure that they have their say on the policies that impact them. People from the regions deserve genuine consultation to ensure that their voices are heard and that they are not disadvantaged by challenges like poor digital connectivity and distance. That is why the Government is supporting the bill, which seeks to enshrine a consultation standard in legislation that provides guidance for agencies working with regional and remote communities.

In supporting the bill, I note that the Government will move amendments. The amendments align with the intent of the bill but seek to improve how it will operate in the New South Wales context. The primary amendment will require agencies to have regard to a "consultation with regional communities guide" when consulting with regional communities. That guide, which will be issued by the Premier, will replace the standard currently prescribed in the bill and will be designed specifically for the purpose of being followed by government agencies. That is a sensible change that will retain the worthwhile intent of the bill of the member for Barwon.

The bill is a response to the consultation challenges facing regional and remote stakeholders. I note that in her contribution, the member for Lismore referred to the concept of consultation. It is a term used medically, which my colleague the member for Wagga Wagga can confirm, and amongst other professions. There is an old cliché that 90 per cent of a good operation is preparation, but a good consultation is primarily about listening. That is what we do. I admit that it is a two-way conversation but, the majority of the time, it is about listening and, at the end, engaging in that conversation. That is what the Government intends to do. We as a government—and I as the member for Bega—know that our regional stakeholders experience real issues when engaging with government. We take that seriously. The Government supports any measures to support genuine engagement and consultation.

Two key issues experienced by regional and remote communities during government consultation are distance and poor digital connectivity. It is important to implement measures to support agencies in how they overcome consultation challenges. The current bill proposes that the *Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement*, published by the International Association for Public Participation, be used to inform our consultation approach. However, that is an international standard and not built for the New South Wales context. Therefore, its relevance to the unique needs of regional and remote communities in New South Wales is limited.

That is why the Government will move an amendment to require the Government to instead create a consultation guide that will be tailored to meet the needs of regional New South Wales communities. Developing a bespoke guide will ensure that agencies have the flexibility needed for the variety of consultation requirements we see across policy portfolios and regional locations. I have learnt in my two years in this place that many issues are because of complexities of overlapping circles in a Venn diagram. It is never a single issue within a single portfolio. Equally, all problems are different. To paraphrase Leo Tolstoy, each unhappy community is unhappy in its own way. Supporting the bill and the proposed amendments will ensure a consistent standard of consultation and will improve confidence and certainty about the consultation processes agencies will undertake. The

Government is supporting the bill today because it provides a clear signal about the way we expect consultation to occur. Consultation with regional and remote communities is an important part of this Government's policy and program delivery.

Often, as rural MPs—and other members have highlighted this in their contributions—we hear from our constituents after a major development that they were not consulted. That is a failure in the way that we approach consultation and communication with our constituents. Supporting the bill demonstrates to the community that this Government is committed to best practice engagement with regional communities and is focused on undertaking high-quality consultation. The Government will also move an amendment to commence the bill on proclamation, which will allow the Government time to develop the consultation guide and related procedures detailing how the new requirements will be implemented.

Additionally, we will move an amendment to exclude from the scope of the bill any consultation in relation to a function not subject to ministerial direction and control. That will mean the bill's consultation obligations will not apply to agencies that are independent, such as ICAC, the Ombudsman and the Audit Office. The amendment will ensure that those agencies can continue to operate in an independent manner. Importantly, the amendment does not preclude the agencies from adopting best practice consultation guidance from the guide where appropriate. I reiterate my support for the intent of the bill. We need to always be conscious of our regional stakeholders who deal day to day with the challenges of distance and poor digital connectivity. The consultation requirements that will result from the bill once amended will ensure that a benchmark for best practice consultation is available to guide government. That is why the Government is supporting the bill with the foreshadowed amendments. I acknowledge the member for Barwon for introducing the bill to the House. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:50):** On behalf of The Greens, I make a short contribution to debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. The Greens commend the member for Barwon for introducing this important bill to the House. The Greens are likely to support the Government's amendments because the member for Barwon supports them and they make sense. I was sitting on my hands listening to the member for Dubbo and his revisionist history of the eight years that I sat in this House when the Coalition was in Government. My electorate was impacted by their decisions. They do not have clean hands when it comes to delivering proper consultation with community. But I do not want to go there; let us focus on the positive.

The Greens welcome standards and benchmarks for the gold standard of consultation and engagement with communities across the board. As the only regional member of the Legislative Assembly in The Greens party room, I have seen the delivery of key infrastructure like the Pacific Highway upgrade and other major decisions that impacted my community, and how vexed the issue of consultation is when government says it is consulting but community does not see it. It was very interesting to hear the member for Lismore tease out the tension between governments often making decisions well before they have talked to the community, if at all, and the community's expectation of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy means that members of a community may have an influence on the outcome of a decision.

The bill is about setting standards for the process, and we have talked about the means of delivering and the barriers to consultation, such as lack of connectivity and distance. They are simply the means of communication, but I believe the word "consultation" is a misnomer for a lot of people in our communities. For example, when high schools were closed in the Ballina electorate under the Coalition—particularly Ballina High School, which was one of the oldest schools in my electorate—the consultation was done after the decision had been made. The community knew that, and I believe it brought democracy into disrepute. Another example is the Pacific Highway upgrade. Who can forget Roads and Maritime Services and its version of consultation? It simply said, "Here is a finite amount of money. People in the community have an expectation that you will make them whole," and then that got outsourced multiple times to multiple bureaucrats about public relations, and the community had absolutely no say in the outcome.

The Greens support the bill and absolutely agree that the core tenets of all consultation should be rooted in early, open and comprehensive engagement. We support the standard; it sets a higher benchmark, and that is very welcome. I think we need a different language. The Greens believe that communities should get the proposition in the beginning and make a decision on key issues, particularly ones that are going to affect an entire region. The bill does not address that, and so maybe we need a different language. When members of the community come to talk to us, they are so confused about the word "consultation" because the decision has already been made. They see it with cynicism, as a tick-a-box exercise and a kind of covering of one's backside, as opposed to genuine, deliberative processes where our communities are equal partners.

Having trust in public processes is critical for social cohesion and for the health of our shared democracy. Agreeing on minimum standards is the first meaningful step towards better outcomes when government is consulting. As I say, we are pleased about that. It is a principle at this stage. We note that the bill sets a minimum

standard that is compulsory, but of course it can go well and truly above that. What is the consequence for government if it fails to meet it? It takes time for people to even know. We all see it at a local government level where something slips in before Christmas. In terms of public submissions, people are very busy and are not sitting around waiting for the submission process. There is a certain milieu of society who makes submissions.

The requirement to push out information and ensure accessibility is vital and a minimum standard. The Greens are also of the view that the Government should consider the intent of the bill in earnest and progress work to properly ensure that public consultation standards are of a higher standard than the minimum, and that such standards be achieved for consultation to be accepted. If the bill is passed, which is likely, the resulting Act will be a guide. We may or may not see meaningful change, but we certainly now have a north star in terms of the processes of consultation. We still have a long way to go in terms of the proposition that communities can influence the outcomes of decisions, and not just at the ballot box every four years but in an ongoing genuine partnership with our communities and our constituencies.

With regard to the revisionist history of The Nationals, to see them standing up and pretending in this place now that they were the party of consultation with the bush is nonsense. The proof is in the pudding. Coming back to some of the critical infrastructure that was mentioned in this debate, consultation is messy and nuanced, but I urge the Government and all members of this place to talk to members of their community. We have faced wicked problems. They are not simple solutions. I urge members and the Government to be guided by experts, but also to listen to community members about what their needs are so that they have genuine agency. I have not seen genuine agency for our communities, and that is where we should be headed. The Greens support the bill.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:58):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. I thank the member for Barwon for introducing it to the House. I speak on the importance of consultation. Members can probably tell by *Hansard* that on a number of occasions I have spoken in this House on behalf of my community about the processes and lack of consultation that has happened with a number of major projects, particularly State significant projects. I will not stand here and say that we were perfect when we were in government, because that certainly is not the case. *Hansard* will reflect the number of times I have spoken about the issues in my electorate and certainly in regional communities.

I thank the member for Bega for his words on consultation and how important listening is. That is the most important part of consultation. The art of listening is what it is all about. It is important that we start to look at and recognise how we shape and do consultation. We can have all the guidelines in the world, but we must have an expectation of standard. If that expectation of standard is not met, there must be consequences for that. If it means not approving a project until those consultation standards are met, that is what should happen. I emphasise that we have projects where companies are saying that they have consulted with the community on their project, yet landowners on whose land the project is supposed to be on are saying they have not been consulted.

These are profound issues. Companies come to us to have a chat about what is being proposed in their project, and they use that as a tick-the-box exercise to say they have consulted with the local member. That is not good enough. We have to respect that communities deserve better. That is so important when we are talking about big issues, like what we are facing in regional areas. I thank the member for Ballina for her comments and for raising the importance of local government and their planning format. If we have planning processes in the local government sphere, it is important that we start to recognise how that happens and what the community desires from that planning. We need to make sure that we are comprehensive at that level and that we are acknowledging the work that has been done by the community in regard to those planning processes.

At the moment, the State significant processes are not even acknowledging what has happened at a local government level. That is where we have to get it right. I thank the member for introducing this bill, because we need to have that genuine conversation, and we need to make sure that the processes are doing what the communities are asking for. As we continue down the process of State significant projects ignoring communities, we must think about what planning processes need to be in place to have that genuine conversation. I cannot speak enough about the distress that a number of huge projects have caused to my community, such as the HumeLink. We have been working with the member for Wagga Wagga on it, and we hear time and time again the distress that it causes.

**Dr Joe McGirr:** Yes, 100 per cent.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** We can all be rushing to an end result, but what damage are we doing in the meantime? That is where this bill comes in. We need to think about how we consult and pay respect to the communities as a part of that process.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:03):** I make a contribution to debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. First, I begin by congratulating the member for Barwon on

introducing bill to the House and thank him for his work on the bill. I have enjoyed listening to the contributions of various members: the member for Bega, the member for Albury, the member for Goulburn, the member for Ballina, the member for Lismore and the member for Monaro. Their contributions have reflected on the importance of consultation in regional communities. I will add a few thoughts, based on my own experience.

I come to debate on this bill with two ideas in mind and they both relate to the effectiveness of democracy. Abraham Lincoln spoke of government of the people, by the people, for the people. I think we often forget the "by the people, for the people" in our work and in the work of our machinery of government. Why is it important that we govern by the people and for the people? For me, it is for at least two reasons—there are probably more. One is that it is a fundamental human right that people participate in government decisions about their future. The communities have the right to participate. To me, it is part of recognising the sacredness of each individual and our communities and the principle that decisions should be made as close to people as is practicable. That is a fundamental principle.

It is also a means of effective government. At the moment democracy is a bit under threat across the world. People are looking for strong leaders who can take action quickly, who will not be bothered about the niceties of human rights and the rights of victims and the appropriate just judicial processes, because we need quick solutions and we need those solutions put in rapidly. Democracy can be pretty messy in that respect. Consulting with people takes time. As I have often reflected on in my career, for every complex problem there is an easy, simple, straightforward and cost-effective solution. The problem is that it is usually wrong because complex problems are not amenable to simple, straightforward solutions. They actually take time to work out, and one of the strengths of democracy is involving people in those complex discussions.

Yes, it does take time. It is messy, and it does involve some tough discussions. But, in my experience over a long period of time, we end up with better decisions, and we end up with decisions that even if people do not agree with them, they will accept and they will work with, and they will make them effective. Without the appropriate consultation and respect, we will not pick up on the ideas that make a good idea great and the ideas that will stop bad ideas from being implemented.

Our machinery of government is sophisticated in New South Wales. I only have to look at the health and education systems. The bureaucrats have systems that are very effective. In my many years of experience in health, there is no doubt that our health system has become more effective. It has largely become so because of the feedback that is provided, often through this Parliament, through the Government and through our democracy. Receiving feedback is not easy. It can be extremely difficult, but it leads to improvement. Unfortunately, sometimes it takes coming back to this Parliament, and that is a long process. The advantage of this bill is that it will set a standard and encourage our bureaucracy to engage in consultation ahead of time so that it thinks through appropriate solutions and operates more effectively.

Let us face it: Our bureaucracy is constrained by rules around conduct and engagement. It is quite appropriately constrained about rules in terms of behaviour and what can be said publicly. Unfortunately, those rules are so tight at times that it does not allow a genuine dialogue with communities. I am hoping that this bill will set a standard that will encourage our bureaucrats to engage in that genuine dialogue. I also hope that it may involve bureaucracy also working with local MPs in a genuine way. Local MPs often have a great sense of their community. It is absolutely incumbent on us to not politicise those processes. However, at times I wish we had a better opportunity to work with the machinery of government so that, as close as we are to our community, we could help with these processes.

In my time as a local member, I have dealt with a number of issues, and some of the members who have spoken in this debate today have also experienced those issues. One of them was the council mergers. Honestly, how did the decision to merge Tumbarumba and Tumut shire councils ever get made? No-one listened to the communities in their consultations. There were many mergers throughout New South Wales, and 19 out of the 20 councils are facing financial difficulties. The whole process went through with poor consultation, or the information gathered from communities through consultation was ignored. The member for Albury spoke about Inland Rail. The member for Goulburn and the member for Albury both spoke about Transgrid. I will come back to Transgrid in a moment.

I have spoken many times in the House on the consultation that Transgrid commenced. It was so poor that Rod Stowe, the former head of Fair Trading, was scathing in the report on it. The problem was that, by the time that report was done, the communities had lost trust in the process. That is what it comes down to: Our communities must trust our organisations and our government. Recently there have been debates about water. The member for Murray has spoken many times in this Chamber about water. I am currently dealing with an issue around the Reconnecting River Country Program. It is important that landowners are involved in the consultation around that. Again, it is such a fraught area. There is a natural reticence to be open and honest about it. But we must be, and we must involve landholders. There must be requirements around those consultation processes.

I will touch on the issue of Transgrid. It has a privatised monopoly in New South Wales. Technically, I think it is under the auspices of a ministerial holding company. While it has a 99-year lease for the infrastructure, technically the infrastructure remains part of a ministerial holding company. We have had a lot of discussions about privatisation in this Chamber. The fact is we do have a number of privatised assets. I am concerned about whether the bill applies to them as it does to State owned corporations and government departments and agencies. I will be seeking further advice as to whether, in fact, Transgrid will be constrained by the bill and the standards. I hope that it would—as I hope private companies elsewhere would—be led by it. In its case, we have a private company leasing State assets. It is not clear to me that it would be covered. I would expect and hope that it would be, but its situation may be different to a State owned corporation. In any case, I will seek some further advice and I certainly put on record my view that it is fundamentally important that it is included.

The bill, I hope, will bake in effective consultation between government and regional communities, and give greater decision-making powers to the people who are directly affected by the decisions of government. I say that because that is a fundamental human right and an important part of our values as Australians, and because I actually think it leads to much more effective government. Best practice consultation is critical to our future, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales. It is about trust, putting power into the hands of those affected by change and restoring the voices of our community members, who too often feel excluded by the decision-makers in metropolitan areas. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (13:12):** I thank the member for Barwon for introducing the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. Stakeholder engagement is vital for managing risks, improving accountability and ensuring sustainable development. If we do not have that, then we are dragged down for years and years. I see that in my electorate. We have all got war stories of poor consultation, where bureaucrats wearing black suits have come to our region and told us what we should have. The bill's principles should also extend to the Federal Government, because we are suffering greatly from what is happening to our water under that Government, and also to organisations like the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, which comes to our town and tells us what we should have.

At one early stage I heard from someone who was dealing with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority that it told the consultants it engaged not to listen to the farmers in our area because they know nothing about the environment and how to run water. That is incredibly insulting. The bill is a breath of fresh air and a new start. It sets a standard that will allow us to be genuinely heard. We are tired of what I call "Clayton's consultation". A problem genuinely shared is a problem halved. The bill will provide a better outcome for everyone across the State. There will be fewer mental health problems—we have a lot because of poor consultation from governments—and an increase in respect for everyone. I thank the House.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:14):** In reply: After the public interest debate last night, which was incredibly civil, I am happy to see that this debate has been very civil as well. I thank every member who spoke and acknowledge the genuine way that they have gone about contributing to debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024: the member for Bega, the member for Lismore, the member for Dubbo, the member for Murray, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Goulburn, the member for South Coast, the member for Monaro, the member for Orange, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Ballina and the member for Albury. I will address one concern made by the member for Wagga Wagga. The advice we have had is that Transgrid would be captured. Obviously the member would need to seek his own clarification, but that is the advice we have had.

I will speak at a general level to keep my contribution brief. The bill attempts to address the massive inequities currently experienced by people in regional areas around consultation. It attempts to improve consultation for a disadvantaged cohort. It does not deny or reduce consultation with anyone. The bill provides a platform for the development of a guide that will be contained in regulation. The detail can be dealt with through regulation and, equally, can be varied to suit a changing environment and needs. The risk with the amendments foreshadowed by the member for Dubbo is that, obviously, we can lose the original intent of the bill. Some of the things that the member has proposed are probably worthy in terms of reviewing our consultation mechanism across other tools and instruments. That is perhaps a separate piece of work.

I am going to have a crack at trying to explain the difference between legislation and regulation for listeners. If legislation is the cargo ship that contains everything, then the regulation is the manifest of cargo that sits inside it, and where it all belongs and how it works and the accreditations required for the pilot or the coxswain, or those sorts of things. That is my attempt. I suppose I am saying that the legislation is the canvas or the cargo ship, and then everything that fits inside it fits within regulation. Again, I thank all members for the genuine way they have approached this issue. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.****Consideration in detail requested by Mr Steve Whan.****Consideration in Detail**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 5 be agreed to.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (13:17):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-151C in globo:

**No. 1 Commencement**

Page 2, clause 2, line 5. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

This Act commences on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation.

**No. 2 Regional communities consultation**

Page 2, clauses 4 and 5, lines 11–31. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

**4 Consultation with regional communities to comply with standards**

- (1) A consultation with a regional community must be carried out having regard to the consultation guide if the consultation is—
  - (a) primarily directed to, or primarily impacts on, the health, cultural, economic, educational or other well-being of persons in the regional community, and
  - (b) to be carried out by or for the State, a NSW Government agency or a statutory body representing the Crown.
- (2) This section does not apply to—
  - (a) a consultation required by or under another Act to be carried out in a specified way, or
  - (b) a consultation in relation to the exercise of a function that is not subject to the direction or control of a Minister.
- (3) A failure to comply with this section does not affect the validity of a consultation.
- (4) In this section—

*consultation guide* means a Consultation with Regional Communities Guide issued from time to time by the Premier and published in the Gazette.

The Government has two amendments. Firstly, there is an amendment to commence the bill on proclamation. That will allow us time for the consultation with regional communities guide to be developed before the requirements in the bill commence. Without the amendment, the bill would commence before the guide is developed. It will give the Government time to develop a robust consultation guide that is tailored to the needs of regional and remote communities of New South Wales. It is intended that the bill would be commenced by proclamation once the guide has been finalised. As I mentioned in my comments during the second reading debate, the Government would be seeking to do that as quickly as is practical and consult with people through that process.

The second amendment aligns the intent of the original bill and seeks to ensure that the bill's intended benefits can be realised. The amendment contains three main parts. The key aspect of the amendment is to require agencies to have regard to a consultation with regional communities guide when consulting a regional community on a proposal primarily directed to or impacting the health, cultural, economic, educational or other wellbeing of persons in that community. The amendment would replace the requirement to comply with the Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement, or the IAP2 standard, with a requirement to comply with a consultation with regional communities guide when consulting with a regional community on one of the specific proposals outlined in the amendment.

The reason for the amendment is that the IAP2 standard proposed in the current version of the bill is not fit for purpose. While the standard outlines best practice principles for consultation, it is an international best practice standard and does not provide specific guidance on various unique circumstances that arise when undertaking consultation in regional New South Wales. In addition, unlike the IAP2 standard, the guide could be tailored in a way that makes it simple for agencies to understand and demonstrate compliance. That would also make it easier for regional stakeholders to understand how they can expect government to consult with them. As a government, we are keen to ensure that any consultation standard for regional and remote New South Wales is flexible to the different consultation approaches needed, depending on the scale of a potential impact of a proposal, or based on the specific needs of the group being consulted.

The proposed amendment also replaces the definition of "prescribed standard", which is currently the IAP2 standard, with the definition of the guide. This is a consequential amendment to the first amendment, which requires agencies to have regard to the consultation with regional communities guide. The amendment also adds a provision to make it clear that the bill will exclude agencies not subject to ministerial direction and control from the scope of the bill, so the bill's consultation obligations will not apply to agencies exercising functions that are entirely independent, such as ICAC, the Ombudsman or the Audit Office. This will ensure that those excluded agencies can continue to operate in an independent manner, though they may use the guide for their operations if they choose to. Despite the amendment, the Government expects all agencies to adopt the best practice consultation guide where appropriate, whether or not they are an independent agency.

These sensible amendments would embed the consultation with regional communities guide in the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024. The Opposition has foreshadowed amendments, but I am advised that they will not be dealt with if these amendments are agreed to. The Government also agrees that this guide provides a minimum standard to start with. I invite Opposition members to speak to Minister Moriarty's office about other assurances that they may seek. The Government would have opposed the Opposition's second amendment on that basis. The member for Dubbo mentioned that in his contribution to debate on the bill. I agree with his assessment that there has been some rewriting of history. It was not so much consultation in many areas as it was paternalism—but I will not go there today. I urge the House to support the amendments.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:22):** I appreciate the contribution of the member for Monaro, but the Government amendments do not add anything to the bill. I am aware that the member for Barwon will accept the amendments in good faith as they come forward. The reality is that the Government has moved these amendments so that it can take credit for this version of the bill, even though the amendments do not change anything. The Opposition amendments were about the idea that if we want to improve consultation, why not do so across the board? As the member for Barwon said, that could be done separately.

The Opposition thought, given there seemed to be agreement on how consultation should occur, this amendment might provide a way of doing that. We added a couple of minor tweaks to ensure a review of all the other Acts, which should start as soon as possible; and also to ensure a report on the outcome of that review, which should be tabled in Parliament within 12 months—as in, what does every other Act need to look at as well? They are sensible amendments. I foreshadow that I do not support the Government amendments. I would prefer to support the bill in its original form rather than the bill as amended by the Government.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:23):** I thank the member for Monaro, the Minister, and the member for Dubbo for their contributions. The Government foreshadowed these amendments and discussed them with me. I will accept and support them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-151C be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....51  
Noes .....31  
Majority.....20

# AYES

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

Hannan, J  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
Minns, C

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

## AYES

Hagarty, N (teller)

O'Neill, M

Wilkinson, K

## NOES

Anderson, K

Ayyad, T

Clancy, J

Cooke, S

Cross, M

Crouch, A (teller)

Davies, T

Griffin, J

Henskens, A

Hodges, M

James, T

Kemp, M

Lane, J

Layzell, D

Moylan, B

Petinos, E

Preston, R

Provest, G

Regan, M

Saunders, D

Singh, G

Sloane, K

Speakman, M

Taylor, M

Thompson, T

Toole, P

Tuckerman, W

Ward, G

Williams, L

Williamson, R (teller)

Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Aitchison, J

Atalla, E

Kamper, S

Coure, M

Roberts, A

Williams, R

**Amendments agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Government amendments having been agreed to, the Opposition amendments now lapse. The question is that clauses 1 to 5 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 to 5 as amended agreed to.****Third Reading**

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

## **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (WATER ACCESS LICENCE REGISTER REFORM) BILL 2024**

**Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 8 August 2024.**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (14:30):** I speak in support of the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Murray. I foreshadow that the Government will move some small amendments, which I will discuss shortly. I congratulate the member for Murray on introducing this bill to the House. If my memory is correct, this is not the first time she has attempted this reform. Indeed, there may have been several attempts. The bill has been the subject of quite a bit of discussion between the member for Murray and the Minister for Water and her office. I thank them for their work on this reform.

The bill is a sensible step to improve transparency and accountability in water management in New South Wales. Water is a precious and finite resource that belongs to the people of this State. It is essential for our environment, economy, communities and way of life. This Government is committed to ensuring that water is managed fairly, efficiently and sustainably, in the best interests of all water users and the public. One of the key elements of good water management is having accurate and accessible information about water entitlements, allocations and usage. That is not as simple as it sounds. Accurate information is vital for planning, monitoring, compliance and enforcement, as well as building trust and confidence in the water system. Currently, the Water Management Act 2000 requires the Minister for Water to keep the Water Access Licence [WAL] Register, which records information about water access licences and dealings.



However, the current register could be made more user friendly. Currently, the register is rigid and tightly controlled to ensure the integrity of water access licence titles. This bill takes a positive step forward by requiring a consolidated public water register be established. The register will contain a range of information of interest to water users and the broader public. The bill also ensures the WAL Register is kept up to date. The consolidated public water register will consolidate information from various registers under the Act and make it publicly available on a website with an electronic search facility. The register will include information about water access licences, available water determinations, approvals and trusts that hold water access licences and have foreign beneficiaries. Much of that information is already freely available online, even though it is not required by law. Making it a legal requirement is a welcome addition to the water management framework.

The bill also provides for the establishment of a code of conduct for brokers, who play an important role in facilitating water transactions and providing advice to water users. The Australian Government, through water market reforms across the Murray-Darling Basin, will lead the development of a code of conduct, which will set out the standards of conduct and professionalism that brokers must adhere to. The New South Wales Government supports the Commonwealth reforms, and the bill allows for the code's adoption in New South Wales and creates an offence for failing to comply with the code or a specific provision of the code. The bill also requires statutory irrigation corporations that operate large-scale irrigation schemes to be members of a prescribed dispute resolution organisation. That provision will ensure that the customers of the corporations have access to an independent and impartial mechanism to resolve any complaints or disputes that may arise in relation to their water services.

The reforms improve the transparency and accountability of water management in New South Wales. They provide more accurate, comprehensive and accessible information to water users, regulators and the public. They also promote fair and ethical practices in the water market and enhance customer protection and satisfaction. They align with the Commonwealth reforms—following a review by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC]—that aim to improve water information and governance across the country. I have a lot I would like to say about that review. The Government intends to move three amendments. The first proposed amendment replaces the provision that compels the Minister to bring forward a regulation within 18 months with a provision that requires the Minister to bring forward a regulation as soon as reasonably practicable. The system of unique identifiers to be adopted in regulation will be done in accordance with a national framework. Once that is finalised and agreed upon by all jurisdictions, the regulation will be brought forward.

We do not know how long that will take. It may take less than 18 months, or it may take more. This amendment still provides assurance that a regulation will be made for the establishment or adoption of a system of unique identifiers. However, it does so in a way that does not expose the Minister to the risk that she will be acting unlawfully if a regulation is not made within 18 months of the commencement of the provision. The second amendment deals with schedule 6 to the bill. The Government wants to continue exploring the role that the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW [EWON] could play to support customers of irrigation corporations. However, until we have reached agreement on this matter, we propose to delete the explicit reference to EWON but retain the requirement for membership of a dispute resolution organisation. The third amendment simply updates the long title of the bill to reflect the deletion of the explicit reference to EWON.

Water management is a complex policy area. As I said earlier, the member for Murray has made a number of attempts to establish this water register. When I read the information it seems very simple, but it is actually really complex. A lot of information is contained in different areas. The ACCC inquiry, which was quite comprehensive, and a number of other inquiries over the years have indicated that even the process of pulling together all the information about who owns the water from irrigation corporations and owners is incredibly complex. There are a whole lot of systems to keep this information. It is great that the member for Murray persisted with the issue and negotiated with the Minister's office. There has been a lot of discussion about this legislation and how it can be moved forward in a practical way so the Government can actually implement the reform. That is the key. We wanted a bill that would produce practical results in a complex space.

Water is confusing for a lot of people and water ownership is confusing for a lot of people. A large swathe of the community do not know about the water reforms that have been implemented over the past few decades, when water became something that could be traded and owned. The separation of water from land has created a system of water savings. The practical system has enabled governments to transfer water to the environmental water holders. It has had some very practical benefits for environmental water. But it has also opened up the ownership of water to a whole range of entities in Australia and overseas: individuals, farmers who have retired from farming but keep their water licences and investment companies that invest in water for returns for their investors. It does become quite complex. As a result of that complexity and the lack of transparency in the system, a lot of people are a bit suspicious about what is happening in the water area.

If we undertake work that helps with transparency and makes it simpler for people to see information about the water licences, then that helps in the long term to bring confidence to people about how water is managed and

owned. I commend the member for Murray for her work on the bill. I thank Minister Jackson for her leadership on many other issues in this space, her support for the bill and her work with the member for Murray. I also thank her staff and the department for their work in bringing us to this point of the process. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:40):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024. I confirm that the Coalition supports the bill. As the shadow Minister for Water, I am committed to collaborating across the Parliament on water management, water reform and water security. Concerning the water space, which is often highly contested, members of Parliament have a responsibility to show leadership by working hard to find common ground on reform that serves the best interests of a diverse range of stakeholders, including communities, farmers, productive industries, the environment and First Nations people.

I now turn to the details set out in the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill proposes amendments to the Water Management Act. The proposed amendment to section 71I aims to ensure that the water access licence register remains accurate and up to date, which is the responsibility of the Minister for Water. It will require the prompt updating of the register to reflect any changes in the details of access licences or holdings in access licences that are notified to the Minister or of which the Minister otherwise becomes aware. This is an important step in maintaining the integrity of our water management systems. By keeping the register current, we foster transparency and ensure all stakeholders can access accurate and up-to-date information.

The bill proposes new section 71ZB at the end of chapter 3, part 2, division 4 of the Water Management Act to introduce a code of conduct for water brokers who deal in or hold water access licences by way of regulation. This provision enables the regulations to prescribe an offence for brokers failing to comply with the code, including the issuing of a public statement in a way determined by the secretary for a broker found guilty of breaches to this code. This is aimed at ensuring that brokerage services are conducted fairly and transparently, thereby protecting the rights and interests of licence holders.

We have concerns about the bill's unclear definition of broker as it is currently drafted. In our view, the definition of "brokerage services" should not inadvertently include irrigation infrastructure operators [IIOs], who are fundamentally different from commercial brokers. It is critical that this legislation clearly distinguishes between those two roles to avoid imposing inappropriate regulatory burdens on those organisations who serve their members administratively under bulk water licence arrangements. In our view, those organisations should be considered uniquely. After all, they have very different organisational purposes.

The feedback we have received is that the provisions of the bill with respect to a code of conduct for brokers may overlap with the Commonwealth's ongoing water market reforms. This overlap could lead to unnecessary duplication of regulatory requirements, complicating stakeholder compliance. It is essential that, through the implementation, the New South Wales Government ensures that these reforms complement rather than duplicate Commonwealth efforts. At a minimum, the bill should be aligned with Commonwealth timelines, which include the introduction of insider trading and market manipulation provisions by July 2026 and new reporting requirements to the Bureau of Meteorology.

New section 87E requires trustees of trusts that hold water access licences to report any foreign beneficiaries of their trusts on a financial year basis. This measure aims to track foreign interests in our water resources, aligning with the broader national interest. This provision seeks to enhance transparency and allows for the monitoring of foreign investments in water. The bill also introduces a system of unique identifiers for dealings in and holders of water access licences as outlined in schedule 1 through an amendment to section 88 (1) (a). This aims to streamline the transparency and management of such licences, reducing the risk of errors and fraudulent activities. It is a practical way to ensure that every transaction and holder is identifiable, bringing more order and clarity to managing water licences and making it easier to trace and verify transactions. We note this version of the bill now includes a provision that states:

The public water register must not contain the following—

- (a) personal information within the meaning of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, Part 6,
- (b) other information prescribed by the regulations.

This appears to be a sensible inclusion, noting longstanding concerns small farming families hold regarding protecting their privacy. There must be a balance between transparency and privacy. However, once again, we are concerned that this proposed reform may overlap with the Commonwealth's ongoing water market reforms, potentially leading to unnecessary duplication of regulatory requirements and complicating stakeholder compliance. We expect the Government to engage closely with stakeholders to ensure that this does not occur and that the costs of implementing such reform do not outweigh the intended benefits. Through proposed amendments to section 123, the bill mandates that irrigation corporations be members of the Energy and Water

Ombudsman NSW or another prescribed dispute resolution organisation. That requirement aims to ensure that there is a clear and accessible pathway for resolving any disputes that may arise regarding water access.

The Opposition has concerns about the unintended consequences of this provision. Since IIOs are already subject to oversight by bodies such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Inspector-General for Water Compliance, this additional requirement may be considered unnecessary. We expect the Government to consult with IIOs regarding this change, particularly in light of the existing and forthcoming oversight mechanisms under the Commonwealth's water market reforms. Ensuring that IIOs are not overburdened with redundant and duplicative compliance requirements will be crucial for the efficient operation of these organisations. Finally, schedule 1 creates a public water register through new section 395AA, which will consolidate and make all relevant information recorded in various registers under the Act publicly available. Importantly, this register will exclude personal information to protect privacy, while providing comprehensive water licence and access data.

I thank the NSW Irrigators' Council, farmers, irrigation infrastructure organisations and stakeholders far and wide who I have had the opportunity to work with over the past 17 months or so as the New South Wales shadow Minister for Water. I appreciate the feedback that they provide. Their insights are crucial as we navigate the complexities of water management legislation, regulation, policy and programs. Their willingness to engage and provide advice in a forthright manner is appreciated. As the reforms proposed in this bill progress, the Government must consult extensively with all stakeholders impacted, including irrigation organisations. A balance must be sought between achieving the intended transparency and accountability in water management without imposing unnecessary burdens on stakeholders by aligning State legislation with Commonwealth reforms and carefully defining the scope of regulatory provisions. I thank the member for Murray for introducing the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (14:49):** I speak in support of the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Murray. The bill is a timely response to the challenges and opportunities that we face in managing our water resources in a changing climate. Water is essential for life. It supports our environment, our economy, our communities and our wellbeing. But water is not unlimited. It is a scarce and variable resource that is subject to natural cycles of drought and flood, as well as human influences such as population growth, urbanisation, agriculture and industry. Climate change is adding another layer of complexity and uncertainty to water management. Climate change is affecting the availability, quality and distribution of water across the State, as well as the demand and use of water by different sectors and users. Those factors pose significant risks and challenges for water security and sustainability in New South Wales. They also require us to adapt and innovate in how we plan, manage and use our water resources to ensure that we can meet the current and future needs of our society and environment.

That is why the Government is taking action to secure and sustain water resources for the long term. In New South Wales, the Government is taking action to address water security and climate change. It is developing and implementing long-term water strategies; undertaking cutting-edge climate modelling to understand the impacts of a changing climate; investing in water utilities and water security; and leading the way in environmental water management. Another key action that the Government is taking is to improve the transparency and accountability of water management in New South Wales. Transparency and accountability are essential for effective and efficient water management. They enable us to monitor and evaluate the performance of our water system, to identify and address any issues or gaps and to ensure compliance and enforcement of the State's water rules and regulations. They also enable us to communicate and engage with water users and stakeholders, to build trust and confidence in the water system and to foster collaboration and cooperation in water management.

The bill will enhance the transparency and accountability of water management in New South Wales by improving the quality and accessibility of water information. The bill will amend the Water Management Act 2000 to ensure that the Water Access Licence Register, which records information about water access licences and dealings, is kept up to date. The bill will also require a consolidated public water register, which will bring together information from various registers under the Act and make it publicly available on a website with an electronic search facility. The public water register will include information about water access licences, available water determinations, and approvals and trusts that hold water access licences and have foreign beneficiaries.

The bill also provides for the establishment of a code of conduct for brokers, who play an important role in facilitating water transactions and providing advice to water users. The code of conduct is being developed by the Federal Government as part of broader water market reforms and will set out the standards of conduct and professionalism that brokers must adhere to. The bill will allow for its adoption in New South Wales and create an offence for failing to comply with the code or a specific provision of the code. The bill will also require statutory irrigation corporations that operate large-scale irrigation schemes to be members of a prescribed dispute resolution

organisation. That will ensure that customers of those corporations have access to an independent and impartial mechanism to resolve any complaints or disputes that may arise in relation to their water services.

The reforms will provide more accurate, comprehensive and accessible information to water users, regulators and the public. They will also promote fair and ethical practices in the water market and enhance customer protection and satisfaction. They will also align with the Commonwealth-led reforms, aiming to improve water information and governance across the country. I commend the member for Murray for introducing the bill and for her ongoing advocacy to water reform in New South Wales. The bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to securing and sustaining the State's water resources for the long term. I urge all members to support the bill.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (14:54):** I welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to debate on the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024. I could not help but note that the Temporary Speaker, the member for Cessnock, is a former shadow Minister for Water. Is that correct?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I don't want to boast, but yes—and I was fantastic.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY:** I could tell that by the way you have been so engaged in this debate. It is good that you are in the chair. I thank the member for Murray for bringing the bill to the House. As I mentioned in the debate on the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024, the member for Murray and I share a lot of commonalities in the regions that we represent. I appreciate the member's advocacy, and I thank and acknowledge her team. Reading her second reading speech, I see the important aspects of the bill are around the publicly available register and the code of conduct for water brokers. As the member for Murray said, brokers who do the wrong thing will no longer be tolerated. The other area of reform is around annual reporting of the foreign beneficiaries of trusts.

When I talk of our region in the Riverina, the Murray-Darling Basin is a significant part of our lives when it comes to water. I am talking about a basin-wide set of markets with an annual average value of more than \$1.8 billion. That is set against an underlying value of entitlements estimated at around \$30 billion and rising. Those markets have grown in complexity, allowing trading of water between users in response to fluctuations in irrigator needs, water availability, commodity prices and local conditions. The benefit of those water markets can be seen. Despite at times tough and volatile climate conditions, the value of production from irrigated agriculture in the southern basin has trended upwards in real terms since 2010-11. Water markets play one part, but the innovation, skill and expertise of the farmers in our region are a testament to that as well.

Alluding to the member for Cootamundra's remarks, there is no single Australian water market. Rather, there are independent and related markets. That, in itself, adds to the complexity of what we are dealing with today. There have been any number of reports about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. A particular focus for me is the Mick Keogh led Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] report into the Murray-Darling Basin water market reform. That report makes it clear that "the benefits derived from water trading rely on fair and efficient water markets, underpinned by an environmentally healthy river system".

We need to underscore the importance of having a fair and efficient water market. As the Keogh report goes on to say, that depends on a governance framework that ensures that trading rules and regulations are developed and implemented with a basin-wide perspective, in close connection to the river system's physical characteristics and while appropriately managing the impacts of trade. It depends on a clear and consistent framework for trading across the basin, and it depends on regulation that promotes open, fair and transparent trading that is robustly and consistently enforced across the basin.

The Keogh report says that "basin water markets lack many features that make markets work effectively". We need to address those issues. A range of deficiencies in the settings for and governance of water trading undermine the efficiency of water markets and the agricultural industries that depend on them. That is why we are in the Chamber today talking about this bill. There were previous attempts at trying to capture information in registers. The Commonwealth previously had a register of foreign ownership of water entitlements. The Commissioner of Taxation reported annually from when the register was set up under the Commonwealth's Register of Foreign Ownership of Water or Agricultural Land Act 2015. The Commonwealth was required to publish aggregate statistics of foreign ownership each year.

In July 2023 a new Commonwealth register commenced, with the Register of Foreign Ownership of Water or Agricultural Land Act 2015 being repealed on that date. My view is that the new register is less transparent. That is concerning, given that it replaced the register that was first initiated in 2015. Interestingly, the registers tell us that approximately 51.5 per cent of foreign-held water entitlements are within the Murray-Darling Basin. That equates to 11.7 per cent of the total Murray-Darling Basin water entitlement on issue. That is a significant contribution to overall entitlements of water in the Murray-Darling Basin.

I return to the ACCC report entitled *Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry*. The inquiry was established by former Treasurer Josh Frydenberg. The government response to the Mick Keogh report outlined a number of areas for reform. I bring to the attention of the House one of those integrity reforms, which suggested introducing a mandatory code for water market intermediaries. That goes to part of the reforms that the member is seeking to introduce through the bill. Interestingly, I found some of the road map recommendations stemming from the government response to the Keogh report, including the water market intermediary code. Whilst not dealt with today, the road map also recommended transparency around conveyance losses. The member for Murray would concur that that important area needs better reform. I turn to the bill. I welcome that I had an opportunity to speak to the member's team. Schedule 1 [2] states:

- (1) The regulations may prescribe a code of conduct for brokers.
- (2) The regulations may create an offence of failing to comply with the code of conduct or a specific provision of the code of conduct.

I raised with the member's team that "may" suggests that there is a little bit of wiggle room for government, and that is certainly not what we would like to see. My understanding is that that is appropriate for the bill. I highlight that all members would like to see that, if we are moving forward with this reform in the House, we are in good faith expecting government to move forward on these reforms. The member for Cootamundra addressed one challenge quite well in her contribution. How will the interventions integrate with measures across other markets? As I said, the Government response to the Mick Keogh report indicated that a lot of the areas that the member for Murray is seeking to reform are raised at the Commonwealth level. We need to see the Commonwealth move forward on that and we need to see the Commonwealth make these reforms as well.

The member for Murray raises the point of duplication, but at this stage we have not seen the Commonwealth make those moves and we have not seen any implementation. I know that the Commonwealth is endeavouring to work on it, but we need actual implementation. The bill of the member for Murray addresses some of those concerns, at least until such time that the Commonwealth acts and implements reforms. At that point, we need to ask how we can integrate once we hopefully see action from the Commonwealth. I raise a personal interest that is unrelated to the bill but is an example of that matter. We now have water sharing plans and water resource plans. Is there a level of duplication, if we have both water resource plans and water sharing plans? That question moves away from the bill, but for me it raises the issue of levels of duplications and increased bureaucratic processes. The *Water market reform: final roadmap report* states:

Negotiations will be needed to implement this advice and recommendations as specific commitments by Basin governments. It is anticipated that Basin governments will enter into an intergovernmental agreement of some form to achieve this.

This market reform process began in 2019. It is essential that implementation is well underway before the Basin experiences the next drought with the stresses that will impose on all water users and the water market's capacity to moderate those stresses. The past concerns the undermined confidence in water markets – such as the lack of regulatory oversight and mistrust about the behaviour of some market participants – should not be repeated.

The member for Murray and I both understand that. The clock is ticking. I support the bill.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:04):** I support the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024 introduced by the member for Murray. The bill is an important measure to improve the efficiency and fairness of the water market in New South Wales. The water market is a key mechanism for allocating and trading water entitlements and allocations in New South Wales. The water market enables water users to buy and sell water rights according to their needs and preferences, and to respond to changes in water availability and demand. The water market also provides incentives for water users to use water more efficiently and productively, and to invest in water-saving technologies and practices. The water market also supports the achievement of environmental and social objectives by enabling the transfer of water to environmental and cultural uses and by enhancing the resilience and diversity of rural and regional communities.

The water market in New South Wales is one of the most active and mature water markets in the world. It operates across a range of water sources and systems and involves a variety of water users and stakeholders, including irrigators, urban water utilities, environmental water holders, Indigenous groups, and recreational and tourism operators. It also operates within a robust legislative and regulatory framework, which establishes the rules and conditions for water trading and protects the rights and interests of water users and the public. The Water Management Act 2000 underpins our robust and mature water market. We already have public registers and dashboards that provide information freely to the public on water trading and use. We have a great network of gauges and monitors across the State providing real-time data about water on the WaterNSW website.

While the water market in New South Wales has delivered significant benefits and outcomes, there is always room for improvement and enhancement. One of the areas that can improve is the transparency and accountability of the water market. Transparency and accountability are essential for the effective and efficient functioning of the water market. They enable water users to make informed and rational decisions about water

trading based on reliable and relevant information about water availability, prices, transactions and ownership. They also enable regulators and the public to monitor and evaluate the performance and impacts of the water market and to ensure compliance and enforcement of the water trading rules and regulations. The bill will improve the transparency and accountability of the water market in New South Wales by enhancing the quality and accessibility of water information.

The bill will amend the Water Management Act 2000 in a number of ways. The existing Water Access Licence Register, which records information about water access licences and dealings, will be required to be kept up to date. The bill will also require a consolidated public water register, where information from various registers under the Act will be consolidated and made publicly available on a single website with an electronic search facility. The public water register will include information about water access licences, available water determinations, approvals, and trusts that hold water access licences and have foreign beneficiaries. The bill will also provide for the establishment of a code of conduct for brokers, who play an important role in facilitating water transactions and providing advice to water users. That follows a review conducted a few years ago by the ACCC and will support Commonwealth-led water market reforms, which New South Wales supports the delivery of.

The bill will also provide for improved dispute resolution within irrigation corporations in New South Wales. The reforms will provide more accurate, comprehensive and accessible information to water users, regulators and the public. They will also promote fair and ethical practices in the water market and enhance customer protection and satisfaction. They will also align with the Commonwealth-led reforms that aim to improve water information and governance across the country. I commend the member for Murray for introducing this bill and for her ongoing advocacy for water reform. I also thank the Minister for Water, the Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, for her leadership and support of the bill. The bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to improving the efficiency and fairness of the water market in New South Wales. I urge all members to support the bill.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:10):** I contribute to the debate on the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024 introduced by the member for Murray. I support the bill, which is a welcome and necessary contribution to improving water information and governance in the Murray-Darling Basin. The Murray-Darling Basin is the largest and most complex river system in Australia. Many would say that it is the lifeblood of Australia's agricultural economy. It covers over one million square kilometres, spans four States and one Territory, and supports over two million people and over 40 Aboriginal nations. It also supports a diverse range of ecosystems, habitats and species, many of which are of national and international significance, and it supports a productive and prosperous regional economy based on agriculture, mining, tourism and other industries.

The Murray-Darling Basin is also facing unprecedented challenges and pressures, such as climate change, drought, over-allocation, environmental degradation, social and economic change, and competing demands and expectations from the broader community. Those challenges and pressures require us to work together across jurisdictions and sectors to manage our water resources in the basin in a sustainable and equitable way. That is why the Government is committed to implementing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which is a historic and comprehensive agreement to restore the health and resilience of the basin, while supporting the social and economic outcomes of its communities.

One of the key elements of the Basin Plan is to improve water information and governance in the basin to ensure that water management is based on the best available science and evidence, and that water users and stakeholders are informed and involved in water decision-making. This Government is committed to the best information, the best evidence and the best governance to support water management. The bill will support the implementation of the Basin Plan by improving water information and governance in New South Wales. The bill will amend the Water Management Act 2000 to require that the existing Water Access Licence Register, which records information about water access licences and dealings, is kept up to date.

The bill also requires a consolidated Public Water Register. The Public Water Register will consolidate information from various registers under the Act and make it publicly available on a website with an electronic search facility, while also protecting personal and private information. The Public Water Register will include information about water access licences, available water determinations, approvals and trusts that hold or co-hold water access licences and have foreign beneficiaries. We are supporting the Australian Government in delivering water market reforms, and this bill will help us support those reforms.

The bill will provide for establishment of a code of conduct for brokers, who play an important role in facilitating water transactions and providing advice to water users. The code, being developed by the Australian Government, will set out the standards of conduct and professionalism that brokers must adhere to, and the bill allows for the creation of an offence for failing to comply with the code or a specific provision of the code. The

bill will also support the Minister adopting a framework of unique identification numbers for water user across the Murray-Darling Basin.

The bill also provides for dispute resolution provisions for statutory irrigation corporations, which operate large-scale irrigation schemes. The reforms will provide more accurate, comprehensive and accessible information to water users, regulators and the public. They will also promote fair and ethical practices in the water market and enhance consumer protection and satisfaction. They will also align with the Commonwealth-led reforms, which aim to improve water information and governance across the country. It also accounts for situations where there are disputes and contains mechanisms to resolve those disputes because that is important. The reforms will help New South Wales continue to lead the way in having the best information and governance across the Murray-Darling Basin.

I commend the member for Murray for introducing this bill and for her ongoing advocacy for water reform. I know that she has been committed and persistent in her efforts to enact change in this place. As a newer member of Parliament, I find her approach to working with the Minister, other members and her community to be quite inspiring and an example of reasonable and successful policy change that can be enacted and achieved when a member is persistent and determined. I thank and acknowledge the Minister for Water, the Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, for her leadership and support for the bill. The bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to improving water information and governance in the Murray-Darling Basin. I also thank and acknowledge the Minister's staff and the department for their hard work in navigating a solution to complex challenge that crosses multiple jurisdictions, therefore having many moving parts. I urge all members to support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:16):** In reply: I thank all the members for their contributions, including the members representing the electorates of Monaro, Cootamundra, South Coast, Albury, Camden and Liverpool. I really value their contributions to the debate. Whenever I am out talking with people in my electorate, I hear one particular phrase over and over again. The subject can be anything, from water to roads to schools or hospitals, but often the conversations start with the same words. People start by saying, "Why doesn't the Government just do X or Y?" The reason I hear that phrase all the time is that it is often obvious to voters what governments should do when it comes to key issues. Water is one of those key issues, and the need for a water register is obvious to most of us. It is a no-brainer.

New South Wales has always needed to know who owns Australia's water. For example, are money launderers buying water to hide their proceeds of crime? I assure members that appears to be happening in my electorate—and I dare say it is happening across the entire State. Are foreign governments putting their national interest ahead of Australia's national interest by buying and controlling Australia's water? Until now, we have never known if that was the case. We did not know who was laundering money with water purchases or who was undermining Australia's national interest or threatening our national interest. But thanks to my private member's bill, all that is about to change. Finally, Australians will know who is buying Australian water in New South Wales. And from now on, when we are asked by constituents, "Why doesn't the Government just set up a water register?" we can now say, "It has." And it has done that with the support of the crossbench and the Opposition.

I give credit to Minister Rose Jackson and her staff for working with me in order to get this bill through. It has been quite a journey, and I really appreciate the work that they have put in. Rose knows how important this register is to regional communities in New South Wales, and also how important it is to everyone in this State who is concerned about money laundering and foreign interference. It has taken me years to get a bill like this through, and I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped along the way to turn this important idea into law. Water is the lifeblood of regional New South Wales. It is the lifeblood of the New South Wales economy and also the Australian economy. We will finally know who owns our most precious national resource: our water.

**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 Mrs Helen Dalton and Mr Steve Whan.**

#### **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.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:20):** I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-156A:

No. 1 **Reporting of foreign beneficiaries**

Page 3, Schedule 1[3], proposed section 87E(2), lines 36–38. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (2) The person must, if a foreign person was a beneficiary of the trust during a financial year, give written notice to the Minister, within 2 months after the end of the financial year, of the name and contact details of the foreign person.

I make a brief statement about the amendment to my private member's bill, which is formally known as the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024. Members might wonder why I am amending my own bill. Put simply, the Government has pointed out that it believes there could be a grey area in my bill. I do not like grey areas; I like things to be black and white. The brilliant team from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office drafted an exceptional bill for us all to consider. We all loved the bill, and we all agreed to pass it. However, one tiny clause stood out to one observer from inside the Government who became worried that the bill may not achieve everything that I want it to. Let me explain.

One of the things that I want my bill to achieve is to put an end to overseas governments and entities secretly buying Australian water. We all thought that the draft bill would achieve that. It was then pointed out that, depending on how one section of the bill was interpreted, overseas buyers might still be able to hide their identities using a trust structure. That is the opposite of what I want. My bill was meant to stop that from happening, which is why I now need to amend the bill. I am happy to say that the crossbench and the Government also want to stop overseas buyers from hiding their identities, which is why they say they support the amendment.

With this amendment, I am confident that the water register that will result from the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register Reform) Bill 2024 will give New South Wales farming communities the protections that they need and deserve. Passing legislation is hard, and sometimes even good bills need amending. This is one of those cases. I ask members to support the bill and this amendment so that New South Wales can finally have a water register. A register will help stop money laundering and also stop the secret, anonymous purchasing of Australian water by overseas buyers.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (15:23):** The Government supports the amendment. Earlier, the member for Murray spoke about the importance of irrigation. I remind members that 84 per cent of our fruit and vegetables in Sydney and surrounds is supplied by irrigators. Without them, we would be in deep trouble. The Government supports the amendment.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:23):** The Opposition supports the amendment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-156A of the member for Murray be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (15:24):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2024-139C in globo:

**No. 1 Unique identifier regulations**

Page 4, Schedule 1[5], proposed section 88(4), lines 9–13. Omit "within 18 months of the commencement of that provision". Insert instead "as soon as reasonably practicable".

**No. 2 Dispute resolution**

Page 4, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 123(5A), lines 17 and 18. Omit "the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (ABN 21 079 718 915) or another". Insert instead "a".

**No. 3 Long Title**

Omit "the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW or".

Amendment No. 1 seeks to amend schedule 1 [5] to the bill so that instead of requiring the Minister to bring forward a regulation to establish unique identifiers within 18 months, it requires the regulation to be brought forward as soon as reasonably practicable. The system of unique identifiers to be adopted into regulation will be done in accordance with a national framework. Once that is finalised and agreed by all jurisdictions, the regulation will be brought forward. As I previously mentioned, the Government is not sure how long that will take. It may be less than 18 months or it may be more, thus the need to take out the time frame. The amendment still provides assurance that a regulation will be made relating to the establishment or adoption of a system of unique identifiers. However, it does it in a way that does not expose the Minister to the risk that she will be acting unlawfully if a regulation is not made within 18 months of the commencement of the provision.

Amendment No. 2 seeks to delete explicit reference to "the Energy and Water Ombudsman", which I spoke about in my contribution to the second reading debate. We will continue to work to explore the role that the Energy and Water Ombudsman could potentially play, but at this stage, until we have reached agreement on this matter with the Energy and Water Ombudsman, it is sensible to take out the explicit reference. However, the requirement for irrigation corporations to be members of a dispute resolution organisation still remains. Amendment No. 3



seeks to amend the long title of the bill to delete reference to "the Energy and Water Ombudsman" in the long title to align with amendment No. 2. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:26):** I agree to the Government's amendments.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:26):** The Opposition supports the Government's amendments.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2024-139C be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

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

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the long title, as amended, be the title of the bill.

**Long title of the bill as amended agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **POLICE AMENDMENT (POLICE OFFICER SUPPORT SCHEME) BILL 2024**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour of the sitting.

### *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: REFERRAL TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion forthwith concerning the referral of an inquiry to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Committees*

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

#### **Reference**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That the following matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics for inquiry and report:

- (1) Whether the member for Kiama's conduct on 21 July 2024 gives rise to any issues concerning the appropriate conduct of a member with respect to their responsibilities and duties to their constituents and the safety and welfare of parliamentary staff.
- (2) Whether any action should be considered by the House, having regard to all the circumstances relating to the member.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Motions*

### **SYDNEY METRO**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:29):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that the previous Government designed, funded, and built the Sydney Metro.
- (2) Notes the current Government had one job, to open the Sydney Metro on time, and has failed at that task.

- (3) Condemns the Government for failing New South Wales commuters and leaving taxpayers to foot the bill for union delays.

Our State is rightly proud of the Sydney Metro. It is the type of visionary project that leaves you going, "Wow, we really do achieve incredible things in New South Wales." There are trains under Sydney Harbour for the very first time. It is Australia's biggest transport project. Just over a month ago, I was at Waterloo station on the day of the Sydney Metro City opening. The moment I remember most from that morning was meeting a little kid called Adam, who had taken the very first journey of the first train from Tallawong to Sydney. I think he said he was going to do that over and over through the day. It was a really special moment. That enthusiasm was shared from kids to adults alike. Commuters were taking pictures. It was a special moment for Sydney, with the people of Sydney saying, "Wow, we are so proud."

As I went down the escalators, I got a sense of the enormity of the project and how beautiful it is. A transport project is a thing of beauty. Imagine getting somewhere fast in Sydney. It was so exciting. It took the vision of the Liberals and The Nationals and leaders like Gladys Berejiklian, Barry O'Farrell, Mike Baird and Dominic Perrottet to deliver Australia's biggest transport project. It took the strength of staying on the course when many said it could not or should not be done. I pay credit to the Premier, who graciously acknowledged the role of those Liberal leaders in delivering Sydney Metro. But we must never forget that, if Labor had been in government, there would have been no metro. It opposed Sydney Metro time and again. If it were up to Labor, it would have been an idea gathering dust on the shelf.

The Liberals build things. The Liberals designed, funded and built Sydney Metro. Labor botched the opening. We delivered visionary public transport for the future. Labor fights for drivers on driverless trains. What next? Perhaps soon we might see Labor's big push for a return of switchboard operators or maybe some typists for ChatGPT. There is an idea. Maybe it is hatching a plan to have faxes replace emails. That would be a good idea too—perhaps telegrams over text messages. Labor is so retro when it comes to the metro that those opposite might soon be donning shoulder pads and leg warmers again. I love eighties music, but that is a stretch too far for me.

Under 18 months of the Government, there has been zero vision, budget mismanagement and broken promises. You only have to look at its decision to delay Sydney Metro West, which cost taxpayers \$364 million, or the union delays to the T3 conversion to see that Labor does not have a plan and a vision and the capacity to deliver for New South Wales. Cancelling transport projects is in Labor's DNA. Let us not forget that, when it was last in government, Kristina Keneally cancelled the CBD metro project at a cost of about \$400 million to taxpayers. Perhaps she needed to listen to Bill Heslop from *Muriel's Wedding*—speaking of retro—when he said, "You can't stop progress." And you should not stop progress, because Sydney Metro is revolutionising how our city travels, connecting Sydney's north, north-west, south-west and greater west to fast, reliable, turn-up-and-go metro services with fully accessible train stations.

The new Sydney Metro delivers 15.5 kilometres of new metro rail. That is part of an overall 113 kilometres of new metro rail. It takes 10 minutes to go from Chatswood to Martin Place, 35 minutes from Castle Hill to Martin Place, and six minutes from Central to Sydenham. Sydney Metro is slashing travel times. It is fast, frequent and fabulous. I have spoken to commuters who say that the metro has made their trip to work and home so much easier. They are saying it is really life-changing and very special. Quick travel times mean more time at home with their family and friends. Sydney Metro is what people want. I like what *The Guardian* said. It described the Sydney Metro as being "like a futuristic movie where everything is beautiful and peaceful". How about that for an infrastructure project description? It reflects our position as a global city. We are so proud of it.

Across New South Wales, people want leadership that delivers a positive vision for our State, that does not say an idea is impossible or it is too hard, or it cannot find the money for it. Leadership that tackles the big issues and does not tinker at the edges. When the former Government came to office in 2011, we inherited 16 years of Labor neglect to our roads, our rail, our hospitals and our schools. We essentially had to rebuild all our hospitals in New South Wales. Over 12 years we invested in the future through road, rail, hospitals and schools. We delivered for the here and now, and into the future.

**Ms Marianne Stuart:** You need to fact-check, big time.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** I can provide the member with a list. The Liberals and The Nationals built or significantly upgraded more than 180 hospitals in New South Wales, with another 130 still in development when we left office. We left them as a gift for those opposite, who cut the ribbons. Our 2023 budget saw more than triple the health capital spending and double the health recurrent spending of Labor's budget in 2010-11. In a cost-of-living crisis, people want to know that the Government has their back and that it has a vision, but it simply does not. We have a Premier fighting hardworking nurses and backing in drivers of driverless trains when what we need is a Premier focused on delivering better health outcomes and tackling the cost-of-living crisis. Sydney

Metro is a gift for future generations—for our kids, their kids and the kids of the future. Labor must be on board and continue the journey of delivering projects like it and more now and into the future.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:36):** Never have I seen such a self-gratifying, elitist, arrogant, smug, self-aggrandising yet brave motion being moved in this House. My dear constituent, the member for Vaucluse, has the absolute gall to walk into this Chamber and lecture us, but it takes a particular level of bravery to lecture us on deadlines. It is that absolute arrogance that got those opposite voted out in the first place. They live in an absolute bubble of privilege and are completely and utterly out of touch with everyone. They are taking ownership for things that do not belong to them. They have been putting out Liberal Party propaganda that says that they funded the project. Let us be clear: They did not fund it. The people of New South Wales funded it. The taxpayers of New South Wales funded it.

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

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** The metro of this State—all of the infrastructure of this State—does not belong to those opposite. It does not belong to me. It does not belong to any member. It belongs to the people of New South Wales.

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

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** Those infrastructure projects are not playthings that those opposite can use as props. I appreciate that the Hon. Natalie Ward from the other place would have been a little upset that the start date of the metro had to be pushed back—the National Rail Safety Regulator had advised that it had to do that—because she had planned a fundraiser for the opening date. It would have been a bit of a miserable fundraiser to go to. You had to buy your own drinks. Were the members opposite invited? It was a cash bar. I would not have gone to that fundraiser. I would hold a better fundraiser than that.

I appreciate that members representing the electorates of Castle Hill, North Shore, Willoughby and Oatley crawled out of bed in the early mornings to hand out their Liberal Party propaganda, full of self-aggrandising, petty politics. I will say it here and I will continue saying it: The Opposition did not fund this project; the people of New South Wales did. It is their infrastructure; it is their metro. It is not yours; it is not ours. It belongs to the people of this State. If the member for Vaucluse had it her way, she would have ignored the National Rail Safety Regulator. Members on this side of the House will never, ever apologise for putting safety first because we want to build trust in our transportation system. We do that by building systems that work. But that is not what members opposite do. Remember when they ordered trains off the shelf from South Korea that did not fit into the heritage-listed tunnels?

Against the advice of the National Rail Safety Regulator, they then wanted to change the rules. But they still do not work. I remind the member for Vaucluse about what happened in December 2019. I will wind back time to the opening of the CBD and South East Light Rail, which broke down on day one—not once, but twice! It broke down twice on the opening day—wonderful! The project cost double its budget, and it did not work because the former Government rushed its opening. Then we have Sydney Metro North West. The former Government was forced to apologise for a meltdown on the system just weeks after it opened. Members on this side of the House will never apologise for putting safety before champagne corks. We want to build trust in our transportation system.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I remind the member for Terrigal that he is on two calls to order.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** Safety is our number one priority, and we will always put safety first. Let us be very clear: The Premier and the Minister for Transport have credited the former Coalition Government with conceiving and delivering the metro project. Members on this side of the House have not sought to claim credit for the project for political pointscoring. We completely understand that the metro is a transformative project that will fundamentally change the way we move around the city, and we are absolutely on board with that. But this is the motion that keeps on giving. Comrade Vaucluse is not sure where she sits. One moment she is union bashing, having a go about safety and getting more workers going, the next thing—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** She is getting a photo.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** She is all over the place! The next thing she is outside with the nurses, standing shoulder to shoulder with working people.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Only one!

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** Only one. From one trade unionist to another, I will give Comrade Sloane a little bit of advice. If she cares about working people, my advice is to be consistent and stop flip-flopping on this.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Marjorie, at least look at me when you say that stuff. It's very funny!

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** It is funny. Be consistent. You're going for the top job—it's very funny! Members on this side of the House are deeply committed to building public transport that is fit for purpose for not only the people here today but also future generations. As I have said, we know the metro is a transformative project. That is why we are so excited for the redevelopment and transformation of the next stage. Government members will never, ever apologise for putting safety first, which is at the heart of how we build these projects. We want to build a transportation system that is fit for purpose and that people trust. It took years to rebuild trust after the CBD and South East Light Rail broke down.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** It got around empty.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** It got around absolutely empty. The former Government had to cut 31 bus routes to get people to start using it—fabulous! That was the only way they could get people back on the light rail. The petty politics that the member for Vacluse has brought before the House is what got the former Government voted out last year, and it is what will keep the Coalition in opposition. The member's motion shows exactly why the former Government was voted out, and that is why the Government opposes the motion.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:43):** I love how excited we all are for the magic of metro. I love that we can all join together and talk about how wonderful it is for the people of New South Wales. I congratulate the member for Vacluse on bringing together everybody to talk about how much they love the metro. I thank the member for moving the motion today. It is people like the member for Vacluse who understand how incredibly crucial the metro is to transforming Sydney and the lives of individuals. As a member of an electorate that has metro stations in it, I can say it is making a huge difference to people's existences.

It is often the small things that change people's lives. The other day I spoke to a person who works long hours at Barangaroo. Before the metro they had a dog walker and did not get to see their pet. Now they catch the metro home to walk their dog at lunchtime. They now get to have that experience with their dog that we all did with the RSPCA bringing in dogs at Parliament House earlier today. There are mental health benefits to having that connection with a pet. That is the type of story we hear from people about the way their lives are transformed by mass transit. We love public transport—everybody in this House loves public transport. There are very few things I like talking about more than public transport in this place.

My community is one of the highest users of public transport. I particularly rely on buses, and I have almost every single mode of public transport except light rail in my community. We love public transport and we want to see more of it. We welcome the investment in more bus services and the continued electrification of the bus fleet. We also welcome more investment in our ferries by the Government as time goes on. But I will talk about the marvel of the metro, which is a city-shaping project that will endure for decades. It is transforming Sydney. For those who have not spent much time in North Sydney, it is transforming North Sydney into a more vibrant city. Victoria Cross station in North Sydney has brought new life back to the CBD.

VicX, which is located directly above the new metro station, marks the spot for a vibrant new laneway dining hub and place for on-the-go eats. The Minister for Transport and member for Summer Hill will be thrilled to know that Marrickville Pork Roll has proved to be a massive hit every day for locals. The member for Coogee went to North Sydney to enjoy Marrickville Pork Roll. I took the Minister out for a wonderful walk to visit the different shops and businesses. We chatted to them all, which we enjoyed. We could not get Marrickville Pork Roll on the day because the queue was too long. Far too many people are excited to have Marrickville Pork Roll at VicX. The site of Victoria Cross had the largest and deepest cavern in the Sydney Metro project, with more than 5,000 workers working more than 31 metres below the ground.

The second metro station in my electorate is located at Crows Nest. It provides a seamless and efficient travel experience for commuters. Crows Nest station took more than 5,500 workers 25 metres below ground to complete the station. Incredibly, more than 126,000 bricks were hand-laid to achieve the unique exterior wall for all to see. Unfortunately, we could not hop on the Sydney Metro service as quickly as we wanted to. Labor said it was about technical issues. That was a misnomer. Technically, the Fire Brigade Employees Union had the Labor Party over a barrel. When Government members got everyone excited about the opening date of Sydney Metro and it did not happen, the metro's slogan at the time was, "Arriving soon, just don't ask when."

Labor's handling of the metro turned into a public transport version of groundhog day. Every day was the same—almost ready! Thankfully the Government finally opened the metro. I congratulate the Government on that. It was an exciting day, and it has been exciting to have the metro every day since. Commuters, families and students all love this incredible new public transport system. I welcome the Minister to visit VicX any time,

particularly to experience Marrickville Pork Roll. Many thousands of people brought about the metro, and I thank every single one of them for delivering the magic of metro.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:48):** I contribute to debate on the motion, introduced by the great champion of the union movement, the member for Vacluse! She was quick to bash the unions on the Government's good-faith negotiations with the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union but was happy to pose in front of the Nurses and Midwives' Association, although not with them—as she is a strident supporter of reintroducing the wages cap on them. As the Premier highlighted yesterday, the only person she found to take a photo with was the member for Hawkesbury. Even the Premier acknowledged the previous administration for the part it played in building the metro.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** The member for Riverstone is speaking about nurses striking against the Government, rather than the motion about Sydney Metro. I ask that he return to the leave of the motion before the House.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** To the point of order: The motion makes specific mention of unions, and the member is talking about unions.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Further to the point of order: I remind the member for Coogee that this motion does not refer to the nurses striking against Labor oppressing them and letting them down on a daily basis. It is about an entirely different union's suppression of the people's rights in New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I have heard enough.

*[Interruption]*

The member for North Shore will come to order. This is her final warning.

**Ms Maryanne Stuart:** Point of order: I ask that members be reminded to direct their comments through the Chair.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! I direct the member for North Shore to remove herself from the Chamber for 20 minutes.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for North Shore left the Chamber at 15:50.]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Riverstone is making introductory remarks. Three members have already presented a fairly wide-ranging interpretation of the motion before the House. The member for Riverstone will conclude his opening remarks and get to the substance of the motion.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY:** Even the Premier has acknowledged the previous Government for the part it played to build the metro. I am absolutely happy to give credit where credit is due. However, responsibility must be accepted for some of the failures in the last Government's delivery of the metro and the chaos it has caused at the end of the line, in Tallawong. The distance between the metro at Tallawong and the heavy rail at Schofields is 2.7 kilometres. An inexplicable decision that has caused chaos in the Riverstone electorate is the failure to connect the metro to the T1 line, which locked out many areas from a connected public transport system.

To make matters worse, failure to provide adequate bus services from Box Hill or Marsden Park—which were originally intended to have metro stations under the plan devised by the Carr Government—has resulted in more cars on the road and the Tallawong car park being full by 7.00 a.m. Everyone needs to drive to Tallawong to make use of the metro, and building the carpark with 627 fewer spaces than the expert advice recommended does not help. As this motion proves, members opposite are more interested in photo opportunities and announcements than in listening to the experts to ensure safe and reliable public transport. The Government makes no apology for sitting down with transport workers and unions, and looking to find good outcomes for the travelling public and for the people of New South Wales.

There is no doubt that the metro is a welcome addition to Sydney's public transport system, which has had more than 6.3 million trips since the city section opened from Chatswood to Sydenham on 19 August 2024. But how dare members opposite laud themselves when they fundamentally failed the people of the north-west. I find it odd that this motion was moved by the member for Vacluse, whose electorate has nothing to do with the metro. It would make sense if it were moved by the member for Hawkesbury. The fastest growing parts of her electorate are acutely affected by her Government's failure when it comes to Metro North West. The metro runs through only one of the 16 precincts within the North West Growth Area. I note that the only metro stations with adequate

car parks are in Liberal electorates. Tallawong is one of the fastest growing suburbs in the State, but it was not given the car park it needed.

I am glad Coalition members are patting themselves on the back for building the metro and claiming credit for what is fundamentally a project for the people, and owned by the people, of New South Wales. While those opposite hand out flyers and move self-applauding motions, the people of Riverstone continue to feel the effects of the former Government's failures. It failed to connect the metro to the heavy rail, to provide adequate bus connections and to build the desperately needed car park at the end of the line. And to that I say, "Shame!"

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:53):** I thank the member for Vaucluse for moving this important motion. Since I was elected as the member for Ryde, I have said many times in this place that I have been frustrated with the lack of vision coming from members opposite. I always feel like the vision is for something in the far distance, but it is a vision in the rear-view mirror. I do not think that is what the people of New South Wales expect. I am glad that the member for Riverstone spoke about people owning up and taking responsibility for their failures because, at its core, that is what this motion is about. It is about the delays associated with the metro and its opening, and I am glad the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport is here. The 259 bus in Macquarie Park in my electorate was included in the timetable changes announced by the Government. The whole premise of the timetable change was, "Trust us. It will work because the metro will be there to save you." But the metro did not open and the buses were cancelled anyway. Talking about mistakes and who is to blame, this Government made the obvious error when it came to opening this metro, and it was people in my Liberal electorate who missed out.

But I think it goes further to this staunch defence of unions that we are seeing from the Government, because I have listened to the member for Coogee speak ad nauseam about unions and the defence and the protection racket, which is typical, but it is particularly interesting to see them be so critical of us for talking about funding this project because it was funded under the Coalition Government. The member for Coogee said it is inappropriate and incorrect to say that it was funded by us. Let us apply that logic to them. It would not be appropriate for them to stand in this Chamber in the future and take credit for increasing wages for nurses, police officers, teachers and other public sector workers because, by that same logic, the people who funded those wage increases are taxpayers, not the Government. So it would not be right for Government members to pat themselves on the back.

I am speaking to the substance of the motion, but I digressed. I was planning to talk more about the metro, but I was railroaded by talk of unions. I want to talk about vision and the positivity of the metro because my Ryde electorate saw part of the earlier benefit of the metro transformation and the introduction of the Metro North West, which runs right through it. It has been a real lifesaver for the Macquarie Park precinct, which is one of the largest commercial districts in the State. In fact, it is the sixth largest and on track to be the fourth by the end of the decade. Part of what is driving the success and progress in the area is the marvel of Sydney Metro. People commuting from within the local area, from the north-west and from all different parts of Sydney is turning that commercial hub into the vibrant, beautiful place it is. We need to see more of that.

I am frustrated that members opposite are trying to chastise other members who may not have a metro station in their electorate, because it is not about that narrow vision. It is about what is good for the whole of the State. I would hazard that places like Macquarie Park benefiting from the metro is also good for the Riverstone electorate, because people from that electorate travel on the metro to the Ryde electorate and take advantage of its marvellous creations. It is really important that we have a bigger, more futuristic, higher level focus and vision. We need to get out of the rear-view focus and think about uplifting all people in this State, because that is what Sydney Metro is about. It is important to recognise that the metro would not have happened had the Labor Party been in government, because its members opposed it at all stages. It was opposed in my electorate, in their electorates and at the beginning of this term. Thank God it was already too far gone.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:58):** I thank member for letting me speak on the motion moved by my mate the member for Vaucluse. I will start with the comment made by the member for Ryde that the metro was already too far gone.

**Mr Jordan Lane:** Thank goodness.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** "Thank goodness," he says. The start of the motion acknowledges that the previous Government designed, funded and built the Sydney Metro. I will be interested to hear the member for Vaucluse explain in this House why my electorate has the Bankstown line but not the metro. I am sure every single person who lives in Birrong and Yagoona will be thrilled to hear her explain why the previous Government designed a metro that excluded Birrong and Yagoona stations.

**Mr Jordan Lane:** The Government can build one.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** As the member just said, it is too far gone. That is the problem with Opposition members. They stand up in this Chamber and make comments, but when I point it out to them they are shocked. They say, "You can do something about it. It was a finalised program, but you can do something about it. We funded it." The previous Government did fund the metro, but internal government documents released after the election showed that the Sydney Metro City and Southwest project is set to cost \$20.1 billion, while the publicly announced figure under the Coalition was \$18.5 billion. The metro review estimated that the full cost of building the Sydney Metro Southwest line is at least \$20.5 billion. That is \$9 billion more than the initial estimate and at least \$2 billion more than the figure touted by the previous Government.

Opposition members talk about how they funded the metro, but the member for Riverstone, the member for Leppington and the member for Parramatta know that the previous Government failed to build school after school. While the cost of every metro project built by the previous Government blew out, schools were not built. Opposition members should not talk about the hospitals that the previous Government funded and upgraded. I have been a member long enough to know that government after government say they upgraded every hospital. I sat in this Chamber when former health Minister Brad Hazzard—who I thought was a good guy—said that Labor did not build any hospitals. He should go stand outside Auburn Hospital, which we built. That is the reality.

People, particularly in my area of Western Sydney, will judge members on what they say and whether they are authentic. As we have seen with the Birrong and Yagoona stations, the reality is that Opposition members will squabble every time to suit their own interests. I have a lot of sympathy for the member for Riverstone and the member for Leppington about what happened with their train stations. The previous Government said, "We are going to build this big aerotropolis in Western Sydney and we are going to have this great big city," but the train only goes to St Marys station. The best course of action with a greenfield site is to build the lines while we can and while it is cheaper so there are no cost blowouts like the one we are experiencing with the Sydney Metro West, which the member for Parramatta knows about. That project was meant to cost \$18 billion but it is already up to at least \$25 billion. That would have paid for the extension to Leppington station. It is a disgrace for the Opposition to move this motion in the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:02):** By leave: I speak on behalf of The Greens on the motion about Sydney Metro moved by the member for Vacluse. It is completely astounding to me that the Opposition has moved this motion. Let me be frank. The previous Government had a plan to deliver some public transport. It delivered some light rail and some metro. It did not deliver those projects in the way The Greens would have liked. It did not deliver them in a way that supported local jobs and the public service. It did not redirect the billions and billions of dollars from the WestConnex privatised toll road into a public transport system for the people of Western Sydney so they could commute without being sluggish by tolls and dealing with the disasters and traffic jams that we knew WestConnex would deliver. The previous Government did not respect the expertise of unions and workers to deliver the transport system. Nonetheless, it did deliver lots of transport.

But now Opposition members come into this place using the delivery of Sydney Metro to condemn the current Government. With classic Liberal-Nationals spin, they are suggesting that the unions are somehow to blame for the failure to open the metro on time, even though it was union workers who built and delivered the metro for the people of New South Wales. I cannot help but point out the hypocrisy of the Opposition. This week during question time Opposition members, pretending to be friends of the workers, asked endless questions about why the New South Wales Labor Government is not delivering for the nurses of this State. They were valid questions, but the hypocrisy of Opposition members in asking those questions is beyond belief. I have sat on the crossbench all week and listened to them, but I cannot allow it to continue. I am glad I have an opportunity to point out that hypocrisy.

If the member for Vacluse wants any tips on how to join rallies and actions and get photos with the people who are rallying, I am very happy to give them to her. It is usually helpful for a member to have some connection to the community rallying outside Parliament before they go down to take a photo. Then when the member walks outside the Parliament, as I did yesterday after question time, they will see about 20 or 40 people they recognise and can chat to. Those people will then say, "Let's get a photo. Hold this banner." Members should not go outside and stand awkwardly with another member of their party in front of a group of people simply because they are there. Members should not do that.

It completely confounds me that this motion somehow blames the unions for the metro delays when Opposition members have spent the whole week pretending to be friends of the unions because the nurses rallied outside Parliament. The New South Wales Labor Government is not doing enough to address the needs of the unions. But I will not sit here and allow you to pretend for one second that you care about the nurses or union workers. You also clearly do not care about—

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order: My point of order has two parts. The first relates to relevance. The second is that the member for Newtown should direct her comments through the Chair and not point at me.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I do not uphold the first part of the point of order. The member for Newtown was being directly relevant. I uphold the second part of the point of order and ask the member for Newtown to direct her comments through the Chair. The member's time has expired.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:06):** In reply: There has been a lot of anger and personal comments made during today's debate. That is a shame because I moved this motion to talk about the big, bold vision of the former Coalition Government, which dreamt big and delivered for the future of our city.

**Mr Warren Kirby:** Remove paragraphs (2) and (3).

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** Do other members wish to make a contribution to the debate?

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Members will come to order.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Coogee and her comedy—Coogee comedy. During my speech I quoted from *Muriel's Wedding*. The member for Coogee reminded me of another quote from that movie, "You're terrible, Marjorie." She did get quite personal, but that is okay. I am wearing a little bit of red for Government members. I am happy to be called "comrade" if it makes them feel a little more comfortable. I thank the member for Riverstone for acknowledging that I did go downstairs on Tuesday to talk to the nurses. I had plenty of wonderful chats with the nurses. I did not see the member for Riverstone there and I certainly did not see the Premier. He has not been speaking to the nurses. He has not been at the bargaining table. He finally chatted to them today, at the eleventh hour.

I very much appreciated the contributions by the member for Ryde, the member for Auburn and the member for Newtown. I again acknowledge the role of the previous Government and the leadership of Gladys, Barry, Mike and Dom in delivering the Sydney Metro. I acknowledge the engineers, architects and Sydney Metro team who have played a part in delivering this really amazing project. I finish on a positive note. There is nothing New South Wales cannot deliver when we back a positive vision for the future. Sydney Metro demonstrates that leadership that focuses on big ideas can deliver big things, even when so many others say it cannot.

New South Wales is a winning State, whether it is the Swans bringing home the premiership this weekend or a potential premiership for the Roosters. We should not forget that the ingenuity, tenacity, hard work and talent of the people of this State makes us special. It is what makes us the best State in this country. It is what ensures a bright future for generations to come. That future is being delivered by Sydney Metro, a project funded, designed and delivered by the Coalition Government. I hope that members will support the motion.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....28

Noes .....48

Majority.....20

#### AYES

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

Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Moylan, B  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G  
Sloane, K

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

#### NOES

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

Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C (teller)

Piper, G  
Quinnell, S  
Regan, M  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Shetty, K  
Smith, T



## NOES

Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J  
Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Hannan, J

Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R

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

## PAIRS

Coure, M  
Kamper, S  
Petinos, E  
Williams, R

Atalla, E  
Henskens, A  
Saffin, J  
Aitchison, J

**Motion negatived.**

## RENTAL LAWS

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:17):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on a rental reform package that makes some of the biggest changes to the system in a decade to protect over two million renters in New South Wales.
- (2) Notes the Government's proposed reforms include ending no-grounds evictions for periodic and fixed-term leases, making it easier to have pets in rental properties, and strengthening protections around rental payments. Rental reform is an important issue that affects over two million people in New South Wales. More people than ever before are renting in our State. In fact, one-third of our population relies on a rental property to call home. The New South Wales rental market, which consists of over one million properties, is the largest in Australia. With such a vast rental market, it is essential that we strike a fair balance between the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and landlords. Sadly, this balance has been missing. Renters in New South Wales are facing challenges like never before. Historically low vacancy rates and the current cost-of-living crisis means that the rental market is becoming increasingly unaffordable and insecure. That is why the Minns Labor Government is committed to taking action. I am proud to say that the Government has set an ambitious agenda for rental reform.

Last year I was honoured to be a member of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023. Through that committee, the Minns Government has already laid a strong foundation for a more balanced rental market. The first step was appointing Trina Jones as the new Rental Commissioner. The commissioner will lead the charge in cracking down on poor quality rental homes and bad behaviour from agents and owners. Under the commissioner's leadership, the NSW Rental Taskforce will be one of the largest teams within the department of NSW Fair Trading. With an investment of \$8.4 million, the taskforce will have new investigators and inspectors to address serious breaches of rental laws. The Government is also ensuring that renters have the tools they need to navigate the complex market.

The new online Rent Check tool provides greater transparency by allowing tenants to compare median rent ranges in any postcode across New South Wales. It gives renters valuable information to help them determine whether their current or proposed rent is reasonable. Additionally, the Government is working on an innovative solution with the portable bonds scheme. The Government has invested \$6.6 million to develop Australia's first scheme of its kind. It will allow renters to transfer their existing bond from one property to another, eliminating the financial burden of saving for a second bond while waiting for their previous bond to be returned. It is a real, practical solution to help ease the financial pressure that many renters face when moving homes. The reforms are the most comprehensive changes in a decade. The Government is modernising the rental market to make it fairer for both tenants and landlords, fulfilling a promise the Government made to the people of New South Wales.

I speak about one of the most significant changes that the Government is introducing: the end of no-grounds evictions. Currently, landlords can evict tenants for any reason or for no reason at all, leaving families to live with uncertainty and insecurity. The system is unfair and disproportionately affects vulnerable segments of our society, including the young, the disabled and lower income groups. Members on this side of the House believe there needs to be a legitimate reason to end a lease. Under the reforms, landlords will now be required to have a valid reason to terminate a tenancy. The Government is introducing commonsense grounds for eviction, such as a breach of lease, damage to property, non-payment of rent or if the property is being sold or undergoing significant

renovations. That ensures landlords still maintain their rights while giving tenants the stability and peace of mind they deserve.

Another change the Government is introducing is ensuring that paying rent is both free and convenient. The Government believes if paying a mortgage does not incur fees, paying rent should not either. Too often, renters are hit with hidden fees or are limited to paying rent in inconvenient ways, adding to cost-of-living pressures. The reforms will ensure that tenants are offered fee-free options like bank transfers or payment through the Commonwealth's Centrepay option, making it easier for everyone to manage their finances. Speaking of fees, I talk about background checks. Renters should not have to pay extra fees just to be considered for a home. In some cases, renters are forced to pay for their own background checks, which is particularly unfair when applying for multiple properties. That stops now. The Government will strengthen laws to ensure that tenants no longer have to pay for background checks in New South Wales.

Finally, the Government believes tenants are renting homes, not just houses. Pets are often beloved and essential members of many families. Unfortunately, some renters are faced with the heart-wrenching decision of choosing between their pets and a place to live. The Government's reforms will make it easier for tenants to own pets in rental properties, ensuring that families can stay together, furry members included. The Government's objective is to provide more options for renters while safeguarding the rights and interests of owners. The Minns Government was elected with a clear mandate to modernise the rental market, and the reforms will deliver on that promise. By bringing more balance, fairness and respect into the system, the Government is creating a rental market that works for everyone, both tenants and landlords. I look forward to the introduction of the legislation to Parliament, and I urge all members to support the vital reforms for renters. Together, we can ensure that renting in New South Wales is fairer and more secure for all of us.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:24):** I make some remarks on behalf of the Coalition in respect of the motion moved by the member for South Coast. I commence by moving a sensible, reasonable and timely amendment to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by removing paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting instead:

- (1) Notes that building approvals have gone backwards under the Minns Labor Government and reached a 12-year low.
- (2) Notes that over Labor's year in power rents in Greater Sydney have increased by more than 13 per cent.
- (3) Notes that the proportion of rental housing accessible to a median income earner in New South Wales has fallen from 35 per cent in 2022-23 to 28 per cent in 2023-24.
- (4) Notes that the Liberal-Nationals Government achieved a record high of rental housing accessible to a median income earner in New South Wales of 48 per cent in 2020-21.
- (5) Notes that the Government dragged its feet on progressing agreed rental reform, including prohibiting no-grounds evictions and establishing a portable rental bonds scheme.
- (6) Notes that the Minns Labor Government has walked away from its promise to legislate a ban on secret rent bidding.

The rental market is in a state of crisis. It is undeniable that the situation has worsened significantly under the Minns Labor Government. Housing supply is the biggest issue by far. Building approvals have plummeted and reached a 12-year low. It is a clear indicator that the Government has failed and continues to fail to support the housing supply needed to meet growing demand. When building approvals decline, the ripple effects are felt across the entire housing market. Labor's failure to stimulate supply has placed an even greater strain on renters who are already struggling to find affordable and secure housing. Over the past year, we have witnessed a surge in rents across Greater Sydney, with increases exceeding 13 per cent. For renters, that means more of their hard-earned income is being absorbed by housing costs, leaving them with fewer resources to cover other essential expenses.

The rise in rent is not just a statistic; it represents a growing fear for families, young professionals and seniors who find themselves priced out of their communities and pushed to the brink. One of the most troubling aspects of the crisis is the decline in the availability of rental housing accessible to median income earners. Just one year ago, 35 per cent of rental properties in New South Wales were considered affordable for the average worker. Today that figure has fallen to 28 per cent, a dramatic drop that underscores the severity of the problem. I contrast that with the record high of 48 per cent accessibility achieved under the former Liberal-Nationals Government in 2020-21, during a time when nearly half of all rental properties were within reach for the average earner. That stark difference demonstrates that when policies prioritise housing supply and affordability, we can make real progress in creating a fairer rental market.

It is clear that rental reform is needed urgently. However, it is equally clear that the current Government has failed to take meaningful action. It has talked about reform but has done little to deliver on its promises. This Government promised to ban no-grounds evictions, yet it has dragged its feet on the issue for a long time and is

still yet to introduce legislation on the matter. The establishment of a portable rental bonds scheme has been, and continues to be, delayed. On pets in rentals, the Coalition completed consultation in 2022. Labor has still not acted on it. The reforms were not just campaign promises; they were commitments to the people of New South Wales. Labor's inaction speaks louder than its words.

Furthermore, the Minns Labor Government has walked away from its promise to legislate a ban on secret rent bidding, a practice that unfairly drives up rents and places tenants in challenging circumstances. There were no less than four social media tiles from Premier Minns about it during the election campaign. When Labor attempted the reform, it put up a proposal that would have made it worse. It was shunted off to a committee, canned by all stakeholders and quickly shelved. What has been done in relation to Labor's promise to ban secret rent bidding since then? Absolutely nothing. What is currently proposed in respect of Labor's promise to ban secret rent bidding? Absolutely nothing. Talk about hollow vessels.

We must recognise that rental reform is not just about making life easier for tenants; it is about ensuring a balanced and sustainable rental market that works for tenants and property owners alike. Members on this side of the Chamber know that property owners are integral to the supply of rental properties. Without their investment, there would be even fewer rental options and the crisis would only deepen. The risk of implementing policies that make it harder or less appealing for property owners to participate in the rental market is that it ultimately reduces the number of properties available, driving up prices even further and exacerbating the very problem that must be solved.

The heart of the issue is supply. Supply is, quite simply, the most critical factor in addressing the rental crisis. If we fail to increase the supply of rental properties, all other reforms will be little more than band-aids on a much bigger wound. The Minns Labor Government has failed to address that fundamental issue, focusing instead on rhetoric rather than action. The former Coalition Government understood that supporting both renters and property owners is the key to creating a healthy, balanced and effective rental market. Policies that protect tenants' rights must be balanced with measures that encourage investment in rental properties.

We need long-term, sustainable policy measures and programs. That means engaging in genuine consultation with all stakeholders, including renters, property owners, real estate professionals and housing experts, to develop policies that work for everyone. We must move beyond the quick fixes, the sound bites and the social media tiles of Premier Minns to commit to building a rental market that is fair, transparent and sustainable. Fairness, transparency, economic reality and balance should be the guiding principles of real rental reform efforts. It is not just about making promises; it is about taking real, concrete action that will make a difference in the lives of renters and property owners alike.

The Minns Labor Government's inaction on rental reform has failed the people of New South Wales. It has not only failed to address the core issues of supply and affordability but has also actively walked away from its own election commitments. Now is the time for real leadership. We must ensure that renters have the security, stability and transparency they deserve, while also supporting property owners who play an essential role in providing housing. Let us work to create a rental market that provides certainty for both renters and property owners and ensures a brighter, more secure future for all. I commend the amended motion to the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:31):** I thank the member for South Coast for moving this important motion on rental reforms. There are two-plus million renters across New South Wales, which amounts to one-third of our population. My electorate lies towards the top end of the scale for rented households per electorate in New South Wales, with a whopping 43.6 per cent of households being rented in the electorate of Granville. New South Wales has long been the State with the largest rental market in Australia and, as such, it is vital that we finally strike a fair balance between the rights of tenants and the responsibilities of landlords.

Unfortunately, the current landscape shows that renters are facing unprecedented challenges, with record low vacancy rates and a cost-of-living crisis that has made it tougher than ever to secure a home. Although New South Wales has well over one million properties, 620,000 of them are owned by landlords. The Labor Government is committed to making renting fairer for everyone in New South Wales, which is why we are launching the most significant rental reforms in a decade. The reforms will modernise our rental market and fulfill our election promise to ensure a just system for all. Members opposite did not address any of those issues in the 12 years they were in government. In fact, they opposed my private member's bill in 2020 to end no-grounds evictions and require landlords to give a reason to evict tenants.

The Labor Government has taken concrete steps to lay the foundations for a fairer rental environment, with no more tolerance for dodgy agents or owners. Trina Jones has been appointed as the NSW Rental Commissioner, marking a crucial move to crack down on poor quality rentals and bad practices from agents and landlords. The newly established NSW Rental Taskforce, backed by an investment of \$8.4 million, will enhance our ability to investigate breaches of rental laws and increase engagement with renters.

A significant aspect of our reforms is to end no-grounds evictions, which has been disproportionality affecting our young people, people with disability and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Polling commissioned by the Tenants' Union of NSW in March 2024 found that over 90 per cent of renters surveyed for the report said that the possibility of being forced to move without being given a reason was a source of anxiety for them, and over 80 per cent identified it as a serious source of anxiety. Along with the mental health impacts, the report highlights the way in which the harms caused by no-grounds evictions perpetuate the power imbalance between renters and landlords and degrade the trust required for a well-functioning regulatory system.

Although owners will still have the power to evict tenants who break the rules, maintaining their right to control their property, tenants will no longer live under the constant threat of eviction without cause, providing them with greater stability and peace of mind. Legitimate grounds for eviction are being established, ensuring that landlords can maintain control of their properties while also protecting tenants from unjust displacement. Moreover, we recognise that paying rent should not incur unnecessary fees. We will require owners and agents to offer fee-free payment options, reflecting the modern methods available to us today. Additionally, we will eliminate the unfair practice of charging renters for background checks, which is disgraceful, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance at securing a home.

Finally, we understand the importance of pets in our lives. As a dog owner, that resonates with me deeply. I cannot imagine throwing away my lifelong companion for a potentially temporary rental. However, until now renters have been shamed into relocating their pets when applying for homes with a strict no pet preference. Through the reforms, we aim to make it easier for families to keep their beloved pets while renting, because families deserve to feel at home in the property they rent. For me, a pet is nothing short of a family member. In closing, the Government has been elected with a mandate to modernise the rental market. The changes we are proposing will deliver on that promise. I urge all members of Parliament to support these essential reforms. I look forward to a fairer, more equitable rental market.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:35):** I contribute to debate on the motion about rental reforms moved by the member for South Coast. It is important in the context of this debate to note that the member for South Coast gave notice of the motion on 6 August, following the NSW Labor conference, where the Premier announced and publicly released information saying that there is a clear timeline for the delivery of the rental reforms. In actual fact, it was a commitment made by the Minns New South Wales Labor Opposition going into the last election that it would deliver this package of reforms. The Premier outlined that all of his election promises would be delivered by the end of last year.

In July this year, at the Labor Party conference, the Premier announced the timeline for these rental reforms. The member for South Coast, in the sitting week following, congratulated the Government on the rental reform package that followed that announcement. That said, it is important to note that we are well beyond the September sitting. In fact, we are in the final hours of the September sitting. The press release from the Premier, which was released in line with the NSW Labor conference in July, said that the legislation would be introduced in September. There are a couple of hours to go. There is half an hour left of government business and there is no rental legislation on the *Business Paper*.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Where's the bill?

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for North Shore will come to order. She has been removed from the Chamber once today.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** Before Opposition members get all excited and to try to pretend that they are backing me on this, they had 12 years to deliver rental reform for the two million people of New South Wales. Did they deliver those reforms? No. They did nothing. They are all loud now asking, "Where's the bill?", but it was not enough to shout and yell about that inside the party room of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals and now they no longer have control to deliver the reform. I know full well that Ministers sitting in the then New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Cabinet tried to introduce this reform on a number of occasions but they were smashed down by the landlords and property developers. They now sit on the Opposition benches. That said, that does not excuse the delays from the Government. The member for Willoughby has no credibility to speak about rental reform. Therefore, I move:

That the amendment be amended by omitting paragraphs (1) to (6) and inserting instead:

- (1) Notes that it has been over 550 days since the New South Wales Labor Government was elected on a platform that included a package on rental reforms for the over two million renters in New South Wales and they still have not been delivered.
- (2) Notes that the Premier announced on the weekend of the NSW Labor conference in July that legislation to deliver rental reforms would be introduced in September but this has not happened and so the reform is further delayed.

The Greens just want to get the reform done. We know how the numbers in this Chamber and in the other Chamber work, and we are offering our commitment to work with the Government to deliver on the reforms. What is stopping the New South Wales Labor Government from introducing the legislation? I have no idea. Let us hope that when we are back in this House in October, we are actually debating the issue.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The time for consideration of general business notices of motions (not being bills) has expired. I set down resumption of the interrupted debate as an order of the day for a later time.

### *Bills*

## **POLICE AMENDMENT (POLICE OFFICER SUPPORT SCHEME) BILL 2024**

### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.**

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 26 September 2024*

No. 1 **GRNS No. 1 [c2024-174A]**

Page 12, Schedule 3.1, lines 3–6. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

[1] **Section 146D Commission has no jurisdiction in respect of death and disability payments for police officers**

Omit section 146 (2).

[2] **Section 146D(9), definition of "death and disability payments"**

Omit "has the meaning it has in Part 9B of the *Police Act 1990*".

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (16:40):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

I am very pleased to remind the House how important this legislation is. The new Enhanced Police Support Scheme will, for a very long time now, be the scheme that will support injured police officers. It will support them and help them get back to work. It will also bring the scheme back into public hands where we will be able to have accountability to ensure that the scheme is looking after our police, wrapping services around them and giving them the best opportunities to return to work, if that is at all possible. I thank the many people who have contributed to this long piece of work, which is incredibly complex. I thank the Parliament for agreeing to the changes. I can confidently say that the scheme will definitely change the lives of police in a positive way. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:42):** The Opposition supports the amendments of the Legislative Council on this bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:42):** I acknowledge the work of my Greens colleague in the other place, Ms Abigail Boyd, who moved the amendments that this House is now considering. I acknowledge the contribution that she has made to make sure the legislation is delivering for people in New South Wales. Indeed, my Greens colleagues in the other place do that on a regular basis. I hope that the Government will continue to take The Greens amendments to legislation on board. I recognise that the Leader of the House said that having debates and amending legislation sometimes makes legislation better.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Committees*

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

### **Establishment and Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:44):** I move:

That:

- (1) This House agrees with the Legislative Council's amendment to the resolution appointing a Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of this resolution.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:44):** The Opposition supports the motion put forward by the Leader of the House regarding the establishment of the joint select committee.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions*

**FORESTRY ACT: REVOCATION OF DEDICATION**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (16:45):** I move:

- (1) That, in accordance with section 15 of the Forestry Act 2012, this House agrees to the revocation of a dedication of land situated in the Bago State Forest, Parish of Wallace, County of Selwyn, being part of Lot 2 and part of Lot 3 in Deposited Plan 755895 in Bago State Forest No. 560 Extension No. 41 and an adjacent land unidentified triangle parcel of land in Bago State Forest No. 560 Extension No. 34.
- (2) The forgoing resolution be communicated by Address to Her Excellency the Governor.

I contribute to the debate on the revocation of the dedication of approximately 32 hectares of Bago State Forest. This step will enable land to be acquired for the purposes of building infrastructure critical to the delivery of the Snowy 2.0 Transmission Connection Project. The project has been determined to be critical State significant infrastructure and will make an important contribution to moving New South Wales towards a clean energy future. Snowy 2.0 will deliver an additional 2,000 megawatts of dispatchable on-demand generating capacity and enough energy storage to power three million homes over the course of a week. The project will enable energy from Snowy 2.0 to be passed into the grid, powering homes across our State. However, in order to ensure the critical piece of infrastructure can be completed, the State forest dedication of this land must first be revoked, and that is what this motion is proposing. Under section 15 of the Forestry Act 2012, the revocation of any State forest land over 20 hectares must be done by the passing of a motion in both Houses of Parliament.

Today the Government is moving a motion in this House to approve the revocation of approximately 32 hectares of Bago State Forest to deliver on its commitment for this important project. This is an important milestone in ensuring new generation electricity assets are in place for Snowy 2.0 for the benefit of our State and the nation. The environmental impact statement did not find any issues that would preclude the approval of the project by the consent authority, and it attained State and Commonwealth planning approval in 2022 under the previous Government. The revocation will assist in the delivery of renewable energy that will help secure our energy supply, and lower carbon emissions to help New South Wales meet its targets and Australia its international commitments. For those reasons, I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:47):** The Coalition does not oppose the revocation of land in the Bago State Forest. It provides a practical solution to some current challenges. We know the decision is aimed at preventing transmission lines from criss-crossing through private property, which would negatively impact landowners. Landholders, from what I understand, have been completely supportive and consulted throughout the process. Their primary concern has been around powerlines crossing their land, and that has been addressed through the plan. The land being made available to Transgrid, as mentioned, is for the construction of transmission lines supporting Snowy 2.0, which are needed. That means private property and agricultural land will not be impacted. That essential infrastructure will be in more public areas. It is a balanced approach ensuring that infrastructure needs are met while protecting private property and prime agricultural land. I commend the motion to the House.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:49):** As the motion applies to my electorate, I offer a few comments to the debate. I acknowledge the important comments of the member for Dubbo about the use of State forestry, rather than private land, for transmission lines. I make a couple of points. The powerline should have been underground from the start. It is a shame that we are not considering undergrounding. The reason we are not considering undergrounding is not because of cost or efficiency. Because of the way that the system is set up, we have to approve the cheapest option. That is all. I have previously spoken about that many times in this House, and I will not miss an opportunity to say it again.

I am interested to know what compensation forestry will get. The loss of 33 hectares of Forestry Corporation land can be ill-afforded at this time. The Snowy Valley has lost nearly 40,000 hectares of plantation estate—a third of the plantation estate—and we are facing significant shortfalls in wood supply. That sounds like a small amount, but I would hope that the Forestry Corporation is compensated. My understanding is that it probably should have had a two-for-one deal. In other words, if we are taking 33 hectares, 60 hectares of plantation should probably have been set aside. My understanding is that very little, if any, new plantations are created in this State. That remains a significant issue for forestry, going forward, and supply for our building industry. We need new plantations, and they need to be supported.

The final comment I make is that the communications and correspondence that I have seen says that the revocation would enable Snowy 2.0 to have the ability to operate at full capacity by 2026. Last seen, I thought Snowy Hydro was struggling to meet its target by 2029. That is a budget that has gone from \$2 billion to \$12 billion and a timeline that has gone out by many, many years. I simply question that. Nevertheless, I leave my comments on the motion at that.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (16:51):** In reply: I note the comments from the member for Dubbo and the member for Wagga Wagga, and I thank them for their contributions. I commend the motion to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **ST MERKORIOUS CHARITY**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:51):** Since its inception, St Merkorious Charity has tirelessly worked to combat hardship through compassion and action. Over its 11 years of service, the charity has expanded its impact, providing vital services such as weekly food drives and offering invaluable assistance to the homeless. That includes the charity providing 5,000 meals each week to the homeless, people with disabilities, the elderly and financially struggling families. The charity runs food service nights for approximately 120 people three times a week, including a Monday daytime session in Fairfield, where it also helps people to address gambling addiction. I thank president Paula Nicolas and her husband, Danny Nicolas, Patrick Chow, Dorian Sarkissian, Diaa Shaker and Colette Assaf, along with the countless volunteers and donors for making a meaningful difference to the lives of so many families.

#### **NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE AWARDS**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:52):** I recognise our hardworking and dedicated NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers on the northern beaches. On 3 September I was honoured to attend the district medal event in Terrey Hills. Seventeen members of the northern beaches RFS brigades were recognised and 14 received national medals, with a combined total of 470 years of service. I recognise Robert Southam; Jennifer Thompson; Lynne Arnott; Raffaele Tigani; Richard Bouwmans; Ben Hallett; Marisa Tigani; Graeme Last; Dianne Cree; Warren Cree, OAM, AFSM; James Hooke; Tim Macgregor; Edward Carroll; Anthony Jones; Shannon Mason; Nicholas O'Connor; and Craig Samuel. They do us very proud. They go out into the field. We recognise that it is dangerous work. We all know that they do not undertake this work to get medals, but it is greatly appreciated. We are proud of them.

#### **LORD LAMINGTON**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:53):** I commemorate the 84th anniversary of the passing of Lord Lamington. Born Charles Wallace Alexander Napier Cochrane-Baillie in London, England, in 1860, he married Lady Lamington in 1895. Lamington was the Governor of Queensland from 1896 to 1901, which was a period of great transformation—most notably, the region's transition from a colony to part of the new nation of Australia. Much like the member for Leppington, he championed the establishment of new schools and improving existing ones, ensuring that all children have access to quality education. His passion for the environment and conservation led to the establishment of the Lamington National Park. Lord Lamington travelled extensively throughout Queensland during his tenure. During those travels, he raised concerns about the treatment of Aboriginals and Melanesians. Highlighting his ability to connect with people from all walks of life, Lamington was a beloved figure in Queensland. Lord Lamington's legacy extends far beyond his governorship, with his namesake cake remaining a cherished symbol of Australian culture and cuisine.

#### **BALMAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:54):** Today I acknowledge the work of the Balmain Public School P&C in bringing together its Art Soiree and Family Fair Day fundraisers. The art exhibition was curated by Archibald Prize winner Mitch Cairns and included works by students as well as 30 works from some of Australia's leading artists, including Archibald, Doug Moran and Brett Whiteley art finalists. I am pleased with the piece I won at auction, which was an artwork designed by the talented students of 6R called "Evergreen". It is a beautiful triptych of a green forest. It now proudly hangs in the Balmain electorate office. It was a busy weekend for the P&C, organising an entire art exhibition on a Friday evening and the Balmain Public School Family Fair Day the following day. The day was a phenomenal community event, including carnival games, fairy floss, roving magicians and inflatables. I congratulate Trista Rose, Kara Martin, Jen Widjojo and Agatha Gothe-Snape from

the Balmain Public School P&C, as well as all the staff and volunteers who contributed to such fantastic events. They should be incredibly proud of their tireless efforts to support the Balmain Public School.

#### **BANKSTOWN DISTRICT AMATEUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION AWARDS**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:55):** It was a pleasure to be part of Bankstown District Amateur Football Association's awards night. I congratulate all the award winners this year. We certainly have a strong football culture in the East Hills electorate, with many local individuals going above and beyond to support their local clubs. A special congratulations to Brad Fitzgibbins from Revesby Workers Football Club, who was awarded BDAFA's Volunteer of the Year, and to Revesby Rovers Football Club, who were crowned club champions. In the premier competition, Padstow United claimed the top spot in the men's division, showcasing their excellence and resilience throughout the season, and Revesby Workers Football Club was triumphant in the ladies competition, setting a very high standard. I also acknowledge Edwin Garcia from the Spears Sports Club, who was awarded the BDAFA Golden Boot for his incredible goalscoring achievements. I thank all the volunteers and Leanne Miller for their dedication to football and for making such a positive impact on our community. Congratulations again to the award winners and the BDAFA board on hosting a wonderful awards night to end off a very successful season.

#### **BEACHES COVERED MAGAZINE**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:56):** I pay tribute to an excellent publication that services not only the electorate of Manly but also the entire northern beaches. *Beaches COVERED* was created by a brother-and-sister team, John and Megan Vickery, and has reached the remarkable milestone of its tenth anniversary. That is despite the challenges of the printing industry, which has seen many well-known print publications fall by the wayside, as well as the difficulties presented by a COVID epidemic. The high-end lifestyle magazine is produced for each of the four seasons to celebrate the people, the businesses and the stories of Sydney's northern beaches. It is an ideal coffee table magazine, which over the past decade has produced more than 3,000 pages, with over 1.5 million words about our local community. John's motto has been "persistence prevails when all else fails". It is a motto that he plans to hang onto. I congratulate John, Megan and all the team, both past and present, on the beautiful publication as they embark on another 10 years of ensuring our local community remains informed with *Beaches COVERED*. Go the Swans!

#### **JUANA REINOSO**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:57):** Today I acknowledge the long and dedicated service of Juana Reinoso, who will celebrate 30 years of working at CORE Community Services. Juana joined CORE in 1994 as a project worker and has since held various roles across a number of key service areas. Her service to the people of south-west Sydney and comprehensive understanding of CORE as an organisation made her the ideal candidate for CEO. She stepped into that role in October 2014. Under her leadership, CORE has not only expanded its service, offering to meet the growing needs of the diverse communities of south-west Sydney, but it has also firmly established its reputation as a well-respected and capable service provider. Juana has extensive experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and I have had the pleasure of working with her to support the services offered at Miller Hub and establish the 2168 Roundtable. I congratulate Juana on this significant milestone of service. While I cannot make it to her celebration today, I wish her the very best and look forward to continuing to support her.

#### **COFFS HARBOUR REGIONAL CONSERVATORIUM**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:58):** Affectionately known as the Con, the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium has been hitting the right notes for 40 years. The Con's rich four decades of history will be celebrated in a mega musical weekend from 11 to 13 October at its Bray Street home. Concerts will showcase the talents of current students, teachers and alumni, as well as buskers and opportunities for attendees to play various instruments. The Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium was the collective dream of community-minded music enthusiasts and is now a thriving not-for-profit organisation serving the Coffs Harbour, Bellingen and Nambucca areas. I congratulate the entire team at the Con on its magnificent milestone and on fostering and inspiring excellence in music and the performing arts. The team is led by president and board chair Dr Terrence Hays; vice-president and company secretary Kristi Rothwell; treasurer Ian Hartcher; board directors Anne Partridge, Steve McDonald and Erica Farag; and artistic director Dr Glen Hodges. It is advised by retiring president, board chair and director emeritus Lesley Schoer.

#### **MILTON ULLADULLA COMMUNITY KINDNESS PROJECT**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:59):** I take the opportunity to recognise and congratulate MUCK Up, the Milton Ulladulla Community Kindness Project. MUCK Up is a youth-led initiative that works to create positive social interactions and experiences for everyone, particularly teenagers, within the local community. Last



weekend MUCK Up held the Singer/Songwriter Showcase, which brought together local youth who, by the end of the weekend, were collaborating and co-writing songs. The showcase culminated in an inspiring performance at the Milton Theatre, where the young artists performed their original songs to a supportive and enthusiastic crowd. The remarkable event would not have been possible without the guidance of mentors such as Tayah Larsen Music, Tom Henry, South Coast Singing and Music Tuition, and Sounds Delicious. I also recognise the sponsors: Tabourie Childcare Centre, Heritage Bakery, Foxy's, Ulladulla Printing and Signage, and the Apex Club of Milton Ulladulla. I thank MUCK Up for another wonderful community event. I cannot wait to join it for its next project in December.

#### VELIKA HAYES

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:00):** At just 21, Wagga Wagga's Velika Hayes is studying for a nursing degree, works full-time in the disability sector and somehow still finds time to devote countless hours to making her community an even better place. It all makes Velika a very worthy recipient of the 2024 Riverina Young Volunteer of the Year award, presented by the Centre for Volunteering. I am delighted to offer her my congratulations. Velika is coming to the end of her term as Miss Wagga Wagga 2024, for raising thousands of dollars for local charities. She has been a community champion for more than half her life, having become involved with Country Hope at the age of 10. As a regular attendee at Country Hope's annual Time Out for Life camps, she has become a buddy and a mentor for other young people. Just this month, Velika completed her 100th event as Miss Wagga, living proof of her belief that volunteering makes the world go around. Velika has thanked her mum, Liza Boyle, and mentor, Ali Tanner, for their support on her journey. I congratulate and thank Velika on behalf of a grateful community.

#### ONAM FESTIVAL

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:01):** I acknowledge and thank the Malayalee Association of Quakers Hill for inviting me to be the chief guest at their Onam festival celebration this past weekend. Onam is a beautiful celebration that embodies the rich traditions and heritage of the Indian State of Kerala. It marks the homecoming of the mythical King Mahabali, who was once a benevolent ruler of Kerala. According to legend, King Mahabali was sent to the underworld by Lord Vishnu as a punishment for his pride. However, due to his good deeds and devotion to his people, Vishnu granted him a visit to Kerala once a year. Onam commemorates King Mahabali's annual visit. The festival is celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm. It features traditional dance, music and the Onam Sadhya feast. It is a time for families and friends to come together, strengthen bonds and celebrate. What better thing to do if you are only to visit earth for one day a year. I am truly honoured to have been included in such a significant cultural event.

#### TANIA MASTROIANNI

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:02):** The smallest act of kindness sometimes has the greatest impact on someone's life. For Tania Mastroianni, founder of Business with a Heart, her journey began at infancy when she was gifted a teddy bear after a traumatic and extremely complicated birth. Before she was even six months old, Tania had three heart surgeries and suffered a stroke that paralysed the left side of her body. The teddy bear she was gifted became a permanent companion and a symbol of hope and comfort for her. Now Tania's Business with a Heart has launched the Special Bear Friends program at Royal North Shore Hospital. The program lets struggling kids and families know that people are thinking of them and supporting them through difficult times through the simple gift of a teddy bear. I acknowledge Tania; Yvonne Collier, president of the North Sydney Business Chamber; Tamara Keniry, president of the Mosman Chamber of Commerce; and all of the members of the chambers. They have helped promote and support Tania's touching program. I know all the businesses are excited to be involved. I congratulate Tania. We all want to see joy in the lives of our little people who are struggling with health concerns. I wish her good luck with the program.

#### GOSHIN RYU KARATE BATEMANS BAY

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:03):** I congratulate Goshin Ryu Karate Batemans Bay, which celebrated its fiftieth birthday this month. The Batemans Bay karate dojo was established in September 1974 and has run continuously since then. The fiftieth birthday celebration on Monday night saw a big turnout of past and present students. Shihan Darrell Bossley has been practising the traditional style of karate for about 55 years. Remarkably, Darrell started when he was in a wheelchair. He said:

I was a pro rodeo rider and had an accident. I started it for the exercise and absolutely loved it. I got up out of my chair and just kept going.

Shihan Bossley is ranked third in the world within the Goshin Ryu Karate Association. He said the challenges of keeping a small club going in the modern era were many, including the cost of hiring venues and insurance. The

Batemans Bay school is a regional branch of the international Goshin Ryu Karate Association. Some students have competed at the national level, while others do it for mental and physical self-improvement.

### **WOLLONDILLY WOMBAT WATCH**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (17:04):** Wollondilly is such a unique place, with beautiful bush landscapes that form the backdrop to our peri-urban setting. However, the inevitable loss of habitat resulting from development means that our native flora and fauna pay the price. I am grateful, therefore, to groups like Wollondilly Wombat Watch, which look after the wildlife that we live alongside. Wollondilly Wombat Watch is dedicated to raising awareness of the wombats that live in our area, close to our homes and roads. It cares for the wombats that are too often victims of road accidents, juvenile wombats that are orphaned or those attacked by domestic animals. It is also helping to improve the health of wombat colonies by treating mites and mange, which pose serious threats to the Wollondilly wombat population, with interventions such as treated burrow flaps. The volunteers of the group donate their time and resources to making a difference to our native wildlife. Their advocacy has seen wombat signs installed on Cobbitty Bridge, and they are creating awareness about mange and promoting safer driving in known wildlife hotspots like Appin Road. My heartfelt thanks go to the Wollondilly Wombat Watch. Keep up the good fight.

### **MARY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (17:05):** On 2 August 2024 I had the privilege of attending the school assembly of the Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School located in Bossley Park, which provides a leading faith-based and quality education in the Cabramatta electorate. I also had the opportunity to announce to the principal, Ms Bev Coffey, and the school the success of its Community Building Partnership application, which will go towards installing bottle fillers and drinking fountains with Indigenous art panels. I was impressed by the speeches that the student leaders and school principal made and all the well-mannered students. I look forward to returning to the school in the near future to witness the completed bottle fillers and drinking fountains, and to celebrate its success and achievements. I also take the opportunity to thank the staff, teachers, parents and local students for their hard work and contributions to our community and for making my visit a wonderful occasion. I wish them success and joy in their future endeavours.

### **2CR CHINESE RADIO NETWORK**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:06):** I congratulate 2CR Chinese Radio Network on its thirtieth anniversary, which it will celebrate tonight. 2CR is Australia's first 24/7 Chinese radio station and has served the local Chinese Australian community by delivering news, informative content and engaging entertainment; promoting and preserving Chinese cultural heritage; keeping local Chinese Australians connected; and facilitating the integration of new Chinese immigrants into society. 2CR has remained abreast of changing technology over the years, remaining agile and adapting to digital platforms as they evolved to ensure that younger generations could also remain engaged. It has been a long-time supporter and media partner for various community festivals, particularly the annual Chinese New Year celebrations in Sydney, fostering a strong sense of community and cultural pride. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 2CR provided crucial updates to Chinese-speaking audiences in Australia, translating government messages, health protocols and lockdown measures into Mandarin and Cantonese. I congratulate 2CR on its thirtieth anniversary.

### **SYDNEY KOREAN UNITING CHURCH**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:07):** I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Sydney Korean Uniting Church on its fiftieth anniversary, which it celebrated on 9 September. It was a privilege to join the church's congregants and witness this significant milestone in the life of the Korean community. For five decades, the church has been a cornerstone of the Australian Korean community, offering not only spiritual guidance but also vital social support. Under the leadership of Reverend Sam, Jenny and the dedicated church team, it has become a place of faith, belonging and resilience, especially for Korean migrants navigating their new lives in Australia. The church's impact goes beyond its congregation. It has fostered strong connections within the Strathfield community and plays a key role in the integration of Korean culture into the broader Australian multicultural landscape. Through its support for families, youth and the elderly, Sydney Korean Uniting Church has been instrumental in building a vibrant, resilient and connected Korean community. Once again, I congratulate Sydney Korean Uniting Church. May it continue to thrive as a foundation of faith and unity in the Strathfield electorate for many years to come.

### **MACLEAN HIGH SCHOOL CATTLE SHOW TEAM**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (17:08):** I congratulate Maclean High School's champion cattle show team, which brought home many wins and places at this year's Brisbane Ekka. Fifteen students from year 10 and year 11 attended the Ekka with 21 head of cattle. The students competed against hundreds of other

competitors to bring home some prestigious awards. Their biggest achievement was for Grand Champion Female in the Braford ring, which they won for the second year in a row. Another achievement was second place in the Led Steer carcass category, among many others. Well done to the Maclean High School cattle show team, including teacher Chris Kirkland. I also commend the volunteers, staff and sponsors who helped the team get to the Ekka. I congratulate them all on a wonderful achievement. We are all very proud.

#### BARBARA JONES

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:09):** I acknowledge and celebrate the incredible contributions made by Barbara Jones of Sutherland, who has been named Southern Sydney Senior Volunteer of the Year for her dedicated support for struggling mothers through the 3Bridges Community. For over a decade, Barbara has selflessly volunteered with the 3Bridges home visiting service, offering not only practical assistance but also a listening ear to women facing challenges. Her commitment helps mothers regain momentum in their lives, fostering maternal and infant health through community connection and support. Barbara's dedication extends far beyond that work. She also volunteers with numerous other organisations, including Bushcare at Bass and Flinders Point, knitting charity Wrap with Love, Sutherland Food Services, Relay For Life and the Cancer Council. Barbara's unwavering service has made a tangible difference to countless lives, reflecting her deep commitment to her community. On behalf of the community, I thank Barbara for her tireless efforts and the profound impact she has had through her volunteer work. She exemplifies the very best of our community spirit. I congratulate Barbara.

#### JO RIJKE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:10):** I congratulate Jo Rijke, winner of the Open Category award in the 2024 Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize, or SWAP, on their outstanding artwork *Varieties of Sardines*. Jo's innovative use of upcycled waste materials in this piece captured the judges' attention and resonated with the broader Ryde community by bringing attention to environmental sustainability. Through SWAP, Jo has contributed meaningfully to raising awareness about waste reduction and sustainability in Ryde. Their work is a powerful example of how creativity can transform discarded materials into thought-provoking art that inspires positive change. SWAP continues to highlight the importance of environmental issues, and Jo's contribution serves as a reminder of the role that art can play in shaping a more sustainable future. The City of Ryde is fortunate to have such a committed and creative individual who, through their work, fosters a sense of community engagement and environmental consciousness. I ask the House to join me in acknowledging Jo Rijke's exceptional achievement and their ongoing contribution to the cultural and environmental fabric of Ryde.

#### FAVOURITE CHILD CHURCH, HOLROYD

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:11):** Fellowship, joy and Christian values were on display at the Favourite Child Church, Holroyd, as they celebrated Culture Sunday, an annual event at which parishioners celebrate their homeland culture in their adopted home of Australia. It also provides the modern generation born in Australia with the opportunity to connect and learn about their parents' original homeland through dance, food, dress and other cultural activities. At the service a country was announced, accompanied by a short video celebration, followed by excited parishioners, who dressed in traditional costumes and danced to the beat of their song. The member for Granville and I were honoured to be invited to the celebration. Senior Pastor Joshua Kpodo, his wife, Rebecca, and church leaders undertake amazing pastoral work, spreading the joy of the Christian message and providing community spirit and fellowship to the congregation and broader community.

#### LINK WENTWORTH

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:12):** I congratulate Link Wentworth on recently celebrating its fortieth year as a community housing provider [CHP]. CHPs like Link Wentworth play a vital role in delivering affordable housing options to individuals and families in need, and in reducing the rate of homelessness. In August I was lucky enough to attend Link's celebration in Dee Why, where I talked to staff and tenants about their decades of experience with the provider. It was heartening to hear just how much of a difference secure housing can make to an individual's life and overall wellbeing. In a phenomenal achievement of celebrating 40 years, recently Link Wentworth announced a partnership with Landcom to redevelop the dilapidated former Queenscliff Community Health Centre, which is in the electorate of the member for Manly. The development will have 37 dwellings, with at least 12 to be dedicated for women over 55 years of age, which is a demographic at higher risk of homelessness. The northern beaches community is desperately in need of more affordable housing properties, so I thank Link Wentworth and Landcom for their hard work in pushing this project along. I offer my congratulations to CEO and Swans fan Andrew McNulty and the entire Link Wentworth team. Go the mighty Swans!

### UNITED WORKERS UNION

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:13):** I stand with members of the United Workers Union [UWU] in their pay dispute with DHL at eight sites across Western Sydney. This week 500 members of the UWU held a stop-work meeting in Blacktown to fight for a cost-of-living pay rise and better working conditions. They stood strong and united, rallying for better wages and fair working conditions for them and their workmates. I say to those members that I know this is not easy. It is absolutely their right to take industrial action and fight for better pay and conditions collectively with their colleagues. The whole labour movement, including the Labor Party, supports the UWU. We have the UWU's back and support its right to take industrial action. We know it is not just about pay; it is about respect and looking after their families. I congratulate the UWU on standing united. We are with the UWU 100 per cent.

### TERRIGAL ELECTORATE RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADES

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:14):** I express my heartfelt thanks to our local Rural Fire Service brigades for their tireless work in keeping our community safe. Last weekend RFS stations across New South Wales came together for Get Ready Weekend, an incredible initiative ahead of the upcoming bushfire danger period starting on 1 October. I say a special thank you to the Erina, Wamberal, Copacabana, MacMasters Beach and Killcare Wagstaffe RFS stations for hosting these important community events. Their efforts to educate and prepare residents and landowners are truly appreciated and will no doubt help many as we approach the bushfire season. For those who attended Get Ready Weekend, these events were an excellent opportunity to learn how to develop a bushfire survival plan, maintain defensible spaces around properties and better understand fire danger ratings. The community connected with local volunteer firefighters, explored firefighting equipment and participated in workshops that provided life-saving information. Our local RFS brigades are always here to help our community. I thank those brigades for their dedication and service to our community on the Central Coast.

### MIRIAM PELLICANO

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:15):** I extend my deepest appreciation to Miriam Pellicano for her eight incredible years of service as an executive manager at the House of Welcome. Over the years, Miriam has been the cornerstone of the organisation, demonstrating incredible dedication, compassion and leadership. Her unwavering commitment to advancing the House of Welcome's mission and advocating for refugees and asylum seekers has had a lasting impact on all of us. The House of Welcome's commitment to advocacy and support services has not only helped individuals achieve independence but also fostered a sense of community and belonging. Under Miriam's leadership, the organisation has made significant strides in bringing together people from diverse backgrounds, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and understanding within our community. I thank Miriam for the invaluable contributions she and her team continue to make. Her passion and dedication are inspiring. It has been an honour to witness the positive changes Miriam made for so many people. While her presence at the House of Welcome will be missed, we are incredibly proud of Miriam's achievements and the legacy she leaves behind.

### WINSTON HILLS LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (17:16):** It is my pleasure to recognise the Winston Hills Little Athletics Club on marking its fiftieth anniversary this year. Last week I attended the beginning of the fiftieth season at Gooden Reserve in Baulkham Hills. It was a landmark day for the local sporting club. Winston Hills Little Athletics Club continues to attract over 450 young athletes each season from suburbs across the Winston Hills electorate. The Winston Hills Little Athletics Club demonstrates the importance of introducing children to sport, teaching them athletics skills, being part of a family and community and, most importantly, having fun. The fiftieth anniversary season is a testament to the club's committee. It has worked tirelessly for many years to ensure that Little Athletics remains the cornerstone of development for young people in our local community. I thank club president Steven Pospischil, vice-president David Macheski and secretary Nicole Martin for continuing the great legacy of Winston Hills Little Athletics Club. I look forward to hearing about another successful season in the months ahead.

### EAST HILLS ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:17):** I congratulate all year 12 students graduating this week. It is an incredible achievement and one they should be immensely proud of. I give a special shout-out to the students graduating from the schools in my East Hills electorate: Condell Park High School, De La Salle Catholic College, East Hills Boys High School, East Hills Girls Technology High School, Georges River Grammar School, Picnic Point High School, Mount St Joseph Catholic College, Sir Joseph Banks High School and Caroline Chisholm School. As they stand on the threshold of a new chapter in their lives, they should take a moment to reflect on what they have accomplished. This achievement is the culmination of years of hard work, late-night

study sessions and the countless moments of perseverance and dedication they have shown. Whatever their futures hold, they already have the strength and commitment to succeed. Those qualities will serve them well, no matter what path they choose. I congratulate the class of 2024. This is their moment. They should celebrate it, embrace it and carry the lessons and friendships they have made with them wherever they go.

#### **TRIBUTE TO MONSIGNOR JOHN USHER**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:18):** I acknowledge Monsignor John Usher, former parish priest of St Patrick's Catholic Parish in Mortlake, who passed away on 20 September 2024. Monsignor John Usher was born and lived his early life in Five Dock. He attended infant school at Domremy College and primary and secondary school at St Patrick's College in Strathfield. Monsignor Usher entered the seminary when he was 25 years of age and was ordained a priest in 1972. He served in several parishes across Sydney, including for over a decade as the well-loved priest of St Patrick's in Mortlake until his retirement in 2019. In 2009 Monsignor Usher was recognised for his outstanding life of service and dedication to the Catholic faith, becoming a prelate of honour. Beyond his priesthood, Monsignor Usher studied social work, serving for over 25 years as director of Centacare, now CatholicCare. He dedicated his time to supporting the community through disability, foster care and counselling services. Monsignor John Usher will be remembered by all for his faith, compassion and dedication to service. I extend my deepest condolences to his friends and former parishioners. Vale, Monsignor Usher.

#### **CABRAMATTA PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (17:19):** I recognise students, Principal Ben Kirkman and Ms Lorraine Greenhill from Cabramatta Public School for their efforts in advocating for improved safety for their school community. On 7 August 2024 they visited Parliament House to meet with the Hon. John Graham, Minister for Roads, and his staff to present their pedestrian safety report and petition. We were all impressed by the students' dedication and advocacy. Their proactive approach along with their leadership in addressing the ongoing safety issues at the intersection of Cabramatta Road East and Cumberland Street are truly commendable. We had a productive and collaborative dialogue with a shared goal of finding a viable solution for the safety of the school community, especially our students. I also had an opportunity to present certificates to the following students: Sarah Minkara, Raymond Tri, Hillary Lam, Jeffery Lam, Jaizelle Mesa, Chantla Pheng, Oscar Nguyen, Huy Lam, Nghi Vu and Rita Tang. I thank everyone for their genuine concern, participation and commitment.

#### **HARRINGTON MEMORIAL HALL AND LITERARY INSTITUTE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:20):** On 21 September a milestone of immense significance was celebrated in the Harrington community to mark 100 years since the establishment of St Andrew's Mission Hall, now renamed the Harrington Memorial Hall and Literary Institute. It was a pleasure to join with locals on the weekend to celebrate 100 years since the grand opening of Harrington hall in 1896. Committee members, local business groups, volunteers past and present and the community came together to share a delicious morning tea to honour a centenary of community events, education, worship, friendship and celebrations. I congratulate committee president and trustee Bill Burges and secretary Margaret Hawkins. Bill has served the hall committee for 12 years, while Margaret has volunteered for 10 years. Past presidents Donna Hanson, Sandy Lockery and Joan Morris have all matched Bill in donating a decade of service to the hall and its operations. I also acknowledge treasurer Des Tomlin and patron Gaye Taggart, trustees Irene Daniel, Barry Bone and Claire Brown, along with the hall's booking agent, Robyn Spek, who is the champion behind the functions held, coordination of events and letting out the hall for private occasions. Robyn and Barry Bone have supported the committee for an impressive 42 years. It is such an outstanding effort.

#### **GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY HOME FOR THE AGED**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (17:21):** I would like the House to congratulate the Greek Orthodox Community Home for the Aged in Earlwood, which has been honoured with the prestigious 2024 Aged and Community Care Providers Association [ACCPA] award for organisation excellence. This national recognition highlights the home's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional residential aged-care services and its dedication to improving the lives of older people in the community. This year the home stood out among a highly competitive field of nominees for its hard work and dedication. The statement from the home said, "We are deeply honoured to receive the 2024 ACCPA excellence award for organisation excellence. This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team, who strive every day to provide compassionate, high-quality care to our residents." I also congratulate the wonderful staff and the facility manager, Katerina Kouris, for her exceptional organisation and leadership, to amazing Chef Panagiotis and his excellent team, and to the lifestyle leader, Virginia, on their excellent work.

*Private Members' Statements***NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VETERANS' HEALTH CARE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:25):** I acknowledge the essential work of the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare at Concord Hospital, which has become a pillar of support for veterans and their families throughout New South Wales and across the country. I recently had the privilege of touring the facility and was amazed by the quality of care provided by the centre. The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare was established in 2022 and is the only healthcare centre of its kind nationwide, playing a critical role in providing health care for our veterans. It is far more than a medical facility; it is a place of support for men and women who have given so much in service to our country. There their unique health challenges—physical, psychological and emotional—are met with specialised and holistic care that acknowledges their unique histories as patients and the extraordinary sacrifices they have made.

The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare offers a multifaceted approach to health care. Upon admission, veterans are assessed by caseworkers and offered as much or as little support as they may want or require. The services currently include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work and mental health support. Drug and alcohol programs are also offered, and this is vital, given that the Department of Veterans' Affairs estimates that half of all veterans experience some form of substance abuse. Beyond the physical care provided at the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare, the centre offers an opportunity for veterans to connect with one another. I was touched to hear of their fortnightly social barbecues, many of which are hosted by former patients.

This sort of holistic approach to health care is so important and should be taken into all levels of our hospital systems. I must acknowledge the support the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare provides to veterans' families. When service members are injured or struggling with their mental health, it is often their families who share that burden. The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare understands this and provides services to support families through the difficult journey of recovery. I was taken aback by the quality of the on-campus short-term accommodation provided to veterans and their families throughout their treatment.

Our veterans have given so much in service to our country. They have put their lives on the line, often facing incredible hardship and sacrifice. The least we can do is ensure that, when they come home, they are met with the care and support they so richly deserve. The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare is doing just that, and I am deeply grateful for its service to our veterans. I specifically thank Concord Hospital acting general manager Anthony Dombkins, National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare medical director Dr Cameron Korb-Wells and clinical operations manager Kirsty Chapman for hosting my visit to the centre. It is truly an honour to have such an important facility in our community, and I thank them for their dedication to veterans' health. I extend my thanks to all staff members and volunteers at Concord Hospital working at the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare. The positive stories I heard during my visit are a testament to their tireless efforts.

As the member for Drummoyne, I am filled with immense pride to have the national centre in our local community. It is truly a great asset, and its presence at Concord Hospital speaks to the rich history of veteran care that has long been associated with our community. The hospital has a history of caring for veterans as a repatriation hospital, and the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare continues and builds upon that legacy with its world-class care and compassionate approach. I thank everyone involved in the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare. Their work is changing lives. At a time when we have just had the final report handed down from the royal commission into veterans, it is really important that we at all levels of government commit to supporting veterans.

The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare is one way we can work together to support our veterans. The real-life stories that come out of that centre leave a mark. When I visited, I was so surprised by the testimonials from veterans about the work and support the centre provides every day. Kirsty and Cameron, who I had the privilege and pleasure to speak with, are so passionate about their work. The caring, holistic approach they take to health care is truly special. I thank the staff at Concord hospital. The work they do every day is so important for veterans across my community, New South Wales and Australia.

**RENTAL MARKET**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:30):** New rental data released earlier this month highlighted the areas most affected by rising rental costs over the past 12 months. Bond lodgement data shows that rents have gone up 9.1 per cent in Greater Sydney and 5.2 per cent in the rest of New South Wales over the past year. However, south-west Sydney, which includes the suburbs of Liverpool, Fairfield and Camden, suffered the biggest increase of 16.4 per cent. Those areas of Sydney were traditionally seen as more affordable. Unfortunately, I am hearing about the impacts of the disproportionate rent rises in the concerns that people raise

with me, both in my office and when I am in the community. This aspect of the housing crisis is why rental reform is so necessary and why I am proud of the recent legislation that was passed in this place.

Rental reforms are an important issue that affects the more than two million people in New South Wales who rent. Our rental market, which consists of more than one million properties, is the largest in Australia, so it is necessary to strike a fair balance between the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords. Sadly, this balance has been missing. Renters in New South Wales are facing challenges like never before, with historically low vacancy rates and the current cost-of-living crisis. That is why the Minns Labor Government is committed to taking action, and I am proud to say that it has set an ambitious agenda for rental reform.

The first step was appointing Trina Jones as the new NSW Rental Commissioner. She will lead the charge in cracking down on poor-quality rental homes and bad behaviour from agents and owners. Under the commissioner's leadership, the new NSW Rental Taskforce will be one of the largest teams within NSW Fair Trading. With an investment of \$8.4 million, the taskforce will have new investigators and inspectors to address serious breaches of rental laws. The Government is also ensuring renters have the tools they need to navigate this complex market. The new online Rent Check tool provides greater transparency by allowing tenants to compare median rent ranges in any postcode across New South Wales. It gives renters valuable information and transparency to help them determine if their current or proposed rent is reasonable.

Additionally, the Government is working on an innovative solution with the portable bonds scheme, which will be the first in Australia. The Government has invested \$6.6 million to develop the scheme, which will allow renters to transfer their existing bond from one property to another, eliminating the financial burden of saving for a second bond while waiting for their previous bond to be returned. This is a real, practical solution to help ease the financial pressure many renters face when moving homes. These reforms are the most comprehensive changes to rental laws in a decade. The Government is modernising the rental market to make it fairer for both tenants and landlords, fulfilling a promise it made to the people of New South Wales.

One of the most significant changes is the end of no-grounds evictions. Currently, landlords can evict tenants for any reason or for no reason at all, leaving families with uncertainty and insecurity. This system is not only unfair, but also disproportionately affects vulnerable segments of our society, including the young, disabled and lower-income groups. Under the Government reforms, landlords will be required to have a valid reason to terminate a tenancy. It is introducing a requirement for commonsense grounds for eviction, such as breach of lease, damage to property, non-payment of rent, or if the property is being sold or undergoing significant renovations. This ensures that landlords still maintain their rights while giving tenants the stability and peace of mind they deserve.

Another reform will ensure paying rent is both free and convenient. Fee-free options like bank transfers or payments through the Commonwealth's Centrepay make it easier for everyone to manage their finances. The reforms also eliminate the imposition of fees on the renter for background checks. Renters should not have to pay extra just to be considered for a home. We will strengthen laws to ensure tenants no longer have to pay for their background checks. Finally, the Government believes that tenants are renting homes, not just houses. Pets are beloved members of many families. Unfortunately, some renters are faced with the heart-wrenching decision of choosing between their pets and a place to live. The Minns Government was elected with a clear mandate to modernise the rental market. These reforms will deliver on that promise, bringing balance for both tenants and landlords.

### **BANKSTOWN SPORTING HALL OF FAME**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:35):** I felt incredibly privileged to attend this year's induction ceremony for the Bankstown Sporting Hall of Fame, which captures the incredible sporting talent of our region and the remarkable achievements of our local sports heroes. The Sporting Hall of Fame was established in 1988 to mark the bicentenary. However, the momentum to update the roll regularly was lost until the hall of fame was revived in 2012. The following year a new facility was unveiled, with more athletes added, including Aussie swimming legend Ian Thorpe. This year, the ceremony included athletes from the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, including swimmer Abbey Connor, who, at just 15, broke the 40-year-old 200-metre butterfly record. It also included Tina Rahimi, the first Muslim woman boxer to represent Australia; and Peter Boukouvalas, an archer and resident of Georges Hall.

Having lived and been involved in sport in the area for decades, I was excited to honour the athletes I recognised on a personal level, including former Bulldogs player and Wallabies hooker Brandon Paenga-Amosa, whose family I have been friends with for many years. I was thrilled that Ashleigh Gardner was honoured for her incredible cricket career. Ashleigh is a well-known and favourite local who excelled in many sports in our area as a child. I have personally known Ashleigh since a very young age, and it was lovely to hear her speak on behalf of all the inductees on the day.

The connections we make playing sport are long lasting and often just as important as the competition. The hall of fame inductees honed their skills in our local sports clubs and in our local community, working hard to earn their stripes before achieving international recognition. David Klemmer played both junior and senior for the Bulldogs, and now has 19 tests for Australia and 14 State of Origin games for New South Wales under his belt. Kim Lembryk played indoor football at the YMCA in Revesby before representing Australia at just 14 years of age. Condell Park residents Michelle Watson and Rosemary Van Bruinessen, who played in the inaugural Matildas game in Sydney in 1979, were recognised for their stellar international soccer careers. The breadth of our region's sporting achievements was on display, with recognition for 2024 Special Olympic World Games gymnast Ellen Maher, who won the hearts of all in attendance on the day with her beautiful big smile.

A number of other athletes were recognised, including Olympic race walker Luke Adams; Aussie Steelers player and Picnic Point resident Hayden Mathews; basketballer Ross Graham, who competed at the 1960 Olympic Games; longtime Yagoona resident and Paralympian athlete Paul Croft; runner Jessica Hull, who broke the world record for the 2,000 metres earlier this year; and 30-year veteran and world karate champion Kristina Mah, who still practices in Revesby to this day. Former Socceroos Jacob Burns, Mark Milligan and Sasho Petrovski, and cyclists Alex Fulcher, Rochelle Gilmore and Sean Eadie were also inducted into our community's historical record of sporting greatness. We also paid homage to some fantastic sports administrators and coaches who have dedicated countless hours to advocacy and management and shaping the next generation of athletes both on and off the field. The list included former Bankstown Bruins President Bob Elphinstone and former President of the Canterbury and District Soccer Football Association Ian Holmes, who went on to hold senior positions with State and national sports associations.

The honour roll included former head coach of the Australian swim team Alan Thompson, who grew up in Revesby, and 2024 pick for the Aussie Steelers squad Callum Beashel, who gives back as a softball coach at local, State and national levels. Several of these people have not just reached the pinnacle of their career but played key roles in advocating for and securing local infrastructure so that our area can continue to excel in sport. Bob Elphinstone was instrumental in the construction of the Bankstown Basketball Stadium in 1976, while steeplechaser Youcef Abdi helped establish Bankstown Sports Club's Little Athletics program only four years ago. Former Paralympic swimmer Denise Beckwith won bronze in the women's freestyle relay team at the Sydney Paralympic Games and also promoted the event throughout New South Wales at over 500 events and 450 schools.

The Bankstown Sporting Hall of Fame is an important monument to our community's love of sport and its ability to foster the growth of some incredible athletes and sports advocates. I congratulate all inductees to the Bankstown Sporting Hall of Fame. I thank them for their contributions to our local sport, for their advocacy of sports and for the help they give to our future world champions.

### REGIONAL RENEWAL PROGRAM

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:40):** I recognise a program that has had a profound impact on our schools, communities and State—the former Coalition Government's Regional Renewal Program. This initiative represented more than just a financial investment. It embodied the collaboration between government and communities to deliver projects that truly mattered—projects that reflected the values and needs of the people we serve. Schools are not just buildings where children receive an education. They are the beating heart of our communities, particularly in the regions. From sporting events to cultural gatherings, schools are also places where people come together. They nurture our children and, in doing so, they help shape the future of our communities. Through the Regional Renewal Program, we accelerated the delivery of critical school improvement projects right across New South Wales, ensuring that our schools were equipped to support both students and the wider community.

It was also part of the then Coalition Government's economic stimulus response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As members know, the pandemic brought unprecedented challenges not only to the healthcare system but also to the economy and our daily lives. The Regional Renewal Program was designed with those challenges in mind. It was focused on delivering education, community and economic benefits, providing a much-needed stimulus as communities worked towards recovery. What made this program particularly special was the approach taken to identify the projects. Rather than the Government making top-down decisions, we listened to the voices of school communities. Schools identified what they wanted and needed most, whether it was new infrastructure, upgrades to existing facilities or enhancements to recreational spaces. These projects were then co-funded by the schools and the Government, ensuring that the improvements reflected each community's unique priorities. It is important to recognise that.

As a result, millions of dollars were injected into local economies, creating jobs and supporting businesses, while also delivering modern, high-quality facilities for students and teachers. Rural and regional towns and schools across the State were transformed, offering enhanced environments for learning, growth and community engagement. One great example is the shared learning hub at Dubbo College Delroy Campus. The hub is a shared



learning space, but it was already being used for much more than just traditional education. The space offers students access to a wide range of services, from TAFE courses to health checks and much more. The hub has already been booked by school and community groups, and the principal says the building is being used almost daily, which is great news. It is a place not just for learning but also for storytelling, Aboriginal health checks and a range of other things.

The hub is also used by NDIS services and features meeting areas and a fully equipped kitchen, with Indigenous designs proudly displayed on the seats inside. The exterior also holds special meaning, with student-designed panels depicting small feet entering the building and then larger feet leaving—a symbol of the knowledge and confidence that students will gain from their time there. But Dubbo College is not the only beneficiary of the Regional Renewal Program. Across the State, schools have seen remarkable transformations. From the second tranche of funding alone, we witnessed significant upgrades at Cudgegong Valley Public School, which received funding for a covered outdoor learning area, or COLA, and shade structures. Dubbo School of Distance Education now boasts a new COLA and a basketball/netball court as well. Gulgong High School received a COLA too, while Mudgee High School underwent a canteen upgrade.

From the new shed at Trangie Central School to the playground upgrades at Wellington Public School, the impacts of the program are both wide reaching and deeply felt. Perhaps one of the most significant projects in this tranche of funding was the recent opening of the new sports complex at Dubbo College South Campus. It is a state-of-the-art facility that includes two indoor multipurpose courts named after former campus sporting greats Megan Dunn and Dyana Calub. It also has four general learning spaces, change rooms and a staffroom. The complex will support not only school programs but also community sports, helping to foster a love of physical activity and wellbeing for all who use it. This is an example of a project that will have lasting impacts both for the students who will benefit from its resources and for the community, which can now access a world-class facility.

That type of collaboration between government and school communities is exactly what the Regional Renewal Program was designed to achieve. It was about more than just building new structures; it was also about building better futures. By working together, we ensured that schools across the State were able to access the resources they needed to support learning outcomes while delivering economic benefits through job creation and local investment. These projects are not just about bricks and motor. They are about creating environments that inspire learning, encourage engagement and foster a sense of belonging. I say well done to all the school communities who worked together to make the Regional Renewal Program such a resounding success.

### THE SALVATION ARMY PARRAMATTA

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:45):** The Salvation Army Parramatta celebrated its 140th birthday on 22 September 2024. It was a joyous occasion, filled with prayer and laughter. It was great to meet Salvationists and reflect on the long history of the Salvation Army in Parramatta, which dates back to 13 September 1884. The first Salvation Army meeting in Parramatta was held under a wooden bridge at Church and Argyle streets in 1884, with the son of the founders of the Salvationists, Colonel Ballington Booth, in attendance. Parramatta became Corps No. 75. Open-air church meetings continued, with no dedicated building until January 1919, when a building was opened on George Street by Commissioner Hay. Other outposts were started in the 1920s in Auburn, Toongabbie and Granville.

The Salvos have a long association with Parramatta Gaol, providing visitation and services for the prisoners. In the 1930s, Major Walter Ward became a regular chaplain at the prison, with his daughter Mabel assisting with services. The Salvos also attended the 150th anniversary of Parramatta, when Parramatta officially became a city by Act of Parliament. In the 1940s Sunday school services commenced in Westmead in an old scout shed. In Rydalmere, Sunday school started in the home of Mrs Searle and eventually there were more children than rooms. By the 1950s, there were 150 Salvationists on the Parramatta corps roll. In 1955, three cottages were purchased in Smith Street, which eventually become the second complex of buildings for the Parramatta corps. The Salvation Army continually reached out to children and young people, hosting a "gutter Sunday School" in Dundas, where 100 children learned about Jesus on the side of the road.

In 1969 the international leader of the Salvation Army, General Frederick Coutts, unveiled the foundation stone of the new Parramatta citadel on Smith Street, stating "This new citadel will fill a huge need in Parramatta"—and it certainly did. Vandals set fire to the citadel in 1973, causing damage worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in today's money. By the 1980s, the Parramatta corps was the biggest in the territory. In the 1990s the church pivoted to provide more services to the community and, under Margaret Poore, English conversation classes, a community welfare basket and more outreach programs were initiated. In 1993 George Hazell, a soldier of the Parramatta corps, was awarded the Salvation Army's highest international award, the Order of the Founder.

Throughout the 2000s the Salvos were active in faith outreach and community services. With Christmas hampers distributed to families in need and carolling throughout the area, the Salvos became active community

members, known throughout Parramatta. In the 2010s the Generation Salvation project began and brought young people from across the Parramatta region to continue youth outreach. In 2022 the Salvos commenced a weekly market day when families can access free groceries donated by Coles and Foodbank. The Salvos are now based at their current premises on Church Street. To this day, the Salvation Army still contributes to the community through programs like homelessness support, funeral help, housing, prison chaplains, rural chaplains and much more. Parramatta Salvos is a stalwart of community and volunteering spirit, and Parramatta is lucky to have such a dedicated group that serves the community daily.

I was honoured to present awards to those involved in the local Salvos at the celebration on Saturday. Dorothy, Anthony, Bing Bing and Vispi all support the congregation or broader community in various ways. Vispi provides financial relief to many individuals through Moneycare, a support service provided by the Salvation Army to help those in need. The service is free and confidential, and is there to help with bills, bankruptcy and many other personal finance issues. That is a great example of the reach Parramatta Salvos has in the wider community. I congratulate Major Kylie Collinson and Lieutenant Sarah Walker from the corps officer team on their hard work. They are continuing the work of 140 years of dedication to this inspiring and pioneering community service and centre of worship that seeks to make the lives of anyone, regardless of faith and favour, safer and happier.

### SEXUAL IDENTITY

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:50):** Sexuality and sexual orientation are a key part of our identity, shaping how we perceive ourselves and how others understand us. Asexuality has been a known orientation for many years; yet people who identify as asexual are often misunderstood, doubted and questioned about personal matters like their sex lives, experiences and desires. If we want to be a more inclusive society that helps everyone to live their best life regardless of their sexuality, it is important that we recognise all sexualities, including asexuality, and work to better understand the experience of people who identify as asexual without asking them to constantly explain themselves.

People often mistake asexuality for sexual abstinence or celibacy, but they are different because they are choices and not states of being. Plus, a person who is asexual may not abstain from sex at all. Some people assume asexuality is the result of a medical condition or past trauma, but it is not a condition that can or needs to be fixed. Asexuality is not the same as fear of intimacy, sexual repression, sexual aversion, sexual dysfunction or not having a libido; indeed, people who are asexual can have a libido. Asexuality generally covers experiencing little to no sexual attraction. To understand that, we need to consider the broad array of different types of attraction someone can experience towards others.

Sexual attraction is only one form of attraction on the spectrum. There is also romantic, aesthetic, sensual, physical, platonic and emotional attraction, and people who are asexual may feel any combination of the other forms of attraction, including all of them or none of them. A person can be aromantic and not experience any romantic attraction towards others. There are people who also experience sexual attraction without romantic attraction. For asexuals who experience other forms of attraction, that can be towards others of the same sex, opposite sex or any sex. Asexuality can mean different things to different people. The term "asexual" has evolved to include a broad range of sub-identities with nuanced descriptions of different asexual orientations, which more people, including young people, are identifying with.

People can identify as asexual if they usually do not desire sexual activity but may experience it every now and then, staying mostly on the asexual spectrum; if they only experience sexual attraction if they have developed an emotional or romantic connection; if sexual attraction is limited to early encounters with a person but not when there is an emotional bond; if the experience of sexual attraction is rare and/or weak; or if the thought of someone finding you sexually attractive creates discomfort. People who are asexual may have romantic relationships. They may engage in sexual intimacy, potentially to show their partner that they care, to have children or to experience sensual pleasure, but it is not something they feel invested in. Asexuality can be fluid, changing over time, with people experiencing varying degrees of sexual attraction over a lifetime, potentially varying from relationship to relationship.

It is something that many people only realise about themselves through self-discovery, personal experiences and development. The way we define our sexuality is a personal choice and one based on what best reflects our experience and identity. The world is a better place for its diversity, and it is important that we acknowledge and accept the wide spectrum of sexual attraction that people experience. We know that denying the way someone understands and experiences sexual attraction is harmful to mental and emotional health and overall wellbeing. Some people still deny the asexual experience and orientation, which makes it difficult for some to come out. Unlike in other States, people who are asexual do not have any protections under anti-discrimination laws in New South Wales and can be discriminated against. My LGBTIQI equality bill seeks to address that.

I also fought to ensure that people who are asexual were covered by conversion practice bans. Because asexuality is often denied and because it can be seen as unconventional, people who are asexual are vulnerable to being told they are broken and need to be fixed. That made protecting them from the threat of conversion practices so important. I am glad the Government agreed with me. I hope that by openly discussing and acknowledging asexuality, we can better educate the community and encourage inclusivity, acceptance and equality, while reducing ace erasure. When someone tells us who they are and that they are asexual, we should believe them, recognise and accept them for who they are, and make sure they know they are supported.

### INDIA-AUSTRALIA TRADE

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:55):** Earlier this week the New South Wales Parliament was visited by a very special guest. Shri Piyush Goyal, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, was welcomed to Parliament at an event co-hosted by the Parliamentary Friends of India and the Australia India Business Council. The event brought together MPs on both sides of the House, India's High Commissioner to Australia, Mr Copal Baglaw, and Consul General Dr. S. Janakiraman, along with a number of key business leaders and members of the Indian diaspora living in Australia. Minister Goyal was also joined by our State's trade Minister, the member for Macquarie Fields, for lunch followed by a private audience with Premier Chris Minns.

Our trade relations with India are stronger than ever. Relations continue to be bolstered, with New South Wales playing a major role in the crucial bilateral trade. India is the world's fastest growing economy, touted to become the world's third largest economy by 2030. Our two nations already benefit from a free trade agreement drawn up in 2022, the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement [ECTA]. Minister Goyal was one of the architects of the agreement. His visit to Australia and the time he took to visit our Parliament is a testament to the role that New South Wales can and will play as our trade relations continue to flourish. As he pointed out during his visit to Australia, "We do not compete in any way other than cricket. Rather, there are enormous opportunities for us to collaborate with one another."

Minister Goyal's visit to Australia is on the basis of continuing trade negotiations. Together with our Federal trade Minister, Senator Don Farrell, our two nations are now working towards improving the bilateral relationship with a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. Additionally, New South Wales benefits from the memorandums of understanding with our sister states Maharashtra and Gujarat. Our sister state status, free trade agreement and now a stride towards a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement positions New South Wales to become the greatest beneficiary. There is enormous scope for New South Wales businesses to tap into the booming bilateral trade.

Since the implementation of the ECTA, \$30 billion worth of Australian exports have entered India without tariffs. Tariff-free Indian imports have resulted in a saving of \$225 million for Australian consumers. New South Wales firms in the agribusiness, agritech, clean energy, information technology and pharmaceutical sectors, as well as others, will continue benefiting from mutually beneficial cooperation. As an example of how the two countries complement each other's strengths, Australia is excellent at research and development but often lacks the ability to convert brilliant ideas into commercial reality. In leveraging the strength of the Indian economy and the size of its population, New South Wales can bring those brilliant ideas to reality, unlock business opportunities, increase exports and create more local jobs while reducing prices for consumers.

India is also geographically a fulcrum between Europe, Asia and Africa, making it ideally located as a distribution hub for Australian exporters. It is important to note the value that the Indian diaspora in New South Wales plays and will continue to play as our trade relations with India continue to grow. I have witnessed firsthand how proactive grassroots business interactions between industry and government can lead to positive outcomes for our State. I have also witnessed the positive contribution that Indian Australians are making in my community.

Over recent years the demographic make-up of Riverstone has changed dramatically. Just over a decade ago, the majority of residents were from Anglo or European backgrounds. Now, according to the latest census data, the three largest ancestries of residents were 22,434 identifying as Australian, 19,957 as English, and 33,409 from an Indian background. That trend is expected to continue. In 2022-23 the country of birth contributing the largest net gain to New South Wales was India, with a total of 32,240 arriving that year. Many of those arrivals would settle in my electorate.

As our population has grown and the demographics have shifted, our employment rate has dropped from around 8.5 per cent pre-COVID to now being 1.9 per cent. I have been approached by multiple religious and cultural organisations asking what they can do in our community to help. The concept of "seva", or selfless service to community, is a deeply held belief across all states and religions throughout India. We have local groups working tirelessly to improve their newfound home, organising everything from food drives to free yoga classes. Many local businesses throughout the electorate are owned and operated by Indian Australians. The bilateral

relationship between Australia and India has never been stronger or better poised to deliver the fruits of economic advantage.

### TWEED ELECTORATE OLYMPIANS

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:00):** The Tweed has a long and proud history of sporting excellence. From school-level sporting champions to stars on the world stage, the Tweed has nurtured many talented and successful athletes. Now the Tweed is home to five 2024 Paris Olympic medals. This is an incredible achievement, and we are very proud of our Tweed Olympians. At 14 years old, Chloe Covell from the Tweed was Australia's youngest Olympian in Paris. Chloe is an immensely talented young skateboarder. Her remarkable abilities saw her compete in the final of the women's street skateboarding event. As noted by Olympic commentators, Chloe does not play it safe when competing. That determination saw Chloe reach the top level of her event. Chloe is an inspiration to young athletes. I am sure she has motivated a new wave of young skateboarders to follow their dreams of representing Australia. I note Chloe's success has continued beyond the Paris Games. Recently Chloe won the women's skateboarding final at the X Games 2024 held in Chiba, Japan, last weekend and, notably, beat the Paris Olympic champion.

Another Tweed teenager to inspire and represent Australia at the Paris Olympics was 16-year-old breakdancer Jeff Dunne. Jeff made history as Australia's first ever male Olympic breakdancer when he competed in the breakdancing B-Boy competition. This year was the first time breaking was included in the Olympic Games. Jeff was the youngest competitor in his event. He had the Tweed cheering him on as he battled the best breakers in the world. Jeff has been breaking since he was seven years old. His incredible skills were evident as he competed at the Place de la Concorde in Paris. Jeff is very much a local champion in the Tweed. He even had his image on the side of a Woolworths truck. I congratulate Jeff on achieving his dream of being an Olympian.

Tweed Heads surfer Jack Robinson returned from the French territory of Tahiti with a silver medal. Jack is Australia's most successful Olympic surfer. His journey to second place included one of the highest scoring waves in the competition, a 9.87 barrel, defeating world number one John John Florence in the round of 16. The surfing event was held at Teahup'o, a well-known and often feared shallow reef break that produces extremely large waves. In my opinion, it is worth a medal just getting into the water at that location. Jack has no doubt inspired the next generation of groms to dream of Olympic success, including many young surfers from the Tweed. We are lucky to have many amazing surfing beaches right on our doorstep. Surfing is a popular pastime, as members in this place would already know. We have had 10 surfing world champions come from the Tweed.

Talented swimmer Flynn Southam added to the Tweed's medal haul, winning both bronze and silver medals in Paris. Flynn was a member of the men's 4x100m freestyle relay team that won silver. He was also a member of the men's 4x200m freestyle relay team that won bronze. Flynn is only 19 years old and was competing at his first Olympic Games, so that is a very impressive result. Moesha Johnson from Piggabeen in the Tweed electorate also won a silver medal for her tremendous efforts in the women's 10-kilometre marathon swim held in the River Seine. Moesha led the breakaway pack for the majority of the gruelling swim. It was not until the final stretch that another swimmer overtook. Moesha's silver medal is only Australia's second-ever medal in this incredibly demanding swim event. Moesha also placed sixth in the women's 1,500-metre swim. These are fantastic results for Moesha at her first Olympic Games.

Last but not least, Jack McVeigh won bronze as a member of the Australian men's basketball team, the Boomers. This is the Boomers' first ever Olympic medal. Jack played an integral role in the team's success over the course of the competition. These six athletes are an inspiration to young and up-and-coming athletes not only in the Tweed but throughout Australia and the rest of the world. On behalf of the Tweed electorate, I congratulate and thank each athlete. We are all incredibly proud of their success.

### CENTRAL COAST RUGBY LEAGUE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (18:05):** In Central Coast Rugby League a new rivalry has developed between the Erina Eagles and the Toukley Hawks from my electorate of Wyong. They have clearly been the best two teams over the past three seasons. In fact, they have been so good that they have met each other in the past three grand finals. The Toukley team has a strong following in the Toukley district. Leading up to grand final day, that support can be felt, as each player's jersey—or a cut-out cardboard version of each player's jersey—goes up on the telegraph poles. Streamers and signs are everywhere. The whole district gets behind the team as they head out to play that first-grade grand final.

In 2022 the Hawks ambushed the Eagles 20-10 in the grand final. The following year, in an absolute thriller, they got up again, 8-6. Going into this year's grand final, held on 14 September, they were aiming for the

three-peat, back to back to back. It could have been a historic occasion. But it was a bittersweet experience for the Hawks on the day, as they went down 12-6 in a very close game, which included an intercept, unfortunately, to the Erina Eagles. I have to take my hat off to the Eagles. After losing the previous two grand finals, they played strongly. The rivalry and the closeness of the games between the two clubs showed the spirit in which those games were played. Although we were disappointed on the day that the Hawks did not make it three in a row, we had to take our hats off to the Erina Eagles, who won their first grand final in 33 years in what was a historic event for them.

It was particularly difficult for me because I had the task of presenting the winner's trophy. I was dressed in my Toukley Hawks colours and gear. As the Erina players came to receive the trophy, they gave me a bit of a strange look, but I congratulated every single one of them on their efforts. I particularly acknowledge Jake Fitzpatrick, the Toukley captain/coach, who has done an amazing job. For a long time, those in the Toukley team were pretty much known as the cellar dwellers, the poor cousins to the mighty Wyong Roos down the road. They are both in my area, so I support the Roos as well. But it has been good to see the Hawks suddenly rise to the top and play in three grand finals in a row—and to have been a whisker away from making it three in a row, which would have been historic.

In what was a tough game, both teams held nothing back and they really went at each other. But, importantly, after the game, the mutual respect between the players and the fans was evident: This was a great rivalry that had been played in the right spirit. Each side was passionate about their respective teams but were united in celebrating the grand final win of the Erina Eagles. I am going to the sponsors night for the Hawks tomorrow night. I am pleased to be able to hand over a Community Building Partnership cheque for \$150,000, which builds on another \$100,000, so that the Hawks can create a facility for the seniors and also—mostly—for the juniors, the young boys and girls who are now playing rugby league, who will be the grand finalists of the future.

The ladies tackle team had another good season. They just missed out on making the grand final after a last-minute try against them took them out. Across that club, there is such great spirit in every grade. I congratulate the Toukley Hawks on another amazing season. I know people will be disappointed that it was not quite what they wanted. We really wanted to get three in a row. But there is no shame in winning two grand finals and then making it to a third grand final and losing by only six points. I congratulate the Erina Eagles. We will get them next year. I hope the other teams in the competition make it a real challenge for both of those teams.

## **ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH CONFLICT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:10):** Before I make my private member's statement today, I take a moment to look beyond our shores. I put on record what is happening in Lebanon right now. Following the terror attacks on citizens in Lebanon through communication devices, the State of Israel launched air strikes on Beirut and quickly followed that up with a barrage of others in locations in south Lebanon. So far 569 people, including at least 50 children, have been killed, and a further 1,835 have been wounded. Those numbers continue to grow. At least half a million people have been displaced. This morning I heard an interview with an eight-year-old girl in Lebanon expressing how scared she was. There is no excuse and no justification for that terror. Our thoughts and hearts are with all those impacted and with members of the community here who are anxiously awaiting news of their loved ones, friends and family in Lebanon. Many of them also have loved ones in Gaza, where genocide has been going on for nearly a year. The Australian Government must immediately end all weapons trade—

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** Point of order: Madam Temporary Speaker, I ask you to direct the member to reference her electorate in her private member's statement.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I uphold the point of order.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I acknowledge that point of order. I make it very clear to members in this Chamber and to those listening that people in the electorate of Newtown have expressed to me their direct and absolute concern about what is happening in relation to both the attacks in Lebanon and the genocide occurring in Gaza right now. They would absolutely stand with me in my call for the Australian Government to immediately end all weapons trade with the apartheid State of Israel and impose sanctions now. They are absolutely supportive of the ongoing and growing campaign for boycotts, divestments and sanctions. I commit to them as their representative that we will continue to advocate for that.

Today marks the fifth anniversary of abortion decriminalisation in New South Wales. Five years ago today, this Parliament passed the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill, now the Abortion Law Reform Act, and enshrined in law a woman's right to choose in New South Wales. I was proud to have co-sponsored that bill alongside my Greens colleague in the upper House Ms Abigail Boyd, and members from the crossbench and both

major parties, some of whom gathered in Parliament earlier today with some of the organisations involved in that long overdue reform to mark the occasion. Before I am pulled up, I note that the people of the Newtown electorate elected me on a promise to commit to decriminalising abortion.

I acknowledge now, as I did then, that the reforms that passed in this place were the culmination of generations of tireless, fearless advocacy by feminists and pro-choice activists who refused to compromise on a woman's right to her body and her right to choose—and, indeed, for all people to access reproductive health care. Many of those people are not part of paid organisations and professional services that advocate for the decriminalisation of abortion, or do not have formal roles in advocacy groups. They are often not recognised. We must pay tribute to them. They are the activists, the feminists and the radicals who marched on the streets, organised the rallies, yelled the chants, threw pro-choice flyers off the buildings in the CBD and remained staunch in their commitment to building community support for the reform over decades.

Deciding whether or not to have an abortion is an intensely personal decision for people. It is never okay for this Chamber to tell women or people what to do with their bodies. In fact, when those laws prohibiting abortion were made, there was not a single woman in the Chamber to cast a vote, because Millicent Preston-Stanley was elected in 1925, nearly 70 years after the Legislative Assembly was established. That is an absolute shame. The Greens have always been a party that is proudly 100 per cent pro-choice. Long before the other parties got with the program, we were unapologetic about our belief that all people should be able to access safe and legal reproductive choices as a basic human right.

I acknowledge my Greens colleague Mehreen Faruqi, who pushed this debate onto the agenda many years ago, lighting a fire under those who knew that there was no way that we could continue to hide and shy away from addressing the criminalisation of abortion in New South Wales. Like any other form of health care, abortion services must be safe, affordable and readily available. While those historic reforms that we passed half a decade ago went a long way to ensuring that, we know that abortion cannot be truly accessible to all in New South Wales unless it is properly funded. It is absolutely critical that access to reproductive health care is delivered to people who need it in this State, and there is much more that we need to do to ensure that that occurs.

#### ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH CONFLICT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:15):** Over the past few days Lebanese Australians have been terrified by the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, which have killed almost 600 people this week, including 558 on Monday. It was the deadliest day in Lebanon since the end of the civil war in 1990. Since 7 October last year, there have been 8,313 Israeli attacks on Lebanon and 1,901 attacks on Israel by Hezbollah—always disproportionate in the number of strikes and their deadly effects. But the bombings in the past few days following the pager explosions, coupled with threats in the Israeli media to annex southern Lebanon, represent a terrifying escalation.

The Granville electorate is home to a very large Lebanese Australian community: Maronites, Melkites, Orthodox Christians, Sunni and Shia Muslims, and Druze. Most of them came to Australia to escape Lebanon's civil war. Some 14.3 per cent of Granville's residents, or almost 15,000 people, identified themselves as having Lebanese ancestry in the 2021 census, although it is likely even higher. It is a wonderful community that has flourished here while maintaining strong connections to their beloved Lebanon. While most of them come from northern Lebanon or Beirut, Lebanon is a very small country so no-one's home is very far from the current bombings. Many have friends or relatives who still live there, and there are also many who have been visiting over winter. At least 15,000 Australians are in Lebanon at the moment.

Lebanese Australians remember the 2006 war, when Israel bombed Lebanon extensively, including using white phosphorus. Everyone also remembers Israel's role in the civil war and the Israeli occupation that continued for another decade after the war ended. So even though the Lebanese Australians in the Granville electorate are overwhelmingly not supporters of Hezbollah and the constant chaos it brings to Lebanon's politics and economy, they are united across their political and religious differences in their concern about Israel's actions. Since the collapse of Lebanon's economy that followed the Beirut port explosion, many Lebanese Australians have been supporting their relatives in Lebanon financially. With the currency collapsing and banks limiting access to savings, many have relied heavily on the generosity of their friends and relatives overseas. At the same time, the cost-of-living crisis in Australia has eaten into the capacity of Lebanese Australians to provide as much support to their relatives as they would like, or as much as they were two or three years ago.

That is the background to the new crisis Lebanese Australians are facing with their loved ones under attack. I was shocked yesterday to read Nabil al-Nashar's article on the ABC news website about the impact of the war on Sydney's Lebanese community and to find out that my friend Mustafa Hijazi had lost five members of his family during Israel's widespread bombing of Lebanon on Monday. Among the dead are his relatives Elham Halal; her daughter-in-law, Haneen; her brother Raef; and Elham's two grandchildren, five-year-old Celine and three-year-old Eileen. They were killed when an Israeli air strike hit their home. It totally flattened a three-storey

building, killing those inside. Elham's husband, Hussein Halal, survived because he was outside during the bombing. I spoke to Mustafa yesterday and he is heartbroken.

The bombings on Monday followed the escalation in Israeli attacks last week with the use of booby-trapped pagers and walkie-talkies widely, but certainly not exclusively, used by Hezbollah. Disgracefully, much of the media reporting the 17 September pager explosions described an indiscriminate attack that killed 12 and injured thousands as "savvy". It killed two children aged eight and 11, and four healthcare workers. It is probably a war crime. Some 4,000 pagers exploded simultaneously. They certainly did not discriminate between Hezbollah operatives and doctors and nurses who, all over the world, often use pagers as they cannot use mobile phones near life support equipment. Immediately after the pager explosions, the American University of Beirut Medical Centre treated 160 patients, 90 per cent of whom had severe injuries to their hands, eyes or both. Some 140 people had eye injuries.

Eye surgeons worked nonstop for over three days, often alongside plastic surgeons who operated on hands. Many victims will be permanently disabled by this indiscriminate attack. Today the Australian Government, alongside France, the United States, Canada, Germany, Japan, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and Qatar, called for a 21-day ceasefire across the Lebanon-Israel border. This is absolutely essential. These attacks follow almost a year of Israeli attacks on Gaza, which have killed over 41,000 people, including around 17,000 children.

However, *The Lancet*, the world's most respected medical journal, estimated the total deaths in Gaza to be 186,000 back in June. The discrepancy represents an estimate that includes the missing, who are likely dead, and those who are likely to die prematurely from months of starvation and the outbreak of serious disease. We need an end to both of these conflicts and a lasting peace, with Palestine recognised as a sovereign nation. The occupation, which has been recognised as illegal by the International Court of Justice, must end and all hostages must be released. Palestinians, Israelis and the Lebanese deserve to live in peace and security.

#### NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:20):** This week year 12 started their final week of school. It is a time of excitement and nervousness as they approach their HSC exams, and a chance for friends to be together before they head off on the great journey that we call life. Each year I award one student from each school in my electorate the North Shore Medal for demonstrating excellence in attitude, exhibiting a commitment to the ethos of the school, consistently participating in school and community activities, and exhibiting an awareness of others and their needs. I acknowledge three local year 12 students who were selected as recipients of the North Shore Medal for 2024. Jade Summers from Cammeraygal High School—who I joined with on Monday—is a house captain. She leads activities and events, fosters team spirit and participation, and plays a crucial role in organising and motivating her peers.

Jade was also a member of the environment council, where she promoted environmental awareness and sustainability initiatives at the school and contributed to projects and events that encouraged eco-friendly practices. Jade has been an active member of the yearbook committee. She contributed to the design, content creation and publication of the yearbook, ensuring that it is an accurate representation and reflection of the very best of Cammeraygal High School. She committed her own time outside of school to achieve that. Jade consciously displays the core values and ethos of the school. She is described as exemplary in everything she does and is empowered to achieve in all aspects of her schooling life. In addition to all of those attributes, Jade has shown a dedication and commitment to the school values of integrity, respect, responsibility and achievement. She is an empathetic and honourable student. The school told me that she is very deserving of the North Shore Medal this year.

I congratulate Ruby Worrell from Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, who has been described as a consummate all-rounder. Ruby has been an integral part of the 2024 leadership team, serving as McGuirk house captain. She is a talented athlete and has represented the school at the Catholic Girls Secondary Schools Sports Association, the Independent Girls' Schools Association, and the New South Wales Combined Catholic Colleges at all school levels. Ruby's co-curricular and service involvement is diverse. She has been a personal project peer mentor for younger students, she has sewn together pump-holding bags for oncology patients at Royal North Shore Hospital, and she has contributed to the college social justice program through the Mercy Action Group.

Academically, Ruby excels in a diverse range of subjects, including biology, advanced and extension English, advanced maths, visual arts, and religious studies. Her rigorous approach to her studies has earned her a place in the top 10 of her year 12 cohort in the first semester. I congratulate Ruby. I also acknowledge Sophia Pek from North Sydney Girls High School. She is heavily involved in the school and wider community, working at all times behind the scenes for the collective good rather than personal gain. Sophia demonstrates commitment to the school values of respect, resilience, compassion, integrity and excellence, and is a positive role model to all.

Sophia's humility and diligence have made her an ideal recipient of the North Shore Medal for North Sydney Girls High School. I congratulate Sophia.

I wish all our local year 12 students the very best as they finish their schooling journey and begin their HSC exams. That includes every student from Mosman High School, North Sydney Boys High School, North Sydney Girls High School, Queenwood, Monte Sant' Angelo, St Aloysius, Loreto Kirribilli, Cammeraygal High School, Redlands, Shore, Wenona and Marist North Shore. I say to students, study hard and believe in yourselves. There are many opportunities ahead of you. The HSC is not the beginning, and it is not end. It is the next step in what will be a marvellous and miraculous journey for every single one of you. Best of luck to all of our students on the north shore and across New South Wales.

### LOCAL SPORT DEFIBRILLATOR GRANT PROGRAM

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:24):** Whether it is coaching the kids' grand final, watching the Premier League semi-finals at 3.00 a.m. in the morning, cheering on the Eels or the Wanderers at Parramatta's CommBank Stadium with an ice-cold beer, or kicking the ball around with mates, all codes of football unite us in the electorate of Prospect. We come together as players and spectators and leave as neighbours and friends. Gabbing from the stands while the kids play, making bacon and egg rolls in the club canteen, or offering first aid after the first slide tackle, a successful game of footy requires a whole team—on and off the pitch. Every team needs the right tools for safe play—including AEDs. An automated external defibrillator, or AED, is used with CPR to deliver controlled shocks to an individual experiencing cardiac arrest. This vital equipment can increase a person's chance of survival by up to 70 per cent.

Unfortunately, until now many local clubs were not equipped with AEDs, and many that are lucky enough to have one lack the training to use them. We must work with local clubs in our electorates, including in Prospect, to address this issue. As patron of the Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association, I love to watch my local teams play our favourite game. But recently we were rocked by a tragedy. During the male all-ages grand final at Binalong Oval in Toongabbie, Auburn Football Club player Volkan Ergun suffered a cardiac arrest and tragically died. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family and the entire soccer community. Our Western Sydney community almost saw another tragedy when the 12-year-old grandson of Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association General Manager Rosanna Lentini suffered a cardiac arrest.

Rosanna's grandson Xavier had just finished soccer training when he collapsed. After four weeks in hospital and gruelling open-heart surgery, Xavier recovered. Thanks to the quick administration of CPR and a defibrillator, Xavier returned home. This life-saving equipment may prevent further tragedies in our Prospect community. The New South Wales Government is taking further action. This month the Minister for Sport, Stephen Kamper, announced the Local Sport Defibrillator Grant Program to provide AEDs to New South Wales sport and recreation clubs. With \$500,000 allocated to the fund, grants of up to \$3,000 are available for clubs that need it most. Applications close on 27 November or when funding is exhausted. For clubs that need a defibrillator, apply now!

A number of AEDs have been rolled out to a number of local sporting clubs across the Prospect electorate. They include junior rugby league clubs the Toongabbie Tigers, Our Lady Queen of Peace, the Greystanes Devils and Wentworthville United; soccer clubs Greystanes FC, Pendle Hill FC, Toongabbie Demons; and the Girraween Little Athletics Club. While these are important grants, having a defibrillator is just the first step. Clubs must ensure coaches, referees and executives are trained to administer this life-saving equipment. We need to work with our local clubs to promote a standard so that someone proficient in first aid and CPR is onsite for every game and training session. The GoodSAM App offers a valuable tool in that area. Developed in partnership with NSW Ambulance, GoodSAM connects trained volunteers to nearby cardiac emergencies. With a few taps, the app connects to someone who can administer CPR and a defibrillator until paramedics arrive. I encourage everyone to download this valuable app today.

Football, like every sport, is more than just a game. Whether it is racing an individual medley in the pool, taking home a first in gymnastics or finally cracking a century on the cricket pitch, sport is the beating heart of our Prospect community. By investing in defibrillators and training, we can protect that heart and the people who make it strong. Sport builds lifelong friendships, forges rivalries and teaches the most valuable lesson of all—how to argue politely with the referee. It promotes teamwork, resilience and problem-solving, and supports a lifelong love of physical activity. To maintain these fantastic benefits, we must prioritise player safety. Every local club needs an AED and someone trained to administer it. With this grant support, clubs in Prospect can play hard and play safe. Our players can leave it all on the field and come home safely to their families.



### ARTSAKH ETHNIC CLEANSING ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:28):** I discuss tonight an issue that is close to my Armenian community and in particular reflect on a delegation I was part of last year with the member for Prospect and the member for Willoughby, who have also made some remarks on this important issue. It was a typical autumn day when I entered the Armenian town of Goris on the border of Azerbaijan one year ago. But there was nothing typical about what I saw unfolding. With my own eyes I saw the mass exodus of ethnic Armenians from the Republic of Artsakh, a place surrounded by Azerbaijan. I saw hundreds of cars filled to the brim with all of their material belongings: washing machines, clothes and teddy bears. It was all they had, and it was heartbreaking to witness. We saw people of all ages—children, mums and dads, and grandparents. Many were so desperate to cross the border that, when they ran out of petrol, they used methylated spirits to complete the journey. While we members were in the Goris square, little children were sitting there, trying to work out how to use fruit drinks. It was touching, and we all knelt down to comfort the children. Thousands had fled for survival. They had little choice. If they did not flee, an ethnic cleansing would have commenced.

The United Nations confirmed that over several weeks more than 100,000 people from Artsakh fled their ancestral home. Azerbaijan claims it was dealing with terrorists. The people of Artsakh claim to have created a democracy. I know the latter to be true, because I met the people of Artsakh, and they are a peaceful people. What can Australia and New South Wales and my community do, given this horrible situation? Australia needs to send a strong message to the international community by boycotting the United Nations' Conference of the Parties 29 [COP29], to be held in Azerbaijan in November. For the Australian or New South Wales governments to visit Azerbaijan is to ignore and make light of our commitment to human rights. Attending would legitimise a regime that disregards human rights. The United Nations should have known better than to award an international conference to Azerbaijan, given its human rights record. The think tank Freedom House ranks Azerbaijan as number 184 of 193 countries when it comes to measuring civil liberties and political rights. That is well below even Russia.

Azerbaijan is also a location where Armenian political prisoners are held, and I recognise the advocacy of Gareth Evans, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, calling for the release of Armenian political prisoners. How can such an event that affects so much of the Armenian community I represent take place in modern times—the 2020s? Sadly, such events have been taking place in this region for centuries, with ethnic Armenians and their rich cultural and religious heritage targeted. This is not the first time that ethnic Armenians have fought for their survival and freedom. In 1915 a genocide took place against ethnic Armenians, and Greeks and Assyrians. Over two million people were brutally killed. We must never forget the genocide because genocide denied is genocide repeated. In 1997 the Parliament of New South Wales proudly became the first jurisdiction in Australia to recognise the genocide. It was bipartisan, led by Premier Bob Carr and Opposition leader Peter Collins. Since then, South Australia and Tasmania too have recognised the genocide. I call on the Commonwealth Parliament to recognise the genocide.

Finally, I will leave members with a sense of hope and a message. While witnessing the mass exodus in the border town of Goris, I met two Australians helping to pack boxes of food and essentials. They were volunteers, forgoing a relaxed European holiday. They told me they were there because they believed in a cause bigger than themselves. They were committed to the values of freedom. Without hesitation, all of us in the delegation, including the member for Prospect, the member for Willoughby, the member for Oatley and the Hon. Susan Carter, helped by picking up the supplies from a car and taking them to the nearby tents. As they say, many hands make light work. Now is the time for Australia and New South Wales to do the same by boycotting COP29.

### BEGA ELECTORATE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (18:33):** It is almost two years since I spoke in this place on the road infrastructure in the Bega electorate. That was under a previous government, and things have changed for the better. The Princes Highway from Cockwhy Creek in the north to the Victorian border is approximately 270 kilometres. Within the electorate, the total road network is 2,621 kilometres, of which 2,312 kilometres is local road network and 309 kilometres is regional road network. The electorate's only option for north-south connectivity is the Princes Highway, and there are limited options for east-west connectivity, with the Snowy Mountains Highway over Brown Mountain to Cooma and the Australian Capital Territory, and the Kings Highway over Clyde Mountain to Goulburn and the Australian Capital Territory.

I invite members on a road trip from the north of the electorate to the south. Within the time allowed for a private member's statement, we may not make it all the way, but I can come back later to finish the trip. The Batemans Bay region has done well, and I acknowledge the previous Government's investment in the necessary improvements to the Kings Highway after the 2019-20 bushfires, the building of the new Nelligen and Batemans Bay bridges, as well as the South Batemans Bay Link Road, but things stopped there. The Moruya bypass was in

limbo for years until our Government's recent announcement of the preferred route. It will consist of a two-lane, nine-kilometre bypass, including a 3.8-kilometre land bridge—the longest in New South Wales—and will run from north of Malabar Drive to south of Mountain View Road. Despite empty promises from the previous Government, it will progress to development and construction stages when future funding is available. This includes finalisation of concept design, environmental assessment processes and construction.

In 2019 we had announcements from the former member for Bega, the former Minister for Transport and Roads, who wasted billions of dollars on transport projects that were delayed, over budget and unnecessary. In June 2019 in this place, the former member for Bega stated that the former Government would be duplicating the road all the way to Tuross Heads fairly quickly—within 10 years. Over the next four years various Ministers responsible for local government, and regional roads and transport promised and promised. On 20 September 2022, almost two years ago to this day, the latest former Minister for Regional Transport and Roads in the other place announced:

... we are building the Moruya bypass. We are delivering for the South Coast, whether or not we hold the Bega electorate. We will deliver for all of regional New South Wales, unlike the select agenda those opposite have.

Unfortunately, the former New South Wales Government did not allocate any money to the Moruya bypass. The reality is that works need to be conducted in a staged way, considering labour resources, skills shortages and supply constraints. The project is estimated to cost \$1.7 billion, calculated based on the Orange option, and all aspects of the project—from final design, development and management, to costs for contractors, road and bridge construction, and materials—have been considered.

I have previously described the potential black spots and near-miss areas of the intersections on the Princes Highway. I am pleased that the Minns Labor Government is committed to delivering immediate short-term road safety improvements in the Eurobodalla region, with Transport for NSW carrying out detailed investigations and planning for other local projects, as well as the improvements on the Princes Highway. This includes the upgrade of the intersection of the Princes Highway and Bingie Road, as well as the intersection upgrade at Hector McWilliam Drive, Tuross Head. The New South Wales Government has allocated \$1.5 million from the \$334 million Regional Road Fund to upgrade that intersection.

The Australian and New South Wales governments have committed funding for a feasibility study and planning on the future of Narooma Bridge. The feasibility study, expected to be completed by mid 2026, will look at opportunities to improve efficiency, safety and access for all road users on the Princes Highway at Narooma Bridge. This will include identifying ways to improve access for larger heavy vehicles on the highway. Transport for NSW continues to carry out maintenance and safety improvements to the bridge. The bridge has also received corrosion remediation work, and plans are in place for continued maintenance that will include further strengthening and repainting of the bridge. While planning for the feasibility study of the long-term future of the bridge is carried out, Transport for NSW will continue to carry out maintenance and safety improvements to the bridge. That takes us about a third of the way, so I will pull over for a rest and continue the journey in a future private member's statement.

### **BUSINESS ORANGE AWARDS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:38):** It was a delight to join with the Orange business community for the 2024 Business Orange Awards on Saturday 14 September, held at the prestigious Banksia Orange events venue. I am a strong and passionate advocate for local businesses; they are the backbone of the community. Importantly, they create employment, contribute to economic growth and prosperity, reflect our community's identity, and innovate and diversify the marketplace. It is important to recognise local businesses for their accomplishments and what they mean to our community. Orange blooms largely because of its vibrant business community, and we are blessed with its abundance. I never cease to be amazed at these annual award events when I discover what our dedicated and talented business community brings to the marketplace. I acknowledge the Gnoo Blas Classic Car Club members for delivering the awards' sponsors and special guests to the event in their collection of exotic classic cars, adding unique style and prestige to this exciting event.

I recognise and again congratulate the award winners as judged by Business NSW. The Outstanding Employee award was won by Maddison McDonald from Millthorpe Little Learning Centre. The winner of the Outstanding Young Leader Business Leader 35 and Under award was Dannielle Ford from Cheney Suthers Lawyers. The Outstanding Business Leader Over 35 award went to Kirsty Evans from Cheney Suthers Lawyers. The Employer of Choice under 20 Employees award was won by Health in Mind, Orange. Integral Scaffolding was the Employer of Choice over 20 Employees award winner.

Skillset Limited was the winner of the Outstanding Community Organisation award. The Outstanding New Business award was won by AccessLife Support Services. The Excellence in Personal and Lifestyle award was won by Styling by Minikin. Health in Mind was the winner of the Excellence in Professional Services award. The

Excellence in Retail award went to REDS: Choose Colour. Hotel Canobolas got the Excellence in Hospitality and Tourism award. The Excellence in Manufacturing, Trade and Industry award was won by Integral Scaffolding. DanicaB PR won the Excellence in Micro Business award.

The Excellence in Small Business award was won by Bella Spazio. Integral Scaffolding got the Excellence in Large Business award. The 2024 Outstanding Business of the Year award was won by DanicaB PR. The awards included the People's Choice awards, with the award winners decided by an online poll. I recognise and congratulate the three People's Choice Award winners: Ben Giumelli of BG Built for Orange's Favourite Tradie; Bella Spazio for Orange's Customer Service Star; and LillyRose Beauty for Orange's Favourite Business.

I recognise and congratulate the awards event coordinator, Rachel Chippendale, whose meticulous planning ensured it was a flawless event, with more than 300 guests in attendance. Whilst we gathered at the event to celebrate the achievements of our remarkable local businesses, it is important to acknowledge that each award represents not only individual success but also the collective spirit of resilience, innovation and commitment that defines our community. These businesses are more than just establishments; they are the lifeblood of Orange, fostering connections and driving progress. I encourage the business community to continue supporting one another, share ideas and work collaboratively to ensure our business community flourishes. The achievements of our local businesses demonstrate that we are constantly creating a brighter future, where opportunity abounds and the entrepreneurial spirit thrives. I thank all our local businesses for their dedication, hard work and unwavering belief in not only themselves and their businesses, but also the greater potential of Orange.

### **BLACKTOWN AND MOUNT DRUITT HOSPITAL**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:42):** Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital has amazing nurses, doctors, allied health and support staff. But the hospital is currently facing a massive increase in demand from the community. According to the Bureau of Health Information, the number of patient attendances at Blacktown hospital has increased in all of the past seven quarters. In the September 2022 quarter, 14,597 patient attendances were reported. In the last quarter in June 2024, that number was up to 16,881. That is a 15 per cent increase in 1¾ years. When Labor was last in government back in 2011, the T2 statistic, which covers the percentage of emergency patients seen within 10 minutes, was 85.4 per cent. Over the 12 long years of successive Liberal governments, that figure fell to 16.5 per cent by July 2022, with the June 2022 statistic being the lowest at 10.6 per cent. Only one in nine patients triaged as emergency cases were seen on time.

The Liberals argue that they gave us a shiny new hospital, costing approximately \$700 million. But they did not account for the population growth in the Blacktown City Council area. In 2011 the population of Blacktown was approximately 300,000 people. Today, it is in excess of 430,000 people. In March 2011, a total of 8,697 hospital attendances were reported. Today the reported number is almost double at 16,881. The waiting room in the newly constructed Blacktown hospital is probably one of the smallest in the State. Interestingly, in 2011, Blacktown hospital got approximately 62 per cent of the number of patients going through Westmead Hospital. Today that number stands at approximately 86 per cent. While it is important to invest in the Westmead Health Precinct—billions of dollars have been invested there—Blacktown hospital did not have enough money invested in it to keep up with population growth.

The permanent breast screening site in Blacktown closed down five years ago. It was replaced by a mobile van. That has resulted in breast screening numbers falling to approximately 40 per cent of eligible women in the Blacktown area, compared with 50 per cent across the nation. The number of eligible multicultural women has fallen even further to 28.5 per cent. I am happy to announce that there will be a new permanent home for breast screening in Blacktown that should be operational by the first quarter next year.

I thank all hospital staff, including doctors, nurses, allied health workers, administrators and support workers. I also thank all the cleaners, counsellors, ward support people, food attendants and all the volunteers who raise money for the hospital. General Manager Brad Ceely and his entire executive team are responding to the demands and pressures of the local area. They are working hard with managers and staff from all areas of the hospital to address the challenges. I thank them for their compassion and for sitting down with patients and their families to discuss the issues when patients or their families believe the treatment did not meet their expectations. Brad and his team believe that meeting with patients is a learning opportunity to ensure the issues are addressed into the future.

We often talk about nurses and doctors, but I thank all the other staff as well, including "Big Al", who has worked at Blacktown hospital in security for decades; and Phil Walters, who provides a friendly face for staff and patients. I acknowledge John Lawrence and Karan Singh, who work in the stores to get all the resources delivered across the hospital so doctors and nurses can achieve their daily tasks. They are also volunteers as Health Services Union delegates. I acknowledge Elizabeth Dunlop and Jack Myers, who work in domestic services and patient assistance. They undertake many patient-centric roles, including patient care, transport and meal deliveries, as

well as clerical tasks and working closely with nurses. Hundreds of support workers at Blacktown hospital help patients have better experiences. I thank all the staff at Blacktown hospital for their efforts to make difficult situations more bearable for patients and their families.

### **TERRIGAL ELECTORATE YOUTH CRIME**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:47):** The significant issue of crime and a concerning increase in youth crime is impacting not only my local community in the Terrigal electorate but also the wider Central Coast. Crime is one of the most significant concerns in my electorate. It is the right of every individual to feel safe and protected in their own home. Unfortunately, a growing number of people do not, following a spate of crimes of opportunity. The Central Coast is not alone. There has been a dramatic increase in crime across New South Wales, especially in the regions, including the Central Coast. I have heard stories about the impact of crime on communities from fellow regional members such as the member for Dubbo, who recounted submissions made to his office, including one about Mike Blake, who was attacked in broad daylight outside his home.

Even the member for the Upper Hunter had to chase away someone who had broken into his car in the middle of the night, a clear reminder that anybody can be a victim of crime. A few of my constituents have written to me with similar stories. Luke wrote to me about two attempted break-ins at his home within three nights. Someone broke into his garage and his wife's car, taking their garage remote, with the intention to return later. Only two nights later, his home was broken into again. He confronted three teenagers who were running out of his garage from upstairs. I had the pleasure of speaking with Luke and he is just as frustrated as everyone else in the community. He wants real action on crime, particularly youth crime.

I also spoke with John, who is a member of his local crime prevention action group. Someone attempted to break into a vehicle across from his home, but luckily for his neighbours, the offenders were apprehended soon after. John witnessed four offenders breaking in and stealing jewellery from a neighbour's home down the road. In the same suburb, Celeste woke to find an intruder in her bedroom and two more within her home. They had broken in, stolen butchers' knives from the kitchen and wandered around the home while Celeste, her husband and her three young children slept. The most concerning part of Celeste's story is that six teenage boys were arrested in relation to her case. The youngest was 14 and the oldest 17—essentially the ages of a year 8 student and a teenager who just got their P-plates. It is a frightening thought.

Those stories are the tip of the iceberg. There are countless stories from constituents who wrote to me to talk about their personal experiences with crime, especially youth crime. There are two common themes in my conversations with constituents—the police response and anger surrounding bail laws. I have spoken in this Chamber before of the great work the police do, day in and day out, and I will do it again. In particular, I thank Senior Constable Reece. The community has said that he has been fantastic to deal with and has kept in touch while investigations were ongoing. Celeste, Luke and John all praised our local Brisbane Water Police District for its fantastic response to these break-ins and vehicle thefts. I thank Brisbane Water Police District for everything it does to keep our communities safe. Serving as a police officer can often be a thankless job, but police always work in the interests of our community regardless.

As I said, concerns about bail laws were also a theme amongst concerned residents. There is a feeling that sometimes, in certain cases, criminals are charged with offences only to receive bail and go straight back to committing crimes. That sends the wrong message. It says to offenders they will only receive a slap on the wrist for their actions, and it says to victims of crime that they will never truly have justice. I welcome the Bail and Crimes Amendment Act 2024, which moves to strengthen bail laws in response to growing crime in our State, especially regarding the publication of crimes by offenders through social media. Members have a duty to ensure we make laws to protect those who are victims of crime, and also to ensure there is adequate prevention and early intervention.

This Government talks big on acting on youth crime and supporting young people at risk of crime but, as usual, there is a big announcement and no details or substance. I look forward to seeing the results of the \$13.4 million invested in targeted initiatives in Moree. More importantly, I look forward to seeing how those initiatives can be implemented on the Central Coast. The victims of youth crime who have had to live with home invasions and car theft would feel completely lost and like they have not been listened to were it not for the proactive officers of the Brisbane Water Police District like the senior constable I mentioned earlier. I thank all those who contacted me. I will continue to tell their stories and hold the Government to account on youth crime.

### **TRIBUTE TO JOHN NEWMAN**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:52):** I commemorate a tragic chapter in Australian political history, the assassination of John Newman, the former member for Cabramatta. It has been 30 years to the month since John was murdered, an event widely acknowledged as Australia's first political assassination. John Newman

was born on 8 December 1946 in Villach, Austria. He arrived in Australia at age four, settling in Cabramatta and attending Cabramatta Public School and Liverpool Boys High School. Raised in a working-class family, the labour movement was a large part of John's life, spending much of it as a union official. He completed postgraduate studies in industrial law at the University of Sydney and undertook a variety of Trade Union Training Authority education programs. He was elected as an alderman to Fairfield City Council in 1977 and remained on the council for 10 years. He became deputy mayor in 1985 and served as acting mayor in 1986.

He was elected to the New South Wales Parliament as the member for Cabramatta in 1986. In his inaugural speech, he detailed the needs of his disadvantaged, multicultural electorate—themes that he would pursue relentlessly over his eight years in office. He championed social justice and worked to improve housing and reduce unemployment. John was an active member of the community, regularly out and about in his electorate and always approachable. I was a constituent of John's during his entire time in office, and I had the chance to meet him once, albeit very briefly. I assume I am like many in this place in that, as a 10-year-old, I had an unusual ability to recognise our local political representatives. On election day 1991 John was working the voters outside Bonnyrigg Public School, where my parents had ducked in to vote. I went over to John and said hi, and he said hello back.

It was around this time that Cabramatta had started to become synonymous with the heroin trade and gang activity. John Newman took a firm and fearless stand against those issues. His stance made him a target for criminal elements in the area, particularly the drug syndicates and gang members who thrived in the shadows. Despite numerous threats on his life, John refused to be intimidated, and he continued to speak out against the forces that were corrupting Cabramatta and the surrounding suburbs. It was that bravery and refusal to back down that ultimately led to his assassination. On the night of 5 September 1994, John was returning from a local branch meeting—something many of us do most weeks—when he was shot dead in the driveway of his Cabramatta home. That brutal act sent shock waves through the nation and underscored the severe risks faced by politicians who confront the underbelly of society. His assassination led to significant changes in how we approach crime and corruption in New South Wales, particularly in regions like Cabramatta.

In the years following his death, a concerted effort was made by both State and Federal governments to crack down on organised crime and gang violence in the area. Cabramatta is now a bustling commercial hub, home to some of the greatest food, produce and shopping anywhere in Australia. It is a go-to destination for many wanting to experience the best of multicultural Western Sydney. Sadly, that is something John never lived to see. John's dedication to his constituents and his refusal to compromise in the face of danger stand as lessons for all of us in public service. In the age of Trump, we cannot ignore the fact that threats against politicians have increased in recent years. Across the globe, there has been a troubling rise in political violence, with leaders, representatives and advocates often targeted simply for doing their jobs.

Here in Australia, the atmosphere of political discourse has become more heated, with abuse and threats becoming an all-too-common occurrence in the lives of those serving the public. John stubbornly refused to give in to a public campaign of threats and intimidation. He relentlessly pursued criminal elements he believed had infiltrated many areas of the community, including the local political establishment. As leaders, we have to be steadfast in the face of concerted and coordinated public campaigns intended to intimidate and silence MPs when they speak up, and seek to stamp out serious misconduct and corruption in local politics. It is essential that we continue to advocate for better security measures, more comprehensive mental health support and a political environment where differing views can be expressed without fear of intimidation and violence. John's story is a reminder that standing up for what is right is never easy or without risk, but it is always worth it.

### **BALMAIN ELECTORATE PUBLIC HOUSING**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (18:56):** Today I speak about an issue that goes to the heart of how we care for the most vulnerable in our community—the state of public housing maintenance in New South Wales. Public housing is not just a roof over people's heads; it is a lifeline for families, individuals and older residents who rely on secure, affordable housing to stay safe. In my electorate of Balmain, public housing plays a critical role in maintaining the social and economic diversity that makes our community so vibrant. It gives people the opportunity to put down roots, build strong community connections and live with dignity. But right now, that dignity is being eroded. The stories I hear from public housing tenants in Glebe, Balmain and across my electorate are heartbreaking. Requests for essential maintenance like fixing electrical wiring or dealing with termite infestations are being ignored. Residents are being told to call again and again to navigate an opaque and unresponsive system that seems designed to wear them down.

Some who face safety risks in their homes have been left with no choice but to move out altogether, while their requests go unanswered and, in many cases, while they are still paying rent. In one case, a Glebe resident and her family had to leave their home due to safety concerns that were never fully addressed. The ceiling had collapsed, and the home had been riddled with water damage, mould and electrical dangers since 2021. Work orders for repairs were left without a response and were then deleted during the maintenance handover in July.

The family was left without a safe home, and their transfer request stalled. A lack of genuine escalation processes left that family in a vulnerable situation where their requests for help went unanswered repeatedly. This is not just a bureaucratic error; it is a failure to treat people with the respect and care they deserve.

In another instance, a Glebe tenant reported an ongoing power issue that had been affecting her home for nearly two decades. Each time she calls, the power outage is treated as a one-off fault and not the larger issue that it clearly is. Imagine having to report the same problem over and over again for 19 years. That is not just frustrating; it is demoralising. In yet another example, a Glebe public housing tenant was left with a broken door, leaving her house completely unsecured. She raised the matter directly with Homes NSW and received no response. In the meantime, contractors provided a bandaid solution and simply covered the broken door with plywood and propped it back up, despite the extensive damage. My office then raised a request for a full replacement via the maintenance MP hotline twice before and after 1 July, with no response either time. When a work order was eventually raised, they failed to notify the tenant. They also failed to replace the door within the time frame provided. To this day, the tenant is still calling the Maintenance Hub for updates on a replacement door.

Those are not isolated incidents. They are systemic failures that stretch across the board. Residents in need of accessibility modifications are being advised to relinquish their homes rather than have their needs met. Homes NSW contractors are leaving jobs incomplete, causing further damage, and residents are told that it is their responsibility to report that damage even though it was caused during the repair process. The underlying issue is clear: The system is broken. While I welcome the New South Wales Labor Government's decision to bring maintenance back in-house and am pleased to see there is finally funding being put towards that essential maintenance, it also needs to increase resourcing on the ground and provide a clear escalation pathway.

The MP hotline for maintenance takes over a week to acknowledge requests and even then meaningful action is rare. Tenants are being told to wait 30 days or more for follow-ups, and in many cases nothing happens. The lack of a proper escalation pathway means that our most vulnerable residents are left in limbo, stuck in homes that are unsafe, unfit and unliveable. It is not good enough. It is unacceptable that public housing tenants are forced to jump through endless hoops just to get basic repairs done. It is people's homes. They deserve better. The Government must act now to improve the broken system. We need a clear, accountable maintenance process that treats tenants with dignity and respect. There must be a proper escalation channel so that when issues are not addressed, tenants can have confidence that someone will take responsibility and fix the problem.

Let us stop forcing public housing residents to fight for what should be a basic right. Let us give them homes they deserve—safe, well maintained and fit for purpose—because everyone, regardless of their income or circumstances, deserves to live with dignity. That starts with the place they call home.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I thank the member for Balmain and recognise that public housing repairs in my electorate also require expediting.

#### ISRAEL-LEBANON CONFLICT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (19:01):** Recently I attended the Arab Council Australia Employment and Education Expo for newly arrived Palestinians in Bankstown. Arab Council Australia, which was established in 1979, is a non-profit, independent community organisation that works to bring about social justice and improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in the community. The Employment and Education Expo was incredible. It made newly arrived Palestinians feel welcome. Assisting them with access to education, employment and social services makes an enormous difference in building a life in Australia.

I have spoken many a time about the horrendous situation in Gaza and I am glad to see initiatives like this that enable Palestinians who arrive in Australia to work and study and continue with their lives. Unfortunately, Lebanon is also now under Israeli bombardment, with over 500 people killed—including women and children—in the past few days alone. Like so many in my electorate, I have family in Lebanon. People in my electorate have already lost loved ones. People I know have had family members killed in the past few days. Those killed were completely innocent. They were civilians whose lives have been cut short. Women and children have been killed and I fear another repeat of the horrors that have unfolded in Gaza and on the West Bank.

As I have said, no matter how far back you go in history, who you may think is to blame, who you think started it or who you think is responsible, any innocent person killed is a blight on our humanity. The situation in Lebanon is dire. The world is at a crossroads. Prayers for peace ring out everywhere and our hearts are being broken. Too many innocent people are being buried. The death and destruction must stop. Calls for peace must be listened to and international laws must not be ignored. Images of dead children will haunt us all. Destruction

of communities will haunt us all. The breakdown of social infrastructure will haunt us all. Our collective failure to stop the suffering to this point will haunt us all.

I am deeply worried about the escalation of the already terrible situation by the Israeli Government's foreshadowing of a ground offensive. That will make matters worse and, I fear, expand it into a wider regional war. No-one wins in war. Innocent people are killed. It is a tragic fact that cannot ever be unwound. The violence will only beget more violence. The death of innocent people is something that the world must not turn a blind eye to. Whilst I know that my speech will not stop the war, my contribution joins a collective effort that demands peace and an end to the horror.

### **RYDE ELECTORATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (19:04):** I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the extraordinary and historic performance of the Ryde Liberals in the 2024 Ryde local government election. In particular, it is appropriate that this Parliament—itself a vessel for harbouring great history—notes the occasion of the first directly elected Mayor of Ryde following a referendum in 2021. That referendum saw Ryde transition from the councillor-elected mayor to a direct election by the community. Save for a brief period between 1959 and 1968, it has always been the case that Ryde's mayor was elected by its councillors or, to traverse history back further, its alderman. To be the first directly elected mayor is to make history. To be the last councillor-elected mayor makes one the keeper of two legacies. That is a title I expect, following the formal declaration of the poll, will be bestowed upon Ryde mayor-elect Trenton Brown.

Succeeding Sarkis Yedelian, who retired from local government after 20 years of service, Trenton Brown has ably led Ryde council over the past six months. In that short time, he achieved much by shedding light on the illegal Ryde Civic Centre transactions made during the former Labor-Green-Independent administration. He was also a strong and considered chair of our council meetings, maintaining the high degree of professionalism and decorum that our team established upon taking over the council. In the community, he was a visible and active presence, establishing Ryde's first and now ongoing mayoral forum. The forum replaced an archaic approach to community participation in council meetings with one that now influences outcomes and ensures mature two-way engagement between our community and its elected representatives.

Trenton has also been one of council's strongest proponents of saving the TG Millner Field in Marsfield. He was the only candidate for mayor in the election who was unequivocal and consistent in his support for protecting that particular piece of green open space. His main rival from the Labor Party previously supported the field too. Indeed, the now Labor Government in this very Parliament went to the last election promising to save it if elected. Upon Labor's election, that promise was broken—and with it, Ryde's support for the Labor Party disappeared. Standing at pre-poll, I was amazed by how many residents came past taking only the Liberal how-to-vote card, exclaiming that it was entirely because of Labor's position on TG Millner.

That was exacerbated by the egregious—and potentially illegal—foray into the election campaign by the North Ryde RSL board. Targeted personally and politically, Trenton Brown did not waver in the face of a concerted and vested campaign to unseat him. I am therefore enormously proud to say that not only is he set to be re-elected but his re-election represents a fresh mandate to save TG Millner. It is a mandate bestowed on him by his political opponents who sought to politicise TG Millner, by the vested interests whose intervention—just as electors started to vote—centred the public's mind on TG Millner and of course by the public, who through the ballot box sent a crystal-clear message that they want TG Millner saved.

This was particularly evident in West Ward, home to TG Millner, where the Liberals achieved their best result, winning over 50 per cent of the primary vote, and there was the unprecedented situation of a third councillor position in play. The result is a testament to the fact that when you stand with integrity and have the support of your community, the possibilities in politics are limitless. I have great confidence that with four years ahead and the support of a diverse, professional and future-focused team, Ryde will be all the better for Trenton's era of Liberal leadership.

On that note, I congratulate all new and returning councillors on their election. I make particular mention of Justin Li, Kathy Tracey, Shweta Deshpande, Daniel Han and Sophie Lara-Watson who led our tickets alongside Trenton. They were ably supported by Cameron Last, Deepak Chauhan, Armen Arakelian, Madison Lane, Keanu Arya and Jeanette Oujani, a fantastic team each with bright futures ahead. Finally, I pay tribute to the Ryde local government conference president Frank Moshfeghi, treasurer John Hassarati, all of our booth captains and volunteers, and importantly, the glue that brings all these things together—my partner, Natalie Hissey. Not everybody understands how we do things in Ryde, but those who do, know that Natalie is why it works. I thank her and everyone for the role they played in this outstanding result. I know that together we will achieve great things for Ryde and ensure the history we now write is one worth remembering.

## WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (19:09):** I highlight the transport oriented development [TOD] proposals that are local to my electorate of Winston Hills in the suburb of Glenwood and its surrounds. The TOD policy is the State Labor Government's signature housing policy to provide housing for future generations. The idea of planning for housing around transport hubs is not new. In fact, there are examples of the former Coalition Government beginning the planning around metro stations. Yet the Labor Government's TOD policy took this well-suited and appropriate policy to another level, which has in many communities generated significant feedback.

One such community is in Glenwood and Stanhope Gardens. Let me look closely at the Kellyville and Bella Vista TOD proposal that was developed by the Labor Government. It has amazed me to see Labor representatives in the area telling the community that the TOD proposal in Glenwood and Stanhope Gardens was, in fact, developed by the former Coalition Government. It has also been interesting to see the local Federal representative make her position on the proposal clear by running a petition and giving an address in Canberra about the faults in Labor's own proposal. My fellow member in this place the member for Riverstone has also been vocal on this issue, which has been valued by his community. He has echoed the concerns raised by his Labor colleague in Canberra.

Recently I was out supporting local candidates in the local government elections in those areas. On the booths, Labor was displaying corflutes stating that "the Liberals are the instigators" of the TOD plans and telling voters that it was the former Government that intended to rezone Glenwood and Stanhope Gardens. The signature housing policy developed by the Labor Government is now so poorly received that even Labor supporters are disowning it. That is either a new low in "whatever it takes" campaigning or a desperate attempt to distance themselves from a community consultation disaster. It could not be any clearer that Labor is divided on the TOD issue. The Minister says one thing and his colleagues tell their communities another. They are afraid about the local impact based on what they are hearing from their communities, and I can understand why.

What have we heard in this place on the matter? On 15 August during question time the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces stated that "the member for Riverstone has been entirely consistent" on the matter, adding that he has been one of the most effective local members the Minister has ever seen in this place. If he is correct, then we can only assume that the Bella Vista and Kellyville TOD proposal will be scrapped. The member for Riverstone made his point clear on the matter in a private members' statement delivered on 15 August, stating that "enough is enough" and adding that his community "have already taken their fair share". Each day we listen to the Labor frontbench call Opposition members nimbys and anti-housing, yet when members from the Government backbench stand up for their communities by opposing the TODs, they turn a blind eye and call them good local members. That demonstrates how clear it is that the Labor Government is in pain over the TOD proposals.

Last week the member for Blacktown—a former Mayor of Blacktown City Council with a great understanding of the local area—spoke about the Bella Vista and Kellyville TOD proposal. The member made it clear that "the Government is doing wide consultation", adding that "most people are saying no", so the Opposition does not need to worry about things like community title in Stanhope Gardens. I have been greatly concerned by the handling of the TOD proposal in Glenwood. My office has received countless phone calls, emails and visits from constituents who were not contacted or notified by the department.

Those who were contacted had only limited opportunities provided for consultation. That process has created angst among the community, with many families fearful about what was going on. The community is confused, and it makes me wonder how the process went so wrong. In fact, it went so wrong that some streets in the centre of the TOD zone were left out. When constituents in a small pocket next to Parklea Markets questioned why they were left out, the response from the planning department appeared to imply that it was unaware that there were houses next to Parklea Markets.

It now appears that the TOD will be scrapped for Glenwood and Stanhope Gardens. I place on record the dissatisfaction of those communities with the consultation process that took place. I thank the member Riverstone for standing with his community throughout this process and engaging constructively with the Minister. Constituents from the Winston Hills community look forward to a decision being made on the TOD that is consistent with the consultation that took place.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:14):** I appreciate the words, sentiments and strong advocacy from the member for Winston Hills. I will support the member for Riverstone and the Federal member for Greenway by correcting the record. The planning department identifies the TOD precinct areas and undertakes consultation. If we were to draw a circle around this particular area, the southern end of the new railway station is an established area just like Stanhope Gardens and Glenwood and on the other side is vacant land. If we had drawn a semicircle



instead, we would have been criticised that we were cutting due process and leaving areas out. I am more than happy to work with the member for Winston Hills, if he would like to meet constituents. But let us take out the fear and work together to ensure the best outcomes for the State.

### *Bills*

## **MUSIC FESTIVALS AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

### **Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 19:17 until  
Tuesday 15 October 2024 at 12:00.**

### *Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

### **2NVR UP FOR RADIO AWARDS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Congratulations to Nambucca Valley Radio [2NVR] for being nominated as finalists in the prestigious Community Broadcasting Association of Australia [CBAA] Awards. This recognition of its two standout programs, That's a Wrap and Studio 3 Live, is a proud and exciting moment for the station and entire Nambucca Valley community. The nomination of That's a Wrap for Best Program: Sports marks its second consecutive year in the running for this award, a testament to the show's exceptional coverage of Group 2 rugby league, including this year's finals series. Equally impressive is the nomination of Studio 3 Live in the Best Program: Music category. This program has been a cornerstone of our local music scene, giving emerging and established artists a platform to perform live, both on the air and in the studio. Your passion for delivering high-quality, engaging content has brought well-deserved recognition, and we're all rooting for you at the awards ceremony on October 19. Best of luck – I'm excited to see your station take home these awards!

### **WAUCHOPE PATCHWORK QUILTERS 2024 QUILT SHOW**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I am proud to recognise the outstanding work of the Wauchope Patchwork Quilters, whose dedication and creativity continue to make a tangible impact in our community. The Wauchope Patchwork Quilters annual Quilt Show this month showcased not only the exceptional craftsmanship of their members but also their commitment to supporting local organisations and charitable causes. This year's show was a feast for the eyes, with vibrant colours, intricate patterns, there was lots of beautiful quilts on display. The beauty of these quilts was matched only by the generosity behind them, with all funds raised going back to essential services. A raffle additionally offered winners a choice of five stunning handmade quilts, further demonstrated the group's generosity to supporting vital services. The funds went to Women's Refuge, Wauchope Neighbourhood Centre, and critical research into Motor Neurone Disease. I also want to acknowledge the group's ongoing contributions of quilts to various fundraising initiatives in Wauchope, including Wauchope Hospital, Palliative Care, and Bundaleer. These donations exemplify their compassion and strong community spirit. I commend the Wauchope Patchwork Quilters for their artistry and kindness that enrich our community.

### **A NEW ERA FOR KEMPSEY - NULLA NULLA GALLERY'S HEARTFELT TRANSFORMATION**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Kempsey Shire is abuzz with excitement as the Nulla Nulla Gallery steps into a new era with its recent upgrade to regional gallery status. This transformation marks a significant milestone for our community, amplifying the gallery's role in celebrating and showcasing art with a broader reach and deeper impact. The gallery's new regional status means a vibrant future filled with diverse exhibitions and cultural experiences that were previously beyond our grasp. The Nulla Nulla Gallery is a cultural venue known for showcasing a diverse range of art exhibitions and cultural events. It serves as a significant community hub for art and culture in the Macleay Valley region. The inaugural exhibition, Saltwater Freshwater Arts, is a perfect introduction to this new chapter, highlighting the stunning work of Aboriginal artists from our region. It's a celebration of both the gallery's expanded role and the rich artistic heritage of our local community. As the gallery embraces its new status, it stands as a beacon of artistic expression and community pride, inviting everyone to experience and contribute to its evolving story.

### **CLIVE WALKER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Volunteers are the beating heart of life in the bush and today I rise to acknowledge the work of Clive Walker, a stalwart of Orange rugby union club, Emus. Rugby clubs obviously

need playing fields and it's at the Emus' home, Endeavour Oval, that Clive's work can be viewed, or more accurately, admired. The club's two fields and surrounding areas are presented in immaculate condition year-round thanks to Clive and his team of volunteers. A winter sport, rugby is tough on playing surfaces. Long weeks of rain, cold weather and rare sunshine make maintaining a playing surface that doesn't turn into a sodden mess an art, and Clive has mastered that art. That mastery has enabled Emus to host not only weekly round matches but junior tournaments on a regular basis. Clive has been a valued member of the Emus community for as long as anyone at the club can remember. His contribution was enshrined recently when the club's rebuilt works shed was named 'Walkers Workshop'. Like most volunteers, Clive does what he does for the love of the club and doesn't seek recognition. I thank him for his behind-the-scenes work that keeps this club flourishing.

#### **ELISE MCKENZIE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I congratulate Elise McKenzie on being presented the Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching, part of the NSW Public Education Awards for 2024. Hosted by the Public Education Foundation, the awards recognise the work being carried out in our public schools and the progressive initiatives being undertaken to improve the educational outcomes for our kids. An English teacher at Orange High School, Elise has earned the respect of students and colleagues through her passion for her subject field and passing that passion on to the young minds under her tutelage. She has adopted innovative teaching methods to engage and motivate her students, often catering to individual learning needs. Elise encourages collaboration, inviting others to be part of her journey at Orange High School where her exceptional curriculum knowledge and ability to create a nurturing classroom atmosphere inspire students and colleagues to excel. Elise's Ministers Award for Excellence reflects her visionary approach to education, and I thank her for her dedication and commitment to her students. Well done Elise.

#### **CEREBRAL PALSY ALLIANCE ORANGE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the incredible work of the Cerebral Palsy Alliance [CPA] in Orange, which has been a cornerstone of support for individuals and families in our region since 2010. CPA Orange provides vital services to more than 300 clients, both in-centre and via telepractice, offering early intervention programs, therapy sessions and a specialised 0-2 early intervention program. Their highly skilled team of six therapists, including Shannon Taylor, Linda Koops, Sophie Kerrigan, and Alex Bird, are dedicated to improving the lives of people living with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. CPA Orange is also home to a fully equipped casting room for splinting and serial casting, ensuring comprehensive care for those in need. Backed by a robust research team, CPA stays at the forefront of innovation in therapy and support, continuing to make a significant impact in the Central West. I commend CPA Orange for their unwavering dedication to our community and encourage continued support for their life-changing work.

#### **GYMEA ANGLICAN CHURCH SPRING FAIR**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—It was my pleasure last weekend to open the Gymea Anglican Church Spring Fair. The event brings the local community together and helps the church raise money to support local and overseas mission. Coordinator Stephen Leitch said the church was thankful for generous donations from local community members and parishioners for its range of stalls such as garden, trash and treasure and the always popular cakes and jams stall. There was a great atmosphere with visiting groups providing entertainment, including Kinetic Arts Martial Arts, Genesis Performing Arts Sutherland, the St George/Sutherland Scottish Pipe Band and dancers from Knee-Deep Squares. Gymea Anglican is an organisation that loves to serve its community and it also runs a regular community food pantry, together with its annual Christmas Carols and Rescue Sunday to recognise our emergency service volunteers. I acknowledge the leadership of Rev David Fell and Rev Craig Stalder, and the hard work of Stephen Leitch and his team of around 50 volunteers who helped make the Fair a success. The church has been running the Spring Fair for six decades and it is always a great day for the Gymea community.

#### **THE YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – VET EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Each year, the Youth Partnership Presents the Vocational Education and Training [VET] Awards, and I was delighted to see several local students recognised for their remarkable achievements in VET. I congratulate Taj Bennet, a student at Kirrawee High School, who received a VET Excellence Award for construction. India Hulbert, of Woollooware High School, received a VET Award for her work in hospitality. Johnathan Prokopis, who attends St Aloysius College Cronulla, also received a VET Award in construction. All three students showed stellar commitment in their VET course and work placement. The Youth Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation helping young people successfully transition from school to work or further education. It coordinates work placements for students studying VET courses in their HSC. I commend The Youth Partnership for its work to give students real-world experience in the industries in which they are studying. I acknowledge the contribution of the local businesses for which the students work. Burraneer

Bay Building, Kingfisher Building Services, Rushi Cronulla, Tass Constructions and Tranquility Landscapes have all played a part in the success of the program.

#### **WATTLE TIME FESTIVAL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I was exceptionally pleased to find out that the Cootamundra/Gundagai Regional Council were bringing back the legendary Wattle Time Festival. The support received from Transport for NSW's Open Streets Program sealed the deal and the date was set for 7 September 2024. Glorious weather, a street parade, market stalls, live entertainment, and children's amusements all added to the bright and beautiful day that had something for every age. Albert Park, Cootamundra was awash with colour and sound and the Wattle Festival was reborn. The theme for the day was all about locals – and that it was. Katherine and Jay with their beautiful baby from Almond Sommers had the most amazing range of goods, all made with their almonds grown just a few kilometres from the Albert Park. Local author and illustrator, Catherine Rains was there with her children's books. One based on real life, is about a working Kelpie puppy who needs to overcome his fear of sheep. The live entertainment was much and varied and it was wonderful to see Abby Sloan, from the Christine Wishart Dance Studios perform before she moves to Melbourne for the next part of her dance journey.

#### **GRENFELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY 60 YEARS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—This year, the Grenfell Historical Society is celebrating 60 years of keeping the local history alive. The Grenfell Museum is housed in the School of Arts building, which was built in 1896. Grenfell, the birthplace of Henry Lawson, was an historic gold mining town after the gold rush of 1866. Between 1867 and 1869, over 1,100 kilograms of gold were produced each year on the Grenfell gold fields, making it the richest gold fields in NSW at this time. For the past 67 years, Grenfell has held the Henry Lawson Festival during the June long weekend, an event not to be missed. Grenfell is also well known for the bushrangers who frequented the area in the late 1800s, namely Ben Hall. Today, in the Weddin Mountains, you can find Ben Hall's cave, which has been preserved by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is believed to have been a hideout for Ben Hall and fellow bushranger Frank Gardiner. The Grenfell Museum has all this history and more. Congratulations to the Historical Society and the volunteers who have been instrumental in gathering information of historical significance and making it available to all.

#### **BURROWA HOUSE – CREATING AN APPETITE FOR LIFE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Burrowa House and the Maggie Beer Foundation have collaborated on the "Creating an Appetite for Life" program, a unique initiative aimed at transforming aged care food experiences. Located in Boorowa, Burrowa House is committed to enhancing the quality of life for its residents, and this partnership underscores that commitment. The Maggie Beer Foundation, founded by renowned Australian chef Maggie Beer, focuses on improving food in aged care by promoting fresh, nutritious, and delicious meals that cater to the specific needs of older adults. Through this program, Burrowa House staff receive specialised training to create menus that not only meet dietary requirements but also rekindle the joy of eating. The initiative emphasises the importance of mealtime as a social and sensory experience, aiming to combat issues like malnutrition and food-related apathy common in aged care settings. By integrating seasonal ingredients and traditional flavours, the program helps foster a sense of comfort and well-being among residents. The partnership between Burrowa House and the Maggie Beer Foundation exemplifies how thoughtful, high-quality food can significantly impact the health and happiness of aged care residents, ensuring that mealtime remains a cherished and nourishing experience.

#### **REVEREND KYOUNGHEE CHO**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I am delighted to acknowledge and celebrate the recent ordination of Reverend Kyounghee Cho of the Bexley Uniting Church. Reverend Cho has played a vital role as a pastor of the Bexley Uniting Church for the past two years, serving in a temporary placement capacity. Her ordination not only formally recognises her as a Reverend but also signifies her official induction into the Bexley congregation, solidifying her role as a spiritual leader in our community. As noted by Bexley Uniting Church elder Mikall Chong, Reverend Cho has made a significant impact as a Student Practicum with the church, and her ordination is a recognition of her calling and commitment to ministry in the Uniting Church of Australia. I look forward to working with Reverend Kyounghee Cho and extend my heartfelt congratulations on her successful ordination and induction. I wish Reverend Cho continued success in her spiritual leadership at the Bexley Uniting Church.

#### **YOUNG MUSICIANS OF HURSTVILLE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I am delighted to recognise a small yet incredibly talented band of young musicians who are pushing well above their youth in their performances. The band members made

up of siblings and friends alike include Essie Li, Gordon Guo, Freda Chen, Matthew Chen, Issac Chen, Ethan Chen and Eunice Li. The group took the initiative to organise a concert on the 14th of September 2024 at the Hurstville Anglican Church. The concert featured classical works by Vivaldi, Brahms and Boccherini combined with traditional Chinese performances utilising traditional Chinese instruments such as the Guzheng. This concert is a testament to the initiative, talent and community spirit of these young musicians. Their efforts in bringing together a group of talented musicians from the St George area reflect their commitment to enriching our local culture and supporting the next generation of musicians. I commend Essie, Gordon, Freda, Matthew, Issac, Ethan and Eunice and look forward to hearing more about their musical journey for many years to come.

#### **VENT THOMAS**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—I am thrilled to acknowledge Vent Thomas for his outstanding contributions to the Homes for Older Women [HOW] project, a remarkable initiative aimed at addressing the urgent issue of housing insecurity among women in the Blue Mountains. With over 45 years of diverse experience in theatre and entertainment production, corporate event production, and digital marketing, Vent has brought invaluable expertise to the team. His skills in marketing, proposal writing, and business systems have been instrumental in the development and implementation of effective strategies for the HOW program. Vent's dedication, combined with his extensive background in communication and IT, has significantly strengthened the HOW team's efforts. His contributions have been pivotal in raising awareness about the alarming rates of homelessness among older women and the severe rental stress in our region. Vent is a talented, multi-skilled, big-hearted, involved, respected and loved member of my community, and I am so very proud to use this forum to publicly, loudly and formally say "Thanks Vent!"

#### **ART THERAPY OPENS VISUALISATION PROCESS DIANE MARTIN, THURGOONA**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to take a moment to acknowledge an exceptional individual in our community, Diane Martin of Thurgoona. Diane has been a dedicated volunteer at the Thurgoona Community Centre for many years. Thirteen years ago, she was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, and is courageously managing her condition through alternative therapies. In March 2024, Diane enrolled in a jewellery-making course. With a background as a hairdresser, she approached this creative outlet with enthusiasm and determination. Remarkably, within just four weeks, Diane experienced something extraordinary—her brain began forging new neural connections, enabling her to perceive vibrant colours once again, igniting her imagination. Diane's story is a powerful testament to the strength that lies in confronting challenges with grace, hope, and an open heart. Her perseverance and proactive approach to her health have led to unexpected and positive outcomes. In the spirit of Diane's resilience, she lives by the belief just because we lose something doesn't mean we can't regain it. May Diane's journey continue to inspire and uplift us all.

#### **DEDICATED LOCALS WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE THE KOALA**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Crystalbrook Byron Resort this week will be hosting a Save the Koala Day fundraising luncheon with former Australian Conservation Foundation president Geoff Cousins OAM as guest speaker. I commend the resort on this initiative which unfortunately comes after a koala named Moji was hit by a car and killed nearby. Volunteer wildlife carers had been trying to alert drivers to Moji's presence by erecting handmade roadside signs. Koala breeding season runs from June to December, so there are more koalas on the move looking for mates. Eleven per cent of deaths are by car hits. It is a mighty effort to save the koala here in the Northern Rivers region. There are the Leafers out there collecting the tucker, animal rescue and koala carers, the Lismore-based Friends of the Koala who raise funds for Northern Rivers Koala Hospital. Friends of the Koala treated 410 koalas at the Northern Rivers Koala Hospital last year, an increase of 26 per cent on the previous year. Chlamydia causes 55 per cent of koala deaths, which is why I advocated for a NSW Government-funded project to vaccinate an estimated 100 koalas each year for three years.

#### **LISMORE LIONS CLUB RAISES \$16,000 FOR OUR KIDS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to Lismore Lions Club members who during the past year have raised an incredible \$16,000 for Our Kids charity. They've done this by hosting Friday night raffles at Mary G's hotel in downtown Lismore. These funds will purchase: An Airvo3 (a respiratory support device to deliver warmed and humidified oxygen to help children who have breathing issues. A Chester Chest Advance Arm mannequin (to assist paediatric nurses train with wound cleaning, applying bandages and fixings, and inserting and removing IVs). Our Kids Fundraising Coordinator Rebekka Battista thanked Lions representatives and everyone who bought a raffle ticket. Lismore Lions Club members also recently supplied food and refreshments to participants in the NAB Darryl Chapman Fund Run supporting Our Kids. It was a massive day with over 1,000 runners and walkers. Rebekka on Facebook thanked all who registered, donated, sponsored and volunteered. In total, over \$26,000 was raised, which will go towards purchasing breast milk warmers for the Special Care Nursery and Children's Ward in Lismore, as well as a humidicrib. Established in 2001, Our Kids

raise much-needed funds to purchase medical equipment to help keep children stay local when needing medical care.

#### **LISMORE REGIONAL GALLERY & LISMORE WORKERS CLUB REOPEN**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I cannot wait for tomorrow evening's official reopening of the Lismore Regional Gallery, beautifully restored from the 2022 floods with \$5.1 million in disaster recovery funding from the NSW and Australian governments. Another iconic cultural centre, our much-missed Gallery is set to open its doors, following on from the soft reopening of the Lismore Workers Club on Monday. The Gallery reopening marks our social and cultural recovery. We have been the poorer with the Gallery not open as it averaged 150,000 visitors a year before the floods. I thank Gallery Director Ashleigh Ralph and her team, Lismore City Council, and the Friends of the Gallery for all the blood, sweat and tears they have contributed to ensure it is back with us. Lismore's CBD is on the move; it's getting its vibe back and this just adds to it. There was a sneak preview walk through of the Gallery yesterday, where I was represented by staffer Ted Bassingthwaighe. I'm also so happy to see Lismore Workers Club back in business. I worked at the club many years ago and I'm very attached to it. This is a major milestone in Lismore's recovery.

#### **JULIA SCOTT**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Julia Scott, Lake Illawarra High School's English head teacher, for winning the 2025 Premier's Inclusive Education Scholarship. Julia plans to travel to the United States to study gifted education in comprehensive public schools because she believes the most potential for growth lies here, especially in a low socioeconomic context. For example, there are children that can comprehend ideas beyond their age, but they don't have the coping skills to manage them. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Julia on the Scholarship and wish her all the best in her studies.

#### **SCIENCE FACULTY – WARILLA HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of the Science Faculty, at Warilla High School, on receiving a Secretary's Award for an Outstanding School Initiative for their innovative 'Science HSC Success' program. This recognition highlights the hard work and commitment of the faculty to student achievement. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Warilla High School's Science Faculty for this wonderful achievement.

#### **LACHLAN BUTTEL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Lachlan Buttel, Year 12 student at Warilla High School, on his recent success at the NSW CHS Gymnastics competition. Lachlan placed first in the floor, vault and parallel bars, second in the pommel and third in the high bar. Lachlan was awarded the overall champion of the event and led the South Coast team to rank first in the state. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Lachlan and wish him all the best in his future sporting endeavours.

#### **ST JOSEPH'S REGIONAL COLLEGE – HASTINGS AECG DUNGANG ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to Year 12 students Jye Donovan and Ceceaila Ducker from St Joseph's Regional College Port Macquarie on receiving recognition in the Hastings Aboriginal Education Consultative Group 2024 Dungang Aboriginal Education Awards. The Dungang Aboriginal Education Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements in education and excellence among students and staff across the Hastings school community. Jye and Ceceaila are exemplary students and role models at St Joseph's Regional College. Dedicated and committed to their studies, Jye and Ceceaila work exceptionally hard to succeed at school while providing practical support to their peers when given the opportunity. At the Aboriginal Education Awards in August, Jye was presented with the 2024 Outstanding Achievement in Performing/Creative/Visual Arts. During the presentation ceremony and Ceceaila was honoured with the award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Speaking. It was pleasing to hear nominations for the Aboriginal Education Awards were high among the listed categories, which is a credit not only to our indigenous students but also our teachers who invest so much time and energy to ensure the best of educational outcomes are delivered. A wonderful accomplishment by two bright and intelligent young students. Congratulations.

#### **RECOGNITION OF MATT LYNCH**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Matt Lynch of Armidale for winning the 2024 New England and Northern Inland Adult Volunteer of the Year award. Matt was recognised for his commitment and dedication to supporting young people as a mentor, coach, driver and cook

with the youth support group BackTrack. I congratulate Matt on this wonderful accolade and for the immeasurable difference made to the lives of young people and their families, in the NSW Northern Tablelands region. Matt is a shining example of what BackTrack represents, that is to provide wrap-around wellbeing and youth support, hands-on skills training, education, and activities that build self-confidence, responsibility, leadership and belonging. I commend Matt on his commitment, tireless efforts and generous time given to this worthy cause, the community and Northern Tablelands electorate solutes you.

#### **CHARLOTTE ARCHIBALD FINALIST FOR MISS AUSTRALIA PAGEANT 2024**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements Charlotte Archibald, for being selected as one of the 34 finalists from around the country for the Miss Australia Pageant, to be held at the Gold Coast later in the year. I congratulate the Glen Innes local on an already impressive resume at the ripe old age of 21. As part of the process Miss Australia finalists are encouraged to nominate a charity where they can help raise funds and awareness. Charlotte's chosen charity is Dolly's Dream, a charity dedicated to starting conversations about the devastating effects of bullying. I commend Charlotte for taking this valuable opportunity to be part of the pageant and for using this platform to better the lives of others. We wish Charlotte the best of luck – your local community and the Northern Tablelands is right behind you!

#### **MOREE BOARS WIN GROUP 4 GRAND FINAL**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the 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 the first home grand final Moree has seen in 22 years and the club's fifth G4 premiership win. I congratulate the players for a hard-fought comeback after being down 14-12 at halftime. After getting the score back to 18 all, the Boars wasted no time and in six minutes, had scored a further three tries before Captain/Coach Michael Watton angled back on an inside run to beat three defenders and score under the posts. Michael converted one of his six goals from seven attempts, to complete a wonderful finish for the home club. I commend the team for a great year on the field and all the hard work and dedication they have put into their training. A special thank you to Club President Todd Mitchell for his huge involvement and leadership, as well as the hard-working committee to promote the club and its players.

#### **ALBURY SCHOOLBOY WINS NATIONAL TITLE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Year 10 Albury High School student Eli Groves, for his outstanding achievement in winning the prestigious Open Age Shooting Competition at the Fly Shoot Nationals in Western Australia. At just 15 years old, Eli is already a two-time Australian record holder. This recent triumph resulted in the talented teenage sportsman claiming the coveted Jim McKinley Trophy, a testament to his incredible skill and determination. Eli's ability to maintain focus and precision throughout five challenging rounds, despite facing 40km winds, speaks volumes about his talent and resilience. As every fly shooter and bench rest competitor knows, having the right equipment and mindset is crucial, and Eli has mastered both. Well done, Eli, on claiming the top prize, your accomplishments are truly inspiring.

#### **DADS PUSHING PRAMS CARRY EACH OTHER AND CONNECT IN STRUGGLES**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to commend Blair Keeble, Tom Cencic, Josh Docking, and Arran Macdougall — four dedicated Albury dads who are not only pushing prams but also pushing boundaries to raise awareness and funds for men's mental health during the prenatal period. Blairs Keeble established the "Man with a Pram" group – to raise awareness around the struggles and unexpected challenges that fatherhood can bring, where men can connect, share their struggles, and help each other. The group, that also shares the wins and joys of being a dad, has been active for the past six years with 200 members. It supports local fathers and strengthens families by encouraging better communication, partnership, and care for newborns. Congratulations to all who took part in the annual "Man with a Pram" event on September 1st. It is more than just a walk; it's a significant statement on the importance of men's mental health in the parenting journey. Well done Blair, Tom, Josh, and Arran for your efforts in supporting fathers and raising crucial awareness about men's mental health during the early stages of fatherhood.

#### **TOP AWARD**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—A Wagga company has taken on the big names of the agricultural machinery industry and won – fittingly, at Australia's biggest agriculture field days event. John Arentz and JTA Spraying won the award for best Australian designed and manufactured agriculture machine at the Henty Machinery Field Days, with the judges declaring the locally made sprayer was the best in the business, beating out powerhouse operators like John Deere and Hutcheon & Pearce. It's an amazing success for a small local company and testament to the ingenuity of Riverina manufacturers who can compete with giants of the sector. Designed from input on farmers' needs and four years in the making, John Arentz's pro-series trailing boom

features a front-mounted boom that rises and falls with the terrain to maximise spraying coverage and reduce wastage. Awards at the Henty Field Days are hotly contested in an environment that tests the best of the best, so this recognition is amazing news for a small local company with a big future. Congratulations to John Arentz, his partner Courtnee Fitzgerald and the JTA spraying team. Our farming and agricultural manufacturing future is clearly in good hands – and that's great news for everyone.

#### **NICCO TIMBER WINDOWS AND DOORS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I take this opportunity to recognise NICCO Timber Windows & Doors, a local business based in Kingsgrove, for its active participation in the Regional Industry Education Partnership program. NICCO Timber Windows & Doors has played a significant role in this important initiative, which bridges the gap between education and industry by connecting schools with employers. Through their involvement, NICCO Timber Windows & Doors has provided prospective students with invaluable skills and hands-on experience, offering them real-life opportunities to understand the workforce. Their continuous commitment to mentoring the next generation of skilled professionals not only benefits the students but also strengthens our local community by helping to address the current skill shortage crisis. I commend NICCO Timber Windows & Doors for their dedication to education and their continued support of initiatives that foster growth and learning.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO RIVERSTONE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2024**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I rise to congratulate the 50 students of the Riverstone High class of 2024 on completing high school. These students have worked incredibly hard over the last 13 years, especially in the past few months completing their trials and, in the lead up to the HSC exams. I really do believe the students of the Riverstone electorate are the best New South Wales has to offer and I look forward to hearing of their successes as they start the next journey of their life, whether it be pursuing tertiary education or entering the workforce - I know that these young people will do incredible things. This is only possible thanks to the remarkable teachers at Riverstone High School and I thank each and every one of them for their dedication to encouraging the growth of all their students. I also acknowledge outgoing school captains Alexander Billett and Naaki Mangu, and vice-captains Almez Kaddour and Ana Tiannah Powell. They have done an incredible job representing their cohort and have left big shoes to fill. I'm sure this is just the start of their time in leadership positions and wish them the very best.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ST JOHN PAUL II CLASS OF 2024**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I rise to congratulate the 113 students of the Saint John Paul the Second Catholic College class of 2024 on completing high school. These students have worked incredibly hard over the last 13 years, especially in the past few months, completing their trials and, in the lead up to the HSC exams. I strongly believe the students of the Riverstone electorate are the best New South Wales has to offer. I look forward to hearing of their successes as they start the next journey of their life, whether pursuing tertiary education or entering the workforce - I know these young people will do incredible things. This is only possible thanks to the remarkable teachers at Saint John Paul the Second. I thank each one of them for their dedication to encouraging the growth of all their students. I also acknowledge the outgoing school captains Tara Dempsey and Sanika Kulkarni and college mission leader Tristan Kemp. They have done an incredible job representing their cohort and have left big shoes to fill. I'm sure this is just the start of their time in leadership positions and wish them the very best.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NORWEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CLASS OF 2024**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Congratulations to the 52 students of the Norwest Christian College class of 2024 on completing high school. These students have worked incredibly hard over the last 13 years, especially in the past few months, completing their trials and, in the lead up to the HSC exams. I really do believe the students of the Riverstone electorate are the best New South Wales has to offer and I look forward to hearing of their successes as they start the next journey of their life, whether it be pursuing tertiary education or entering the workforce - I know that these young people will do incredible things. This is only possible thanks to the remarkable teachers at Norwest Christian College. I thank each one of them for their dedication to encouraging the growth of all their students. I also to acknowledge the outgoing school captains Jemma Hubbard and Josiah Viray and the vice-captains Olivia Keegan and Oliver Harriot. They have done an incredible job representing their cohort and have left big shoes to fill. I'm sure this is just the start of their time in leadership positions and wish them the very best.

#### **GREAT LAKES PEARL DRAGONS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons, Forsters Dragon Boat team. As well as Dragon Boating, the team also gives back, raising funds for local charities

and their club. Their commitment to early morning training on Wallis Lake, often in the cold and rain, has produced impressive results. At the recent Taree Manning River Regatta in August, they secured second place in the women's 20s, 200m event. In September at Camden Haven, they went on to win gold and bronze in the women's events, competing against teams from Newcastle to Kempsey. Congratulations to the Great Lakes Pearl Dragons team on their well-deserved victories!

#### NEVILLE POLLITT

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Neville Pollitt, an Old Bar resident, Royal Navy veteran, and member of the RSL Sub-branch, who is currently taking part in The Long Run to raise funds for prostate cancer research. Neville has set himself the challenge of walking 72 kilometres throughout September, and he's already made progress, raising over \$570 to support this important cause. Prostate cancer is a devastating illness that affects many men in our community, but Neville's determination to make a difference is inspiring. By taking on this challenge, he's not only raising funds for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia [PCFA], but also raising awareness of the impact prostate cancer has on men and their families. I thank Neville for his commitment - every dollar raised brings us closer to a future where men can live longer and healthier lives, free from the threat of prostate cancer.

#### WINGHAM RSL SUB-BRANCH AUXILIARY

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the Wingham RSL Sub-branch Auxiliary on their 95th anniversary, celebrated on August 15, 2024, at the Wingham Services Club. Members from Harrington, Taree, Old Bar, Wingham, and Gloucester gathered to honour this milestone. Special guests, Ray James OAM and Pauline James OAM, joined the celebrations, with presentations including Life Membership to Mrs. Lesley Irwin and Ron Irwin OAM receiving a quilt in recognition of his service. The event highlighted the rich history of the Auxiliary, and the contributions of members like Mrs. June Yarnold were celebrated. Congratulations to the Wingham Auxiliary on 95 years of service.

#### SKYLA LANGE – BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I take this opportunity to recognise the remarkable sporting achievements of Camden Haven elite athlete, Skyla Lange. A Camden Haven High School student, Skyla juggles study, social engagements and a gruelling training schedule. Countless hours of jiu jitsu training, cardio, and circuit have resulted in Skyla amassing multiple medals at the recent Brazilian Jiu Jitsu championships in Las Vegas. Skyla competed in eight gruelling matches, across multiple categories to achieve this outstanding success. In the Blue Gi Juvenile Division, competing in her age and weight division, Skyla earned her first medal, a silver. Pushing herself, she entered the open-weight category for Gi, where she faced heavier opponents and secured a bronze medal. The No-Gi matches in Skyla's weight division brought further rewards of a second silver. Determined to push herself further and seize every opportunity, Skyla entered the Open Weight No-Gi event. She fearlessly battled with competitors from various weight classes and emerged victorious, claiming the coveted gold medal. What an extraordinary result! A four-medal haul! I encourage Skyla to unwaveringly chase her dreams and I await the results of the Abu Dhabi World Youth Championship this November and the European Championship in Portugal.

#### GEMIRAH FERNANDO – AECG SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I recognise the extraordinary talents of Year 9 student Gemirah (Gem) Fernando from Mackillop College Port Macquarie for recently taking out the coveted Sportsperson of the Year at the Dungang Awards ceremony. Gem Fernando is known as a local superstar of the netball courts, showcasing her skills at both local, state and national level. Earlier this year, Gem was selected to compete with the NSW Echidnas Indigenous Schoolgirls netball team on the Gold Coast, joining over 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls. The result saw Gem chosen to represent the Australian Under 14s Budgies Indigenous School Girls team in New Zealand - an extraordinary achievement! Accompanying Gem is fellow teammate and local Shakiylah Chatfield. They will now travel to New Zealand for the 2024 International Netball Festival in Aotearoa held over September 25 to October 2. On 13th August Gem was awarded the prestigious Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group (AECG) Sportsperson of the Year recognising her outstanding accomplishments in netball. This has helped to secure her selection for the North Coast Academy Indigenous Talent program. I congratulate Gem on her sporting achievements and wish our Aussie girls well in New Zealand.

#### BARBARA ATKINS - COMMUNITY HERO

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—I am proud to inform the house of the incredible work of one of our own, Barbara Atkins, a Keira Constituent and extremely valued member of the extended Illawarra community who has



earned an NSW Community Hero of the Year nomination. Barabara has been volunteering since the young age of 12 and has made a significant impact in the Illawarra as a Volunteer Outreach Coordinator at the Bulli Community Centre and other volunteer work services through initiatives such as the Illawarra Street Kitchen. Barbara has provided an unwavering amount of support to many members of the community, who feared there was nowhere else to turn and her dedication to helping the most vulnerable is unparalleled. Through her work at the Bulli Community Centre, Barbara has created a supportive and welcoming environment that allows people to feel safe, supported and heard. Barbara embodies all the qualities of a community hero, as she is compassionate, selfless, and determined to assist the community in the best way she can. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Barabara for her continued work in the community and recognise her outstanding efforts in helping our most vulnerable.

#### **JEMMA POLLARD**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—19-year-old Jemma Pollard of Whitebridge is an extraordinary athlete. After blitzing her competition in the 400-metres event at the Australian nationals in Adelaide earlier this year, Jemma went on to the World Athletics U20 Championships. The World Athletics U20 Championships are a biennial athletics tournament, where gifted young athletes from around the world gather together to compete. Some may remember when Sydney hosted the 1996 championships. This year, it was Lima's turn to host the Championships. Due to political instability in Peru, the Championships almost didn't happen at all, but I'm happy to report that they went off without a hitch from 27 to 31 August. Jemma reached the semi-finals, coming fourth in her heat. Congratulations to Jemma on her achievements so far, and thank you for representing the Charlestown electorate and Australia on the world stage. I am so proud to see young women from my electorate achieving in sports, and I can't wait to see what comes next for this amazing young woman.

#### **KAHIBAH VILLAGE FAIR**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The 2024 Kahibah Village Fair was held on Sunday 15 September at Kahibah Memorial Park, and though it was a chilly, blustery morning, the Fair was a great success. Aiming to bring the community together, introduce neighbours to one another and encourage all to have some fun, the Village Fair is a yearly event I was thrilled to go along to. I was proud to officially open the Fair, and loved the opportunity to see the local community come together to celebrate their fantastic village. I saw very talented performers from Kahibah Public School, St Joseph's Primary School and Whitebridge High. The Fair also featured pony rides, a petting zoo, face painting, live music and a chance to learn more about local history. My thanks to the Kahibah Village Alliance for organising the fair, partnering with the Greater Charlestown Sustainable Neighbourhood Group and Glenrock Anglican Church. I would like to acknowledge the local businesses who sponsored the Fair, and to all those who chipped in to make it happen. I'm looking forward to 2025's Fair!

#### **CHARLESTOWN FIRE STATION**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—We all know how fantastic and hard-working our emergency services personnel are. Their dedication, professionalism and commitment is reflected in the feedback I receive from my constituents, as when I recently heard from Ann Johnson of Kotara South about an experience she had with the men and women of Fire and Rescue NSW Station 255 Charlestown. Ann told me about a very small fire in her home which was quickly put out. Afterwards, at her neighbour's suggestion, she reported the fire to Charlestown Station. Her call was answered by in a clam, professional manner, and the fires arrived in no time at all. They performed a quick inspection, realised Ann needed new smoke detectors and immediately installed them in two rooms. They were also quick to notice that Ann's husband, Noel, was coughing badly. As Noel was at higher risk for complications from smoke inhalation, they recommended that an ambulance be called. This is the kind of work done by Fire and Rescue personnel all over the state, but it makes me so proud that Charlestown is home to such a great team. My thanks to the Charlestown Fire Station team.

#### **ORCHARD HILLS RURAL FIRE BRIGADE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend the junior team of the Orchard Hills Rural Fire Brigade, led by Junior Crew Leader Emily Filewood, for winning the junior event of the 26th NSW Rural Fire Service State Championships held in Albury earlier this month. The event had the junior members compete against nine other junior teams in which their leadership, teamwork and decision-making skills in various grass, bush and structural fire scenarios were tested. There are approximately 30 cadets of the Orchard Hills Fire Brigade, of which 6 were chosen to compete. I congratulate the Orchard Hills Rural Fire Brigade for this outstanding achievement and thank everyone at the Brigade for their service to our community.

### RSPCA NSW

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—As today marks the RSPCA's annual Cupcake Day for 2024, I take the opportunity to thank and commend the RSPCA for the important and outstanding work they do as a not-for-profit charity promoting and conducting animal welfare. I encourage everyone in my community to enjoy Cupcake Day, with the money raised going towards helping the animals being assisted by the RSPCA. For those unable to get involved today, they may hold a bake sale at any time throughout the year and donate the funds to the RSPCA. I thank the RSPCA for all that they do and extend my appreciation to the community for supporting this cause.

### WORLD PHARMACISTS DAY

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Wednesday the 25th of September 2024 marked World Pharmacists Day. I thank all pharmacists in my electorate of Badgerys Creek for their commitment to meeting the needs of our community with care and dedication. In Australia, community pharmacies are the most frequently visited and most accessible healthcare destination. Every Australian, on average, visits their community pharmacy 18 times each year. There are around 37,000 pharmacists across nearly 6,000 community pharmacies in Australia. Many of our amazing pharmacists work after hours and on weekends. I commend all pharmacists and express the appreciation of my electorate of Badgerys Creek for their service.

### VIEW CLUB

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the Ballina Evening VIEW club and its President Julie Stephan for the incredible contributions that this club makes to the lives of young people in our community and the admirable vision of 'women creating and leading a more inclusive society' that they actively pursue. The local VIEW club formed in 1989 and is part of The Smith Family. It is the only national women's organisation dedicated exclusively to supporting and advocating for the education of young disadvantaged Australians. The club's commitment and unique focus are inspiring and has made a remarkable difference in the lives of almost 2000 children since it started through The Smith Family's Learning for Life program. VIEW clubs have more than 14,000 members in around 300 communities and manage to raise more than \$1.3 million every year for the programs that The Smith Family run. I know the powerful force that is created when women come together and thank the VIEW Club for providing a space for the women of our community to unite in the mission to drive meaningful change for vulnerable young people in our community.

### MULLUMBIMBY HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the wonderful efforts of students and staff at Mullumbimby High School who prepared 300 home-cooked meals as their contribution to the frozen meal program at the Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre. The meals are distributed to vulnerable members of the community including those who are isolated, unwell, or rough sleepers. The school community has had a tough few years after the school site was badly impacted by the 2022 floods and as the school recovers it is so encouraging to see the school spirit of giving back and volunteerism has not been dampened at all. Students are actively encouraged to participate in the strengthening of community – within and outside of its halls. I give my thanks to the kind- hearted students and teachers who took part in this fabulous program and who are making a tangible difference to the health and wellbeing of vulnerable members of our community.

### KOREAN WOMEN'S HEALTH WORKSHOP

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—I rise to recognise the Cancer Council NSW, the Chinese Australian Services Society (known as CASS), and the Asian-Australian Women's Association (known as AAWA Inc). for their generous support for the recent Korean Women's Health Workshop which I was pleased to host in Strathfield electorate. This important workshop was aimed at raising awareness within the local Korean community - where screening rates have historically been lower than in the general population - of the availability and necessity of breast and cervical cancer screening. Special acknowledgment goes to Jade Bridgeman, Community Coordinator at Cancer Council NSW, whose leadership was instrumental in the event's success. Additionally, Dr. Michael Holland, Member for Bega, contributed his expertise in obstetrics and gynaecology, while Sarah Chang from CASS and Elizabeth Wang from AAWA Inc. provided facilitation in Korean, ensuring the workshop remained engaging and informative. With 23% of attendees registering for follow-up appointments with Breast Screen NSW, the workshop was clearly successful in encouraging proactive health measures. This initiative underscores the vital importance of supporting community-led health education, especially within diverse communities as reflected in the Strathfield Electorate.

### MAITLAND'S 2024 HUNTER RUGBY AWARDS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Maitland is Hunter Rugby's Club of the Year following the end of season Anderson Medal Awards presented in Newcastle last Friday night. The Blacks were dominant Premier One minor premiers completing the 15-round regular season with 12 wins and three losses to finish well clear of eventual grand final opponent Merewether Carlton. Merewether turned the tables from last season to defeat Maitland 41-25 and collect the premiership trophy. Among the accolades for Maitland in season 2024 was polling the most Anderson Medal points to win the Kia Toa Shield. Nick Davidson placed second place, Patrick Batey third and Dane Corben fourth. Blacks first grade coach Luke Cunningham was named Hunter Rugby Coach of the Year for the second straight season. Pat Batey crowned Hunter Rugby's top try scorer after breaching the opposition try line 17 times this season. The boot of Hare Meihana was also pivotal to the Blacks Premier One season with the fly-half crowned Hunter Rugby's leading pointscorer. Darcy Gillett's 24 tries for Maitland this season saw her recognised as Hunter Rugby's leading Womens' try scorer. Congratulations to president Pat Howard, Maitland Rugby Club's officials, players and supporters on another memorable season!

### AWARD WINNING WINEMAKER - LIZ SILKMAN

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—A collective 'cheers' for Liz Silkman on an awe-inspiring August 2024. Liz made history named Halliday Winemaker of the Year 2025 - a first for a Hunter winemaker. A stellar achievement to be recognised by respected wine critic and vigneron James Halliday and his esteemed panellists. The Silkman Blackberry Semillon 2023 also named the Halliday Wine Companion's Semillon of the Year. To paraphrase Liz's reaction "I'm not one for the limelight, so I'm still in shock .. it's so exciting too for Silkman, a tiny brand (husband) Shaun and I started as a platform to collaborate on winemaking ideas, styles and have a bit of fun." Then further success at the 52nd Hunter Valley Wine Show collecting seven trophies for First Creek Wines and Silkman Wines. The Petrie-Drinan Trophy and the Drayton Family Trophy for Best Semillon of Show for the Silkman 2017 Reserve Semillon. The Murray Tyrrell Trophy for Best Chardonnay for the Silkman 2023 Reserve. First Creek Wines 2024 Classics Vermentino won the Graham Gregory Memorial Trophy. Congratulations Liz on being Halliday Winemaker of the Year and to Liz and Shaun for the success of Silkman and First Creek wines.

### SINGLETON BUSINESS AWARDS 2024

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I want to acknowledge an amazing display of community spirit recently for the 2024 Singleton Business Awards. Just over 300 award nominations were submitted with the judges selecting 52 finalists across 21 categories. Congratulations LOOP Organics named 2024 Business of the Year at the awards presentation on Saturday 6 July at Singleton Civic Centre. Business Leaders of the Year are Rachel Baigent of Witmore, (for Businesses over 20 Employees) and Skye Vickers of Hunter Urban Dance Studio (for Businesses under 20 Employees). Employee of the Year is Dean Mainey of Soldier On. For the second-year running, Jess Stewart of HSV Heaven, named Young Business Leader of the Year. HSV Heaven also crowned People's Choice for Best Customer Service. 250 years of local business longevity was celebrated with recognition for Cox's Bakery on 100 years of trading, Singleton Neighbourhood Centre (50 Years), Daracon and Singleton Pump & Water (40 Years) and Worn Out Wares (20 Years). Thank you also to Danny Eather, who after six years as a director on the Business Singleton Board and the past two as President, is stepping down from executive duties.

### ROSELANDS FOOTBALL CLUB UNDER 14S PREMIERSHIP

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to Roselands Football Club Under 14s squad on their recent impressive victory against Marrickville Football Club. Their dedication, teamwork, and skill have truly shone brightly, displaying the essence of sportsmanship and excellence. This win not only reflects their hard work on the field but also their commitment to representing their community with pride. They have shown their amazing work on and off the field. Tony and the late Grace Martin founded Roselands Football Club in 1972. From the beginning, their unwavering spirit led to a remarkable achievement when four out of their eight teams emerged as runners-up in their respective divisions. Their traditional kit consists of green and yellow shirts, green shorts, and green socks, and it is wonderful to see this sports club grow and develop. Their success is a testament to the support and encouragement they receive from their coaches, supporters, and the entire community. Well, done to Roselands Raptors Football Club Under 14s squad for their outstanding performance and commendable sportsmanship. This win not only brings glory to their team but also adds to the rich legacy of sporting achievements in our community.

**NONIE'S FLORISTRY BUSINESS AWARD 2024**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to Nonie's Floristry in my electorate of Bankstown on winning the 2024 Canterbury Bankstown Local Business Awards in the Florist and Gift Services category. This is a well-deserved award as it shows the outstanding dedication, innovation, and courage Nonie and Hamna consistently bring to making Nonie's Floristry a success in our community. This dynamic duo has created a new way of thinking about floristry in the Wedding industry. The fairy-like florists revisit the venue one hour before the event concludes and they expertly wrap existing florals into delightful mini bouquets. Guests are offered a unique and beautiful personalised memento as they take a piece of your wedding home. This new way of floristry is eco-friendly and easy on budgets, which ensures guests leave with a smile on their face. With over 15 years' experience, Nonie's Floristry has featured on Sunrise on Channel Seven. They understand the value of making a couple happy, and this is evident in their thriving business. Once again thank you and congratulations to Nonie and Hamna on your Local Business Award. It is a much-deserved recognition of the way your business is valued in our community.

**CENTRAL SYDNEY WOLVES ALL AGE MEN'S DIVISION 1 SQUAD**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to Central Sydney Wolves All Age Men's Division 1 squad on their recent impressive victory, that went all the way to penalties against neighbouring Greenacre Eagles FC. Their dedication, teamwork, and skill have truly shone brightly, displaying the essence of sportsmanship and excellence. This win not only reflects their hard work on the field but also their commitment to representing their community with pride. They have shown their amazing work on and off the field. Central Sydney Wolves was established in 1967, and adults experience the great game of football in a friendly environment. Their success is a testament to the support and encouragement they receive from their coaches, supporters, and the entire community. Goalkeeping dynamo Hamzah turned it on in the shootout saving 2 penalties and winning the cup for the Wolves. Their achievement serves as an inspiration to aspiring athletes and demonstrates the positive impact of sports on our community. Thank you to the President, Ola Hamed, for encouraging an inclusive and supportive culture which led to the team's victory. This win adds to the rich legacy of sporting achievements in our community. Well done Wolves!

**SIMON CROCE - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise recently retired Griffith Councillor Simon Croce. Simon has been honoured for his more than 20 years of dedicated, long-standing commitment and service to local government. Simon, first elected in 2004, has been an active voice on Council and contributed to a wide range of key projects and initiatives. He served as Deputy Mayor for a 12-month period in 2020. One of Simon's notable achievements was advocating for the Griffith to Yoogali shared bicycle track and bridge, which is currently under construction and will serve as a vital link for the community. Mayor, Doug Curran together with some of Griffith's longest-serving councillors acknowledged the many years they worked alongside Cr Croce. Mayor Curran commented that Simon was always willing to mentor new councillors including himself over the years. Simon thanked all the staff who had always supported and helped him out and to the public who had voted for him over 20 years. I thank Simon for his exceptional service to the Griffith community.

**HAY TREES PLAINS LANDCARE GROUP - HAY**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise the Hay Trees on Plains Landcare Group, supporting natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. The group is volunteer led and are made up of passionate carers of country who give up their time to ensure the governance of the group is of a high standard. Hay Landcare group runs workshops, paddock walks, seed collection days and school talks and have supported developing native bush tucker gardens at two schools. Creative Catchment Kids program was developed to expose students to natural resource management, including First Nations Elders, as well as working closely with local schools to create native bush tucker gardens. The group has been a part of the Taronga Zoo programs for Hay's primary students to educate them about the endangered Plains Wanderer bird. They have established a native and bush tucker community garden in the Hay prison grounds. Hay Landcare staff are to be congratulated for their dedication and commitment in educating people of all ages on better land and resource management.

**WENDY AVES - IVANHOE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I recognise Wendy Aves for her milestone of raising \$20,000 for cancer sufferers in her local area. Wendy has always been an Ivanhoe local, and always looking for ways to support her small community of 196 people. After a close family member struggled

with cancer, Wendy began a campaign to raise funds to help local cancer sufferers. She completed a horse ride to raise funds, held raffles and donated prizes. Wendy has found travellers through the town to be very supportive, including one person who donated 12 first aid kits to be sold to raise money. Wendy is to be commended for her care for her community and work in raising funds to help those in need.

### **BROOMS TO BOWLO CHARITY WALK**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I congratulate the team at Raine & Horne – Maclean, Yamba, Iluka, along with the participants, volunteers and sponsors for the outstanding success of the 2024 Annual Brooms to Yamba Bowlo Charity Walk for Cystic Fibrosis held on 4 August. Raising an incredible \$20,180 for Cystic Fibrosis research is an extraordinary achievement, and reflects the generosity, unity and strength of our community. The 23-kilometre walk from Brooms Head to Yamba brought together 280 walkers, participants, and volunteers in a powerful demonstration of unity and compassion. Since the event's inception in 2008, it has raised over \$110,000 to advance Cystic Fibrosis research and provide crucial support to individuals and families impacted by this challenging condition. I thank Raine & Horne for organising this event along with the numerous local businesses for their generous contributions. Special recognition goes to this year's event ambassador, 14-year-old Chloe Edwards, who, along with her family, has raised over \$40,000 for CF since 2012. The community has rallied behind this cause year after year. It is heartwarming to see so many people come together to raise awareness, offer support, and contribute to a cause that affects so many lives.

### **CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF FERRY PARK GALLERY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I extend my congratulations to Ferry Park Gallery in Maclean, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary—a remarkable milestone that marks three decades of showcasing local art and fostering a vibrant artistic community. Since its inception, the gallery has been a cornerstone for artists and art enthusiasts alike, offering a space where creativity thrives and the rich cultural heritage of the Clarence Valley is proudly displayed. It has also become a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from near and far. This milestone is a testament to the dedication and vision of the early members of the Lower Clarence Arts and Crafts Association [LCACA], who raised \$50,000 to help establish the gallery at Ferry Park. Their efforts have resulted in a lasting cultural asset for the community. Over the years, Ferry Park Gallery has continually evolved, hosting numerous exhibitions, workshops, and events that reflect its unwavering commitment to promoting the arts. As part of its 30th-anniversary celebrations, the gallery featured special exhibits highlighting both long-standing member artists and emerging talents. Congratulations once again to everyone involved in achieving this significant milestone, and may Ferry Park Gallery continue to flourish for many years to come.

### **RICHMOND VALLEY BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I congratulate the winners and finalists of the Richmond Valley Business Awards hosted by the Casino Business Chamber recently. The gala event, a celebration of outstanding contributions made by local businesses and individuals to the prosperity and vitality of our community. The winners are: Excellence in Agriculture & Primary Industries; Southview Orchard; Excellence in Trade, Construction & Manufacturing; APRACS Pty Ltd; Excellence in Retail and Personal Services; Casino Travel Shoppe; Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion; Casino RSM; Excellence in Sustainability; Summerland Credit Union; Outstanding Community Organisation; HART Services; Outstanding Visitor Experience; Casino Beef Week; Outstanding Start-up; Wild Soul Bakehouse; Employer of Choice (open); Casino RSM; Outstanding Employee; Courtney Gill, Summerland Credit Union; Outstanding Young Business Leader; Jackson Whitney, JW Media; Outstanding Business Leader; Jeff Gibbs, The Northern Rivers Times; Excellence in Micro Business; On Point Bus Hire; . Excellence in Small Business; Casino Travel Shoppe. The Richmond Valley region thrives from the hard work, passion, and resilience of its business community, I commend everyone involved in making this year's awards a success. Congratulations to the Casino Business Chamber for another successful event, to all the businesses that make our region a great place to live and work.

### **JOHN AND SUE HOWARD**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Sue and John Howard, who have been jointly honoured with the prestigious Jim Anderson Memorial Award at the 2024 Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Awards. Their remarkable dedication to Touch Football and OzTag in the Penrith area for an astounding 35 years is truly commendable. For over three decades, Sue and John have been pillars of our local sports community, contributing their time, passion, and expertise at The Kingsway in St Marys. Their commitment has not only enriched the lives of countless players and families but has also fostered a strong, vibrant sports culture in our region. As they now enjoy a well-deserved retirement, we celebrate their hard work and the positive impact they have made in the lives of local athletes. Their contributions to sports have set a high

standard and their dedication will be remembered fondly by all who have had the privilege of working with them. Sue and John, thank you for your unwavering service and congratulations once again on receiving this prestigious award. Your achievements are a testament to your exceptional commitment and love for your local community

### **2025 COLYTON HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—Earlier this week I had the pleasure of joining senior students at Colyton High School for their 2025 Senior Leadership Induction. I am delighted to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed school captains of Colyton High School and know they will lead with passion and integrity. Colyton High's "Everyday Leadership" program stands out as an exemplary initiative that not only encourages student involvement within the school but also fosters meaningful connections with our local community. This program is a testament to the school's commitment to nurturing essential leadership qualities in our youth, preparing them to be responsible and engaged citizens. I commend the dedicated students and staff whose tireless efforts have cultivated such a vibrant and impactful school community. Your hard work and passion are truly inspiring and play a crucial role in shaping the leaders of tomorrow. Congratulations once again to the new school leaders, I look forward to witnessing the positive contributions you will make throughout your tenure.

### **RECOGNISING BURWOOD STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE (SES)**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—I rise to recognise and express deep gratitude to the Burwood State Emergency Service [SES] team for their outstanding service to our community. The dedication, courage, and selflessness demonstrated by the Burwood SES volunteers is truly inspiring, and their commitment to protecting lives and property during emergencies, natural disasters, and crises is invaluable. Whether responding to floods, storms, or other emergencies, the Burwood SES team is always on the front lines, working tirelessly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community. Their readiness to act in times of need, often under challenging conditions, showcases not only their skills but also their profound sense of responsibility to the people of Burwood and the wider Strathfield area. The SES team's contributions extend beyond immediate emergency responses; they also provide critical education and preparedness programs, helping residents to stay safe and resilient in the face of potential hazards. On behalf of our community, I extend my sincere thanks to every member of the Burwood SES team. Your commitment to service makes our community a safer place for all.

### **DEREK GRAY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Kirrawee's Derek Gray who received a Sutherland Shire Football Association Merit Award at the recent presentation night, after 40 years as a player and official. In his four decades as a player, Derek has turned out for Kirrawee Kangaroos, Gynea Lilies, Gynea Giants and Grays Point Possums. His playing service covers five years at Kirrawee, 27 years at Gynea and eight years for Grays Point. According to the Grays Point club "Derek has always been an integral part of every team he has played for and more often than not an organiser of not only those teams but also their social activities". More recently Derek has committed his time as an official at both Gynea and Grays Point. In over 12 years as an official at the Grays Point, Derek has served in several roles, including committee member, vice president, draw secretary, and team photo organiser. Local sport is better for passionate lovers of the game like Derek and the volunteer spirit and dedication he has brought. I join with the Grays Point Possums in celebrating this well-deserved award for Derek and recognise his contribution to football in the Shire over four decades.

### **MR BOUATHONG SANANIKONE**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise Mr Bouathong Sananikone, one of the founding members of the Laos Community Advancement Co-op in NSW[LCAC]. Mr Sananikone was born on the 2 October 1934 and arrived in Australia with his family as a political refugee on the 3 March 1978. He has dedicated many hours and contributed his own funds into supporting the local Laos community through his work in establishing the LCAC, Lao Cultural Centre and Lao Temple in Edensor Park. The Lao Cultural Centre aims to share, preserve and promote Laos culture in Australia through community events and educational programs. It allows Lao migrants to integrate into Australia, connect with the community and express their cultural identities. The Lao temple hosts cultural Lao events coinciding with the Buddhist calendar and Lao traditions and fosters a safe and peaceful environment for enacting religious activities. Mr Sananikone is a valued member of our community and is recognised for his continuous commitment to preserve and impart the Lao culture and knowledge to future Lao generations in Australia.

### **18TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLOC 1706**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 6 September 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the 18th anniversary celebration of Bloc 1706, an organization dedicated to advocating for human rights in Vietnam. Bloc 1706 is a union of pro-democratic activists that focuses on promoting social justice for Vietnamese people through

domestic and international efforts. They bring awareness to oppressed individuals and human rights abuse through campaigning and by gaining the support of other organisations and the wider community. The Vietnamese government incarcerates authors of publications and websites considered to undermine and oppose the Communist government. Activists facing criminal penalties can face up to 20 years in prison and are separated from their loved ones. Bloc 1706 frequently raises awareness and mobilises support for political prisoners deprived of their freedom of expression, pressuring the Vietnamese government for their release. The members of Bloc 1706 and the Vietnamese Australians continue to campaign for democracy and freedom for the people of Vietnam. Their efforts of paving the way for lasting change should be recognised. I would like to congratulate Bloc 1706 on their 18th anniversary and thank the current President Ms Nguyen Thi Nen for the warm invitation.

#### **MR BOUSAY SOURIGNAVONG**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr Bouasy Sourignavong was born on the 10 March 1951 and arrived in Australia to seek refuge in October 1978. He served on the Board of Directors for the Laos Community Advancement Co-op in NSW [LCAC] for 10 years until December of 2020. During this time, he was a strong advocate for Australian values, freedom and democracy, and multiculturalism in Australia. He was a strong promoter of social cohesion and harmony and has been one of the most active fund-raising committee members of LCAC for religious and cultural events. Through his work, Mr Sourignavong assisted refugees and immigrants with their integration into Australia. This assisted in reducing feelings of isolation, stress and loneliness that many migrants feel when arriving to a different culture and society. Further, Mr Sourignavong assisted in facilitating cultural awareness, maintenance of heritage and the celebration of traditions, enriching the lives of both refugees and existing Australians. I would like to recognise and commend Mr Bouasy Sourignavong for his remarkable services to the LCAC and the Australian society at large.

#### **DAIRYING IN WOLLONDILLY**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—At the launch of "Dairying in Wollondilly", President of the Oaks Historical Society Trish Hill reminded attendees of the vital role that the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum plays in preserving local history for all to enjoy. The exhibition, created by dedicated volunteers, traces the region's dairying journey, from early hand-milking techniques to modern mechanisation. Local farmers shared personal stories, including memories of milking their first cows as children decades ago, painting a vivid picture of farming life in Wollondilly over the last century. The exhibition captures the evolution of dairy farming, highlighting advances in refrigeration, bulk milk collection, and the rich heritage of the 111 dairy farms recorded in Wollondilly by 1959. The event celebrated the past but also the continued presence of descendants of these pioneer farmers and their role in shaping Wollondilly's identity. Attendees enjoyed afternoon tea with traditional scones and milkshakes, embracing the community spirit. A mural by local artist David Campbell is a unique addition to the exhibition. The launch also marked the announcement of the History Week 2024 school competition winners. Congratulations to Harriet and Matilda Hill for their award-winning entry, "Marking Time," a heartwarming story about Daisy, the dairy cow.

#### **AI GRANT AWARDED TO WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Wingecarribee Shire Council has been awarded a \$200,000 grant and as part of the AI trial program led by the NSW Government, aimed at streamlining the development application process. The 12-month trial will implement an AI-powered pre-lodgement system to reduce errors and expedite project approvals. Currently, around 7% of overall applications are returned due to missing or incorrect information. The new AI system will ensure applications are complete and compliant upfront, saving time for both developers and council planners. The AI system will be fully implemented within 4-6 months and will undergo a 12-month trial to assess its impact. This innovative approach offers several benefits to the community: faster development approvals, real-time guidance for applicants during the pre-lodgement phase, and increased efficiency for council staff. By automating routine checks, AI frees up planners to focus on more complex tasks. I look forward to seeing the results of the trials and the positive impacts of this technology for council staff and residents.

#### **WOLLONDILLY FIREFIGHTERS BATTLE WILDFIRES IN CANADA**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Two firefighters from Wollondilly have put their lives on the line to help fight the wildfires in Canada. Rural Fire Service firefighter Matt Duncan of Tahmoor and Group Captain Andrew Beville of the RFS Southern Highlands Brigade departed Australia for Canada in July. They join a crew of over 100 firefighters from around Australia and New Zealand, who in their roles of air attack supervisors, incident managers, fire behaviour analysts as well as front-line arduous firefighters, who specialise in remote area firefighting, will provide support and expertise to those facing the devastating impacts of wildfires, that are unfortunately all too familiar to the residents of Wollondilly. Australia has a history of helping out by sharing knowledge and resources to fight fires overseas, and this is reciprocated during our own times of need. Canadian

Firefighters travelled to Australia to assist during the 2019-2020 bush fires, and this latest effort, facilitated by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council's National Resource Sharing Centre will provide much needed relief and support. The generosity and selflessness of firefighters like Matt and Andrew is something we can all be proud of.

#### **SWAP - SAMANTHA SIRIMANNE HYDE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising the outstanding achievement of Samantha Sirimanne Hyde, a finalist in the Open Category of the Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize [SWAP] for her artwork titled ECollage. This remarkable piece, created from upcycled waste materials, exemplifies artistic creativity and environmental awareness, aligning perfectly with SWAP's mission to promote sustainability. Samantha's work has made a meaningful contribution to the City of Ryde by encouraging the community to reflect on the importance of environmental preservation. Her participation in SWAP highlighted the potential of upcycled materials, fostering dialogue around sustainability and inspiring others to consider the impact of waste on our environment. Through ECollage, Samantha has helped elevate Ryde's local arts scene, proving that creative expression can play a crucial role in addressing global challenges. Her contribution to this competition is a testament to the power of art in raising awareness about critical environmental issues. The community of Ryde is fortunate to have such passionate individuals contributing to its cultural and environmental landscape. I commend Samantha Sirimanne Hyde for her vision and dedication, and for helping make Ryde a more sustainable and vibrant community.

#### **SWAP - ASSAF CARMELI**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging Assaf Carmeli, one of the finalists in the Open Category of the Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize [SWAP] 2024, for their exceptional artwork Tools in Flight and Scavenger. Assaf's contribution to this environmental art competition showcased their artistic talent. It demonstrated a deep commitment to sustainability and environmental advocacy. Through their use of upcycled waste materials, Jo has helped raise awareness of the importance of waste reduction and resource conservation, aligning with the core values of SWAP. Assaf's work has had a positive impact on the Ryde community, inspiring residents to think creatively about the potential of discarded materials and encouraging a shift towards more sustainable practices. Assaf has contributed to fostering a culture of environmental consciousness and artistic expression in Ryde by participating in this prestigious local event. I commend Assaf Carmeli for their remarkable achievement and for helping to drive positive change through art in our community.

#### **SWAP - XIANG CHEN**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising the outstanding contribution of Xiang Chen, the runner-up for the Functional Award in this year's Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize [SWAP]. Xiang's work, titled Waste Down, exemplified innovative use of reclaimed waste materials to create a functional, artistically compelling and environmentally conscious piece. Their achievement demonstrates artistic merit and reinforces the importance of sustainable practices within our community. Through their participation in SWAP, Xiang has contributed to raising awareness around the critical issue of waste management and sustainability in the City of Ryde. This initiative aligns with the broader goals of environmental stewardship, inspiring others to consider the value of upcycling and responsible resource use. Their work, showcased at See Street Gallery, serves as a reminder of the power of art to communicate vital environmental messages and encourage positive change. I commend Xiang for their creativity and dedication, which have impacted our Ryde community. Their work in SWAP exemplifies how art can be a force for environmental good, and I look forward to seeing their continued contributions to the arts and sustainability in Ryde.

#### **DUBBO ART FAIR**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to extend a well-earned congratulations to the staff and volunteers of the Western Plains Cultural Centre for pulling together another incredible Dubbo Art Fair. Now in its fourth year, Dubbo Art Fair or DAF as it is affectionately known, is an initiative by Dubbo Regional Council and the Western Plains Cultural Centre to connect emerging local artists with a broad audience across Dubbo and the Central West, this year over 2000 visitors came to see it in action. Dubbo Art Fair 2024 showcased 40 emerging artists who all produced a stunning array of drawings, paintings, photography, ceramics, textiles, resin, jewellery and sculptural pieces. Not only does the fair offer artists the opportunity to engage with art lovers and members of the community, but this year the team at the WPCC coordinated a learning breakfast, Marketing for Artists, for both professional development and a networking event. It's no small feat to curate and install the hundreds of works for the Fair, so a special mention to the volunteer installation crew who tirelessly measured and hammered away to see all the works professionally displayed in such a high-end atmosphere. Well done team DAF24!



**KRISTA MORRISSEY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate Krista Morrissey from Narromine Netball Club who was recently awarded the Dubbo Netball Association Harry McDermott Award. The Harry McDermott Award is presented to a Dubbo Netball Association Member who has shown outstanding commitment to Netball. It is awarded to someone who has gone above and beyond in the previous twelve months and can cover any area including playing, coaching, umpiring and administration or a combination of these areas. Krista is the current Vice President of the Narromine Netball Club and held the President position prior to that. She is a team manager, coach, and mentor for junior umpires. Krista goes above and beyond her responsibilities as a committee member, she is always the first to put her hand up to assist others. Not one to shy away from a difficult conversation, Krista will always step up and deal with challenging situations when necessary for the betterment of the players, teams, and the club. As a passionate and community minded netballer, both Narromine Netball Club and Dubbo Netball Association are extremely lucky to have a leader and teammate like Krista on their teams!

**JEAN RICHARDSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Jean Richardson of Narromine who, has recently celebrated fifty remarkable years as a member of the Country Women's Association [CWA]. The CWA, Australia's largest women's organisation, has a proud tradition of improving the lives of country women and children. For half a century, Mrs Richardson has been an integral part of this mission. When Mrs Richardson first joined the CWA in Trangie in 1974, she was known as part of the 'younger set', bringing fresh energy and ideas to the association. Her passion and dedication quickly became evident as she made significant contributions to the Trangie branch. Later, Jean transferred to the Narromine branch, where she continues to serve as a beloved and active member. Throughout her time with the CWA, Mrs Richardson has held many roles, including that of President. Her willingness to volunteer and contribute to her community is truly commendable, but what stands out most is the extraordinary commitment she has shown over these many years. Thank you, Jean, for your incredible dedication and all you've done for Narromine. Here is to many more years of service.

**JAYDEN SHIEL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the athletic success of Jayden Shiel from Mulwaree High School. Jayden's performance at the NSW CHS Athletics Carnival is nothing short of extraordinary. Earning three medals—a gold in the 12 years 200m, a silver in the 100m final, and a bronze in both the 800m and high jump events—demonstrates his incredible versatility and athleticism. Competing across multiple events and excelling in each one is a remarkable achievement that speaks to his dedication, resilience, and competitive spirit. Jayden's success is an inspiration to his peers and the entire Mulwaree High School community. His hard work and determination have not only earned him these accolades but have also set a high standard for future athletes. I celebrate Jayden's outstanding achievements and look forward to seeing him continue to excel in his athletic pursuits.

**MARCUS LOWE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the artistic success of Marcus Lowe from Mulwaree High School. Marcus' nomination for OnStage, the NESA showcase of exemplary HSC Drama projects, is a significant achievement that highlights his exceptional talent and dedication to the performing arts. His captivating performance of the monologue "Randy Writes A Book" by Rowan Atkinson has earned him this prestigious recognition. The comedy monologue displays Marcus' wide array of dramatic skills. This nomination is a testament to his hard work, creativity, and passion for drama. Being selected for OnStage is a rare honour, and Marcus' achievement is a source of great pride for Mulwaree High School. His success not only recognises his individual efforts but also reflects the support and encouragement of his teachers and peers. I eagerly await the final selection in November and am confident that Marcus will continue to excel in his artistic pursuits.

**YASS HIGH SCHOOL – LAWN BOWLS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the talent and skill represented by Yass High School's Logan Waters, Harry Waters, and Sam McGuigan in Lawn Bowls. The Yass High School Lawn Bowls team, comprising Logan Waters, Harry Waters, and Sam McGuigan, has demonstrated exceptional skill and teamwork in their recent performances. Finishing at the top of their pool with two wins and a draw in the NSWCHS Knock Out Competition is a testament to their hard work, strategy, and dedication to the sport. Their achievement in reaching the top four of the competition places them among the best in the state, showcasing not only their talent but also their resilience and determination to succeed. As they prepare to compete for the CHS championship, they carry the pride and support of the entire Yass High School community. Their journey serves

as an inspiration to their peers and highlights the importance of perseverance and teamwork in achieving success. I wish them the best of luck in their quest to bring home the championship. I celebrate these student's outstanding achievements and look forward to their continued success.

#### **VISIT TO ROSEVILLE COLLEGE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I am always delighted to engage with students about our parliamentary democracy and system of government. On 23 September, I had the pleasure of doing this with an impressive class of Year 6 students at Roseville College near my community of Willoughby. Founded in 1908, Roseville College is an Anglican School for girls from K-12 with a proud reputation for pastoral care and academic excellence. Addressing the students, I was able to bring to life, my day-to-day work as a Member of Parliament. I shared with them my inspiration and motives for seeking public office, the ways in which I seek to address the needs of my constituents, and the complexities and challenges I deal with as a parliamentarian. My address to the students was well-received and I was pleased to answer their many thoughtful and insightful questions afterwards. I thank the Head of Roseville College Junior School, Ms Abi Woldhuis, for her kind invitation and for giving me the privilege to address the year 6 students.

#### **BRENDON ZHU COUNCIL CAREER**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I'm pleased to pay tribute to outgoing Councillor Brendon Zhu of Willoughby City Council for his service to our community. Brendon was Willoughby's first Asian-Australian Deputy Mayor and the youngest Councillor ever elected to Willoughby City Council. While studying for his law degree at the University of New South Wales, Brendon was elected as an independent councillor at the age of just 22. A committed Christian involved with his local church, Brendon stated that his vision for Willoughby was about "loving and serving the community with the servant leadership model". Brendon served Willoughby with distinction, respecting the cultural diversity of his community and ensuring that the community's voice was heard. As Councillor, he supported Willoughby's vibrant economy, rich urban heritage and unique natural environment, never taking it for granted that it was one of the best communities to live in. Dedicated to enhancing the physical health and wellbeing of Willoughby residents, Brendon was also a champion for investing in active transport infrastructure and open recreational spaces. I thank Brendon for his strong leadership and service as Councillor to our Willoughby community.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING THE CAREER OF CR JILLY GIBSON**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I'm delighted to pay tribute to Councillor Jilly Gibson for her outstanding service to the North Sydney community over a remarkable quarter-century. Jilly has been a tireless advocate and an exemplary leader, dedicating her time, energy and passion to the people of North Sydney. Jilly earned widespread support and acclaim for her commitment to putting the community first. Her vision, energy and unwavering dedication ensured that she remained local and connected, focusing on the needs and aspirations of the people she represented. Jilly's legacy is one of tireless contribution and achievement, always driven by a genuine desire to improve the lives of those in her community. I am proud of my friend Jilly Gibson, and it's truly the end of an era for North Sydney with her stepping down. I have no doubt that there is much more to come from this wonderful local woman. I wish Jilly every success and happiness in the next chapter of her life, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations and thanks for all she has done for our community.

#### **MR KIW (DESMOND) LEE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Kiow ("Desmond") Lee and family arrived in Australia from Malaysia in 1981. Initially a tailor, he made the choice around 25 years ago to open his own business - the now famous Mr Lee's Chinese Takeaway in the Maryland Shopping Centre. His shop was amongst the first when the centre opened more than a quarter of a century ago and remains the only business from Maryland's first shopping centre at 144 Maryland Drive. Not only is Mr Lee still trading but he does so in the very same shop that he started in. He and wife Julie live locally and have two children – a daughter and son who still helps in the shop on weekends. When Woolworths was added to the centre during re-development, the community was adamant that "Mr Lee must stay!" He was, however, always part of the new owners' plans. Everyone loves Mr Lee's team's delicious food, and they are an adored part of the community: there is nothing more "Maryland" than Mr Lee. We are pleased and proud that you have made your Australian Dream come true in our community. Thankyou.

#### **MERINDAH CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Merindah Children's Centre at 28 Bunn Street Wallsend has been awarded Winner of Best Daycare in NEWFM's Best of Newcastle 2024. The staff are dedicated and professional educators from a diverse range of backgrounds with broad knowledge, skills and experience, with many having worked there for more than a decade and who are active local community members. Established in 1991, the centre comprises an Early Learners Room, Junior Preschool and Preschool, caring for local children from ages

0-5 with 50 permanent long day care places each day. It is firmly a place to belong, where children are safe and secure, relaxed and happy. The staff take pride that they are the only Wallsend community-based Early Learning and Preschool long day care service. The centre is currently led by five highly qualified university-trained teachers and dynamic diploma-qualified educators. The evolving educational curriculum has been rated at the highest possible standard of 'Exceeding' by the Department of Education. Merindah Children's Centre has a long history of high-quality care and education in our Wallsend community. The beautiful, caring staff well deserve this accolade. Congratulations and well done, everyone!

#### **NOVOCASTRIAN QUILTERS 40TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Novocastrian Quilters is a welcoming and friendly group of both traditional and modern quilters with varying levels of experience who meet at the Community Centre in New Lambton. Novocastrian Quilters, established in 1984 by a small group of ladies with the same interests, initially met at a hall in Waratah. Membership has grown to over 100 and is affiliated with the Quilt NSW Guild. On Friday and Saturday 12th and 13th July 2024, they held their Ruby 40th Anniversary Exhibition at Callaghan College Jesmond Senior Campus with a display of over 100 quilts, top-quality hand-crafted goods, assorted gifts, "Bag Lotto", a raffle quilt, pop-up shops with supplies of fabric, and cakes and slices available to buy. Category prizes were awarded by local sponsors, with visitors encouraged to vote for their favourite quilt on display. A variety of quilted items were displayed in response to this year's "Ruby Challenge". Members contribute to the community by donating hundreds of quilts to the John Hunter Children's Hospital, Calvary Mater Hospital and many local refuges and other charities. Thank you, dear quilters, for your contributions to our local community!

#### **VALE IRENE HEMSWORTH**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Irene Hemsworth was a Maitland legend, taken too soon this week. At 17, Irene married Jimmy Hemsworth in 1957 they were inseparable. A Freeman of the City of Maitland Irene was one of the first computer operators in 1955 at Stuart's and Lloyds in Newcastle. Irene was however best known to all in the community for her unpaid work, Irene started volunteering at age 14 and never stopped. Irene was a swimming teacher, timekeeper and judge and also a diving judge. She was a P&C member at St Ethel's, Maitland Girls and Maitland Boys high schools and she was also a Girls' Friendly Society coordinator. President of Maitland RSL youth group, scripture teacher, organised Maitland debutante balls, a Maitland Netball Association member, Maitland RSL Womens' Auxillary member, Maitland Oval Board member, Hunter River Dragons Committee member, and a church warden at St Mary's Anglican Church. Irene was a life member of Maitland Netball Association, Maitland RSL Youth Club, Hunter River Dragons and Maitland Rotary. Irene was also a breast cancer survivor. Irene was a wonderful mother to five, grandmother to twelve and great grandmother to two. Vale Irene Hemsworth.

#### **VALE JOHN CASE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I can't remember if I knew John and Joan first as guests of my tour company, or from attending Federal Electorate Council meetings in Singleton when we were both in the Federal Seat of Hunter. What I do remember most was the fact that it was always John and Joan Case, together, they were a formidable team, leaving a lasting impact on everyone they encountered. Politically, John and Joan were core Labor Party members, joining in 1990. They were the backbone of our local branch, would always go above and beyond for the cause, rallying the troops and leading by example. John and Joan would always share heartwarming stories about their children Judith and Justin, showcasing their immense pride and love for their family. They were always together, until they weren't. It is humbling to reflect on a life lived so well, so focused on the welfare of others, constantly putting others before himself, that was what made John such an extraordinary member of our community. John truly embodied the spirit of community, and his passion for life, love, and laughter and even loss will inspire me forever. Vale John Case.

#### **HYPHEN HEALTH**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Hyphen Health who won two awards at the recent Business Hunter Awards. Hyphen Health was successful in both the 'Employer of choice under 20 employees' and 'Excellence in Innovation' categories. Hyphen Health is innovating new Australian healthcare solutions through their ground-breaking sexual health testing platforms and leading the way in online healthcare. Utilising secure, reliable platforms, they have helped over 17,000 people and counting, revolutionising the healthcare industry. Driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, James Sneddon and Dr Michell Tanner co-founded Hyphen Health, now Australia's largest online sexual health clinic group, inspired by a 90-minute delayed doctor's appointment. They set out to create the "Uber of health" by providing on-demand access to taboo healthcare services. Hyphen Health's passion for breaking down healthcare stigmas to transform

sexual health into something empowering, breaking down the barriers that stop people from accessing critical healthcare. Congratulations to Hyphen Health.

### RAKSHA BANDHAN FESTIVAL

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was great to join the Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc [VHP] and the Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations [HOTA] for their Raksha Bandhan Festival, Glenwood, on the 25th of August. Raksha Bandhan celebrates Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the belief that the world exists as one, single family. The festival gathers people to celebrate Raksha-safety and the Bandhan Bond, cherishing the unbreakable bond of brotherhood and sisterhood. The Festival highlighted cohesion in our community. Despite many of us being separated from loved ones, the Festival recognised that family can be found, even when far from home. VHP is a grassroots community organisation that strives to promote social cohesion, unity and pluralism through a diverse range of community services. They established HOTA; to provide one common platform to unite all Hindu organisations, temples, associations and sampradayas, supporting our Hindu community. Without the work that organisations like VHP and HOTA and their dedicated volunteers engage in every day, the unity we see across NSW, would be far harder to achieve. Thank you to NSW VHP General Secretary Jayanthi Thilak, HOTA Coordinator Subrahmanyam Ramarathinam and the passionate members of the VHP for their ongoing support for our community.

### DUSTIN DAO – RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I sincerely thank Dustin Dao for his service to the Prospect Electorate. Dustin has been an integral member of my team for two years, working tirelessly to support the people of Prospect. A compassionate advocate, Dustin showed empathy, working tenaciously to resolve issues for individuals and community groups. With genuine spirit and passion for helping others, Dustin embraced every interaction with kindness and care. Dustin applied himself diligently, leading to meaningful and efficient solutions for our community. Acting as an Electorate Officer, Dustin went above and beyond. By his own initiative, Dustin became a Justice of the Peace and offered services in Vietnamese, helping connect our residents to vital services. Dustin is committed to giving back to the community who raised him. He tutors local students and advocates for our community as President of Western Sydney Young Labor. Once completing his Bachelor of Law and Arts (Political Economy) at the University of Sydney, I have no doubt, Dustin will go on to use his skills to support the continued development and success of our Western Sydney community. Thank you, Dustin, for your hard work. I wish you every success in your next endeavour.

### ST JOHN AMBULANCE

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 22nd September, I was honoured to attend the St John Ambulance NSW Annual Awards Ceremony 2024 at The Great Hall, the University of Sydney. The historic Order of St John spans more than 900 years, originating from 11th century Jerusalem when a hospice was established to provide care and shelter pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land. The modern St John Ambulance was established in Australia in 1883, and was the first and only provider of an ambulance until the early 20th century. In the presence of Her Excellency the Hon Margaret Beazley, Governor of NSW, the Awards recognised exceptional service and commitment of St John NSW members. In our Western Sydney community, we're fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers who go above and beyond to provide care when we need it most. Congratulations to volunteers from the Fairfield Adult and Cadet Divisions, Holroyd Adult and Cadet Divisions, Western Suburbs Adult and Cadet Divisions, Bankstown Division, Penrith Combined Division, Granville Combined Division and Macarthur Division on receiving awards. Thank you to Sean McGuinness CstJ, Chair, Commissioner Ilan Lowbeer CstJ, Dominic Teakle, CEO, and our volunteers at St John Ambulance NSW for your life-saving service across Western Sydney.

### CHABAD OF BONDI

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I rise to congratulate Chabad of Bondi for opening its new Synagogue. It was an honour to be at the grand opening for the celebrations on Sunday 22 September. This grand opening marks many years of dedication and hard work from countless individuals who have designed the synagogue to be a beacon in the heart of our Eastern Suburbs Jewish community, where traditions blend with the vibrant energy of the new. This new facility is a unique space that not only serves as a place of worship, but also fosters a sense of belonging for all generations. Chabad of Bondi offers the local Jewish community a meeting place for religious services, educational programs, youth activities and community events. I would like to sincerely thank Rabbi Ulman and Assistant Rabbi Schlanger for their unwavering commitment to fostering a warm and welcoming environment for the community. I thank them for their service to the local community and wish them all the very best. Congratulations once again to Chabad of Bondi on this remarkable achievement.

### TWEED DISTRICT YOUTH ORCHESTRA

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—The Tweed District Youth Orchestra, based in Pottsville, is a wonderful example of a community organisation making a difference in the Tweed. Founded by Paul Robinson, an accomplished musician who toured the UK and Europe with the Queensland Youth Orchestra at the age of 17, the Orchestra provides important social and musical connections for young people in the Tweed area. The Orchestra plays a range of musical pieces with and has talented tutors and a skilled conductor to guide local young people through rehearsals and performances. Well done to Paul and the entire team behind the Tweed District Youth Orchestra for supporting young people in the Tweed and building on their musical abilities and passion for performing.

### COOK ISLAND CODE OF CONDUCT

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Cook Island Aquatic Reserve, 600m off the coast of Fingal Head in the Tweed Electorate, is a very special and ecologically rich marine environment some 80 hectares in size. Last month, all ten tour operators who conduct snorkelling and scuba diving trips to the Reserve signed the Tour Operators' Code of Conduct, marking an important milestone in the preservation of the Reserve. Tour operators worked alongside the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and the National Parks & Wildlife Service for the last year to create a practical Code of Conduct that will conserve the reserve's incredible ecosystem while supporting sustainable tourism. Well done to everyone involved in the creation and signing of this important Code of Conduct for the Cook Island Aquatic Reserve.

### KEVIN WALKER

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Kevin Walker has made to the people of Bathurst. Kevin has more than 10 years' experience working in the disability sector, he has become a competent young business leader. Kevin was employed as the sole therapist within Vivability when he arrived in 2016, he has been able to develop the clinical expertise of the organisation and has worked to grow a clinical team that is capable of being a resource to their clients, staff and the community. Disability services like Vivability are a vital piece of the business community in Bathurst and it is hard-working individuals like Dylan that keep these services running smoothly. Kevin won Outstanding Young Business Leader Award at the 2024 Carillion Business Awards. Congratulations to Kevin for this well-deserved accolade.

### DYLAN DONAHUE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Dylan Donahue has made to the people of Bathurst. Dylan joined Vivability as a trainee in May 2021 and he quickly made a strong impression with his dedication and hard work. His commitment to excellence was recognised early on when he was named Trainee of the Month by both ACCM College and Skillset during his traineeship. Exhibiting exceptional drive, Dylan completed his Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping a full year ahead of schedule. His remarkable performance earned him three nominations for the prestigious Australian College of Commerce & Management Trainee of the Month award. Disability services like Vivability are a vital piece of the business community in Bathurst and it is hard-working individuals like Dylan that keep these services running smoothly. Dylan won Outstanding Employee Award at the 2024 Carillion Business Awards. Congratulations to Dylan for this well-deserved accolade.

### MATTY POWER

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement recognises the outstanding community and business contributions Matty Power has made to the people of Bathurst. Matty Power has been recognised as Bathurst's Favourite Health and Wellbeing Employee, winning the People's Choice Award at the recent 2024 Carillion Business Awards in Bathurst. This award underscores his commitment to promoting health and fitness within the community and highlights the impact he's had on his clients and the broader community. Matty's recognition in this award reflects the appreciation and support he has received from those who have benefited from his work at City Fit. City Fit is a family run, community minded gym that Matty has been a part of for many years now, greeting each person with a smile and encouragement before their work out. Congratulations to Matty for this well-deserved accolade.

### LEICHHARDT PUBLIC SCHOOL SPRING FETE

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Leichhardt Public School P&C in bringing together another excellent Spring Fete. It was great to be a part of the action. I really enjoyed volunteering on the waste stations for the sustainability committee to make sure there was as little waste going to landfill from the day's festivities, as well as announcing the winners of the colouring competition on the

main stage. From exciting rides and carnival games to live music, crafts, and delicious food, the fete was filled with fun and community spirit. Of particular note was the chance to "Pie the Principals", which I'm sure took a lot of high-level bargaining skills on the behalf of the organisers, and the talented contributions to the Made with Love craft stall. Congratulations to Louise Mackrill from the Leichhardt Public School P&C and the amazing team Manuela Fregnan, Jen Bastick, Ella Bruniges and Albert Eichholtzer, as well as all the staff and volunteers who contributed to such a fantastic event. I'm looking forward to joining you again next year.

### **GREENWAY ART PRIZE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the wonderful GreenWay Art Prize. This year was the 14th year of the GreenWay Art Prize. The prize aims to capture the essence of the GreenWay – the 5.8km urban environmental and sustainable transport corridor in Sydney's Inner West from the Cooks River to Iron Cove – through visual art, and to celebrate the vibrancy, creativity and community spirit of the Inner West. The GreenWay is an iconic part of the Inner West and the Art Prize showcases this special part of our area. It presents our community with an opportunity to create unique and beautiful art that acknowledges the themes of environment, waterways, urban ecology and sustainable transport. I was so pleased to attend this year's event at the White Bay Power Station and present the Local Artist Award. Congratulations again to winner Silda Trainor, both highly commended entries by Neil Mackenzie and Eben Wheeler, and to all finalists and entrants. Congratulations Jennifer McNamara, Tara Morelos, Jennifer Aaron and Chris Statham on another very successful event.

### **NIGHT AT THE BARRACKS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I pay tribute to Night at the Barracks, which once again has been a huge success this year. Set against the historic backdrop of North Head Sanctuary's Barracks Precinct, Night at the Barracks has been a game-changing event for Manly, revitalising an area of North Head to deliver high quality entertainment for visitors and local to enjoy. This year's lineup includes impressive headliners such as Icehouse, The Presets, Matt Corby and Jessica Mauboy to name just a few. Sustainability and preserving the cultural and heritage significance of North Head Sanctuary governs every aspect of the planning of this event, and a portion of each ticket sale is proudly donated to Bear Cottage and Lifeline Northern Beaches. I commend Cameron Coghlan and his partner in crime Brendan Maher. Through sheer determination, their dream of converting Manly into a premier entertainment venue has become a reality, and Night at the Barracks is now a calendar event bringing tourism and investment to our area, which has a welcomed flow-on effect to our local businesses. I congratulate the entire team at Second Sunday, the Northern Beaches Council and all the wonderful supporters of the Night at the Barracks concert series.

### **DULWICH HILL FESTIVAL**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would encourage you all to come down to Marrickville Road in Dulwich Hill on Sunday 29 September to celebrate the community and delights of the Inner West village of Dulwich Hill. Dulwich Hill is ready to shine for the festival's return to the streets. Footpaths and streetscapes will come alive with live music, foodie treats, artisan stallholders and more. This year the festival has partnered with the Inner West Artist Market to bring you the finest Inner West creatives, workshops and performances across two stages and roving around the site. Think artisan bakeries, book stores, live entertainment and family friendly activities and you're at the Dulwich Hill Festival. The festival will kick off at 12pm with a Welcome to Country on the Main Stage, followed by an afternoon of music from seven different bands - covering music from Brazil, Greece, Americana folk, and Indigenous traditions. Congratulations to Mayor Darcy Byrne, General Manager Peter Gainsford and the whole Inner West Council team for putting on such a wonderful community event. I look forward to seeing you all there!

### **WELCOME POSTINO OSTERIA**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to give a warm welcome to the team at Postino Osteria, Summer Hill's newest dining destination, reinventing the site of the much loved One Penny Red in the former Post Office building. I would like to also recognise and thank Nina Alidenes and David Murphy for ten years of service at One Penny Red. Postino Osteria is run by dynamic couple Allesandro and Anna Pavoni, well known for their restaurant Ormeggio at The Spit. Chef Alessandro has emphasized how important it is for a community to have a venue like Postino Osteria, which aims to bring Summer Hill locals together for simple food and wine in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. I was fortunate to share a sneak peek with some lucky locals a few nights before their official opening, and can confirm how delicious the food and drink is, and what a kind reception you will receive. If you're looking for a place to sit back and relax with some lovely food and wine, visit Postino Osteria.

### LINK WENTWORTH 40TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Monday 30 September 2024, I will be attending the Link Wentworth 40th Anniversary celebration in Hornsby. Link Wentworth's 40-year history began in 1984, with eight local community tenancy schemes across NSW. One of these was the Ku-ring-gai Hornsby Community Housing Association, located within the Davidson electorate. Over the years, these local schemes joined to form Link Wentworth which today is one of the largest community housing providers in Australia, delivering a better future for people facing housing stress and homelessness. Link Wentworth's values can be expressed simply as Customer Focus, Compassion, Integrity, Respect and Ambition to lead and help drive positive social change. I recognise Chair Mike Allen and Chief Executive Officer Andrew McNulty. I look forward to working with Link Wentworth, and supporting the next 40 years.

### ABC FRIENDS NORTHERN SUBURBS OF SYDNEY BRANCH - 5TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Thursday 10 October, I look forward to celebrating the 5th anniversary of the ABC Friends Northern Suburbs of Sydney Branch at Roseville. Established locally in 2019 to advocate for the ABC, it represents over 700 northern Sydney residents that are passionate about the importance of Australia having national broadcaster. The branch also regularly hosts meetings with guests on topics surrounding Australia's media landscape and the role of the ABC. In celebrating the 5th anniversary they will be joined by Jonathon Holmes, who has worked on programs including Four Corners, Foreign Correspondent, the 7.30 Report and Media Watch. Jonathon spoke at the inaugural meeting. I recognise the 2024 committee led by Convenor Janine Kitson, Corin Fairbun Bass, Jenny Forster, John Inshaw, Beverley Inshaw, Wendy Siriani and Peter Vail. Thank you all for your continued work that helps bring our community together.

### DUKES GREEN CAFÉ IN EAST LINDFIELD

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Dukes Green Café in East Lindfield, which is a much-loved institution of our local community. As their website states, "We share a passion for producing the finest coffee, from the highest quality coffee beans from around the world" and "Nestled in the heart of East Lindfield, Dukes Green is one of the most picturesque settings on the north shore." I very much agree with these statements. I recognise the owner, Wally who leads a wonderful staff. We are so proud of all of the work small businesses do. They are the backbone of our community, creating local jobs and economic growth. I encourage everyone to back in our local small businesses.

### NSW VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community and contribute about \$178 billion to the NSW economy, so it is fitting that we recognise and celebrate the people that give their time to support a diverse range of causes and organisations. The Western Sydney Regional Ceremony for the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards, organised by The Centre for Volunteering, held at Liverpool Catholic Club, was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of people in my community that devote themselves to the service of others. The ceremony was one of 25 regional award ceremonies held across NSW, which bring together our state's extraordinary volunteers and their families. I acknowledge the work of the many award winners in Liverpool, who have demonstrated their tremendous commitment in areas from creatively engaging men in residential aged care, providing essential JP services, to first aid emergency care. It is particularly heartening to see the number of young award nominees and winners, as they will ensure that a culture of volunteerism and service will continue long into the future. I commend the Centre for Volunteering and the award sponsors, for recognising extraordinary people in our community.

### GREEN VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL CONCERT

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Lights! Music! Action! Green Valley Public School students dazzled and dazzled in a matinee and evening performance for their 2024 School Concert. The students, staff and parents at Green Valley always look forward to this biannual event and, this year, the performances were better than ever. This year's lineup was stacked, including renditions from Grease, Ghostbusters, Minions and more. There is so much talent in the Valley and I am so pleased to see Green Valley Public School providing avenues for students to unleash their creativity and their dance skills. All of this would not be possible without the work of Maddie Low, an ex-Green Valley student who kindly donated her time to help classes prepare for their concert items. It's worth highlighting that music brightens the day, uplifts our spirit, nourishes our creative minds, and develops the brain. Music teaches us to listen more and talk less and can help create better citizens. Music can also provoke and inspire us to create a better world. School concerts and music programs are essential!

### SILVER JUBILEE OF THE INDIAN CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Keeping an organisation strong and active for 25 years is no small feat! I recently had the pleasure of attending the silver jubilee celebrations of the Indian Catholic Association at All Saints Catholic Church in Liverpool. The Indian Catholic Association – or ICA – was formed in 1999 as part of the broader All Saints Parish. It was formed by Christians who predominately migrated from Bangalore in India so that they could not only share a spiritual connection, but a cultural and linguistic one as well. Each year the ICA comes together to celebrate the Feast Day of St Mary, who is regarded as their patron and protector. After a special mass, I joined members of the ICA for an invocation dance, lighting of the traditional lamp, acknowledgement of seniors and a prayer blessing by Father Paul Monkerud. The truly multi-cultural and welcoming nature of the All Saints Parish was on display during the evening! I am grateful to Dr Matthew Rathinam and ICA members for their warm hospitality. It is yet another reminder of how faith plays a vital role in bringing together communities in Liverpool.

### HARRY WESTERDYK

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to celebrate an incredible milestone for a remarkable man. Like the metal-hulled yachts he so masterfully built, Harry Westerdyk is still going strong as he marks his 100th birthday. On Friday, September 20, Harry reached this impressive century, and it's clear that his strength and spirit continue to shine. A skilled boatbuilder, Harry's craftsmanship is evident in the yachts that have sailed in prestigious races like the Sydney to Hobart and Brisbane to Gladstone. His first yacht, now known as the Cadenza, remains at sea—testament to his enduring legacy. And even in retirement, his love for the craft endures, with an unfinished Dutch canal boat sitting in his Wamberal yard, a reminder of his exceptional talent. Though Harry now faces mobility challenges and relies on a walker, his mind is as sharp as ever, and he remains an avid reader. He continues to live independently, enjoying the company of his faithful dog, Mater. Harry's legacy extends beyond boatbuilding. He is a devoted family man, with three children, nine grandchildren, and soon-to-be 21 great-grandchildren. Whilst his beloved wife, Vicky, passed in 2002, Harry's life remains full of love and accomplishments. Happy 100th birthday, Harry!

### SOLDIERS BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Congratulations to Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club and the crew who re-enacted the epic IRB journey from Sydney to Coolangatta 50 years ago, to highlight the value of the rescue craft. In 1974 some of our life members, including John Fallon and Cliff Spong, did the trip in 31 hours all the way to Queensland in an IRB to show the durability and reliability of the boats. The two IRBs departed 2nd September from Jeffery Street Wharf, Kirribilli, Sydney. Umina Surf Life Saving Club was the first stop then travelling north visiting seventeen locations with original crew member Graeme Lewis being involved for part of the journey. Along the way there was team effort, tireless work, determination, experience, and passion. The crew members showed excitement when reaching their final destination arriving at the IRB World Titles at Kurrawa Beach, Queensland. The trip involved hard work and support from sponsors, clubbies and the Surf Clubs that were visited along the way. This is great history shared from our local surf club at Soldiers Beach.

### JARED WILLIAMS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Jared Williams has been selected in the Australian Schoolboys Tour Under 16s Football team. The Australian team will be travelling to the United Kingdom and Ireland, leaving on the 9th of January, and returning to Australia on the 28th of January 2025. Jared is currently in year 10 and attends Central Coast Sports College and is a part of the Central Coast Mariners Under 16's/Under 18's playing goalkeeper. There have been 5 other players Harrison Jablonski, Shumba Mutokoyi, Harper Ryles, Bowen Hine, and Laurence Taylor chosen from the Central Coast Mariners team to join the Australian team. The Central Coast boys were part of the NSW squad who won the state titles held in Perth in early August. The NSW side went through undefeated, with no goals scored against them. I wish Jared and the team all the best in your upcoming competitions.

### STUFF'D GOODS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Wyang Business Stuff'd Goods celebrate their first birthday in sharing delicious handmade baked stuffed cookies with the community. Co-owners Kasinda Crosser and Jake Broadhead achieved in a year 22,631 cookies sold, 29 flavours created, 27 locations stocked and bringing to the Central Coast and Newcastle the best New York



Style cookies. Each cookie that is distributed to every one of their stockists and orders across the region are hand weighed and hand rolled. One of their new creations is their traditional cookie dough, white chocolate, slivered almonds throughout, a delicious frangipane centre and topped with almonds and icing sugar. On this journey the couple have grown with creating memories, experiences, meeting new people and expanding throughout the community to share what love doing best, baking delicious cookies. I wish Ms Kasinda and Mr Broadhead all the best with their business.

#### **SARAH PLUNKETT**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge an outstanding individual who I had the pleasure of meeting recently. Sarah Plunkett is an outstanding and inspiring person whose dedication and determination has had a profound impact. Sarah participates and hosts sailing programs specifically designed for blind and vision-impaired individuals, providing an opportunity for everyone to be involved in the sport. Through her passion for sailing and work with Vision Australia, Sarah, alongside her noble guide dog Jet, creates an inclusive space where vision-impaired individuals can develop their skills, gain confidence, and experience the thrill of sailing. Her commitment goes beyond teaching and fosters a sense of community, empowering participants to overcome personal challenges. Sarah is a distinguished sailor, participating in Sailability at Dobroyd Aquatic Club and has been named a finalist in the Para Sailor of the Year category at the 2023 NSW/ACT Sailing Awards. She has competed across the world, including at the World Championships in Japan. Her contribution to accessibility and her commitment to making sailing a sport for everyone is truly commendable. I thank Sarah for her work and for being a shining example of what it means to give back and inspire our community.

#### **ARDILL HOUSE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I recently visited Ardill House, a local charitable organisation providing support to children and families in our community. Ardill House was originally built in 1859 in North Strathfield and was donated to the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children in 1918. Ardill House is now licensed to various charitable organisations including Integricare Early Learning Centre, Kids at Weldon After School Care and the Children's Tumour Foundation. At the core of Ardill House's operations is a mission to make a difference for children. It was wonderful to receive a tour of the lovely heritage building and to hear about the organisation's work. I recognise President John Hughson, Vice Presidents Robert Craven and Keith Mason, Treasurer David Collins, Secretary Elisabeth Harrison, and all members of the Ardill House Management Committee for their service. I extend my sincerest thanks to all staff and volunteers working at Ardill House. Thank you for your commitment to serving local children and families in our community.

#### **2CR CHINESE RADIO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate 2CR Chinese Radio on their 30th anniversary this year. Since its establishment in 1994, 2CR has become an essential voice for Sydney's Chinese community, providing news, entertainment and building cultural connections on the nation's first 24/7 Chinese radio station. Over the past three decades, 2CR has delivered a range of programs promoting diversity and celebrating Chinese culture. The station plays a pivotal role in ensuring our Chinese community stay connected, informed, and engaged. Their work is a shining example of how media can strengthen our multicultural communities. I sincerely congratulate the founders, managing team, presenters and the entire 2CR staff for their unwavering commitment to serving the Chinese community for 30 years. The success of the station speaks to the passion and dedication of all involved in the 2CR team. Congratulations 2CR Chinese Radio on 30 years of service to our community. I wish you all the very best and many years of prosperity and good fortune.

#### **LOGOS / ΛΟΓΟΤΥΠΑ**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the incredible team behind the Logos / Λογότυπα exhibition, which I was pleased to officially open for Sutherland Shire Council on 20 September 2024. Logos / Λογότυπα is a collaboration between the Hazelhurst Arts Centre ("Hazelhurst") and Saint Stylianos Greek Orthodox Parish Gynea ("St Stylianos"), through the leadership of Father Constantine Varipatis. Spanning the 1960s to the 2020s, this impressive exhibition showcases the incredible depth and diversity of Greek Australian artists, celebrates the underrepresented impact of a Greek migrants in the Shire and honours the bond formed as neighbours between Hazelhurst and St Stylianos. Exploring Greek culture and identity in Australian art would not have been possible without the 40 Greek Australian artists, including 8 local artists including prominent fashion designer Jordan Gogos, who attended St Stylianos as a child and curator Kon Gouriotis OAM. I encourage our community to check out the Logos / Λογότυπα exhibition and the works on display including paintings, videos, sculptures and installations until 17 November at our beloved Hazelhurst. I thank the team behind the Logos / Λογότυπα exhibition as they continue to promote our rich Hellenic cultural heritage.

### WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—For almost 80 years, the incredible members of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club have been a cherished and quintessential part of life in the Sutherland Shire. Wanda'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 Wanda members conducted 15 rescues and provided first-aid to 51 individuals. In addition, Wanda also left a strong mark at the 2024 New South Wales Surf Life Saving Championships, with the Opens placing second and Age placing fourth on the leaderboard. Our volunteer surf life savers are an essential part of the fabric and culture of our local community. I recognise the 2024/2025 Wanda Board of Management, namely Fiona Sutton, Grant Sandstrom, David Gumley, Mark Sargeant, Denny Rowlands, Glenn Bell, Lachlan Black, Greg Pierce, Natalie Buckley, Lisa Zammit, Brett Thatcher, Dean Slater and Kaylene Walker. I also acknowledge Wanda's long-standing Patron, the beloved Ernest (Solly) Stephens who has stood down from this role after 26 years. I thank all Wanda Surf Life Saving Club members for their continued dedication to protecting local beachgoers.

### AMBER FULLER

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge and congratulate Hawkesbury's Amber Fuller, for her significant achievements in showjumping. Amber has competed nationally and represented Australia. Amber has ridden horses for as long as she can recall, riding independently at the age of three. She has been involved in various competitions and made several significant achievements nationally. These include winning the 2018 Australian Jumping Championships and being placed 6th and 7th with her teammate in the showjumping events of the Doha Tour 2024. Amber was also selected as a travelling reserve for the Australian Equestrian Team who competed in the Paris Olympics this year. I congratulate Amber on her blossoming career and look forward to hearing of her future achievements. Good luck to her in upcoming competitions, particularly the grand prix classes where Amber has spoken of her goal to have her younger horses compete when ready. Her involvement in equestrian is truly inspirational and admirable. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### LEGACY WEEK

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the Legacy Week Commemoration in Martin Place on the 2nd of September, with members of the veteran community and their families. Wreaths were laid at the Cenotaph to mark the start of the week, signifying ongoing support for the widows and children whose loved ones have served our country. Operating since the 1940s, Legacy Week is a time for Australians to support the families of our Defence personnel. It follows from a promise made by the Legacy organisation in 1923, to help veterans' families carry on living after an injury or loss of a loved one. Today, Legacy supports 34, 000 partners and children of veterans nationally with 10,000 of those individuals residing in New South Wales. It was an honour to partake in this commemoration, speaking with members of the veteran community and witnessing the continued support for them and their families. I am so grateful to Legacy and the Australian community, for their dedication in providing stability, guidance and assistance for the families of those who have so valiantly fought to defend our country. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### NORTH WEST DISABILITY SERVICES

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I recently had the honour of attending the North West Disability Services Anniversary Ball, celebrating 40 years of service to The Hills and Hawkesbury communities. Participants engaged in a joyous night celebrating the many triumphs of the organisation. Established in 1984, the non-profit organisation believes strongly in the rights of people with disabilities and strives to support these individuals in achieving a full and valuable life within the community. North West Disability Services complies with all Government requirements whilst helping individuals achieve their mission of 'turning dreams into reality'. They advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities through implementation of the 2014 Disability Inclusion Act and Disability Service Standards. North West Disability Services believes in the potential of every person and encourages individuals to bring this potential, their opinions, ideas and uniqueness to the world. It was a pleasure to hear from the organisation's staff and participants and celebrate their achievements at such a momentous occasion. I wish participants all the very best in their endeavours and look forward to hearing of their future successes. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### SUCCESS WORKS

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—It was great to celebrate the opening of Success Works Parramatta along with Minister Jodie Harrison, and meet participants and graduates of the Success Works program. Since 2022, Success Works Partners have been assisting women with a criminal record to find a job through their mentoring program, one-on-one support, job readiness workshops and introductions to employer programs. Unfortunately, women with a criminal record can often encounter barriers in obtaining meaningful employment,

which often prevents them from turning their life around. Since their founding, Success Works Partners have helped 115 women find employment. Overcoming barriers for these women to secure employment, helping them to become work ready, requires not only assistance with skills and training. It also requires assisting with clothes, secure housing, physical and mental health support and long-term case management supporting individuals to turn their lives around while also increasing female participation in the workforce. Megan Etheridge OAM, founder of Dress for Success Sydney, went on to build the Success Works model as a program. Thanks to CEO Kerrie Sheaves, Mentor Program and Candidate Operations Manager Gemma Kollios for your contributions. The work you do is improving the quality of life of hundreds of women across Sydney.

#### JOHN KNOX

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises John Knox, a long-time member of the Minnamurra Lions Club, who was recently honoured with a NSW Volunteer of the Year Recognition Award. Known as "Knoxy" to his mates, John has been a dedicated volunteer for many years, not only with the Minnamurra Lions Club but also in a wide range of community activities across Kiama and beyond. Whether he's turning sausages at the Lions Club BBQs at the Kiama Seaside Markets, driving local aged care residents to their appointments, or lending a hand at the Birdsville Big Red Bash, you can always count on Knoxy to be there, quietly making a difference. When the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards called for nominations this year, the Minnamurra Lions had no hesitation in putting John forward. His countless hours of service, his selfless spirit, and his dedication to helping others make him an inspiration to all. On behalf of the Parliament, I congratulate John Knox on this well-deserved honour and thank him for his continued service to the community. Kiama Downs is lucky to have such a devoted and generous volunteer.

#### MICHAEL BOWEN

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Michael Bowen of Bomaderry, who represented Australia at the WorldSkills international competition in Lyon, France. Michael, a talented industrial mechanic, competed against the world's best in a series of intense challenges, showcasing his skills and dedication. His journey to Lyon has been remarkable, having secured a gold medal for NSW at the 2023 National WorldSkills competition. Now, he stands proudly as part of Australia's elite team of 32 apprentices, who took on competitors from over 70 countries. I also acknowledge his mentor, David Baldwin, whose guidance and expertise have been invaluable in preparing Michael for this international stage. Together, they have worked tirelessly, refining skills and techniques, ensuring that Michael is ready to face any challenge that comes his way. On behalf of the Parliament, I congratulate Michael Bowen on this incredible achievement. We wish him the best of luck as he represents not only Bomaderry but all of Australia on the world stage.

#### ARTIE SMITH OVAL – EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AWARD

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the outstanding achievement of the Artie Smith Oval in Bomaderry, which has recently won the Excellence in Social & Community Infrastructure (Public Domain) category at the Urban Development Institute of Australia Awards. The award highlights Artie Smith Oval as more than a sports facility. It's a community hub designed to bring people together, fostering a sense of unity through the mediums of sport. The oval's design allows it to host state, regional, and local sporting events while catering to local clubs and community groups. It features an AFL and cricket field with a modern pavilion clubhouse, cricket practice facilities, croquet courts and many other facilities. The hard work of those involved in the project cannot be understated. From builders to the community groups that will go on to use the facilities. Congratulations to all involved for making the Artie Smith Oval a vibrant, welcoming space for all. I extend my gratitude to Shoalhaven City Council, the local community, and all involved in this project, and I am sure the community will continue to enjoy Artie Smith Oval for years to come!

#### ST MARYS KMART

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—Last week, I had the privilege of opening the first Kmart store in St Marys. I warmly welcome the opening of this new retail space which marks an exciting chapter for our community. The St Marys location introduces hundreds of new employment opportunities that will greatly benefit our local families. With nearly 200 new jobs created, this is fantastic news for our residents. I am especially pleased to see that the majority of the new staff members are under 21 years old. This initiative not only empowers our young people but also allows them to gain invaluable work experience right here in their own community. Furthermore, I want to highlight that the St Marys location is included in Kmart's Deadly Store initiative. It is fantastic to see a major retailer take proactive steps to promote inclusivity and support Indigenous communities. I am also proud to announce that the store features a stunning collection designed by Kyrilee Shields, a talented local Indigenous

artist. Congratulations to the staff for all their hard work on opening day and I look forward to seeing how this St Marys Kmart will continue to positively impact our community.

---