

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 17 October 2024**

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

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

## *Members*

### **LEADER OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr RYAN PARK:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that I will act as Leader of the House today and on Friday 18 October 2024.

## *Rulings*

### **TABLING OF PAPERS**

**The SPEAKER (10:02):** Yesterday the member for Wahroonga was given leave by the Deputy Speaker to incorporate into *Hansard* material relating to his contribution to the second reading debate on the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 271. I have been advised that the material cannot be incorporated in *Hansard* in the desired format. Therefore, I table the document in my capacity as Speaker in accordance with Standing Order 265. I order that the document be printed. The member for Wahroonga is aware and satisfied with the outcome.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **ROADS AND CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (OFFENCES REPEAL) 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) (10:20):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As the New South Wales Greens spokesperson on democracy, I introduce the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment (Offences Repeal) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to amend both the Roads Act and the Crimes Act to repeal several offences in relation to protest activities. In short, schedule 1 to the bill will amend the Roads Act to abolish the offence for a person to enter, remain on or otherwise trespass on a major road if the conduct causes damage or seriously disrupts or obstructs vehicles or pedestrians attempting to use the road. Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Crimes Act to abolish the existing offence for a person to enter, remain on or near, or otherwise trespass on or block entry to any part of a major facility. Schedules 2 and 4 make other incidental amendments to the respective Acts.

The intent of the bill is to wind back the draconian anti-protest laws introduced by the former Government, with support from Labor, in 2022. These anti-protest laws sought to criminalise peaceful protest and make it harder for people to assemble in public places, including on roads and in declared major facilities, including train stations, that have typically been associated with peaceful protests and gatherings. People found guilty under these anti-protest laws are liable for up to two years in prison or a fine of \$22,000. The chilling effect of these heavy-handed and undemocratic laws cannot be understated.

To demonstrate the widespread concerns of the experts and relevant stakeholders in this space, I will share a small sample of the warnings given concerning these draconian laws. The Human Rights Law Centre has said these laws are "anti-democratic, disproportionate and violate international human rights law". The NSW Council for Civil Liberties has warned that these laws "significantly infringe people's rights to freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of political communication". Lydia Shelly, president of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, warned:

Anti-protest laws not only criminalize protests, but they also cultivate an environment of fear and they have a chilling effect on organising peaceful movements that desire positive social change ...

Similarly, Environmental Defenders Office legal strategy director Elaine Johnson argued:

Such changes pose a very significant risk not just to those individuals, but also to our democratic process and our shared climate. We cannot achieve the kind of transformational change that we need to see for a safe climate, without a free and fair democracy.

Meanwhile, Dr Marcos A. Orellana, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, included warnings on the negative impact of anti-protest laws in Australia. His interim report said:

Draconian restrictions on the right to protest in several states are also very troubling. Peaceful protests are a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of assembly, and they enable citizens to mobilize their concerns and make them visible to public authorities.

In December last year, we saw some of these objections upheld by the New South Wales Supreme Court. In the case of *Kvelde v State of New South Wales*, the Supreme Court ruled that sections 214A (1) (c) and 214A (1) (d) of the Crimes Act were invalid for impermissibly burdening the Commonwealth Constitution's implied freedom of political communication. The findings in *Kvelde* are welcome, and they are a testament to the strength and resilience of two Knitting Nannas, Dominique Jacobs and Helen Kvelde, who worked with the Environmental Defenders Office to launch a constitutional challenge in a bid to overturn these anti-protest laws.

However, as I indicated during my disallowance motion earlier this week, we are rapidly approaching 12 months since these undemocratic laws were found to be partially unconstitutional. Despite consultation with the community on these laws earlier in the year, there has been no public report on the findings and there has been no formal move from the Government to remove the unconstitutional provisions from the Crimes Act. Furthermore, other laws that infringe on the right to protest, including clause 48A (1) of the Roads Regulation, remain in force, with the Government making no attempt to act on the concerns raised by human rights experts and advocacy groups. It is nothing short of appalling that this Government has neglected its duty to amend a law already found to be partially unconstitutional. We should not have to stand in the Chamber today demanding basic rights that never should have been taken from us in the first place. This should have been a priority for the Minns Labor Government. Instead, it has been left to the community to press for the right to freedom of political communication.

The rights eroded by the constant attacks on peaceful protest in New South Wales have their roots in international human rights law. The right to peaceful assembly and association is found under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is also found under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is called the ICCPR and which Australia is a signatory to. The ICCPR provides for the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association. The High Court has also ruled that, under our Federal Constitution, we have an implied right to freedom of political communication. In making that determination, the High Court suggested that the free exchange of political communication is fundamental to the operations of the representative and accountable government established under the Constitution.

While these rights are not absolute, there is a high threshold that must be met to curtail these basic freedoms enshrined in international human rights law. For example, to restrict the right to peaceful assembly, the ICCPR requires that any attempts to curtail the right are necessary and proportionate, and that they are an appropriate response to a "pressing social need". Similarly, to curtail rights under our Constitution, the law needs to be reasonably appropriate and adapted. The comments I shared earlier from experts and advocates in this field indicate that the anti-protest laws we are dealing with are not reasonable or necessary, and they are certainly not proportionate. They were a knee-jerk response to talkback radio shock jocks complaining about protests causing traffic delays.

When introducing these undemocratic laws, former Attorney General Mark Speakman spoke about the need to deter actions that close or obstruct roads and bridges and that cause traffic diversions and economic loss. We cannot allow such a low threshold to stand when it comes to casting aside fundamental human rights. The rights to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of political communication cannot be sacrificed for the sake of short-term economic profit or to avoid being temporarily inconvenienced on our drive to work. These anti-protest laws are a massive overreach and demonstrate a real threat to our democracy.

Democracy as we know it is not just about the ability to vote. True democracy comes when people can voice their disagreement with the decisions of government without the fear of being criminalised, targeted by heavy-handed police surveillance, subjected to hefty fines or imprisoned. New South Wales already has some of the most restrictive anti-protest laws in the country. In its most recent report, entitled *Protest in Peril: Our Shrinking Democracy*, the Human Rights Law Centre highlighted that New South Wales has more anti-protest laws on the books than anywhere else in Australia, and the introduction of new anti-protest laws in this State has

been increasing at an alarming rate. We are on a dangerous slide toward authoritarianism. If we do not stand up today, these undemocratic laws that stifle our most fundamental rights—the right to speak, to gather, to dissent—will continue to erode our democracy. We must repeal them, for the sake of our future and for the generations to come.

I take a moment to reiterate that the laws we are seeking to repeal should, frankly, never have been supported in the first place. These anti-protest laws are a legacy of the Perrottet Government and were supported by Labor when it was in opposition. From the beginning, Unions NSW, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the Australian Services Union, the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union, the Maritime Union of Australia [MUA], the CFMEU and the National Tertiary Education Union sounded the alarm on these dangerous anti-protest laws. More than 230 civil society and human rights groups vocally opposed their introduction. Despite clear opposition and valid concerns from experts in the field, the laws were rushed through Parliament in just 72 hours, suspending the requirement for the House to have two weeks to consider new legislation.

While the reactionary laws were passed quickly, the impacts have been long-lasting. Our community has continued to feel the consequences of these laws since they were introduced in 2022. In November 2023 over 100 peaceful climate protesters were arrested, and 23 of them were charged, simply for standing up against climate injustice at Newcastle Harbour. Even legal observers were not spared from the overzealous police response. This is the type of heavy-handed response that these anti-protest laws encourage. Those convicted have faced steep fines under the new laws. They have also faced oppressive bail conditions, including requirements to report to the police up to three times a week, handing over their phones, not "associating" with certain people and organisations in the climate movement, and not attending "unlawful protests". We should be reserving those types of conditions for organised criminal gangs, not for peaceful protesters.

In June this year, more young climate activists were arrested and charged following a peaceful direct action to block a coal train in the Hunter, including 21-year-old activist Laura Davy. She was the first person to be sentenced to prison under these oppressive laws. Initially sentenced to three months in jail for her part in the peaceful protest, a court later overturned her prison sentence on the condition that she did not reoffend. These anti-protest laws were wielded again in August when five MUA branch members and officials were arrested in Port Botany during a peaceful protest against the ongoing genocide in Palestine. More than 40 people have been arrested at other protests near Port Botany, also calling for an end to the attacks on innocent people in Gaza. Using draconian anti-protest laws to silence people speaking out against genocide and war is unacceptable. These were peaceful protests, with people exercising what should be their basic rights to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of political communication.

In a democratic society, people should be able to call out their government for enabling war crimes without fear of reprisal. These anti-protest laws are silencing opposing voices and making it harder and harder for people to hold decision-makers to account. At the end of the day, people in our community should have the confidence to engage in peaceful protests, calling for action on climate change or an end to war. Teachers and nurses should be able to join colleagues to rally on the street, calling for fairer pay and conditions. Sometimes peaceful protests may be disruptive. They might cause traffic congestion; they might delay trains. But that is part of what it means to live in a democratic country. In fact, much of what we now take for granted was hard won by protestors in years gone by. In my own electorate of Balmain, things would have looked vastly different without strong local activism. The Green Bans helped to protect much-needed public housing in Glebe as well as treasured inner west icons, including the heritage-listed Callan Park, Ballast Point Park, Clontarf Cottage and more.

Looking at social justice movements in Australia more broadly, protests played a huge role in shifting government policy on the Vietnam War and on the approach to apartheid in South Africa. Protest movements helped win the right to vote for women and for First Nations people. Protest actions from the union movement secured weekends, public holidays and the eight-hour workday. The first Mardi Gras protest helped to put LGBTQIA+ rights on the agenda. Those wins were significant, and it was all thanks to our robust democracy and the right to protest. But there is still so much more to be done. I ask members to remember that when we think about what is at stake if we allow our right to protest to be eroded by these undemocratic laws.

Today we see continued violence in the Middle East, with the ongoing genocide in Palestine. People have a right to peaceful protest, to hold our decision-makers to account and to say that they do not support public money being used to fund war crimes overseas. They do not want to see parts manufactured in Australia being used to help bomb refugee camps, schools and hospitals. Our community has every right to stand up and call for peace, just as they did during the Vietnam War and during the apartheid regime in South Africa.

On other fronts, we continue to deal with the fallout from runaway climate change, fuelled by successive governments that put the profits of the coal and gas lobby ahead of the interests of people and our environment. Again, people have every right to express their frustration and their opposition to those decisions. They have every right to demand more from their elected representatives, to take to the streets, to disrupt business as usual and to

peacefully advocate for change in the same way that environmental activists of the past banded together to save the Franklin River. It is movements like this that have shaped our society and that will continue to shape our future.

If we truly value democracy and freedom of political communication, we cannot allow these draconian anti-protest laws to stand. We must ensure a healthy and mature democracy that engages with, respects and facilitates political expression outside of the ballot box. We must ensure that we have a society where people are not criminalised and imprisoned for expressing themselves in peaceful and non-violent ways. The ongoing attacks on the right to protest must stop, and these undemocratic laws must be repealed. I take a moment to thank the many organisations that have continued to call on successive governments to protect the right to protest and the many protesters who have fallen afoul of these laws and put themselves on the line to press for important social change. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 15 August 2024.**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:36):** I resume my contribution to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. Previously, I made the point that the issue of affordable housing is not limited to the metro areas anymore. It has most definitely made its way out to the electorate of Cessnock, which I have the great privilege to represent, and that is fundamentally because people are being priced out of places like Sydney, the Central Coast or Newcastle. I acknowledge the good member for Newcastle, who is sitting behind me in this Chamber. I am sure that he has heard plenty of stories from his constituents about how they can no longer afford to live in that neck of the woods. The good member for Gosford is also in the Chamber, and I am sure that she has spoken to many constituents who can no longer afford to live in that area.

The question of affordable housing is a good conversation for this Parliament to have. However, having said that, I acknowledge that the member for Newtown is active in this space and has brought a number of pieces of legislation to this place. I have had the great privilege of being on a number of committees with her about rental issues and affordable housing being an extension of that, which is fundamentally about trying to make sure that people have a roof over their head at a price that they can meet. In his response to the bill, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces went to great lengths to explain why the Labor Party would not be supporting the bill in its current form. I will draw out a couple of the important points that he made.

One of those points was that the bill seeks to put into an Act of Parliament some definitions and terms that might need a bit more flexibility and as such currently sit in State environmental planning policies, SEPPs. There is a clear case to be made for the need for flexibility around these things, and there is an inability to be quite as flexible when something appears in an Act. It is important, as is the case for all Acts of Parliament, that we not only have the Act itself but also some regulation and policy that sit outside of the Act to shape the finer detail of implementing the Act as intended. That is an important point to reiterate, and the point was made well by the planning Minister.

There is also the question of perpetuity, which I think is a difficult one to nut out. In essence, when the Government enters into an agreement or an arrangement for an affordable housing property, there is an immediate assumed position that that would of course be in perpetuity. But the truth and reality is that the definition of the word "perpetuity" is a difficult one. We all know that whatever home or housing we currently live in was built at some time previously but will not last forever. There will come a time when the houses that we have the privilege of residing in will reach the end of their lives and will need to be redone, redeveloped or reconfigured in some way, shape or form—even the houses that are made out of fibro. So there is concern around inserting the word "perpetuity" into the legislation.

The other part of the perpetuity question is around the register. This is a good point to make not only in relation to the bill but also in terms of the general discussion about affordable housing. It seems odd that we do not have a detailed register of the affordable housing arrangements that government has entered into with different developments. We really should. The planning Minister noted that he believes that we should as well. He talked about the fact that the planning portal, which was introduced I think five or six years ago, is still a bit clunky and has its problems. The Minister is trying to work through that. One of the things he foresees is that, when the planning portal is up to scratch and up to speed, there absolutely needs to be a register of affordable homes that

government has entered into arrangements for. We look forward to doing that work. It seems like a sensible thing to do.

I make the final point that there is a lot to do in the space around providing more housing supply to market at a price point that people can afford. If they cannot afford to purchase, then we absolutely need to make sure that they can afford to put a roof over their head. In addition to social and community housing, there is the next layer, which is affordable housing, which we are going to expand. We are offering incentives and bonuses for developments to that purpose. The member for Balmain in her contribution made the point that 15 per cent—because the language of the Government was "up to 15 per cent"—is some sort of a ceiling, but there is no real floor to that. [*Extension of time*]

Our language was "up to 15 per cent" because in some developments we will realise that target and in other developments we will not. I do think the member for Balmain made a good point. I looked at the language used by the Minister in his contribution. He was talking about the transport oriented developments bringing to market 60,000 properties—I think that is the figure. I thought, "Well, if we got 10 per cent of that, we would be bringing 6,000 affordable homes to market, which would be pretty good." Of course it would be better if we got 15 per cent. But even if we got as low as 1 per cent, which was the example given by the member for Balmain, there would still be 600. In any case, this House and the government of the day needs to constantly move forward in this space to create more opportunities to try to bring about a fairer and more accessible level of housing to the people of New South Wales.

The Government is certainly committed to that. I know that the planning Minister is absolutely committed to that. We have seen and read a lot in the media from both the planning Minister and the Premier on that front. Quietly in the background the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Rose Jackson from the other place, is also working incredibly hard. She is passionate, committed and clever, and thinking inside and outside of the box on ways that we can bring about the targets and goals that we have committed ourselves to. They are incredibly ambitious. I certainly hope we reach and exceed them. If we get 90 per cent of the way, we will be a lot better off than we were when we came into government 18 months ago. We will not support the bill. It is a good bill in many ways and has caused us to talk about some important topics in this House. But the New South Wales Government is doing a lot of work in this direction anyway and the bill in its current form is not necessary.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (10:44):** I speak on behalf of the Opposition in debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. We will not be supporting—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: The member for Willoughby spoke in debate on the bill on 15 August. Members cannot speak twice during a second reading debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I uphold the point of order. I did not have the list of prior speakers when I gave the member for Willoughby the call.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (10:45):** I oppose the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024 introduced by the member for Newtown. In summary, the bill seeks to amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act [EP&A Act] and the State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP] (Housing) 2021 to transfer the definition of affordable housing from the SEPP into the Act, as well as to make all affordable housing in perpetuity. The bill also seeks to create a register of affordable housing across the State to keep track of all of the affordable homes that exist and are being built, and requires the register be established through the EP&A Act under the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Both of those aims sound great in theory but unfortunately theory does not always align with reality and, in the real world, wishing does not make it so. But, to address the second aim of the bill, the Government is working on getting together a register. I sit on a number of parliamentary committees, including the one that, Mr Temporary Speaker, you and I both sit on: the Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing. That issue of making sure that we have a coordinated register of all properties has come up in that committee. The Government has appointed a community housing provider [CHP] registrar, who is currently undertaking that work with the relevant departments.

Unfortunately, the bill will not deliver more affordable homes. But it will create a negative impact on the Government's ability to develop, deliver and manage social and affordable housing projects through Homes NSW. I will focus on the aspect of the bill dealing with the definition of affordable housing. The bill would move the definition of affordable housing from the housing SEPP and into the EP&A Act. That is an unnecessary change that only adds red tape, time and bureaucracy to the system. The member for Newtown argues that the need for it is due to inconsistent definitions of affordable housing across different legislation and regulations. The EP&A Act is a rigid piece of legislation and refers the reader to the housing SEPP for the definition. That is because the SEPP

is able to be readily adapted, and the housing SEPP contains the most contemporary definition of affordable housing.

As I said earlier, there are numerous parliamentary committees looking at the definition of "essential worker", "affordable housing" et cetera. I assume other parliaments across the country are doing that as well. Over time we will be able to arrive at a definition that will address the concerns of the member for Newtown. The member for Newtown is not arguing for a new definition of affordable housing but merely to change the document it is defined in. The Minister for Housing, the Hon. Rose Jackson, is currently working with her colleagues on a nationally consistent definition for affordable housing as well, and the bill would put that work at risk. The question about how much rent someone in an affordable home pays is one for the CHP that manages that property, and the overwhelming majority of them charge tenants 30 per cent of their income. While that is what the member for Newtown wants, it already happens. That is why the Government's in-perpetuity affordable housing is required to be managed by the CHP: so that it can be held accountable.

In her second reading speech, the member for Newtown said that the Government has a woeful lack of ambition on social housing and rental reform. While the member uses rhetoric—she is a wonderful presenter and orator in Parliament—phrases such as "woeful lack of ambition" unfortunately do not reflect reality. The Government has undertaken to deliver affordable housing such as the redevelopments in Waterloo and South Eveleigh. It is sad that for the past 12 months the member for Balmain has run a petition in the community entitled "Stop the Government's housing agenda" regarding the proposal to redevelop a disused shed into six apartments, half of which would be affordable housing. Former and current members for The Greens ran that campaign and celebrated when the redevelopment was cancelled by the council.

The Government is committed to delivering more affordable and social homes across the State, and that commitment is funded in the budget. We call on The Greens to work with us to deliver that housing. In the 2024-25 budget the Government delivered \$6.1 billion for social housing. That is the biggest single investment in social housing in New South Wales history. Some \$5.1 billion will go towards delivering 8,400 social homes, and \$1 billion will go towards repairing another 33,000 existing homes. In light of that investment, it is galling to be accused of not contributing in that space. The Government has also committed \$5 million to continue the audit of surplus government land, which has already delivered 44 sites. The Government will use that land to deliver 30,000 new homes.

The Government has allocated \$450 million for Landcom to deliver a key worker build-to-rent program across metropolitan areas of the State, along with \$200 million for NSW Health to provide homes for healthcare workers in rural, regional and remote areas. The Government has introduced reforms to build more homes and change the way people live in those homes. It has also recently announced rental reforms. The Minns Government has moved to end no-grounds evictions in New South Wales once and for all and to create a portable bonds scheme. Those two key reforms will provide renters with more security and less financial stress throughout their tenancies. The Government will introduce its bill in relation to those reforms to Parliament this week, and it will be debated next week.

The irony is that the Government is already working on many of the matters raised by the member for Newtown in her second reading speech. The Transport Oriented Development [TOD] program has provisions for affordable housing. The TOD SEPP will provide housing across Greater Sydney, including in the Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra. The TOD SEPP contains mandatory requirements that 2 per cent of affordable housing be held in perpetuity and be managed by a registered community housing provider. That is an achievable and deliverable level of affordable housing for the private market at this stage. The Minister for Housing has committed to increasing the amount of affordable housing over time in a way that industry and the community can respond to. The Government will provide increased levels of affordable housing into the future.

The accelerated precincts in the TOD program have affordable housing requirements based on the particular local conditions of each of the precincts. Those affordable housing requirements are also required to be held in perpetuity and managed by a registered community housing provider. The Government is committed to delivering affordable housing rather than aspirational targets that are never reached. The peak body of the CHP has provided support for the Government's plans for affordable housing and has recognised that it is a starting point. The CHP wants to work with the Government to achieve and build on those outcomes.

The member for Wahroonga has stooped to a low level on this issue in opposing the Government's housing policies. I had hoped for more support from the member for Balmain. At least Opposition members are up-front in opposing all housing. Their desire is for young people who live in New South Wales to live outside Coalition electorates. They want them all to live in Western Sydney. The Minns Government is committed to delivering the homes the people of New South Wales need now and into the future, and that includes affordable homes. The bill does not achieve that. Therefore, I oppose it.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:54):** I contribute to debate on this important private member's bill, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Newtown. The bill addresses affordable housing in this State. Affordable housing is meant to be an alternative to the private rental market. The member for Newtown and The Greens have worked tirelessly for the past decade in this space. The phrase "affordable housing" has lost all meaning in that regard because it is linked to the market. The market is super inflated and favours developers and landlords rather than tenants. We are in real trouble because affordable housing is linked to the market, not people's incomes. It is incredibly disappointing that Labor and the Coalition are in lockstep in their opposition to the affordable housing bill, although for different reasons.

I have listened to debate on the bill, and for the past nine years I have heard debates about the affordable housing issue. The main reason for opposition to affordable housing is the supply mantra. But the supply mantra does not capture who these houses are for, where they are located and why they are provided. We have built so-called affordable housing in my community, but it is linked to the market and not to people's incomes. We have done so in an era that has had a massive increase in short-term rental accommodation for tourists. That does not make any sense at all. The Government has said that it has put in place provisions, but those provisions are not working, certainly not in regional areas like mine. I put on record the incredible work of people like Chels and the team at House You in my region. There are countless others, including Social Futures.

Byron Shire Council has tried to work with successive planning Ministers to provide out-of-the-box residential development that is truly affordable. I really hope we see that at the old Mullumbimby hospital site. Some may recall that thanks to community campaigning we were able to buy that site back for a dollar. We really hope to deliver genuine affordable housing that provides an alternative to the private rental market in Mullumbimby. After the 2022 floods, five pod villages, or temporary housing villages, were established in my electorate. Each of those cost around \$70 million. About \$350 million was spent on temporary pod villages in my electorate. While that was well intentioned, imagine how many homes we could have built with that \$350 million.

It is very pleasing that, in the context of my community, there is a 60-day cap on short-term rental accommodation. That came into effect a couple of weeks ago after a lot of campaigning and advocacy. I note that the former planning Minister, the member for Lane Cove, is in the Chamber. He was very supportive and instrumental in that process. I thank also the current planning Minister for supporting our community. I have already heard from real estate agents, advocates and the community that that has been very successful. Generally, living in Byron Bay is not an affordable prospect, but at least homes in that area are now available on the private market. Businesses are starting to see a real shift, and frontline workers and key workers now have the opportunity to live in actual homes. We are also hearing really positive stories from the community about people who for the past nine years, since the disruptor, have lived next door to short-term rental accommodation run by large multinational corporations.

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

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR BALLINA**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge an upcoming special event for the member for Ballina—I think she has a birthday coming up. I trust it will go well.

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome guests to the gallery, some of whom I recognise from previous sittings. I welcome our friends from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. I extend a warm welcome to guests of the member for Kiama from the Nowra Croquet Club. I welcome Nikki Williams, the mayor of Coffs Harbour, and Suzanne Ryan, who are guests of the member for Coffs Harbour. Finally, I welcome students from Blacktown Girls High School.

*Members*

#### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr RYAN PARK:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that I will answer questions today in the absence of the Attorney General. My colleague the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will answer

questions in the absence of the Minister for Local Government. In the absence of the Attorney General, he will also answer questions in relation to the portfolios of Finance and Natural Resources.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank you. You are henceforth to be known as the Leader of the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I should get a pay rise.

**The SPEAKER:** If you can get that out of your Premier, you are welcome to it.

#### *Question Time*

#### **PUBLIC PROTESTS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:04):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The Police Association supports the user-pays principle for protests. But last night the Government voted down an upper House motion referencing the Palestine Action Group [PAG], which called for the Government "to charge these persistent protesters for the cost of policing". Whom does the Minister stand with, Anthony D'Adam and her upper House comrades or the Police Association?

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. I call the Minister. She will be heard in silence.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:05):** I stand with the men and women of the NSW Police Force, who keep our streets safe day in and day out.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Wahrenonga to order for the first time. I think the member for Coffs Harbour was also interjecting.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We ask a lot of them and we know how stretched they are. They are stretched because the legacy of the former Government was one of wage cuts, no recruitment and no retention. They are so stretched because that is the legacy of the former Government. Those are exactly the facts. They are on the table and everybody knows it. I will not take any advice from those on the Opposition benches. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the hypocrisy of the question from the Leader of the Opposition is really quite flabbergasting. Mr Speakman, on 2GB with Ben Fordham two weeks ago—

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 75. No member will be referred to by name but rather by title.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I refer to the appearance by the member for Cronulla on 2GB's *Ben Fordham Live* just two weeks ago. When asked—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, concerning direct relevance. The question is about which side the Minister stands on regarding the user-pays principle for protesting.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear more from the Minister.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I am getting my steps up here, Mr Speaker. I refer to the comments made by the member for Cronulla on 2GB's *Ben Fordham Live* two weeks ago. When asked about the 8 October PAG rally, he said, "I think, if people were being respectful, that's what they'd do. ... you can't ban things that make you feel uncomfortable." He then went on to say, "I don't"—

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Mr Speaker, you did not rule regarding Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question is not about whether or not anyone feels comfortable.

**The SPEAKER:** We will not have an argument.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** It is about direct relevance to the question.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will settle down and not quarrel across the Chamber. I did not rule on the point of order from the Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps that was a failing on my part, but I was not going to uphold it at that stage. The Leader of the Opposition rose before the Minister's time had expired. I understand that he intends to request additional information.



**Mr Mark Speakman:** I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant an additional two minutes. The Minister has the call. She will be directly relevant to the question, which I note contained some elements of irony that could be challenged.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Mr Speaker, I will answer the question again. The Leader of the Opposition asked who I stand with, and I answer that I stand with the good men and women of the NSW Police Force. I go back to the member for Cronulla's comments on the Ben Fordham program two weeks ago, when he said—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** This bloke's got a glass jaw, seriously.

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

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question is about the user-pays scheme. What is the Minister's stance on user pays?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** No, you need to rewrite your questions, mate.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will not argue the point. For the benefit of the House, I will be clear. I understand the Leader of the Opposition's question even though I have not received a copy of it. The final part of the question related to whether the Minister stands with upper House member the Hon. Anthony D'Adam.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Yes, or the police, on the topic of user pays.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will return to the leave of the question and be directly relevant. I directed her to do so when I granted an extension of time. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Just a fortnight ago on the Ben Fordham program the member for Cronulla went on to say, "I don't think they can ban it in a liberal democracy."

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Mr Speaker, stop the clock.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I will not stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** The Minister is flouting your ruling to return to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will finalise her answer. She will be directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Mr Speaker, I have spent more time sitting down listening to points of order from those opposite than I have giving the answer. What the Leader of the Opposition said was—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired.

### SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCTS

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:11):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to return New South Wales to a world-class destination for culture and entertainment?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:12):** Members will be aware that the State lost more than half its music venues under the previous Government, with just 133 venues registered in March 2023. That was the result of the lockout laws and an endless amount of bureaucracy and red tape that stopped entertainment in New South Wales.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** The lockout laws you guys supported! That's how they got through.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** There was also a lot of nimbyism from The Greens, I must say. There were some crazy rules in place regarding entertainment. For example, Barangaroo House was banned from having disco balls and the South Dubbo Tavern would allow cover bands but not original bands. If the AC/DC cover band played that was fine, but if Angus Young came in, he absolutely could not play. There were bans on the Alexandria Hotel, with a specific "no entertainment" clause in place. The rules were, do not have fun! It has been reported that Madonna, Justin Bieber, The Smashing Pumpkins, James Harden and Steven Gerrard were all banned from entering a New South Wales premises under the previous Government. However, this Government is clearing all that up. The DJ, not a DA, should determine what is played in venues. The lead regulator will be Liquor and Gaming NSW and not nine different noise complaint agencies. There will be incentives for live music in this

State. We will establish special entertainment precincts. A single complaint will no longer be able to shut down a venue. We will permanently relax rules for outdoor dining. There will be no more "dancing bans" in place.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** What!

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** For people such as the member for Bankstown the dancing bans were a good thing, but the majority of people want to have the opportunity to dance. We will get rid of the restrictions that mean a person is not allowed to stand up outside when having a drink with their friends. Lastly, we will get rid of the five-kilometre radius rule around clubs in New South Wales. We have UFC 312 coming up, Volkanovski today and the King's visit next week. The Everest is on this weekend, and recently we had the NRL grand final and the women's world cup. It is all happening in Sydney. In fact, two weeks ago *Conde Nast Traveller* named Sydney the best city in the world. Sydney is coming back. I know people are very excited about the coming visit to Sydney of His Majesty the King. As part of those arrangements, the Government has negotiated with the palace to have a community barbeque in Parramatta, with prominent people from Western Sydney to be introduced to the King and share the excitement. Most people are more than happy about this. [*Extension of time*]

But not everyone is happy about it. The Leader of The Nationals put out a press release that stated:

The Minns Labor Government has today announced an event to celebrate REGIONAL NSW will be held in PARRAMATTA, SYDNEY.

He then said, on 2WEB:

... regional celebrations should have been thought of anyway, and shouldn't have just been tacked on in a tacky way to a press release—

by the Government. He was then interviewed by Clinton Maynard on 2GB. Mr Maynard made a not unreasonable point, stating:

MAYNARD: But it would be fair to say that the King is on—he has very limited time. He's only visiting two cities. He's not even going to Queensland, not going to Melbourne. He may not well have time to go to your electorate of Dubbo ...

Saunders replied, "Well, it's only an hour flight away. Why can't he come to Dubbo?" The Leader of The Nationals is so demanding.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will come to order. The Premier will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Hawkesbury.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Mr Speaker, I ask that you stop the clock.

**The SPEAKER:** I will consider it. I will see how quickly the member for Hawkesbury takes her point of order.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 75.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat.

[*Interruption*]

The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat or she will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** On Sunday the member for Dubbo called the event in Parramatta an "insult". On Monday he called it "tacky". On Tuesday he called it "a kick in the guts". On Wednesday he accepted an invitation! He is coming to the barbeque. If I had known that, I would have invited him in the first place.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Dubbo did not get an invitation so he started bagging out the barbeque. Then we gave him an invitation and he is going to come along. What is he going to say to the King?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I have finished my answer.

## SCHOOL SAFETY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:17):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Last year the Minister cut a school electrical safety program, then backflipped and told contractors she would honour commenced works. Now she has cut the program for a second time. How many schools do not currently have protection against electrical shock or electrocution?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:18):** One thing that this Government will not do is take any lessons, advice or lecturing from members opposite on what to do with public school infrastructure. The truth is that upon coming to government we inherited a large, booming backlog of maintenance problems.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** There was booming infrastructure.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** There was no booming infrastructure under the former Government. I challenge the member for Dubbo to go to the growing areas of north-west and south-west Sydney and tell people there that they have booming infrastructure. Last time I checked, a field where there is supposed to be a school is not "booming infrastructure". Let me be clear, never has a government spent more on public education than the Minns Labor Government. That is true, and it is in black and white.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129, relevance. It is a very simple question about safety programs that have been cut. Would the Minister let her kids go to a school that did not have this safety?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Dubbo to order for the second time. He knows that is not how to take a point of order. I call the member for Wahroonga to order for the second time.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We are working through the backlog that you left us with basic maintenance. What I am talking about when it comes to basic maintenance are safety requirements like toilets that work at places such as the school I was at with the member for Heathcote where previous education Ministers went and announced a maintenance blitz and then never actually did the maintenance.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We are investing in schools and areas that you never, ever invested in.

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The question is specifically about electrical safety in schools. She has gone nowhere near it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The Minister is being directly relevant. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I am clearly talking about maintenance and safety issues in public schools, and we are taking care of the backlog that the Opposition left us in education. We are not above giving the Opposition credit when it deserves it.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** When it comes to building the metro, say, we will do that. But when it comes to public education and investment in public school infrastructure, we will not give the Opposition credit for anything because it does not deserve it.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We are cleaning up the Opposition's mess, and we will continue to do that on behalf of the students of New South Wales. We are building more schools than the Opposition ever dreamed of.

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

## HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:21):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to deliver new and upgraded health infrastructure for communities across New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:21):** I thank the member for Liverpool. The Premier and I were recently at Liverpool Hospital, and she remarked on how different that hospital is from when she did work experience there all those years ago. We are very lucky to have her in that electorate. I will talk a little about Liverpool and the south-west and the investment we are making there. I acknowledge again the Nurses and Midwives' Association, whose members are in the public gallery today. They might be speaking with MPs, and we have certainly been engaging with them in the course of this week through their leadership team.

South-west Sydney is home to large, growing communities. People who travel to that part of Sydney see the houses coming out of the ground, and we need to make sure the health investment matches that growth. That is why the \$830 million hospital redevelopment at Liverpool is so crucial to meeting the health needs of those growing communities. This Saturday there will be an open day for people to look at the new precinct and the new facility before we start bringing in more staff and obviously treating and serving that community. That hospital is very interesting. It is arguably the second busiest hospital in the country, only just behind Campbelltown. Its emergency department serves around 90,000 people each year. That means about 250 people per day move through that precinct.

While the investment in infrastructure is important, what really makes a difference is the skill, tenacity, commitment and dedication of our hardworking healthcare staff in that hospital and in the hospitals of south-western Sydney. They are under extreme pressure at the moment and, with challenges in primary health, big hospitals like Liverpool are really starting to feel the pinch. I acknowledge the team at Liverpool for their work. Many of us who are from regional areas will also know the importance of investing in our hospitals. That is why over the past few weeks it has been pleasing to visit the electorate of the member for South Coast to see the investment in Shoalhaven Hospital, and to join the member for Shellharbour to see the investment that we are making in her electorate. I am meeting with the member for Albury later today. I know he has been a strong advocate for the partnership that we have with the Victorian Government, a \$500 million investment in the local hospital. We are investing right across the board in other regional and rural centres, making sure that investment keeps up with the health needs of those communities. [*Extension of time*]

What we are doing in smaller hospitals is also important. We have allocated \$12 million for small, minor upgrades to hospitals that do not need full redevelopments but do need some facilities upgraded. I was recently with the member for Barwon. I have told many people in this place that one of the best things anyone can do is spend a few days with the member for Barwon—

**Mr Roy Butler:** Hear, hear!

**Mr RYAN PARK:** —because you meet phenomenal people, including the member for Barwon, who are passionate about their hospitals. We are upgrading hospitals like the one at Lightning Ridge, which is a fantastic hospital. I met the manager out there a month or two ago with the member for Barwon. From memory, her name is Nova. I also met Greg, the maintenance person. We had a look under the hospital and at some of the plumbing issues that they were concerned about and saw some of the ways the hard water in that part of the world has damaged some facilities. We are looking at that Lightning Ridge facility on behalf of the member for Barwon and Greg and Nova.

The upgrades include upgrades to facilities at Port Macquarie—I know the member for Port Macquarie has a strong relationship with her local hospital and local health district—and at Kempsey. I know that is also the case for the local member there. We are determined to make sure that that investment meets community needs. But nothing is more important than making sure that we invest in our hardworking healthcare staff, and we are determined to continue to do that. We must make this very important investment. All our communities deserve to have the very best standards of healthcare facilities, whether they are in rural, regional, remote or large metropolitan areas.

#### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION REVIEW

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:27):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, representing the Attorney General. It has now been over 12 months since preliminary submissions to the Law Reform Commission's independent review of the Anti-Discrimination Act closed, but there have been no public updates beyond the nebulous promise of a consultation paper in coming months. Will the Minister provide an update on the timeline for the review and indicate whether the Attorney General or his office have received any interim reports or updates in relation to how this is progressing?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:27):** I thank the member for Newtown and acknowledge her advocacy in this space over a substantial period. I am advised that in June 2023 the Attorney General referred the Anti-Discrimination Act to the NSW Law Reform Commission for a comprehensive review, which fulfilled an election commitment. The Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 is a proud Labor achievement of the former Wran Government. It was groundbreaking legislation that set the stage for similar reforms both nationally and in other jurisdictions. We do acknowledge, however, that almost 50 years since the Act's introduction, it requires a review for it to be fit for purpose and aligned with the times in which we now live.

A core tenet of the Minns Labor Government is ensuring that all people across New South Wales, regardless of where they live, can have a life free from discrimination. Everyone in this House will agree with

that. It is critical that the Anti-Discrimination Act provides the protections that the community expects, deserves and can rely on. The Law Reform Commission's review is considering a range of issues relating to the Act, including whether it could be modernised and simplified to better promote the equal enjoyment of rights and reflect contemporary community standards, as well as whether the range of attributes that protect against discrimination requires reform.

The NSW Law Reform Commission is an independent statutory body chaired by the Hon. Tom Bathurst, AC, KC, a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Experienced employment law specialist Kate Eastman, AM, SC, has also been appointed a part-time commissioner of the NSW Law Reform Commission for a three-year term. Ms Eastman has more than 30 years of experience in dispute resolution and advocacy in a wide range of employment matters including sexual harassment, discrimination and vilification law. Preliminary submissions to the review closed on 29 September last year, with 92 published on the commission's website. On its website, the commission notes that it is currently reviewing these submissions and expects to release a consultation paper in the coming months.

As is convention with Law Reform Commission reviews, there is no due date or specific time frame for the finalisation of the review. It is a significant body of work. The Government awaits the report and will consider its recommendations carefully when they arrive. The Law Reform Commission is the appropriate body to undertake this work on the Anti-Discrimination Act. It touches on many facets of all of our lives and those of the communities that we represent. Getting changes right is of paramount importance as the protections go to the heart of our society and who we are as a people. [*Extension of time*]

That being said, the fact that the Anti-Discrimination Act is subject to a detailed review does not mean that the Government has paused its agenda to ensure that New South Wales is a fairer and more equal society. Yesterday NSW Labor was proud to support a number of incredibly important measures brought to this place by the member for Sydney. The equality bill made important amendments to nine different pieces of legislation in order to right wrongs, bring the State in line with other jurisdictions, remove discrimination and outdated language embedded in our legislation, and strengthen protections for LGBTIQ+ people.

When that bill passed the Legislative Assembly last night, it was a fantastic moment for the people of New South Wales. Equality lifts us all; it makes us better and stronger as individuals and as a society. Unfortunately, members opposite decided to sit on the wrong side of history and voted against the bill. As the Attorney General mentioned yesterday, we are at the beginning, not the end, of our journey for a fairer State. I thank the member for Newtown for her ongoing advocacy. I will make sure that the Attorney General gets back to her with any further information.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND HOUSING

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (11:32):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. The Committee for Sydney says that we need more trains before we can get more housing, and that we should have a new metro line every four to six years. Apart from projects started under the Coalition, what funding is allocated for new metros?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:32):** I thank the member for Winston Hills for his question. It is interesting. Members opposite ask questions about the one thing they have a position on currently that is important to the people of New South Wales—housing—and their position is to oppose it. They want to oppose it, particularly in their backyards and particularly—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Particularly that member.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Particularly the member for Winston Hills. They took it so far as to introduce a bill in the upper House to stop our policy that would see more housing associated with public transport. That is their position.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question is what funding is allocated for new metros.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We on this side of the House are delivering public transport alongside housing. In the current budget there is \$62.9 billion allocated to public transport investment. We are building three metros. One of those was one that those on the other side were going to cancel. That is right: They were going to cancel it.

**The SPEAKER:** All members will come to order. The Minister does not require any assistance.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Opposition members do not like it, but the fact is—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. I warn the member for Oatley that he will be removed from the Chamber if he does not calm down. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Minister's evasion is an admission that their budget has zero for new projects, but she should answer the question.

**Mr Ryan Park:** To the point of order: The Leader of the Opposition should not debate the point of order. Take a point of order, receive instructions and sit down, dopey. Sit down, dope! Mate, you are as bad as your football team!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will resume his seat. There is no point of order. I uphold the position of the Acting Leader of the House. He is correct, and the Leader of the Opposition knows it. The Minister will continue.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The Government will take metros all the way to Bankstown. We on this side will deliver for south-west communities, delivering 10 more stations. Unlike those opposite, we will build the homes along with public transport to deliver for Sydney.

#### NORTHERN RIVERS EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:35):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to ensure Northern Rivers families impacted by the floods have access to critical education infrastructure?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:36):** I thank the member for Lismore for the question, which is important to her community. She is a tireless and fearless advocate; she is tenacious for her community. I also acknowledge the work of the other members in this place who represent communities in the Northern Rivers: the member for Tweed, the member for Clarence and also the member for Ballina, who is steadfast in supporting her community, particularly in the area of public education, as an experienced former educator herself. It has been two years since the devastating floods. As those members I mentioned remind us when they stand up for their communities, the recovery is still underway. We still have many families and regions doing it tough, and we still need to support them. The Premier has said many times that we are in for the long haul. It is taking a while to get these communities back on their feet.

In education, we are committed to doing that and ensuring every student has access to quality education infrastructure. It was great to see students and teachers returning to new permanent schools at Wardell and Empire Vale public schools. I give a lot of credit to the member for Ballina, who made representations for these schools to reopen in their permanent facilities. Both of those schools have been rebuilt to be flood resilient and to withstand possible future flooding. They both have new classrooms, libraries and canteens. At Wardell it ensures that Jumbunna Sugartown Preschool next door can continue. At Empire Vale, the original 150-year-old school building was able to be retained. It is an important part of the history of that area.

This is a huge milestone for a community that has gone through a hell of a lot and shown enormous strength, resilience and patience. That is particularly true of the hardworking teachers and principals, whom I pay tribute to as their Minister. They are so dedicated to their students. Principals and teachers are leaders in their community. We are also determined to see all of the flood-affected schools return to permanent facilities. That includes Blakebrook Public School. We have announced that we are using enhanced planning powers to get this project moving, just like we are doing at Broadwater, in the electorate of the member for Clarence. He has been a strong advocate for his community in this regard. [*Extension of time*]

I transparently say to the member and to the community that it has taken longer than we would like, but I am pleased that we now have a way forward. I acknowledge the planning Minister's assistance on this matter, using powers under the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act. We have a path to getting students back into their permanent school as soon as possible. I look forward to updating the communities from Condong and Tumbulgum to Richmond River as those critical projects progress. I believe they are on exhibition. The member for Tweed will be pleased about that.

Sadly, it has not just been floods that have tested the communities in northern New South Wales. The Murwillumbah community has been through quite a lot of change in education. The member for Lismore and I have worked hand in hand to make sure that we get on top of community needs and educational needs in those communities because of a failed merger of four schools into one mega school, which was announced with no consultation with the local community. As soon as it was announced, people flocked to the member for Lismore to ask what happened.

In opposition, we stood up for that community on the member's insistence. Since coming to government, we have been working with that community to listen to their needs. From day one of term 1 next year Wollumbin High School and Murwillumbah Learning Community High School will reopen as two separate schools. We have announced the two new principals: at Murwillumbah, Zoe Tiernan; and at Wollumbin, Kelly Spilstead, who, in good news, is returning to the area. That brings to an end a failed experiment and gives certainty to the community, which has been through a lot and has shown resilience. We vow to continue to support the community with critical education.

### ILLAWARRA STEEL MANUFACTURING

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:41):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on why the BlueScope Steel land transformation and Project NeoSmelt in the Illawarra are critical to New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:41):** I thank the member for Shellharbour for her question. It gives me a chance to highlight the importance of steelmaking in New South Wales and the Illawarra, which I know is backed by the member. Local job creation has always been one of my priorities as the local MP. It is also one of the Government's key priorities, and a key priority of all of my colleagues but particularly the Illawarra representatives in this place. We are proud of the steelmaking that has been taking place in the Illawarra for nearly 100 years. Collectively, we in the Illawarra and in the Government want to see it continue long into the future.

Steelmaking directly and indirectly employs thousands of people in the Illawarra and beyond, and there are hundreds of businesses in the supply chain that steelmaking relies upon. Each tonne of fabricated steel produced in Port Kembla supports 16 full-time equivalent jobs. Recently around 200 hectares of land has been identified as surplus to steelmaking requirements. For members struggling to understand the size of 200 hectares, it is roughly the size of Sydney CBD between Circular Quay and Central station. This project is the largest industrial land transformation project on the planet today. I will let that sink in: It is the largest industrial land transformation on the planet, right down the road in the Illawarra. That parcel of land could be home to 30,000 jobs in the future and attract new industries, establish new education precincts and potentially a super TAFE and university presence, create community open space, and foster innovation and research and development. If it is done right, we stand to double the current output of the site, adding a potential 1.5 per cent of gross State product from that landholding.

This Government has already seen big projects get underway at Port Kembla by granting planning approvals for berth upgrades, an upgrade to the tin mill, and a new metal coating line in Western Sydney that uses Port Kembla's steel. If it were not for Labor governments of the past facing up to the challenges the steel industry has experienced, we would not have a steel industry left in New South Wales today. The Minns Labor Government is alert to that, and is backing in the land transformation with a Cabinet-endorsed working group, chaired by me, to get this industrial land transformation done right and with appropriate speed and certainty. This Government is backing jobs and Port Kembla's potential to transform itself and modernise steelmaking and its employment opportunities. The Government is also giving strong support to an electric smelting furnace—or NeoSmelt, as it is known—which has the potential to unlock near zero emission steel. [*Extension of time*]

At a time when steelmakers are under pressure all over the world, we are working to retain and evolve steelmaking in New South Wales. It is of critical importance to the region, housing, job creation, investment and other renewable energy projects throughout the country. BlueScope Steel has partnered with BHP and Rio Tinto to unlock ironmaking decarbonisation, using Pilbara ores. That is an exciting project and a game changer for the making of quality Australian steel. There is interstate competition for this NeoSmelt facility. The West Australian Government is keen to get it and the South Australian Government is keen to get it. But we want to see that pilot project in New South Wales in Port Kembla. We want to see steelmaking continue in this State, because it is important.

The governments of Western Australia and South Australia are keen to host it, but the best place in the country to host the NeoSmelt pilot project is Port Kembla. Members on opposite sides of the House may disagree on a few things from time to time, but we would confidently agree that Port Kembla should be the home of steelmaking in Australia. I am sure I speak for all members who want to see us united in backing NeoSmelt at Port Kembla. I thank the Premier for his strong support for the partners in this venture and for the project to be located at Port Kembla. Port Kembla offers a deepwater seaport, a highly skilled workforce, a ready-to-go facility and a strong supply of renewable energy to get NeoSmelt underway. In the end, the choice for NeoSmelt partners is simple. Forget Western Australia and forget South Australia. Choose the great State of New South Wales, choose Port Kembla and choose the Illawarra.

### TEACHER POLITICAL DISCOURSE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (11:46):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Last year, regarding political protests by teachers, the Minister said:

... people will be dealt with in accordance with the code of conduct if they breach it.

A group called Teachers and School Staff for Palestine is calling for teachers next week to engage in political protests during school hours. What are the specific penalties which will be applied to teachers who breach the code of conduct?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:47):** I thank the member for Goulburn for her question. I have been clear about this in the past and I will be clear in answering this again today. The Department of Education has a very clear code of conduct for teachers in our schools.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has just begun her answer. She will be heard in silence.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Hang on. I am answering the question. It is very serious. What I say as Minister in response to this is very serious for the employees of our public schools. I understand there are concerns from members of the community about this. Schools have to be nonpartisan and unbiased. We take that seriously. In fact, one of the tenets of public education is that a school is a nonpartisan, unbiased place where students come and learn about the world and have teachers that present evidence and the curriculum to them in an unbiased and nonpartisan way. That is a skill, and it is one of the many skills of being a public schoolteacher. It will shock members to know that the group mentioned by the member for Goulburn is not a group within the Department of Education. It is a private group of people who happen to work in public education who have come together and feel that way. They are not permitted to protest inside schools or to express their political views while working in a public school as a teacher.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The question acknowledges that there is a code of conduct. It is asking what the penalties are.

**Mr Ryan Park:** What's your point of order?

**The SPEAKER:** The Acting Leader of the House will cease interjecting. All members will come to order, which includes the Minister who is acting as the Leader of the House. I will hear the point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The question is, "What are the penalties?" We have only heard about the code of conduct. We know that there is a code of conduct.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will address the question directly. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I am being very clear about the ramifications—or, as the member for Wahoonga punitively puts it, "penalties". The Department of Education does not run a court of law or a police force. The ramifications, according to the code of conduct, will relate to what that teacher or employee might have done. There will be different ramifications for different breaches of the code of conduct. If a teacher has breached the code of conduct, it will be dealt with by the principal or someone in the department.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I make it clear to teachers—and I have made it clear time and again—that it is unbiased and non-political. The vast majority of teachers understand and respect their responsibilities.

**The SPEAKER:** I was going to grant an extension of time, but the Minister has concluded her answer.

### DIGITAL STRATEGY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:50):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's digital strategy for New South Wales and how it will drive greater innovation in our fabulous State?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has been wanting to have a chat all week. I am pleased to call the Minister.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:50):** I have, Mr Speaker, but no-one took the hint. I finally get a question from the outstanding member for Gosford, whom everyone not only loves but also admires. Her community supports her incredibly. I thank the member for her question. Upon becoming the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, I looked at how we are using digital government to help people, and



we are doing a whole heap of things. However, the focus on inclusion and accessibility was missing, and a key mission became how we could use this strategy to make sure that every person in New South Wales can benefit from our digital revolution.

I have said a number of times that it does not matter if we have the greatest app and the shiniest tool. If it cannot be used by everyone, then we are not doing the right thing. With that focus, we became interested in and dedicated to ensuring that every person in New South Wales can be a part of this digital revolution, especially making sure that it is an inclusive and accessible experience. People were potentially missing out because of accessibility issues, including new migrants who speak languages other than English, slightly older people, or people who live in the regions or remote areas. Let us not forget those people who simply cannot afford to engage in that digital process.

It was with enormous pride that I released the Minns Labor Government's digital strategy a couple of weeks ago. It came about after a year's worth of genuine consultation; it was not "tick a box" consultation. We worked with the Disability Council, academics, industry and community groups to look at how to make this digital strategy the best that it can be and the pathway for what we do in this space. Government strategies will often talk about goals, aspirations and pillars. Ours was simple. I wanted to focus on one word: mission. There are five missions in this digital strategy. Just like any Venn diagram, those missions intersect a lot. I specifically want the word "mission" because it is more than a goal. It has to be what drives us in every single thing that we do. In keeping with what I have talked about, the first mission is about how we can make our digital processes more accessible and more inclusive.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** As so many people around New South Wales want to hear more from the Minister, I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant an additional two minutes. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** The first mission—and the key word is "mission"—is about accessibility and inclusion. The second mission is about making sure that we use this strategy to drive productivity. The third mission is about building trust and maintaining that trust, which is key. The fourth mission is about keeping New South Wales resilient and supporting communities at all times, not just during natural disasters. The fifth mission is focused on our digital capabilities. Working with my colleague and friend the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, we are looking at how we enable digital connectivity. We cannot have one mission that stands alone. This is a series of missions. They all intersect, and they all rely upon one another.

Having the shiniest tool is not the answer. The answer is having what is most practical and what works. It is easy to say that this is a digital strategy. Indeed it is, but it is so much more than that. It is a people strategy. It is a strategy to make sure that every person in this great State can participate actively and fully. If we want to take people on a journey, we have to take every person on that journey. I am also proud to say that the next element of this strategy is our digital inclusion strategy. We will work specifically to not only identify the problem—because members in this place are good at that—but also respond to and fix that problem. If there is a shortage of connectivity, is it because we need to invest in connectivity? If people do not have the skills, do we work on that? If people have accessibility issues, how do we help them? It is about harnessing every opportunity and making sure that we continue to do everything that we can so that every citizen in New South Wales participates in this digital revolution.

## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SPORT

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:56):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Women's safety advocates say that cage fighting glorifies violence, and last year's event was headlined by a fighter who boasted about punching a fan in Bondi. By spending \$16 million on cage fighting what message is the Government sending to families struggling with a cost-of-living crisis and to victim-survivors of domestic violence?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:56):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. The answer is that this Government is absolutely committed to achieving and delivering on its election commitments. That is exactly what we are doing. In relation to the areas that cover my portfolio, the Minns Government has absolutely no tolerance for domestic violence, disrespect and sexual violence. We will achieve every one of our election commitments, and this is one of them. Having said that, disrespect for women creates an environment in which violence against women is tolerated and even condoned. The Government recently released our first ever primary prevention strategy. A key component of that strategy is to work with

sporting clubs to change the attitudes and the beliefs of people so that we can drive down the rates of domestic and family violence. Sport reaches people across our community. Sport has sportspeople, volunteers—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is what message does spending \$16 million on cage fighting send. It is not about election commitments.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** As I was saying, a key component of the primary prevention strategy is working with sporting clubs. Sport is an important way to change people's attitudes because it involves volunteers, sportspeople, families and communities. It is important that we work through sport to change those attitudes. I want to talk about something really wonderful that the Ultimate Fighting Championship [UFC] is doing in New South Wales.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** There is a partnership between the UFC and PCYC, which began earlier this year, called Fit for Life. It is a youth mentoring initiative. This is what we are talking about in primary prevention.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** That program does hugely important work, particularly in getting through to Indigenous young people and Indigenous young men on healthy lifestyles and role models. We stand by our primary prevention strategy. We will deliver change in the domestic and family violence space.

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

#### TAFE NSW

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:00):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's investment to rebuild TAFE in New South Wales?

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:00):** I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. I also thank him for his leadership in his community on vocational training. I have to say that, since I have been in this role, people have talked to me about the opportunities they see for expanding vocational training on the Campbelltown TAFE campus. I appreciate the leadership that the member has shown in that. I look forward to working with him in the future on the opportunities to make sure that we are providing the vocational training that is needed in his region. The Government came to office with a clear commitment to rebuild the vocational and training sector in New South Wales and restore TAFE at the heart of that sector.

That is not an easy job because TAFE teachers—as have constantly told me since I have become Minister—feel battered by the previous Government. They feel that the previous Government did not appreciate their efforts, and their morale has sunk as a result. We are working hard to try to rebuild that morale by showing our confidence in TAFE and the vocational and training sector. To that end, in August I was pleased to release the final report of the independent review into the VET sector. That report included 21 recommendations, on top of the seven from the interim report, aimed at improving and rebuilding TAFE and vocational training in New South Wales. We will be delivering a phased response to that report and, by the end of this year, we will have a new TAFE charter that clearly outlines the Government's view of the role of TAFE in our skills sector.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** We will have a new operating model next year, which will focus on rebuilding links with the community and industry, and addressing the gaps left by the previous Government in its move to the One TAFE system. I am excited to work on some of the recommendations in the VET review, particularly around better planning for vocational training in regional areas. We have this novel idea of going to regional areas and talking to people about where they see their future skills demand will be. That is important to me as a member representing regional New South Wales.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It is reasonable for country communities to expect that from the Labor Party, which was born in country New South Wales—the representatives of the bush—and is the party that has delivered most of the infrastructure that regional New South Wales has relied on over the years.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

"Oh, ho, ho," members opposite say. Labor governments over the last century or so delivered 70 per cent of the irrigation dams linking the electricity network to regional communities. We have represented and delivered for country New South Wales for over 130 years. It is no wonder that in that process The Nationals are down to their lowest number of members in this place in 99 years.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I hope members have got it out of their systems. Those who have not will be directed to leave the Chamber. I assume the member for Campbelltown is seeking additional information.

**Mr Greg Warren:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted. Members will be mindful of the decorum of the House.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** Recently I was pleased to join the Premier and Federal Minister Giles to announce one of our key election commitments: the Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence. We announced that one at Wetherill Park in the electorate of the member for Prospect. It is an important campus for TAFE. One of the important things about that joint investment between the Minns Labor Government and the Albanese Labor Government is that the skills delivered there will be able to be delivered anywhere—not only in regional New South Wales but also in Australia as well. It is an important model that will help us address the manufacturing needs of our State into the future.

We are also working with the Education Union to reverse the terrible decline in the number of permanent teachers at TAFE that we saw under those opposite. Some 500 people have already been transferred to permanent teaching roles. We currently have an application process open. It has been incredibly enthusiastically received by casual TAFE teachers, who feel that they are eligible to become permanent. That is a really exciting prospect for making sure that the workforce understands the value that we place on them and their teaching skills as we move forward to ensure that we are delivering the skills that New South Wales needs in so many areas—whether it is in aged care and health care; in the building sector, to back up all our work to increase housing; in the digital sector and the sort of work that Minister Dib talked about; or in the steel industry for steel fabricators in the Illawarra. Importantly, we are doing work to make sure that we are engaging with rural and regional communities across New South Wales to deliver the skills they need for the future.

### REGIONAL HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Residents of regional New South Wales are experiencing increased house prices and rents and a lack of available housing. Will the Minister provide an update on what the Government is doing to increase housing supply and address the housing crisis in Orange and regional New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:06):** I thank the member for Orange for his question. He is one of the great class of local members elected in the 2016 by-elections. I am sure the Minister for Industrial Relations would agree on the quality of those members. The member for Orange is a tireless representative of his community, making sure that the issues that affect the lives of the people of Orange are considered first and foremost by members of the front bench. Recently the entire Cabinet was warmly welcomed to Orange. The member was a gracious host. The member for Orange and I have often spoken about the critical issues of housing supply, housing diversity and housing affordability for people across regional New South Wales. He understands the problem and is working with the Government on local solutions for his constituents, his business community and particularly young people who want to make regional New South Wales their home.

Orange is set for some steady population growth over the next 25 years, which will create demand for more than 6,000 new homes. The housing crisis is not an issue that is just faced by Sydney, the Illawarra, the Hunter and the Central Coast; it is being felt across New South Wales. In regional New South Wales, median house prices rose 3½ per cent over the past 12 months to \$770,000, while median prices for apartments rose 3.9 per cent to \$610,000. Rental prices have increased as well, now reaching about \$575 a week. At the same time, vacancy rates have been stuck at about 1 per cent across the entirety of regional New South Wales. That is why the Government is working just as hard to increase housing supply in regional New South Wales as it is in metropolitan areas. Earlier this year we provided \$212 million in funding for the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund for 10 projects to help build key infrastructure for projects to deliver 24,000 homes.

More recently, another \$3 million went to the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund to provide 16 councils with funding to finalise strategic planning and enable infrastructure that will allow the delivery of

around 24,000 homes. Another round of that funding is open for applications right now. I suggest that regional MPs contact their local councils to ensure that they get their applications in before 18 November—because we have all seen what happens when people get their applications in late! But that is not all. The Government has also provided the Strong Start Cadetship Program to assist councils to pay tuition fees for young planners. Of the 74 grants provided last year, 60 went to regional councils, including one for Orange City Council. [*Extension of time*]

I am sure the member for Orange is pleased that more planners are coming to regional New South Wales. The Government is making specific moves to address housing supply and affordability in Orange. This morning the Government, together with the member for Orange, announced a new Landcom project to be delivered in partnership with Orange City Council. That will go on public exhibition. The project is a rezoning proposal for the Redmond Place precinct in Orange to deliver 330 new homes, with 20 per cent allocated for affordable housing. That is an exciting project for Orange and will have lasting benefits. I was pleased to join representatives from Landcom and Orange City Council earlier this year to look at the site and get a feel for the size of development and the kind of community that will call that place home.

The project unlocks 24.2 hectares of council-owned land at the eastern entrance to Orange, to provide not only more homes but also housing diversity for the Orange community. The project will boost the supply of diverse housing typologies in the area, providing duplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartments. That will offer residents greater choice and affordability. Not only will the development deliver new homes; it also includes 5.3 hectares of public open space for residents and visitors to Orange, including a family-oriented park for young children, community gardens, a youth-focused park with sports courts and equipment for older children, shared walking and cycling routes, and a fitness station.

The project will go on public exhibition on Monday and will be open until 18 November. This is the first project to go through the new rezoning pathway established by the Government to speed up the delivery of social and affordable homes. The pathway provides Landcom, Homes NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office with access to the new rezoning pathway, which cuts approximately six months off the rezoning process. Development applications will be submitted once that rezoning is done in 2025, and construction is expected to start in 2026. I look forward to working with the member for Orange to make sure that project delivers more homes for his community.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:11):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to invest in the critical transport and roads infrastructure that regional communities need?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:12):** I thank the member for Wallsend for her question. She is a passionate advocate for regional transport and roads. She is such a great advocate for her community. There is a bulk of projects out there, including the Rankin Park to Jesmond bypass, the Hexham Straight upgrade and the M1 to Raymond Terrace extension. Like every member of the Labor Party, the member for Wallsend is passionate about those projects in the bush, and that is because we are the party of the bush. We are investing billions of dollars in regional New South Wales. I was in Parkes on the weekend.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will settle down.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Construction on the new bypass has reached a milestone. Massive girders are in place and everything is going well. There is work going on in Coffs Harbour, Dubbo—with the New Dubbo Bridge—the South Coast and Jervis Bay. Those projects are all going well, which is very exciting. Together with the Australian Government, we are investing \$44 billion into that work.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The biggest thing we are doing is fixing the roads after a lack of investment from those opposite when in government. I have not received a question from the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. We do not know who he is—I can't remember.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The shadow Minister and the Leader of The Nationals run around the State saying things that are very outrageous.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** They tried to say that I was pork-barrelling with the Regional Road Fund—they thought I was doing a bit of Pork Barilaro, and that is outrageous.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129—relevance—and Standing Order 73. If the Minister wishes to have an argument, she should do so through the proper process.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I will talk about the Regional Road Fund. The Government is fixing the roads the former Government could not fix. Let us get the facts. The Opposition said that those projects are in Labor electorates. At the time of the last election, the former Government had 14 projects in Nationals electorates, two in Liberal electorates, one in an Independent electorate and only 11 in Labor electorates. Some 21 of those 28 projects were not located in marginal electorates but in electorates with margins over 55 per cent, and 14 were in electorates with margins over 60 per cent. The Nationals must be very clear about that fund. To paraphrase a great Australian Prime Minister, if they want to know what pork-barrelling looks like in this modern Australia, they do not need a motion, a media story or a question in this House; they need a mirror!

### *Petitions*

#### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **Toowoona Bay**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to designate Toowoona Bay on the Central Coast as a marine-protected aquatic reserve, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

#### **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a paper petition signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Paul Scully—Minmi Development Proposal—lodged 18 September 2024 (Ms Sonia Hornery)

### *Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Debate**

#### **Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:16):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. In New South Wales "affordable housing" is defined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 as:

... housing for very low income households, low income households or moderate income households, being such households as are prescribed by the regulations or as are provided for in an environmental planning instrument.

The regulatory framework for affordable housing is set out in part 2 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021, or the housing SEPP—it has recently been under review—which requires affordable housing to be maintained as such for at least 15 years and managed by a registered community housing provider. The Greens' position, backed in by many housing advocates and planning experts, is that affordable housing should not be time limited and must be held in perpetuity. It was disappointing to hear that the Labor Government does not agree with that perspective.

At a Sydney Alliance pre-election event in February 2024, Treasurer Daniel Mookhey and former Treasurer and member of this place Matt Kean promised that their parties would ensure that all new affordable housing delivered through the New South Wales planning system would be affordable in perpetuity. Today we have heard a very wishy-washy response to that. Because affordable housing is often approved at council level and there is no centralised register of approvals, we simply do not know the total amount of affordable housing in New South Wales. Like so many matters with a sunset clause or other provision such that, after a number of years, a developer is meant to do something or the rules shift, we do not know who is watching this or why there is no central register.

The member for Newtown and The Greens are presenting such a great reform in this bill, so it is disappointing the Government is not backing it in. It is impossible to assess whether affordable housing is meeting community need and to strategically plan where, and in what quantity, more stock may be needed. In question time the planning Minister spoke about thousands of residential developments. We definitely need more housing in key areas but, unless we get the frameworks right, those houses will simply not be attainable for people under the so-called "affordable housing" framework. The housing SEPP states that tenants should not pay more than 30 per cent of their income in rent. But this is undermined by the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines, which allow CHPs to set affordable housing rents at no more than 80 per cent of market rent.

As I said before, this market is so overblown, driven by factors I will not go into but we all know of. It is pleasing to see that Federal Labor is finally saying the words "capital gains tax" and "negative gearing", because we know that housing has become a money-making effort instead of being a human right and for people to live in. In an uncapped rental market, 80 per cent of market rent is still, in many instances, particularly in my electorate, beyond the grasp of most people and may well exceed 30 per cent of their income. It makes a mockery of the situation and needs to be seen in the context of who these houses are really for.

The bill will make amendments to both instruments, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation and the Housing SEPP, to require affordable housing to be held in perpetuity, cap rents for affordable housing at 30 per cent of a tenant's gross income, and establish a statewide register of affordable housing, to be maintained by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. I would welcome knowing what on earth of those three modest provisions the Labor Government feels to be beyond it. The bill will also remove current exemptions to the 15-year minimum period for the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Land and Housing Corporation, to ensure that developments by both organisations are also bound by the perpetuity requirement. Taxpayers' dollars are being invested into housing, and it is absurd that it is for only 15 years.

This is necessary reform. I believe that the Government wants to enact a vision of the future of housing, but we should go back to basics about whom these homes are for and how long they will be for those people. As we have argued recently, with the silver standards, there are so many minimum standards we want to see embraced so that we can do this properly and all stand proudly in a bipartisan way to say that this State is delivering genuine affordable housing.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:21):** I oppose the bill brought by the member for Newtown, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. In summary, this bill seeks to amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment [EP&A] Act and the State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP] (Housing) 2021 to transfer the definition of "affordable housing" from the SEPP into the Act, as well as make all affordable housing affordable in perpetuity. The bill also seeks to create a register of affordable housing across the State, to keep track of all of the affordable homes that exist and are being built, and will require that this register be established through the EP&A Act, under the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Both of these things sound wonderful in theory. But, unfortunately, theory and reality are not always aligned. In the real world, wishing does not make it so. Unfortunately, this bill would not deliver more affordable homes. It would create a negative impact on the Government's ability to develop, deliver and manage social and affordable housing projects through Homes NSW.

I will focus on the aspect of the bill relating to the register of affordable homes in New South Wales. The bill calls on the Minister to have written into the EP&A Act that a register of all affordable homes in New South Wales be created and maintained. Again, the Government has no problem with this and is in fact working on that exact thing right now, in another project that the Minister for Housing is advancing. This work is being done with the Registrar of Community Housing. This is the same registrar who currently exists and oversees community housing providers [CHPs] to make sure that they are acting appropriately. It is most appropriate that a register of affordable homes be the responsibility of the Registrar of Community Housing to maintain, as the body within the Government with the most direct involvement with CHPs, as they manage the affordable homes, rather than be in the planning portal. The Government supports collecting data relating to the number of affordable housing properties delivered under the new policies and local affordable housing schemes, but this cannot be rushed through. We need to ensure that it is done once and done properly.

The member for Newtown stated in her second reading speech that the Government has a woeful lack of ambition on social housing and rental reforms. I find it quite difficult to stomach comments like that from members of a protest party, who say one thing in the Chamber and another thing to the people in their electorates. While the member for Newtown brings forward this bill and criticises the Government in this place, she frequently opposes the actions the Government is taking to deliver more housing, and more affordable housing, such as the redevelopment of areas like Waterloo and South Eveleigh.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for South Coast will resume her seat. The member for Newtown rises on a point of order.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I am very happy for references to the "party of protest" and "Greens political party" and various other things, but the suggestion that I am opposing a development in my electorate that I literally—

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** That is not a point of order.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I ask the member for South Coast to withdraw the comment about the South Eveleigh project, because I sent an email to my constituents welcoming the housing project at South Eveleigh, so the member's comment is factually incorrect. The point of order is to ask her to withdraw a factually incorrect statement made about me. If she has a concern and a critique about me, she should bring it by substantive motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Newtown has asked the member for South Coast to withdraw her comments. Does she wish to withdraw?

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** No, I do not wish to withdraw.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for South Coast may proceed.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** The Greens love nothing more than to grandstand, as members just saw, and make themselves out to be the protectors of social housing, all the while doing everything they can to stop the building of more social housing in their own electorates. The member for Balmain, for instance, for the entirety of this year has been running a petition in her community to stop the Government's housing agenda. But what else would you expect, when, as a candidate before her election, she joined the previous member in a campaign against a redevelopment proposal on Darling Street in Balmain? This was a proposal to redevelop a disused shed and turn it into six apartments—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order: My understanding is that, if the member for South Coast wishes to critique a member who is not in the Chamber, she needs to do it by way of substantive motion. While making a contribution to a bill, she cannot offer a critique of a member while the member is not here to defend herself.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will seek advice from the Clerk before I rule on the point of order.

*[A Government member interjected.]*

I remind the member for Leppington that I am seeking advice from the Clerk before I rule on the point of order. I do not appreciate being told how to do my job. While some latitude is allowed during a second reading debate, I draw the member for South Coast back to the substance of the bill.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** The proposal in question was to redevelop a disused shed and turn it into six apartments, half of which would be affordable housing. This bill gets to the heart of housing in New South Wales. The previous and current Greens members for Balmain ran the campaign against the redevelopment and celebrated when it was refused by the council. In spite of The Greens, the Minns Labor Government is committed to delivering more homes, more affordable homes and more social homes across the State. That commitment was backed up in the budget. In the 2024-25 budget, the Government delivered \$6.1 billion for social housing—the biggest single investment in social housing in the history of New South Wales—unlike the previous Government, which sold off over \$3 billion worth of social housing. The budget has \$5.1 billion to deliver 8,400 social homes and \$1 billion to repair another 33,000 existing social homes. I am sure all members here can think of a few in their electorates that need it. The South Coast is desperate for it, and we are building build-to-rent apartments on the South Coast.

In light of this investment from the Government, I think that it is pretty galling for the member for Newtown, the member for Balmain and the member for Ballina to say in their contributions to the debate that this Government does not care about social housing. This \$6.1 billion investment would say differently. The Government has also committed \$5 million to continue the audit of surplus government land, which has already delivered 44 sites on which the Government will deliver 30,000 new homes. There is \$450 million for Landcom to deliver a key worker build-to-rent program across metropolitan areas of the State, and there is \$200 million for NSW Health to provide homes for healthcare workers in remote communities in rural and regional areas. We have made reforms to not only build more homes but also change the way that people live in them through the rental reforms currently before the Parliament. The Minns Government is ending no-grounds evictions in New South Wales once and for all and has already created a portable bonds scheme. Those two key reforms will mean that renters have more security and less financial stress throughout their tenancy.

The irony of the member for Newtown's bill is that the Government is already doing the work on the very matters the bill seeks to address. The Transport Oriented Development [TOD] program has provisions for

affordable housing. Under the TOD State environmental planning policy, locations across Greater Sydney, the Hunter, Central Coast and the Illawarra have mandatory requirements for 2 per cent affordable housing to be held in perpetuity and managed by a registered community housing provider [CHP]. At this point in time that is an achievable and deliverable level of affordable housing for the private market. The Minister has committed to increasing that amount over time, though, in a way that industry and community can respond to so that the Government is providing increasing levels of affordable housing into the future.

The accelerated precincts in the TOD program have affordable housing requirements too, based on the particular local conditions of each of the stations in those precincts. They also require the affordable housing to be held in perpetuity and managed by a registered community housing provider. We are committed to delivering affordable housing in a way that actually delivers and gets these homes built rather than just being an aspirational target that is never reached. The peak body for CHPs supports the Government's plans for affordable housing, recognising that there will always have to be a starting point and wanting to work with Government to achieve that outcome and build on it. That is more than I can say for the member for Newtown. It is easy to say one thing here on Macquarie Street and then act the opposite way elsewhere.

Despite the rhetoric of Greens members that they support housing and affordable housing, people want to see deeds and action, not just empty words. Nothing epitomises that more than the member for Balmain's petition against the Government's housing reforms. The member for Wahroonga has stooped to that level, but I had hoped for more from the member for Balmain. At least Opposition members are up-front about opposing all housing and fulfilling their desire to keep young people in New South Wales out of homes. However, The Greens appear to want to flip-flop, talking about the need for affordable housing and then opposing any housing being built. On the other hand, the Minns Labor Government is committed to delivering the homes that the people of New South Wales need now and into the future—and that includes affordable homes. The member for Newtown's bill is not the way to do that, and I oppose it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Members will cease calling out across the Chamber.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:33):** I oppose the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024 brought forward by the member for Newtown. In summary, the bill seeks to amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 [EP&A Act] and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 to transfer the definition of "affordable housing" from the policy into the Act, as well as make all affordable housing in perpetuity. The bill also seeks to create a register of affordable housing across the State to keep track of all of the affordable homes that exist and are being built, and requires that the register be established through the EP&A Act under the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Both those things sound good in theory. Unfortunately, theory and reality do not always align and, in the real world, wishing does not make it so.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Other members have said that already. But legislating does make it so.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** That was in a different context.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** It's the same line. It's really awkward when three members make the same joke.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I say to the member for Newtown that the point bears repeating. Unfortunately, this bill will not deliver more affordable homes and will negatively impact on the Government's ability to develop, deliver and manage social and affordable housing projects through Homes NSW. I will focus on the unnecessary red tape the bill would create for Homes NSW by removing existing exemptions for social housing providers. The bill also removes existing exemptions for Homes NSW from things like land title registration and evidence of agreements with affordable housing providers. Removing those exemptions would mean that Homes NSW would have an increased financial, administrative and time burden, which would slow down and add costs to the delivery of social and affordable homes by the Government. All members of this House who have dealt with Homes NSW, particularly over the past 12 months, would appreciate the time burden placed on its workers. Adding to their financial and administrative workload is not in the best interests of increasing social housing nor ensuring that those who currently live in social housing have access to maintenance and other aspects of our social housing system.

Finally, the bill's attempt to make all affordable housing continue in perpetuity rather than having a time limit does not consider the practicalities of housing developments or operations. Currently in New South Wales, the only projects that have affordable housing provided for 15 years are those where the private market is delivering affordable housing as part of specific Government policies. An in-perpetuity requirement for that amount of affordable housing would drive away investment in private development, which we do not want to see.



Preventing investors from capitalising on the asset in the long term will negatively impact the feasibility of those projects. It will mean that fewer projects get off the ground and there is less affordable housing overall.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** We don't want that.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Leppington. That is exactly what we do not want. All members of this House, save those in the Opposition, are on a unity ticket in wanting to see an increase in social and affordable housing. I appreciate that previous speakers in this debate might have mentioned this aspect of the member for Newtown's second reading speech, but I highlight the fact that in it she said the Government has a "woeful lack of ambition" on social housing and rental reforms. I really take issue with that and find it difficult to stomach those comments.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order: I am being verballed. That is not what I said. The member for Liverpool is the third member in this debate to wrongly quote from my second reading speech. I appreciate that this may not be a formal point of order, but I have a copy of the *Hansard* in front of me and that is not what I said. I encourage members not to read from the speaking notes of other members if they were not in the Chamber for my second reading speech and did not hear what I said.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I ask the member for Liverpool to withdraw because she is not quoting me accurately.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Does the member for Liverpool withdraw the comment?

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I withdraw. As I said, I find those comments difficult to stomach. I was elected to this place to represent a community that relies on social and affordable housing and needs a robust system to access it, so I take issue with those comments. Members have also highlighted The Greens' love of grandstanding. There has been reference to that by a number of members this week, in relation to not only social housing but a number of other matters. When a member says one thing in this Chamber and another thing out in the community in the interest of political expediency, not only is it obnoxious in the extreme but it also undermines the credibility of that member. I acknowledge that the member for Balmain is not in the Chamber. However, as the member for South Coast mentioned in her contribution to this debate, the member for Balmain running a petition in her electorate to stop the Government's housing agenda is not the right way to go about supporting an increase in social housing. When a member comes into this Chamber and says they support an increase in social housing and then they try to stop a proposal to redevelop a disused shed to turn it into six apartments, half of which would be affordable housing—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** It is embarrassing that departmental resources are used to repeat that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Newtown will come to order!

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Like I said, while it might be repetition to the member for Newtown, it is important to highlight the issues to acknowledge that what is happening in this place is different to the campaigns and the statements being made by members outside of this place, which is the definition of "grandstanding". In spite of The Greens' comments, the Government is committed to delivering more affordable homes and more social housing across the State, and that commitment is backed up in the budget. I repeat the figures because they bear repeating. In the 2024-25 budget, the Government delivered \$6.1 billion for social housing, the biggest single investment in social housing in the history of New South Wales. That is \$5.1 billion to deliver 8,400 social homes and \$1 billion to repair another 33,000 existing homes. I am sure all members can think of a few people in their electorate who not only need it but would not survive without a robust social housing system.

In light of that investment from the Government, I think it is disingenuous for the member for Newtown and the member for Balmain to say that this Government does not care about social housing. The \$6.1 billion investment would say differently. The Government has also committed \$5 million to continue the audit of surplus government land, which has already delivered 44 sites across which the Government will deliver 30,000 new homes. There is a \$450 million investment for Landcom to deliver a key worker build-to-rent program across metropolitan areas of the State. Key workers, particularly nurses, teachers and police officers, and other workers who contribute so much to this State, are telling us that they are being priced out of not only Sydney but other metropolitan centres, including Newcastle and Wollongong. That is an impetus for us to act and to say that this investment is necessary, and the Government has the runs on the board.

There is also a \$200 million investment for NSW Health to provide homes for healthcare workers in remote communities in rural and regional areas. We have heard over the past 18 months and longer that many communities in rural and remote parts of New South Wales are struggling to attract healthcare workers, which

has a disproportionate impact on the healthcare access in their communities. Initiatives like that will attract healthcare workers that are more remote or regional in our State and will have a flow-on impact in enabling access to care, and affordable access to care, for those communities. We have made reforms not only to building more homes but also to the way that people live in them as well, through the rental reforms announced recently. The Minns Government has ended no-grounds evictions in New South Wales once and for all and created a portable bonds scheme. These key reforms will mean that renters, like me, will have more security and less financial stress throughout their tenancies. I have shared this in the media and with my community, so it is no different to what I share with the House today. *[Extension of time]*

Many people in my community have spoken with me about the uncertainty they face or the prospect of moving rental properties multiple times in a short period because of the existence of no-grounds evictions. The Transport Oriented Development [TOD] program also has provisions for affordable housing. In the TOD State environmental planning policy [SEPP], for locations across Greater Sydney, the Hunter, Central Coast and the Illawarra, areas that I previously identified that were struggling with affordable housing, especially for key workers, there are mandatory requirements for 2 per cent affordable housing held in perpetuity that are managed by a registered community housing provider. That is achievable and a deliverable level of affordable housing for the private market at this stage. We have to acknowledge that, realistically, we are in partnership with the private market at this stage. We cannot go it alone. We do not have access to the resources to go it alone at this stage. That is perhaps an expansion that can be considered later.

The Minister has committed to increasing that amount over time in a way that industry and community can respond to so that the Government is providing increasing levels of affordable housing into the future. The accelerated precincts in the TOD program have affordable housing requirements too based on the particular local conditions of each of the stations, but those requirements are also for the affordable housing to be held in perpetuity and managed by a registered community housing provider [CHP]. As I have identified, the Government is committed to delivering affordable housing in a way that actually delivers and sees homes built rather than just being an aspirational target that is never reached.

We can pretend that we are very pure and morally superior, but if that is not the reality we deliver for our communities, what is the point? The peak body for CHPs has supported the Government's plans for affordable housing, recognising there will always have to be a starting point, and they want to work with the Government to achieve that outcome and build on it. As I said, it is easy for members to say one thing in Parliament and act the opposite outside of Parliament when they are too busy focusing on grandstanding. I oppose the bill from the member for Newtown.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:45):** I make a very brief contribution to debate in opposition to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. Conceptually, I understand the bill. I understand what the member for Newtown is trying to do, but the reality is that the bill will not achieve what it needs to achieve. In theory, I get it, but it is a theoretical utopian view of how things can work. The reality is the bill will make it harder and more difficult to deliver the housing the State needs. We do not need that housing today; we needed it yesterday. That is the reality. We should be simplifying our planning system and making it easier and better, and not creating more barriers to make it harder.

As I said, I understand the bill aims to keep track of all the affordable homes that exist and are being built in a register established to transfer the definition of "affordable housing" from the State environmental planning policy [SEPP] to the Act, as well as make all affordable housing held in perpetuity. In theory, that sounds wonderful, but the reality is it will not deliver more homes and it will create more uncertainty in the market. The unintended consequences of this bill are quite immense. As I said, I understand where the member for Newtown is coming from, but the reality of this bill is that it is hugely problematic and will not deliver what it needs to do. The unintended consequences mean the planning system will unnecessarily become more complex and it will be much harder to deliver the housing we need. As I said, we do not need it today and we do not need it tomorrow; we needed it five or 10 years ago. The previous Government allowed people to sit on their hands and do nothing.

The Federal Government has proposed 40,000 new social homes, and we need more, but isn't good better than nothing? Isn't something better than nothing? I think about how people say they want more housing, they are given an opportunity to get more housing, but instead of doing that, they say no. They let perfect get in the way of good.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Who says no?

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** The Greens did federally. The Federal Greens have stopped the Federal Labor Government from progressing that housing.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** We just improved it. It is done; it is delivered.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** A year and a half later. It took a year and a half to get a bill through. A bill has sat in the Parliament when housing could have been built for a year and a half because The Greens have let perfect get in the way of good and get in the way of progress. That is the thing about this bill: It will get in the way of progress. As I said, conceptually, I get it. Theoretically this all sounds great. The reality is it will make the planning system more complicated. At a time when we need to build more homes, we need to make it simpler, more efficient and more effective to do so. The reality is if we want to deliver more homes, we need to have a planning system that is fit for purpose.

The housing crisis is the single biggest issue facing the community. The single biggest line item for people is their mortgage or their rent. In some ways, just stabilising the housing market will help. How do we do that? We need to build more homes. We need to create a better and fairer renting system as well. People live in homes in a variety of ways, whether they choose to get a mortgage or rent. They may also have to engage with social housing. This issue should not be politicised. It is so huge that we need all hands on deck, from both sides of the House, the Government, NGOs and corporates. Everyone needs to come to the table to fix the housing problem. Making the planning system more complicated with more red tape is not going to fix it.

Another issue is in the construction industry, which is facing huge issues with supply chains and costs. Building homes costs more today than it did a decade ago. We have missed that opportunity. The bill creates more red tape, which will make it more complicated and harder to build the housing that we need. As I said, conceptually I get it. But the bill does not consider the wider economic challenges that New South Wales and the construction industry are facing right now. I come back to that, because the member for Newtown says that she is being misquoted when members have called her out for saying, on record:

We have seen a woeful lack of ambition from successive governments of all stripes when it comes to delivering new social housing. This Government is trying to do something and trying to build things, with transport oriented developments and rental reforms. We on this side are trying our hardest to fix a problem that has been in the making for over a decade. As I said, I find it difficult to stomach the bill because what the member for Newtown says in this place and what the bill tries to do are just about grandstanding. Conceptually it is great, but it is not based on any economic understanding of the real challenges that our State faces. A number of my colleagues have outlined the vast history of The Greens' relationship with housing, particularly in their own electorates. The reason those colleagues do that is because they want to demonstrate that, while The Greens are a party of protest, we are a party of government. A party of protest does not have to progress the State at all. Its members can say one thing in one place and another in another place because—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** So there is no role for protest in progressing this?

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** No—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** It is a luxury.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** It is a luxury that you can protest on absolutely everything. Members have put that on the record because they want to make it clear that, while the Government is making sometimes difficult decisions, it is drawing a line in the sand and saying it will build more housing. Every single electorate is going to take their bit.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Absolutely.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** Absolutely, we all have to do it. I live in the most densely populated part of Sydney. We are getting more housing. I also want more buses—after the former Government took them away—and I will keep fighting for those. But we are getting more housing; everyone is getting it. In order to do that, the planning system needs to be simplified to make it easier to build housing—and not the housing that is needed tomorrow but the housing that was needed 10 years ago. It is housing that is so overdue that supporting the bill will only slow down the progress in housing that the State needs. I oppose the bill.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (12:54):** I oppose the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024, brought forward by the member for Newtown. In summary, the bill seeks to amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act [EP&A Act] and the housing State environmental planning policy [SEPP] to transfer the definition of "affordable housing" from the SEPP to the Act, and to make all affordable housing "in perpetuity". The bill also seeks to create an affordable housing register across New South Wales that will keep track of all the affordable homes that exist and are built, and will require that this register be established through the Act under the responsibility of the relevant Minister, which in this case is the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

As other members have mentioned, theory is one thing but practice is another. While this sounds good in theory, in the real world where I live, out in Leppington, that will not work. As the Government Whip, I spend

quite a few hours in the Chamber. I am usually the first in and the last to leave. This place can have an effect on members. They do need to get back to their electorates from time to time and ground themselves with real people and real problems, and hear about what is going on. Unfortunately, I do not believe the bill will deliver more affordable homes. It will in fact create a negative impact on the Government's ability to do what it wants to do—and what The Greens want done—and that is to develop, deliver and manage social and affordable housing projects through Homes NSW. The reason for that is—and that is what I will focus on in my contribution—around the issues of flexibility and adaptability when it comes to affordable housing. Flexibility and adaptability are lost by pushing the Minister's powers from the SEPP into the Act.

Parliament sits only 17 or 18 weeks a year, and legislation is difficult to pass. It is a long process and then the bill has to go to the other place. When legislation is in the other place, all bets are off. We have an urgent bill that we have to get through. We are waiting here while they take a break, come back and then are off again for supper. We cannot have a situation where affordable housing and the housing crisis is left up to the legislative discretion of those in the other place. That is why the SEPP is the most appropriate instrument for those kinds of things. Also the bill does not consider the reality and cost of managing social housing and affordable housing. I cannot blame The Greens for this—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** It is a management issue.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** It is a management issue. The reason for that is they do not understand how the market works. Buildings and homes do reach the end of their useful life. The member for Liverpool, who is in the Green Valley housing estate, is well aware of that. When that happens, the providers will work out what they want to do. They may dispose of them; they may redevelop them. This ensures that stock is up to date, and we do not have a situation where, 30 years from now, we have an old fibro house in Miller still standing but in need of desperate repairs because it was put in perpetuity because of the bill. I grew up in public housing out in Bonnyrigg. That whole area is going through a regeneration project. The stock that was built in the 1980s is being knocked down and redeveloped. The people who live there have first dibs to move back to one of those new homes. It was once a neighbourhood/suburb that had social issues. I experienced those; I saw it with my neighbours—

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** You were probably responsible for them.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I was probably responsible for a few of them. My classmates and I saw some of those social issues in my public school. Some fantastic work has been done regenerating that entire suburb. The way new neighbourhoods are designed means they provide much greater amenity. They even have some private ownership. Research shows that a mix of public and private housing results in better outcomes for the people who live in those areas. That is one of the reasons we need to give community housing providers that ability—it is basic asset management.

Community housing providers need to balance vacancies and turnover between available homes and people who need them, but the bill would remove the ability of the community housing providers to do exactly that. In the long term it would remove the ability to discard and rebuild old stock. Who knows—those old houses in Bonnyrigg might still be standing today had this bill passed years ago. We cannot have that. That is why I oppose the bill. Our reforms will provide a steady pipeline of developers to build affordable housing, alongside the Government, on an ongoing basis—even some housing that has been held for 15 years. That way we can ensure the perpetuity of affordable housing as a category of housing, rather than being linked to an actual address and a physical asset.

While well meaning, the bill simply will not work and will take us backwards. The Government is working towards goals like the ability to refresh stock, redevelop suburbs and ensure that tenants within social housing get some of the best housing. They need that in order to thrive and achieve great things, such as I have done as a product of public housing myself. I turn to the topic of grandstanding, which a number of members have spoken about. I dug up the *Hansard*, and the member for Newtown has been a bit upset about this. The phrase "woeful lack of ambition" was used in relation to successive governments.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Yes, successive governments.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Yes, successive governments—I correct the record. The other issue in relation to grandstanding is about some comments that were made about the member for Balmain and certain developments. We heard about Darling Street.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Do you even know where Darling Street is? Do you know what the Darling Street development is?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! The member for Newtown will have the opportunity to reply to the debate.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Despite the interjections from The Greens, this Government is committed to delivering more homes, unlike the Liberal Party. Our commitment has been backed up in the 2024-25 budget. We delivered \$6.1 billion for social housing. That bears repeating. That is the single biggest investment in social housing in the State's history. I mentioned it earlier in my contribution but, as a product of public housing, I could not be prouder to be part of a government that holds that record. I will leave it at that, given the time. I will give the member for Newtown her moment in reply. It is easy to say one thing and then do the opposite. I support affordable housing and social housing, but I certainly do not support the bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:03):** In reply: Before I respond in detail to the criticisms and concerns with the bill that were raised by members opposite, I will clear up the back and forth about the issue of the misquote. I did say in my second reading speech on the bill that we have seen a "woeful lack of ambition from successive governments of all stripes when it comes to delivering new social housing". We would agree that there is a woeful lack of ambition. That is very different to how it was phrased by members in the speaking notes that were provided from who knows where. They all read off those notes almost word for word in their contributions. I will leave that aside for now, but maybe I will come back to it later if I have time.

I acknowledge and thank the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for his engagement on and contribution to debate on the bill. I also thank the Minister's office for its ongoing discussions with The Greens about the bill. Unlike some members who spoke towards the end of the debate, the Minister and his office are aware that there is broad stakeholder support for the legislation before the House today. It is unfortunate that the members who spoke to it seemed less willing to engage with the substance of the bill and more keen to engage with the talking points from some sort of media or TikTok grab about "The Greens political party".

I acknowledge that the member for Willoughby made a contribution. Indeed, he was so excited about the bill that he actually tried to speak twice, which is pretty amazing. He contributed to debate on the bill in the last sitting, and today he tried to speak again. The member for Cessnock pointed out to him that he had already contributed. I like his enthusiasm to oppose the bill twice. I acknowledge that the member for Campbelltown and the member for Cessnock made contributions. I thank the member for Cessnock for recognising that, while we do not always agree on everything, we play a role in debating these matters and putting them on the agenda.

The member for Blacktown shares our views about the questionable nature of the build-to-rent model for addressing the housing crisis. The member for South Coast, along with the member for Liverpool, appeared to have been provided with speaking notes. She awkwardly read them out, and the same jokes were made multiple times about grandstanding and wishes and other things that the member for Leppington also spoke about. I am happy to organise a briefing with Shelter NSW, the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS], the Tenants' Union, the Community Housing Industry Association [CHIA], Mission Australia and the Sydney Alliance—which was very supportive of the reforms in the bill—so that the members can understand in more detail what is actually happening with affordable housing in the State.

I thank the member for Coogee and the member for Leppington for their contributions. I note that the member for Coogee raised a number of concerns from the standard speaking notes that were also provided to the member for South Coast and the member for Liverpool. I find it slightly odd that in her critique of The Greens as a party of protest, she said as the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport that she would keep pushing for buses in her area. I am not sure at what point the member for Coogee will realise that, as the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport in a Labor government, she can deliver the buses for her area if she wants to, as opposed to just pushing for them. That seems to be a completely out-of-whack scenario.

I move to the substance of the bill. We have a situation where the Labor Party opposes the bill because it is a Greens bill. It has decided to critique my approach to talking about affordable housing as opposed to the actual details of the bill. Regarding the development of this affordable housing bill, I remind the House that peak bodies like the Tenants' Union NSW and Shelter NSW support keeping all housing affordable in perpetuity and capping rents to 30 per cent of tenant income. Both measures are included in the bill. In consultation on the bill, NCOSS, CHIA and Mission Australia all expressed support for it. Mission Australia raised some caveats around the need for flexibility in the affordable housing requirements for community housing providers.

In fact, Treasurer Daniel Mookhey, at a Sydney Alliance forum before the Labor Party was elected to government, committed to affordable housing in perpetuity if Labor was to form government. Things are very awkward and silent now on the other side of the House. The Greens are being told that the bill is completely unworkable and impossible, but the now Treasurer committed to the same position at a Sydney Alliance forum. Matt Kean also committed to it. Matt Kean, Daniel Mookhey and the member for Newtown all agree regarding perpetuity, but the member for South Coast, the member for Leppington and the member for Liverpool are not

interested in ensuring that housing is affordable in perpetuity. Perhaps the member for Leppington is keen to follow in the Prime Minister's footsteps. He does not care if public housing remains, because now he can go and buy a \$4.3 million home on the Central Coast.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! Members who interject will be called to order.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I will take a step back and engage with the idea of The Greens having the luxury of protest. Next week we will be doing something exciting: debating to end unfair no-grounds evictions in New South Wales. That is great. In 2018 I moved amendments late into the night in this very Chamber on a bill to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, and members probably would have described that as grandstanding. What are we doing next week? The New South Wales Labor Government will deliver on The Greens' policy to end no-grounds evictions in New South Wales.

In 2018 I was grandstanding in this Chamber until late in the night. The Minister for Lands and Property was there. Everyone was groaning as I was grandstanding and moving endless amendments. Six years later, we will deliver an end to no-grounds evictions. I look forward to reminding members of the debate today when we pass a bill from the Government to introduce a register to deliver affordable housing. I look forward to reminding members of this debate when we pass a Government bill to ensure affordable housing in perpetuity. We can have different views about how we critique things, but the fact is that we are attempting to set the agenda with this bill.

In response to comments that this is wishful thinking and we cannot make wishes a reality, we are not wishing for things. This is a bill. This is proposed legislation that we have brought before this Parliament to be considered by the Government. The Greens have not made things up in this bill. It is supported by Shelter NSW, NCOSS, Mission Australia, the Sydney Alliance and all of the groups involved. People pushed for the former Government to act on these issues. When in opposition, Labor members stood at public forums and committed to taking action. Eighteen months later, they have failed to deliver on that promise.

As we talk about the delivery of affordable housing, I note the Darling Street development in Balmain. That development has been the focus of so much critique by the member for Liverpool and the member for South Coast, who may or may not know the details of it. The Darling Street development application that we have heard much about predates the current housing State environmental planning policy, meaning that, while the developer behind the DA could claim a density bonus for a pathetic three affordable housing dwellings, there was no requirement for it to be affordable or to be managed by a community housing provider. In short, it was affordable in name only, not in reality.

Indeed, the member for Balmain has confirmed with me that as the local MP she met with residents concerned about the Darling Street development and the local councillors. The Labor-led Inner West Council also opposed the Darling Street development. In addition to that, the developer got approval through the Land and Environment Court anyway. What has happened to that development now? It has not been built. The developers got approval, yet no housing has been built. The developers are more interested in building when the profit will come in, so they are land banking that land. They have not started the development, and no housing has been built.

The Minister for Lands and Property is in the Chamber, and he knows that this is a genuine problem in this State. Only three affordable housing properties were going to be developed anyway, but there is an idea that the member for Balmain meeting with residents who are concerned about the development will somehow cause the sky to fall in on affordable housing. Let us look at some bigger picture options, like the 1,200 homes on public land in Blackwattle Bay, also in the electorate of Balmain. The Labor Government that cares about affordable housing thinks that The Greens are grandstanding and opposing it, but how many affordable homes will be built on that public land in Blackwattle Bay? Zero. It is lovely to have the Minister responsible for the Labor Party's land audit in the Chamber. Before the last election, the Labor Party said that land audit would cover 30 per cent social and affordable housing and 70 per cent private development.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** Overall.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** Overall. Where Labor can hand over the most valuable land to property developers and its most cashed-up mates who will develop it and offer beautiful luxury homes—the kind of luxury that the Prime Minister expects from his \$4.3 million mansion on the Central Coast—what does it offer at the Blackwattle Bay site? Zero affordable homes. Let us take the Camperdown dive site, which is between the electorates of Balmain and Newtown and a key spot for public housing. Indeed, it is only about 100 metres from the public housing where the Prime Minister grew up.

It is public land, with the potential for more public housing. A future Prime Minister could live there. Indeed, a future Government Whip could live there. But how many public homes will be built on that site? How much affordable housing will be built on that site? Absolutely zero. It will only be private development. The

New South Wales Labor Government was elected on a mandate to end the Coalition's privatisation agenda. Instead, under this Government, 70 per cent of land goes to private developers—and in some cases 100 per cent goes to private developers.

Before I take issue with some other things that have been raised in the debate, I turn to the property register. There has been much talk about what happens in theory and in practice. There may be developers who have concerns about having to offer affordable housing in perpetuity. It is sad that while in theory the Labor Party is pro-worker, in practice it is much more pro-landlord and pro-developer. The Labor Party is not interested in setting a requirement of a standard percentage of affordable housing.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** You will never build anything under your policy. Nothing will get out of the ground. That is the problem.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I acknowledge the Minister's interjection that if we set a percentage of affordable housing nothing would get out of the ground. The reality is that if the State Government invested in building housing then a lot would get out of the ground. But if we rely on the private market to deliver housing then it would not. That is the fundamental issue. The market is broken, and the New South Wales Labor Government thinks that the solution, as the member for Coogee said earlier, is to try to ensure that we maintain the market. We need to make sure that is the case.

We seem to be in genuine agreement about the affordable housing register, and I urge the Government to take immediate action. A massive amount of supply is about to come online in New South Wales. We know that housing in this State is not genuinely affordable, even though it is called affordable housing. That supply will come online now. If we do not act on this register and ensure that genuinely affordable supply comes online, we will never be able to do it again. We have to set those parameters before we start building, before we start rezoning and before we start that process. I strongly urge the Government to act. The Greens certainly do not come to the end of this debate with a willingness to set aside our passion to provide genuinely affordable housing. That will continue.

In closing, I say that while those opposite may wish to bring a Federal fight to New South Wales, that is not how we should act in this State. We should deliver public affordable housing for the people of New South Wales. We hope that those opposite stop making base-level criticisms of The Greens that we would expect on social media and instead start engaging with the serious issues around affordable housing—because that is the only way that any affordable housing bills will get passed through the upper House. The Greens know that the reality is that the Opposition is completely morally bankrupt on affordable housing. I am not sure if the Government has looked at the numbers in the other place; it does not get a bill through without The Greens, so maybe it should start talking to us genuinely about the reforms that we want rather than critiquing us.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time. A division has been called for. There being only three members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 3**

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

**Motion negatived.**

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

*Motions*

## **RENTAL LAWS**

**Debate resumed from 26 September 2024.**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (14:30):** As part of its comprehensive reform package, the Minns Labor Government is delivering on its promise to build a fairer rental market for the people of New South Wales. Renting has become the norm for around one-third of New South Wales' population, with more people now renting than ever before. That is evident in my electorate of Shellharbour, where almost 27 per cent of households are renting. Unfortunately, the rental market is also tougher than it has been in decades. Vacancy rates are at a historic low and rent prices for houses have surged by more than 7 per cent over the past year alone.

What has become clear, through listening to the community, is that renters are often left with limited and costly ways to simply pay their rent. Many have told us that they are being charged additional fees and surcharges, making an already stressful situation even harder. That is why the Minns Labor Government is taking action. As part of our rental reforms, we will require property owners and agents to offer free ways for tenants to pay their rent such as bank transfers or Centrepay, which is a free Commonwealth Government service. The Minns Labor Government has provided \$6.6 million to develop the first portable rental bonds scheme in the nation. That scheme will make it simpler for renters when moving by allowing eligible tenants to digitally transfer their existing rental bond to their new rental home. It will involve an upgrade of the rental bonds system and this is anticipated to be completed in 2025. But that is not all.

After careful consultation with stakeholders, including more than 16,000 submissions from the public, we are also making it easier for renters to have pets in their homes. As it stands, the surrender of one in five animals to the RSPCA in New South Wales is due to concerns about rental applications. Worse, domestic violence organisations report that many victim-survivors feel trapped in dangerous homes because they fear they will not be able to find housing with their pets, let alone afford the rent. We believe that renters deserve better—much better—and that is why this reform will make it simpler to have pets in rentals. While tenants will still need to apply, landlords will no longer be able to refuse without good reason. The reforms will bring New South Wales in line with other States and ensure that renters have the freedom to live with their pets, without unnecessary barriers. It is about fairness and respect, and creating homes, not just houses.

Additionally, the bill builds on key reforms that have already been announced. We are ending no-grounds evictions, ensuring that both periodic and fixed-term leases can only be ended for valid reasons, providing greater certainty for renters and property owners alike. We are also cracking down on unnecessary fees. Renters will no longer be charged for background checks when applying for a rental property. This work displays our commitment to modernising the rental market with the goal of getting the balance right between renters and property owners. Our reforms are about ensuring that renters in New South Wales have the stability, transparency and fairness that they deserve. That is a modern, forward-thinking approach to rental laws that reflects the needs of today's market. We are working closely with everyone—from renters to landlords to animal welfare organisations—to ensure that the changes succeed and create a more equitable rental experience for all.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:35):** By leave: I withdraw my amendment.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (14:35):** I support the motion on rental laws moved by the member for South Coast, knowing the Minns Labor Government is making some of the biggest changes in a decade to protect over 2.2 million renters across our great State. I note the Government's proposed rental reforms and commend the Government for providing cost-of-living relief to renters in Parramatta, where 57 per cent of residents are renters, which is why I am so focused on delivering certainty to the rental market. In March 2023, Labor went to the election with a promise to the people of New South Wales that we would make renting fairer for tenants and owners.

With the largest rental market in Australia, we understand how significant it is that the Government strikes a fair balance between the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords. On 24 July this year the Premier announced that the Labor Government would introduce the biggest rental reforms in a decade, modernising the rental market in New South Wales. On 15 October, we delivered on our promise, introducing the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2024 to this place. Let me make it crystal clear: These comprehensive reforms are only possible under a Labor government. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government failed to act on the issue and renters have been living with the fallout as a result.

Sure, the Liberals and Nationals had an election commitment to end no-grounds evictions; but it was for periodic leases only. That would have created two classes of renters: one protected from the threat of no-grounds evictions and one without that protection. Australians pride themselves on being a classless society and the Minns Labor Government would not stand for that inequity. It would have resulted in perverse outcomes, such as renters being pushed onto rolling short-term leases. We have seen that happen in other jurisdictions. Only one party can be relied upon: the Labor Party. We have a strong leader and the resolve to make historic changes to the rental system by ending no-grounds evictions across all lease types. The bill will introduce the most significant changes to rental laws since the current Residential Tenancies Act became law in 2010.

The bill is the next step in fulfilling the Labor Government's commitment to making renting fairer. The Minns Labor Government will cap rent increases to one per year for periodic and fixed-term leases, closing a loophole in the existing legislation. The changes will make renting in New South Wales fairer, simpler and more certain. The bill will align New South Wales laws with the National Cabinet's Better Deal for Renters. It will end no-grounds evictions to give renters and owners more clarity by introducing reasonable and sensible reasons to end a fixed-term or periodic lease. It will ensure renters have a free way to pay their rent, including bank transfer



and the Commonwealth Government's Centrepay, and will protect renters from having to pay for background checks when they apply for a property.

When it comes to the family cavoodle, we have their back too, because pets are another member of the family—just like my Poppy—and we should not have to prioritise a place to live over our pet. Under our rental reforms, tenants can apply to keep a pet and landlords may only decline the application on certain grounds. Landlords must respond to the application within 21 days with their grounds for refusal, and an appeal is available to renters via the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. These proposed changes follow extensive and detailed discussions with renter advocates, industry stakeholders, tenancy experts, a parliamentary inquiry and 16,000 submissions and survey responses to public consultation. The Minns Labor Government is a government of action. We listen, consider and take action to get the balance right. We will introduce a fairer rental system in New South Wales to support the 2.2 million renters across every single electorate in this State.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:40):** By leave: Once again we are debating a self-congratulatory motion moved by the Minns Labor Government. It is wonderful that the Government has finally put a rental reform package on the table, because when the member for South Coast lodged her notice of motion in August the Government had not yet introduced its bill. Indeed, when we began debating the motion in the last sitting week of Parliament there was no Government bill before the House. Labor came to the election in 2023 promising to make a difference for renters across New South Wales, but it prevaricated for 18 months before introducing a bill to this House for consideration.

Members opposite love to pat themselves on the back about these reforms, but they have done nothing to date to help renters in this State. Members have only now seen the Government's bill, and once again Government members are already congratulating themselves. So far no changes have been made to end no-grounds evictions. As a renter myself, along with many millions of other people across the State, I know firsthand there are challenges with renting. In the time that Labor has wasted not addressing those challenges, there has been an 11 per cent increase in the cost of rent across New South Wales, and there is a 1 per cent vacancy rate for people who need to find a home for themselves.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Government members will cease interjecting.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** Some 46.5 per cent of people who live in my electorate are renters, so it is right for me to speak on their behalf on this crucial issue. When we add in the number of landlords in my electorate, the overwhelming majority of my community cares about renters and the way that properties will be dealt with under the legislation the Government has finally introduced. In my local community the average median weekly rent increase in 2023 was 15 per cent, which is above the statewide increase. That reflects my experience as a renter. Across my own community, housing stress is playing a significant role. We frequently talk about the cost-of-living crisis. A big proportion of people's household budgets go towards housing, whether that is mortgages—and the continuing increases in interest rates play a role in that—rents or associated costs such as electricity and insurance. All of that is putting added pressure on people.

Housing stress is described as when more than 30 per cent of a household's budget is spent on rent. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that more than 27 per cent of my community is experiencing housing stress. We cannot shy away from the fact that 18 months after the Labor Government was elected, it is only now taking action. I welcome the bill the Government has introduced. I look forward to hearing the detailed debate on the legislation. But we cannot wait any longer for this issue to be addressed in New South Wales. I encourage all members in this House to act quickly to ensure that renters have a seat at the table.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (14:43):** By leave: I thank the member for South Coast for introducing the motion. This is a very important issue and the member is a very strong advocate and champion for her community. The member for North Shore was a member of the former Government that was in power for 12 long years. During that time it did nothing to address the housing crisis, yet now she is pleading for something to be done. Prior to recently acquiring a house, I rented a home for a family of four for 17 years. I am proud to be able to stand with the Minns Labor Government and talk about not just what we want to do but what we have already done in our short 18 months in office. In Heathcote around 20 per cent of dwellings are rentals, so I speak on behalf of my constituency and as a very proud member of the Minns Labor Government.

This month the Government introduced a suite of new measures to make renting fairer. The rental package includes ending no-grounds evictions, which is close to a lot of renters' hearts. Renters need security, permanency and peace of mind. The Government will establish a set of reasonable grounds on which to end a lease, giving greater certainty to renters. Property owners will now need a reason to end a tenancy for both periodic and fixed-term leases. The Government will ban fees for background checks so renters will no longer be charged when applying for a rental property. The reforms also include ensuring that tenants have a free way to pay rent. Property

owners and agents will be required to offer free ways to pay rent, such as by bank transfer or the Commonwealth Government's Centrepay.

We are going to make it easier for tenants to have pets in rentals as well introduce a fairer and more streamlined application process. The important changes do not stop there; they come alongside other key initiatives such as the portable bonds scheme. The Government is investing \$6.6 million to develop and deliver the nation's first portable rental bonds scheme. This means eligible renters can move homes and digitally transfer their existing bond with them. We have also established Rent Check, a free website that renters can use to check whether the rent they are being asked to pay is fair. A NSW Rental Taskforce will be established within NSW Fair Trading. We are investing \$8.4 million in that taskforce so investigators, inspectors and support teams can help renters and act on serious breaches of rental laws.

Reforming the rental system is a vital step to rebuilding our housing system in New South Wales, which was left in a state of crisis by the former Government. These reforms are about fairness. Whether it is making it easier to have pets or ending no-grounds evictions, we are delivering a better, more balanced rental system. We want to ensure that the growing number of renters in our State have the stability and transparency they deserve. We are providing them with more options and greater certainty. I congratulate Minister Rose Jackson in the other place, Minister Chanthivong and Minister Scully. We are not just talking about rental reforms; we are delivering them and putting them in place. I say to the people of New South Wales to watch this space.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (14:47):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the motion, not only today but also in the last sitting week. While I thank the member for Willoughby for his contribution to debate, I was astounded by his statements. Since when has the Liberal Party been a friend of renters in New South Wales? When in government, the Opposition had 12 long years to deliver reforms for the approximately 33 per cent, or one-third, of the population of people in New South Wales who rent. What did members of the former Government do for renters? They sold more than \$3 billion worth of social housing and did not replace it. How does that help renters? It doesn't!

**Mr Tim James:** That's not true.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** It was in *The Guardian* in April 2022. The former Government loved nothing more than privatising everything it touched. We all know that when you privatise services like power, housing and home care—and the list goes on—the costs increase. I thank the member for Granville for clearly pointing out the concrete steps the Minns Labor Government has undertaken to lay the foundations for a fairer rental environment in New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The member for South Coast will be heard in silence.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** Thank you. As I was saying, the Minns Labor Government has undertaken to lay concrete foundations for a fairer rental environment in New South Wales: the appointment of the Rental Commissioner to crack down on poor-quality rentals and dodgy agents and owners; the end to no-grounds evictions, which disproportionately affect our young people; and the recognition of the importance of pets in our lives. The member for Newtown pointed out that members opposite had 12 years to deliver these reforms. Did they deliver anything? No. They did nothing. The member for Newtown pointed out also that the rental reforms currently before this place were commitments made by the Labor Party going into the last election, and I am proud that we are delivering on that promise.

The member for Shellharbour pointed out how these reforms will make it easier for renters, especially the provision to transfer bonds from one property to another. The member for Parramatta acknowledged that the reforms will make renting easier for one-third of the State's population. They are the biggest reforms in over a decade and only possible under a Labor Government. The Government's bill will introduce legislation to make renting fairer. We listen, consider and take action. We are the Minns Labor Government. The member for North Shore said we made a promise to the residents of New South Wales—yesterday seems such a long time ago! Yes, we did make a promise to the residents of New South Wales leading up to the election, and we are delivering. We have taken appropriate steps and appointed the Rental Commissioner to ensure we get this right. We will do it once and do it right.

The member for North Shore pointed out that electricity costs have gone up. Yes, I agree. That is what happens when you privatise power stations and the wires in this State. She is keen for us to get this legislation through the House, so I cannot wait for her to support it. It has taken 12 long years and a Labor government to get to this point. We cannot wait another 12 years to fix the problems. I thank the member for Heathcote for her advocacy. Some 22 per cent of households in her electorate will be thanking her and the Minns Government. As she said, fees for background checks will be gone, there will be a fee-free way to pay rent, no-grounds evictions

will be ended and it will be easier to have pets in rentals. We do not support the amendments of the member for Willoughby. I commend the motion to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for South Coast has moved a motion, to which the member for Willoughby has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....31  
Noes .....46  
Majority..... 15

#### AYES

Anderson, K	Kemp, M	Sloane, K
Ayyad, T	Lane, J	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Layzell, D	Taylor, M
Cooke, S	Moylan, B	Toole, P
Cross, M	Petinos, E	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	Preston, R	Ward, G
Di Pasqua, S	Provest, G	Williams, L
Griffin, J	Roberts, A	Williams, R
Henskens, A	Saunders, D	Williamson, R (teller)
Hodges, M	Singh, G	Wilson, F
James, T		

#### NOES

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

#### PAIRS

Coure, M	Daley, M
Davies, T	Hoenig, R
Thompson, T	Washington, K

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### CROWS NEST METRO

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that four weeks ago the Government announced the opening of the Crows Nest metro for 4 August 2024.
- (2) Notes that community and business were working towards this date, including on a new bus timetable, which relied on the opening of the metro.

- (3) Notes that with only four days' notice, the Government cancelled that opening with no new date confirmed.
- (4) Condemns the Government for its mismanagement and incompetence.
- (5) Notes the disruption, frustration and disappointment of the community.

I address what was and, in many respects, remains a sense of frustration, surprise and disappointment in the Crows Nest community. The metro represents more than just a new mode of transport; it has fundamentally transformed the way people move, work and socialise in our great city. It stands as a testament to what can be achieved when visionary planning and dedicated efforts are combined. I thank the former Coalition Government, including my predecessor Gladys Berejiklian, for the unwavering commitment and hard work needed to bring this vital piece of infrastructure to life.

The metro is a symbol of real progress and an innovative solution to our city's growing transport needs. It was designed to alleviate congestion, provide more reliable transport options and connect communities in ways never seen before. With all the groundwork laid by the previous Government, the present Minns Labor Government basically had one job—to get the metro open and ensure that the project would be fully functional for the people of New South Wales. It managed that responsibility with all the finesse of a ship navigating without a rudder. The metro opening was clearly and publicly announced for 4 August, a date that businesses, commuters, consumers and residents had eagerly anticipated.

The announcement of the date was a chance for many to move forward after years of disruption and hardship, particularly for small businesses and local retail outlets that had been affected by the construction, as well as residents in nearby streets. Many were eagerly looking forward to the day when the barriers would come down, the station doors would open and the community would once again be able to freely and readily move around. However, a mere four days before that grand opening was scheduled to occur, the Government proceeded to cancel it, with no revised date announced at that point in time. This sudden change not only dashed the hopes of many but highlighted a glaring lack of planning and effective, open communication from the current Minns Labor Government. The lack of transparency and accountability demonstrated that those decisions were poorly made and poorly communicated.

What made the situation even more frustrating was that the chaos did not end when the opening was cancelled. The Government had also introduced a new bus timetable meant to coincide with the metro's launch. There were significant changes to the bus times, routes and more, designed under the assumption that the metro would be up and running at that point in time, to provide seamless connections for commuters, for example, travelling into the city. Extraordinarily, when the metro opening was abruptly delayed, the bus timetable changes still went ahead, leaving countless commuters stranded, confused and much more. That was not just bad planning. It was a total disregard for the needs, instincts and expectations of people in the community. People could not make sense of it.

Businesses were once again left in a state of uncertainty. They had planned operations, marketing, staffing et cetera around anticipated increases as a result of the metro being open. Events had been scheduled, promotions organised and rosters arranged in anticipation. The cancellation, with four days' notice, meant many businesses were left out of pocket, with lost revenues, wasted resources and so on. For commuters it was even more bewildering, with a new bus timetable that relied upon the metro being open and a dearth of timely, effective, open communication to the community. Commuters were left facing long waits and overcrowded buses. Adults were unable to get to work and kids struggled to get to school.

There was, rightly so, immense frustration over a situation that could have been easily avoided with proper planning and effective, open communication. The silence from the Minister, the department and indeed the entire Government was deafening. The lack of communication not only caused confusion but a sense of abandonment among those who rely on bus services to get to work, attend appointments and connect with loved ones. Overall, the Government displayed a real level of incompetence and a lack of ability to manage a situation that required clear, open, effective communication. There is no question that it was damaging to the commencement of the metro at the time.

More recently, in yet another display of this Government's incompetence, metro trackwork has been scheduled for this coming Sunday, which happens to be the day of Crows Nest Fest—the busiest day of the year for the Crows Nest community. The festival will see more than 50,000 people in attendance, with 150 stalls, bands, kids' events and so on scheduled. However, the metro will not be running, even though the organisers of Crows Nest Fest had made the date of the event known many months in advance. In fact, the metro was to have been a focal point of the festival: a point of pride and a celebration of community. I have tried ad infinitum to get an answer by emails and text messages. I have appeared in the press on the issue; I note that a news item has just appeared on this topic. It is just not good enough. The metro has only been running for two months. As members

know, there are 365 days in a year. Why is it that on this one day—the biggest day of the year in Crows Nest—the metro will be closed?

The heart of the issue is the Government's continued failure to effectively plan and respond. It has failed to communicate with ordinary people, businesses and communities and demonstrated an inability to meet the ordinary expectations and reasonable demands of people. What became clear in relation to the metro was the power of the unions and this Government's willingness to meet the demands of its union paymasters over and above the interests of the people. Overall, it was a disappointing episode. The people of Crows Nest, the Willoughby electorate and the State of New South Wales deserve so much better than the incompetence and failure of this Minns Labor Government.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:08):** New York, New York! The member for Willoughby is better than this. Being in opposition is pretty hard, isn't it? Opposition members bring such bitter, angry, indignant motions to this House. How long will members have to put up with these rancorous motions? Why are Opposition members so focused on the past? Why does member for Willoughby keep looking back? People absolutely love the metro, with 10 million trips taken since it opened. As long as members of the Opposition stay bitter and angry about the new revolutionary transportation that is changing the State, they are going to stay where they are. This is fantastic, the indignity of all of this. Get on board. The Sydney Metro is the biggest public transport project that the State has seen.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Opposition members will come to order.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** We have paid tribute where it is due. The Premier has gotten up time and time again and has absolutely been part of it. I just wonder. The real question here is: Why can't the Liberals get on board with it? Why do they have to keep coming into this House, time and time again, complaining about it, living in the past—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Terrigal walked into the Chamber and began to interject immediately.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** I am sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker. I just wanted to remind the member that they opposed it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I will not be backchatted. The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Coogee has the call.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** If the member for Willoughby had any dignity or decency at all, he would have withdrawn this motion because he would have got on the metro and started spreading the news about how good it is. They are excellent services, turning up every four minutes. Over 10 million people have used the metro so far. The Coalition needs to stop living in the past and stop moving motions like this. A project of this size and complexity takes years and years of planning. It started in 2017. The Government understands that opening a project of that scale is much more than just cutting a ribbon. We want to build public transport that people have trust in and that they can rely on. When public transport is opened and is not reliable, it takes years and years to rebuild that connection and that trust. I know that all too well from when the south-east Sydney light rail opened too fast. On the first day, it broke down not once but twice, because the Coalition was in a rush to open it, to cut the ribbon and to get it going.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Terrigal will be called to order if he continues to interject.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** Safety has always been our priority. I wonder why the Coalition is in such a rush to open public transport projects. Do they not care about the people of New South Wales? Do they not want to build a reliable public transport system that we know works and that we know is safe? Is that not their priority? I guess it is not. I guess the Coalition's priority is to come into this place, continue to have a whinge and be mean spirited, rather than getting on and enjoying the metro. The motion seeks to condemn the Government for its mismanagement and incompetence because the opening of the metro was pushed back. We will never, ever apologise for putting safety first, because we want to ensure that the public has absolute confidence in public transport. Communities across Sydney have enthusiastically embraced the metro—everyone but the Coalition.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** The No-alition!

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** I like that one. They are the No-alition. We have not sought to score political points or to claim credit for a project that we understand started long before we entered government. The metro is absolutely fundamentally changing the way that Sydney is moving. The opening was a huge success, and it was celebrated by the current Government with the former Government. As I said, at no point did we try to politically pointscore on that. Moments like the metro opening should be above politics. It is so disappointing to see that the

Opposition continues to whinge and complain. Get on the metro, get excited and get on board. Join the other people on the metro. Join the millions and millions of people on the metro.

I acknowledge the fact that essential work is being carried out along the M1 north-west Bankstown line over the weekend of 19 and 20 October. They are critical works that were planned months and months ago. They are necessary planned works. There is no good time to ever do any of that stuff. There is no good time to ever shut down transportation systems. If it is in the middle of the night, shiftworkers will be impacted. People will always be impacted. But the works were planned months and months ago. The closures are necessary for critical software upgrades that will require a full line shutdown. They are complex.

Because of the complexity of the scheduling requirements around the operation of Sydney Trains, the metro operation and the metro construction, that was the only suitable date for the work to take place. Maintenance of both the metro hardware and the software is critical. A quality metro service does not happen without regular maintenance works. We cannot build it and leave it. It needs ongoing work. I understand that the member for Willoughby is relatively new to the Parliament and that he has probably never worked around major construction projects like the metro, but major infrastructure like the metro is complicated and requires ongoing maintenance and work. I thank everyone in advance for their patience around the work on the metro. There is a lot of work happening and a lot of events are happening this weekend.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (15:15):** I contribute to the debate on the motion moved by the member for Willoughby. I begin by thanking the thousands of public servants who worked on delivering the Sydney Metro. Recently I wrote an opinion piece about the Sydney Metro, and on the back of that I received a beautiful email from the mother of a public servant, one who would be well known in this House and who had a lot to do with the metro. She was extremely proud of her son and all the work that he did on the metro, and rightfully so. Like I have always said, major pieces of infrastructure cannot be delivered without the support of public servants. I thank the public service for the work it did all the way back to 2011 when the Sydney Metro was first announced.

I also thank the politicians who believed in the project: Barry O'Farrell, Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian and Dominic Perrottet. Gladys, as Minister for Transport, started planning it within the first 100 days of coming to government. Barry O'Farrell, as Premier, sat around the Cabinet table and made sure the project proceeded. I thank then Treasurer Baird, who later became Premier Baird, then Treasurer Berejiklian, who later became Premier Berejiklian, and then Treasurer Perrottet, who later became Premier Perrottet, because the metro cost a lot of money to build.

I thank the member for Willoughby for moving the motion and standing up for his community. His community is a great winner in the case of the metro project, and he knows that. Even my community is a winner. Although sadly a metro line does not go through the Davidson electorate, we can connect to the metro, and that is absolutely amazing. As I have said in *The Daily Telegraph*, and as the member for Willoughby has said, it is very disappointing that the Government had just one job, which was to cut a ribbon, and it could not do that on time. The Government announced, with great fanfare, that the metro would open on 4 August. It should not have announced that, and the opening was delayed. It is very disappointing that that took place.

The member for Coogee said that Opposition members always talk about the past, but we are talking about the future, because this Sunday is the Crows Nest Fest. Sadly, this weekend a lot of people are going to be inconvenienced, particularly the people who are travelling to small businesses that are relying on income on Sunday. Sadly, not as many people will be attending the festival because the Government is shutting down the metro. *The Daily Telegraph* shared some tweets. One tweet, from a person called Simon, said:

Insane ...every bloody weekend almost

Pardon my French. Another said:

Ummm.. how will I get to the crows nest fest??

That is a good question. Another, from a person called Paul, said:

You shut down the whole line. It just opened for goodness sake

The shutdown is concerning because the Minister would have done one of two things: The first is that the Minister knew about this and did absolutely nothing; or, even worse, the Minister had absolutely no idea that Sydney Metro shut down the line. I do not know what is more concerning. There has been some unfair criticism of the Minister for Transport. Many people say that she has had a road to Damascus conversion when it comes to the metro. That is unfair—it was a metro to Damascus. It is interesting that the Minister, when she was elected in 2015, was elected not supporting the funding of what would be Sydney Metro City. My colleague in the other place Chris Rath asked Minister Graham, "Was Sydney Metro City funded by asset recycling?" What did the Minister say? He said, "It is a matter for the Treasurer." Sadly, he could not admit that asset recycling built Sydney Metro City.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:19):** I thank the member for Willoughby moving this motion because it allows us yet another opportunity to do something that those opposite do not like: put facts back into the story. I will start on a positive note, but I will outline the facts in my contribution. The Premier and the transport Minister, rightly, in their good nature, acknowledged former Premier Baird and former Premier Berejiklian. They acknowledged that this project was started by the previous Government and was, of course, finished by this Government. We were delighted to finish it. Why? Because it is not about those opposite, nor is it about us. And, as the Premier and the transport Minister know, it is not about them. It is about the people of New South Wales and, more specifically, the commuters in Sydney, who sit on many of the congested toll roads that were flogged off and privatised by those opposite when they were in government.

I remind the House, and those opposite, that this project started out at an estimated cost of \$12 billion and blew out to beyond \$25 billion. It was way over budget. It was poorly managed. I do concede that there were some complexities that arose, including, of course, COVID. When governments begin any kind of construction of major works of this nature, there will be hurdles along the way that they cannot forecast for. I accept that. I do not blame the former Government for that. But for Opposition members—those sanctimonious lost souls—to blame the Premier and the Minister for Transport for everything to do with the delay is nothing short of shameless. It means they have learnt nothing; it speaks volumes.

Members would remember the opening of the North West line. It was rushed and should never have opened. Why? Because it was unsafe and it was plagued with problems. The then Premier had to apologise to the people of New South Wales, particularly to the people of the north-west. When we came to government we had to invest an additional \$1.1 billion. When it came time to open the line, it had some complexities that ultimately would have put the safety of passengers at risk. What does a sensible government do? Does it rush the opening for a photo opportunity—

**Mr Tim James:** That's why you announced.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** —or wait to make sure it is safe for the commuters of New South Wales? I will give the member for Willoughby a bit of advice: A government may not always be popular when it has to be honest, but people will respect those that have the decency to be honest. That is exactly what this Government did, that is exactly what the Premier did, and is exactly what the transport Minister did. It is exactly what they will continue to do. I welcome this motion because we on this side of the House get the chance to correct the record. The Opposition is more all over the place than a Quentin Tarantino film. Whether it is *Django Unchained* or *Pulp Fiction*, we do not know. I thank the member for Willoughby, I thank the previous Government and I thank the Premier and this Government.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (15:23):** Castle Hill is also on the metro line so we were inconvenienced by the bungling of the opening date of the metro by this Government as well. But this wonderful and important motion is about how it affected the community of the member for Willoughby. I thank the member for moving the motion. It is important because it shows the incompetence of the Government to manage the opening date. That is the important part. It is not about cancelling it in respect of a safety issue. We all acknowledge that if safety was not up to scratch, then the opening date had to be cancelled.

But the question is why. That is what my community has asked me. Why was the opening date announced, publicised and promoted when it was not ready to open? The Government had not completed all the tasks it had, but it chose to announce the opening, thereby disrupting our communities. That is the issue. The Government responded, "There were safety issues," and complained about us. But the question is why did it even announce the opening when it was not ready to be announced? That is what caused the issues. The metro is a great piece of infrastructure. We have to thank those who had the vision to put it forward and build it: the great Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian, Dominic Perrottet as Treasurer and the former Government. Those opposite cannot build infrastructure.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Oh, really? You've never heard of the M2?

**Mr MARK HODGES:** Those opposite cannot even manage the opening. They had one task. The reality is that when the metro was not opened on time, many members of the community were inconvenienced. According to the census in 2021, 80,000-odd people work in the North Sydney local government area around the metro. Of that, 69,000 people, or 86.7 per cent of the workforce, do not live in that area. Who was disrupted? It was those wanting to travel to the great electorate of Willoughby around Crows Nest.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Apart from the local member.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** Member for Campbelltown, you had about 800-odd people in your electorate who travel there. Did you apologise to them?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Yes, I apologised to them about you.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** Did they complain to you? I am sure they did.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Castle Hill will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** There are 4,200-odd people from Parramatta who travel each day to work in Willoughby, and I hazard a guess most of them would want to use the great metro built by the former Government. Those people were all disrupted. In the electorate of the Minister for Transport, 3,600-odd people, or 4.5 per cent of the workforce, travel to work in Willoughby. They were all disrupted because of the incompetence of announcing the metro opening date without having done all of the appropriate work. But it is not only that. We heard earlier today from the member for Willoughby and from the member for Davidson that the Government cannot even manage the maintenance, which is why the Crows Nest Fest will be disrupted. Jo Henderson was shocked when he found out that the metro would be closed during the iconic event. Not only did those opposite not get the opening date right, but they cannot manage the maintenance correctly. I thank the member for Willoughby for moving this great motion, which brings attention to the incompetence of this Government.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:28):** I oppose the motion. It is astonishing how cavalier members opposite are with passenger safety. They say, "Let us open everything, and let us cut a ribbon." The member for Davidson belled the cat when he said, "The Government had one job: to cut a ribbon." Well, no. We know that is what they did for 12 years. They were obsessed with photo and media opportunities, and cutting ribbons. We on this side of the House are not about cutting ribbons; we are about delivering world-class public transport for the people of New South Wales. Let us be clear. Opposition members come to this Chamber and they are bitter. I did a double take—is that a bunch of grapefruit? No, it is not a bunch of grapefruit. It is in fact the mob opposite. It is hard being in opposition but, surely, world-class public transport is something we can all come together on.

Government members acknowledge the work of previous transport Ministers and Premiers. When members opposite were in government, what did they do for the electorate of Leppington? They opened the Leppington train station. I do not remember them thanking the former Government, but they certainly took the credit. I remember them saying, "On budget and on time", but what they did not say was "in scope" because they forgot about the commuter car park. For many years after the train station opened in 2015, thousands of cars clogged up the roads because members opposite decided they would scrap the multilevel car park so that they could cut a ribbon. They were obsessed with cutting ribbons rather than delivering what the people want. I reference the good member for Campbelltown—they are all over the shop like a Tarantino film.

**Ms Anna Watson:** *Django Unchained* or *Pulp Fiction*?

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I was reminded of Tarantino's last great movie, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, which reminded me of another great film with a similar title, *Once Upon a Time in America*. Do members remember that film? It was directed by Sergio Leone and was great. The music was by Ennio Morricone. For members who are not film buffs, *Once Upon a Time in America* was about a bunch of people in New York. They were not working in corporate and they did not have masters of business administration; they were gangsters. It was a great film. I am reminded of another Sergio Leone film called *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The member for Leppington began straying quite far from the leave of the motion when he started talking about grapefruit.

**Mr Tim James:** Point of order: The motion has nothing to do with movies or grapefruit or anything of the sort. This is a total waste of time. It is unparliamentary and it is embarrassing.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I uphold the point of order. The member for Leppington has strayed a long way from the substance of the debate.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Back to Crows Nest. This will not be the first Crows Nest Fest, will it? Was there a Crows Nest Fest last year?

**Mr Tim James:** Yes, there has been for many years.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** And people got there without a metro? I am sure they will be able to get there. While it is unfortunate, we do not want to put the safety of passengers at risk. I will leave it at that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I call the member for Willoughby in reply. There will be no interjections or references to fruit.



**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:32):** In reply: I promise I will not talk about fruit, movies or anything of the sort. I will not waste the time of the House like members opposite did. I thank the member for Coogee, the member for Campbelltown and the member for Leppington for their contributions to debate. In particular, I recognise the wise and sensible contributions made by the member for Davidson and the member for Castle Hill. Once again, the motion focuses not on movies and fruit but on the glaring example of this Government's failure to effectively plan, execute, communicate and be responsive to the needs of the community. That is at the heart of the motion.

I put it to members this way: The biggest piece of public infrastructure for decades is coming to this city. One would think that, before a public announcement was made about its opening, there would be a level of certainty that it would open on that date. Roughly four weeks notice was given that it would open on 4 August. Anyone with any common sense would expect a level of certainty that it would have opened on that date, but that is not how it transpired. The worst of it was that, after having received four weeks notice of its opening, people were given only four days notice that it would not open. That is absolutely inexcusable. This was known for some time and kept secret. There was a total lack of transparency, courtesy and dignity afforded to the community.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Shellharbour will come to order or I will put her in the naughty corner. The member for Willoughby does not require any assistance from the member for Davidson.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** The worst of it was that four weeks notice was given for the opening without the basic certainty that it would happen. That is unbelievable in the truest sense. Then only four days notice was given that it would not open. Events were planned, businesses had built up stock, celebrations were organised and there was great anticipation. The community dealt with the disruption and difficulty of building the metro for many years. They felt a sense of understandable excitement when the Minister announced that it would open on 4 August but then, with four days notice, they were told it would not.

What is more, an alternative date was not offered at the time. We were left in limbo. Meanwhile, bus timetable changes continued. That was a complete mess for the community. Anyone with common sense would say that, if bus timetable changes are predicated upon the opening of the metro but the metro cannot open, in spite of the announcement of its opening, the bus timetable changes should not proceed. How anyone can make sense of that is beyond belief.

That was the feeling of my community that precipitated the motion. There was a deep sense of frustration, shock, embarrassment and so much more that the Government delivered. That feeling is at the heart of the motion. Subsequently, we found out that the Government failed miserably—as it does all too often—to manage the demands of its union paymasters. The people came second and the unions came first and there were undue delays. The worst of it, again, was the lack of communication, courtesy, and timely and effective engagement with people in the community. The Government chose to show a lack of respect and basic competence. It should never happen again. Shame on the Minns Labor Government. Let this never be repeated.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....13

#### AYES

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

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

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

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

Davies, T	Hoenig, R
Thompson, T	Washington, K
Toole, P	Daley, M

**Motion negatived.**

*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2024-2025**

**Debate resumed from 8 August 2024.**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:44):** I am delighted to resume my contribution to the take-note debate on budget estimates and related papers for 2024-25. I could talk all afternoon—and I will. From the outset, I acknowledge the challenges that we face, which are not that inconsistent with the challenges that local families face at the moment. Whether it be in Kempsey, Campbelltown, Shoalhaven, Shellharbour, Penrith, Pittwater, Strathfield or any other part of the Sydney metro area, times are tough. It is tough for our local businesses. It is tough for our local families. It is tough for our workers. It is tough for industry. Equally, it is consistently tough for governments.

Members in this place would know that I will always be happy to be critical where appropriate, but I will also give credit and defend where adequately appropriate. The former Government had to go through COVID, and we continue to experience the flow-on economic consequences from inflationary pressures. Our Government is determined to continue its agenda of budget repair, led by the Treasurer and, indeed, the Premier. That is because we are an honest government. We know what we want to do and what we need to do as a government.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Are you rehearsing?

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It is the matinee.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** The reality is that we will not be able to do any of that if we do not get the budget right. There will be long-term ramifications if we do not address budget repair.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You should be on the front bench.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Who are you talking to?

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Ignore them.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** I acknowledge the member for Vacluse, and I thank her for that commentary. The muppets up the end can joke around all they like, but people are hurting. It is deeply disappointing. On 20 June this year, the Opposition leader stated, "None of the Government's attempts at smoke and mirrors can disguise the Government's failure to address the cost of living." We have been in government for just over 18 months. The fact is that inflation is falling. It has halved since 2022, but it is still elevated. The Sydney consumer price index rose 1 per cent in the June quarter of 2024 to once again be 3.8 per cent higher through the year. Those numbers look numerically low, but members in this place—including those intelligent people on the other side—know that when

those percentiles are drawn into monetary figures, they are big numbers. That is why this Government is taking a sensible approach to making sure that we get it right.

As I reflect back on a more macro level, I am proud to be a member of a government that is taking a sensible approach to the economic situation that we are in. With just over 18 months in government, we must not forget that we inherited an enormous debt of over \$180 billion—the highest in New South Wales's history. We campaigned on modest yet bold election commitments, which are consistent with the needs, dreams and requirements of communities across New South Wales. This Government has a whole-of-State approach. We represent every man, woman and child, whether they are in the east or west of the great divide, equally and without prejudice. That is what good governments do. They govern for all. They do not just section off little areas for political populism. If there is one lesson those opposite could learn, it is that one. Whether they like it or not, the people of New South Wales are smarter than that and deserve better than that. That is why the Government is giving them better than that.

My electorate of Campbelltown is the heart of south-west Sydney. We must always use the correct language and differentiate between the west and the south-west of Sydney. Yes, many areas make up greater Western Sydney. Riverstone, Leppington, St Marys, Camden, Campbelltown, Badgerys Creek, Fairfield, Cabramatta, East Hills, Holsworthy, Liverpool, Macquarie Fields and the mighty city of Penrith all make up greater Western Sydney. But the challenges, issues and concerns that we experience in the far and outer south-west, whilst similar, vary significantly to those experienced in the outer west. They are no more or less important; they are equally important. But we must approach them differently. We must give priority to rapid buses from Campbelltown to Western Sydney airport, which I am delighted to see funded.

I was privileged to be the shadow Minister for Western Sydney when the decision was made on the metro and light rail from St Marys to Western Sydney airport. In my view that was a catastrophic mistake for a number of reasons. I will point out two. First, there is no direct link from Western Sydney airport through St Marys to Kingsford Smith. In cities all around the world, the success, opportunities and full potential of a second airport are only ever achieved when there is a direct connection between the primary and secondary airport—in our case Kingsford Smith to Western Sydney airport or, more specifically, the T8 line that goes from Campbelltown to the airport. Obviously, Western Sydney airport needs to be connected through Leppington to Glenfield so that there is a direct line into the primary airport.

The second reason it was a catastrophic error is that the south-west is growing. Between the Western Sydney airport and the great city of Campbelltown, there will be a city the size of Adelaide along that Western Sydney belt. We are now looking at enhancing connectivity to the beautiful region of the Illawarra, another important and great part of our State. If we do not have that connectivity, we will not see that economic growth and the regions will not reach their full potential. [*Extension of time*]

I take the opportunity to thank our health workers, nurses, clinicians, allied health workers, paramedics and our good friend the Minister for Health, who have worked tirelessly throughout an absolutely terrible flu season. In one of the health briefings that I am very privileged to receive from my local health district, I was advised that Campbelltown Hospital was beyond capacity. The reason was outbreaks of RSV, which is a respiratory virus—something I had never heard of—and influenza A, combined with multiple and continuing COVID outbreaks, many cases of which developed into pneumonia. The patients were not just those with weaker immune systems; they were children, babies, older people and middle-aged people, and even really young people like me! We know that the system can cope. It coped on the goodwill and the hard work of those staff and allied health workers, and I thank them for that. But that is just not sustainable. We cannot rely on goodwill. That is why the health Minister and the Government are committed to getting it right when it comes to supporting our health system.

I am delighted to be the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning, working with and beside my good friend the Deputy Premier. She has been very consistent in her support for our education system, overseeing casual teachers moving back into permanent roles. Teachers were running away from our education system for a number of reasons that the Minister has often outlined. Every minute of every day she turns her attention to repairing that system, which was ignored for too long—and who paid the price? Our students did. If we are not providing our students with the important foundation of a good education and adequate resources to achieve that, they will not have the grounding to allow them to build the best life that they can live. Education is often said to be the greatest equaliser. There are a lot of different terms used when it comes to education. For me, education is the invaluable asset that every human being must have as they navigate their way through the journey of life. If they do not have that and we do not support them then they will simply miss that opportunity.

I have been delighted to see some improvements in the transport system. Of course, we debated the Sydney Metro earlier. The Premier and the Minister for Transport credited the previous Government and the relevant Premiers. That project brought with it financial and cost challenges, but it also brought with it great opportunity.

I commend the transport Minister for taking a sensible approach. No, it did not open on time, and the reason it did not was because it simply was not safe. That project blew out from \$12 billion to over \$25 billion. I said in my contribution to the previous debate that I do not blame the previous Government for all of that. Yes, it mismanaged it, in my view. But there were a number of challenges mixed in as well, including the COVID era, which threw many challenges at every community in our society.

Looking through a more local prism, my electorate of Campbelltown finally saw the upgrade of Appin Road. I thank my community for its patience—people who, like me, cherished the conservation and protection of our valued koala colony. I was devastated to see so many trees cut down, but the reality was we had to upgrade that road. There have been in excess of 30 people killed on that notorious road; two of them were friends of mine. I ran coal trucks up and down that road, and I remember getting a bit loose at the bottom end of the road at about 2.00 a.m. while running about 36 tonnes of coal to the port for the steelworks. It had to be upgraded. There have been upgrades at the Illawarra end, and it is now the Campbelltown electorate's turn for upgrades between Campbelltown and Appin.

Whilst I am on Appin, I want that community to know that I am on their side. I cannot do everything. I cannot change the past. I believe Appin was ignored for a very long time. People were disengaged and decisions were made with no consultation and no representation. I note that my good friend and former mayor of Wollondilly, the member for Wollondilly, has entered the Chamber. I thank her for her time on Wollondilly council. I was delighted to work with her when I was the mayor of Camden, and I am delighted to work with her in the Parliament today. She knows how the people of Appin feel, and I know as well. I may not always be able to do everything for them, but I promise this: I will always do what I can, I will always do my best and I will always be honest with them. Constituents may not like what they hear when conversing with members, but they will respect our dignity to be straight-up and honest with them. They might not like what they hear, but they will respect us for respecting them.

**The SPEAKER:** It being 4.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

#### *Petitions*

#### **BRIDGETTE "BIDDY" PORTER**

**The SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Orange, I welcome visitors to the gallery for this important debate. I understand that this is a very difficult and sensitive issue. I do not think that sensitivity is lost on any member of this House. I hope that coming together earlier in the Jubilee Room was of some value. I have spoken to a number of members who will be participating in the debate. All are experienced members and are learned in this area. I remind members that some aspects of the case that led to the petition are subject to non-publication orders outside of this place through the court system. I am sure members will be mindful of that. I have touched on a number of those, but if anybody who wishes to speak has any concerns then I am happy to hear from them privately as we proceed. I wish the circumstances were different, but it is what it is.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:02):** In the early hours of Wednesday 8 July 2020, 10-year-old Bridgette "Biddy" Porter was brutally killed when she was left alone in a house with a teenager she trusted. To fulfill her desire to murder, Biddy's killer methodically planned and executed one of the most heinous killings by a young person in Australian history. The injuries inflicted on Biddy were so shocking they have been suppressed by the Supreme Court. But Biddy's teen killer showed no remorse. She calmly confessed to police that she knew that killing Biddy was wrong, but she did it anyway. People knew Biddy's killer was dangerous. Her school knew, her friends knew and her parents knew of her lust to kill and her obsession with weapons, which she gave names to. None of those people did anything to prevent her desire to kill.

But what of the people Biddy left behind as the living victims of the horrific crime—her parents, Rebekah and Dominic, her brothers and her extended family? I acknowledge they are in the gallery. Like so many other victims of heinous crimes, Biddy's parents continue to suffer from severe anxiety and complex post-traumatic stress disorder. There is no escape from their overwhelming grief or the darkness that continues to engulf their world each and every day, because the systems that should have supported them have failed them repeatedly—systems focused on protecting their daughter's killer rather than meeting community expectations and achieving justice for all victims and their loved ones.

The Justice for Biddy Porter ePetition was signed by 21,550 New South Wales residents, and another 18,450 people from Australia and around the world, via a change.org petition, have joined our calls for justice for precious Biddy, her parents and every victim of serious crime. Sadly, Biddy's case is not an isolated one. Overall, 40,000 voices are demanding reforms to the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice victims

support services, which fail to recognise the immediate and long-term financial, physical and mental health needs of victims and fail to provide adequate financial support or essential services, including social work and free access to appropriate mental and physical health care for victims of serious crimes.

Those 40,000 voices are demanding an inquiry into the New South Wales Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions [ODPP] for failing in its responsibilities under the Charter of Victims Rights, the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 and the ODPP Prosecution Guidelines. The Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP] misled Biddy's parents with assurances that her killer would serve a limiting term. The DPP withheld documents that Biddy's parents had a lawful right to see. The DPP allowed her parents to believe that Biddy's identity was suppressed for 20 years.

The petitioners demand an inquiry into the Mental Health Review Tribunal's failure to meet its legislated responsibilities. Biddy's self-confessed killer, subject to oversight by the tribunal, is being detained at a forensic health facility, receiving appropriate care by a team of mental health professionals, taxpayer-funded legal advice, NDIS and Centrelink funding. It is shocking that families of murder victims do not have equal free access to essential specialised mental health services, legal advice or ongoing financial support. It is shocking that the tribunal respects killers' rights over those of victims and their families. It is shocking that, less than three years after Biddy's brutal murder, the tribunal granted her killer escorted day release to enjoy trips to public places where other vulnerable children play. It is shocking that the tribunal could release Biddy's killer at any time. With its secret autonomous powers to release killers back into the community, the tribunal operates without transparency or accountability and fails to adhere to community standards and tests of future dangerousness.

While the tribunal and the DPP have the power to avoid public scrutiny and accountability, victims like Biddy and her parents will continue to be silenced, with justice denied to them and all victims of serious crime. We call for justice for Biddy and vital change to the governance, systems and services that currently fail all victims and inflict additional pain and suffering on that minority group, who have endured the unthinkable and deserve our respect, compassion and support.

In presenting the Justice for Biddy ePetition, I call on this House to stand with us in our calls for parliamentary inquiries into the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Mental Health Review Tribunal and the Department of Communities and Justice. We also call for a coronial inquest to identify the underlying factors that contributed to Biddy's death, to help prevent future killings. I commend the petition to the House.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:07):** On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: In response: I acknowledge the family and community of Bridgette "Biddy" Porter in the gallery today. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I express our deepest sympathies for their loss and the ongoing trauma that they all experience as a result of that heinous crime. I speak today on behalf of the Attorney General, who could not be here and has asked me to pass on his apologies.

The petition was tabled on the fourth anniversary of the death of 10-year-old Bridgette "Biddy" Porter, who was killed by a young person known to her, as we have heard from the member for Orange. I pay tribute to the member for Orange for his passionate advocacy, not just for Biddy but for many victims of terrible crimes. It is difficult for any elected member of Parliament to see such grief go through their community. He has been a strong advocate. I acknowledge the work that has been done—and I acknowledge Rebekah, particularly—to get us across all of this. In my office I have a picture of her daughter, which moves me every day to think about what we should be doing to stop this kind of event from happening again and to better support the victims who are left behind.

The trauma experienced by everyone in this situation is overwhelming. To stand up and fight for change in the depths of that grief, suffering and loss is not only a very brave thing to do but also the only way to get through each day—to feel that you can, in some way, stop some other person from experiencing that kind of grief. There is not a person in this Chamber who does not grieve for you and your family. The petition calls on the Government to initiate a parliamentary inquiry into the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions [ODPP] and the Mental Health Review Tribunal, to increase support for victims of serious crimes and to conduct a coronial inquest into Biddy's death. There is no doubt that this was a tragedy.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is an independent prosecuting authority, and the Attorney General has told me that, under the law, he is unable to comment on the conduct of these proceedings or to direct the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions due to the way our legal system is set up. But he assured me that the ODPP has had regular and ongoing contact with the family about the matter. He has also advised me that the Victims Support Scheme provides counselling, financial support and recognition payments to victims of violence in New South Wales. We all want that to be provided in a scheme that is fit for purpose.

The Department of Communities and Justice is currently reviewing the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013, and the New South Wales Government will carefully consider any recommendations arising from that review. The Mental Health Review Tribunal is an independent, specialist, quasi-judicial body established to undertake functions, including making orders about forensic patients. There are mechanisms for transparency and accountability, including open hearings and appeals. The Attorney General and the Minister for Mental Health, and Minister for Youth are also keen to continue working with Bidy's family and the member for Orange in any way they can to try to assist them in working through what has happened and to make that process better for other people.

Again, the request for a coronial inquest is a matter for the State Coroner, and this is the problem. In a former life, I was the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, so I know that these processes are very difficult for people in this situation. It is a maze. It is a system that members on both sides of the Chamber want to improve and make better. This is not a political matter. The State Coroner is currently reviewing the decision to dispense with the holding of an inquest at the request of Mr and Mrs Porter, and I hope this brings a positive outcome. There is no legal change—there is nothing—that can bring back Bidy. I acknowledge the grief and loss of Bidy's family. We will do all we can to make this process better for her family and for others into the future.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:12):** Eight July 2020 is a day that people in my community will never, ever forget. It is the day that Bidy Porter was murdered on a farm outside Gunnedah in the Tamworth electorate. I acknowledge Bidy's family members and friends in the gallery today who have been living with the shock, trauma and grief for more than four years. Their journey has been incredibly difficult, and their fight for justice will continue beyond this debate. I commend the member for Orange for taking carriage of this petition and for his work advocating on behalf of Bidy's family. Recently I discussed the petition with the member for Orange to gain his expert perspective as a former police prosecutor. I spoke also with Dom a few weeks ago, and learnt of his grief, his mental anguish, his diagnosis with post-traumatic stress disorder and his inability to return to work because of the trauma of losing his daughter.

The member for Orange is leading the substantive fight on a number of issues, including the push for a coronial inquest. His expertise in this matter is extensive and I commend him for his work on this case and for working with Bidy's family. I acknowledge that the support to the family following this unimaginable tragedy has been totally inadequate, and I support the call for a parliamentary inquiry. Victims Services is legislated under the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013, which is intended to provide support for victims. Under the Act, parents of victims under the age of 18 should be eligible for financial support and counselling. That support and the counselling offered to Bidy's family was clearly totally inadequate—it was missing in action. Dom, Rebekah and their family feel that the system has let them down. They feel that there was not adequate compensation to assist them through an incredibly tough time when they were unable to work—and they still cannot.

They feel that there was inadequate access to counselling or mental health support in the following months and years. The \$7,500 recognition payment they received could never have covered the cost of this trauma. It is staggering to believe it would have. The up to 22 hours of counselling could never be enough; it should be ongoing. They are correct in saying that mental health support is hard to come by in regional New South Wales. We have fought incredibly hard to improve mental health support services in my area. The family is correct in saying that more needs to be done. There is a strong case for victim support reform. The Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 is well intentioned but, in this instance, totally inadequate. More must be done to support Dom, Rebekah, family and friends. Chair of Advocacy Australia Clare Collins said:

... there appears to be inequity between a victim's rights compared to those of a killer. Victims are not receiving free, independent legal advice to help evaluate the DPP's recommendations or any legal representation at MHRT hearings without leave from the MHRT.

I strongly urge the Government to support change that will mean greater assistance for victims' families, particularly in extreme, devastating circumstances such as these. Again, I support an inquiry into how the administration of the Mental Health Review Tribunal handled this case, and transparency in its administration and consultation with living victims.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:16):** First, let us remember Bidy. Her life is an important and enduring memory that we must hold on to, and that is an important outcome of the work the family and community have been doing in seeking justice for Bidy. It is also an enduring legacy. We should not forget Bidy and her short time amongst us. We must hold on to her memory as we seek justice. That legacy and seeking justice is a difficult path. I commend Bidy's parents and supporters for their courage to speak out and continue to pursue justice for her. The search for justice invites us to work alongside those who suffer and listen to their stories. That is part of what today's debate is about. As we go through this process, we can learn and we can achieve change and progress as a society.

Deficiencies in the Mental Health Review Tribunal have been identified by government. A 2017 review by Anthony Whealy, KC, made 30 recommendations, which were all accepted by government and have been implemented. The Minns Labor Government has allocated additional money this year to the Mental Health Review Tribunal to improve records, upgrade IT systems and invest in a new case management system. These system improvements will position the Mental Health Review Tribunal to be a more robust and responsive system that can meet the continued growth in patient numbers and associated hearings. I am aware of the concerns raised by the member for Orange and some of my constituents. I have two families in my electorate who have experience of the Mental Health Review Tribunal. They have spoken to me about their concerns, and their points are well made. We need to do more to make sure that the Mental Health Review Tribunal not only seeks to rehabilitate people who have done wrong in our society but pays due regard also to the victims and their journeys and their need to see justice done, as well.

I was speaking to one of my constituents this morning. He said a lot of his experience of the Mental Health Review Tribunal turns on how the chairperson of the tribunal handles the hearing. That gentleman has been attending Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings for the past 15 years, after a killer took his uncle away from his family. That is a long period in which to be seeking justice and to follow up on a matter. He said that the skill, empathy and handling of the tribunal hearing by the chairperson is crucial to how victims perceive justice to be done, as well as rehabilitation. I will be talking to the Attorney General about the experience of my constituents. Hopefully, we can build that into the system to make sure that we provide a better experience and a better rehabilitation service but also to do justice to those who have lost in the way in which the people in the gallery and our society have lost, by having Bidy Porter taken away from us in such a terrible way. It is a loss for all of us as a society. I give my deepest regards on behalf of the people in this House and in my community.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:20):** I speak on the petition on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, in my capacity as the shadow Attorney General. I begin by acknowledging Bidy's parents and her family and friends who are here today. Our hearts go out to them. We can never understand the pain they are feeling. Bidy's death at just 10 years of age is an absolute tragedy. Whilst we do not want to dwell on the matter, it was a horrible crime. Members of Parliament regularly receive petitions. Particularly as shadow Attorney General, I am often written to about crimes and legal matters. However, the campaign to highlight the issues surrounding Bidy's death has been exceptionally detailed and effective, and I congratulate all involved in that campaign.

In dealing with each of the elements of the petition, I will voice my concerns about the aspects of this case and the issues raised. I do so not only as the shadow Attorney General but also as senior counsel admitted as a barrister in 1996. The first issue I raise is the extent of the suppression orders that have hampered Bidy's family from raising the issues of public policy that are contained in this petition. The first thing I did after I received the material was to ask my office for a copy of the sentencing judgement in the New South Wales Supreme Court, to read a summary of the evidence at the trial, the legal analysis of the facts and law and the reasons for sentence. The judgement is not publicly available. How can we, as democratic lawmakers in this Parliament, properly respond to the public issues raised in the petition—that justice has failed in this case—if we are not able to read the sentencing judgement to understand what should be the most reliable explanation of the case?

Judgements in exceptional cases like this should suppress only those parts that are absolutely necessary. There should be free legal support for victims and their families who wish to challenge all or part of any suppression orders that are made and a mechanism for MPs to have access to judgements in the public interest—if necessary, on a confidential basis—so that we can perform our role on behalf of the community. I commend the member for Orange for his diligence in this matter. There should be mechanisms also for speedy and transparent accountability for the concerns raised in the petition about the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions: that it may not have followed its responsibilities under the Charter of Victims Rights. Bidy's case is not the only high-profile case where concerns have been raised by victims of crime. Similar concerns were raised by the victims and the families of victims of the Hunter bus crash about the performance of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in recent months.

Effectively, the DPP often represents in court the public and also the families of victims. It is a difficult role, with inherent conflicts of interest on occasion. Perhaps a different and better way of dealing with the conflicts between those two responsibilities can be arrived at. I note that Bidy's family believes that the support by the victim support services of the Department of Communities and Justice requires reform and improvement. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is made up of public servants, and they should be accountable to the public for the way in which they perform their publicly funded duties. Public resources being given to victims and their families is surely justifiable on the basis that they did not choose to be in the situations they find themselves in, and Bidy's family has had to endure an unbearably painful trauma.

The work of the Mental Health Review Tribunal is obviously difficult, but any concerns about its transparency, accountability and mechanisms for victims' families to be supported and provided with an explanation and accountability warrants further investigation. Under the Coroners Act there are various avenues for an inquest to occur. Under section 28 of the Act the Attorney General can order an inquest, although the Minister did not seem to indicate that that would occur. I would encourage her to lobby the Attorney General to order an inquest into this matter, as one of the easy things that the Minns Labor Government can do to satisfy this petition before the Parliament. I congratulate the large number of people who have acknowledged the importance of Biddy's life by signing the petition. It is a tragic case that has rightly drawn deep emotions. If the inquiries that are requested can stop another case like Biddy's, then they will be justified. I end by again expressing my deep condolences to Biddy's parents, family and friends. I support the petition before this House.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:27):** By leave: At the outset I acknowledge the friends and family of Bridgette "Biddy" Porter who are in the gallery. I cannot imagine what they have been through. When a crime is committed, the public expects certain things to happen: that the criminal will be apprehended, prosecuted, tried and convicted and that a suitable sentence will be passed to detain or restrain the criminal, with the objective of preventing them from reoffending or to discourage them or others from offending. We also expect that the victims of crime will be looked after or, in the case of murder, that the families of the victims will be supported and cared for. Murder victims' families live with the knowledge that their loved ones' lives were taken away by murderers, usually under horrific circumstances, and they have to cope with the trauma that knowledge causes. So it seems fair and just that there would be something to compensate them for the loss or to support them in their ongoing grief and their struggle to come to terms with the loss. But sometimes the system does not work that way. Sometimes the focus is more on ensuring the rights of the criminal rather than doing something for the ongoing suffering of the relatives of the victim.

When 10-year-old Biddy Porter, from Orange, was killed in 2020 by a teenager she and her family knew, there was an expectation that the murderer would be detained, Biddy's family would be supported, and her parents would be allowed to honour Biddy's memory. The murderer was apprehended and subjected to a legal process but was deemed mentally incompetent. Instead of prison time, the murderer was referred for treatment in a mental healthcare facility. Biddy's parents were led to believe that this would mean the murderer would spend more time locked away than if sent to an ordinary prison. But they have since learnt that Biddy's killer has been granted escorted day release. The murderer has been afforded counselling, NDIS access and other support that seems to have been denied the grieving family.

Instead, Biddy's parents, Rebekah and Dominic, were restricted from using their daughter's name or image because the killer is a relative and it might lead to someone discovering the murderer's identity. There is more concern about protecting the identity of the murderer than there is about allowing the parents to honour and cherish the memory of their daughter. I am not against rights for convicted criminals. There was a time when criminals could have their rights completely taken away and be forced to forfeit property and goods. Convicts could be banished to another country, flogged on the whim of overseers, and even executed. The public mostly came to consider such deprivations of rights as too extreme. In Australia, as in many other countries, the death penalty was abolished in the twentieth century and prisoners were given more rights. This was to prevent cruel and unusual punishment, prevent prisoners being exploited and offer reform as another potential course. But the pendulum has continued to swing too far.

A major change came with the "insanity plea", where a murderer could be deemed not responsible for their actions if it could be established that some mental illness impaired their ability to understand that what they were doing was wrong. The first instance of the plea being used successfully was in 1843, when Daniel M'Naghten tried to assassinate the then British Prime Minister but blamed his psychosis and was acquitted of murder. Established in legal precedent over the decades since, this defence has been shaped in legislation, but it has led to some perverse outcomes. In 2014 in Cobar, Ian and Margaret Setttee were murdered by their son Scott. Because he was deemed not guilty by reason of his mental illness, he still stood to inherit from the parents he had murdered. Wendy Robinson successfully fought it in the Supreme Court but lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in the process. The loophole was closed in New South Wales by the passage of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020, which allowed a verdict of "act proven but not criminally responsible".

The law also requires a referral to the Mental Health Review Tribunal. Unfortunately we are seeing decisions being made by the tribunal that only consider the rights of the perpetrator and often fail to consider the impact of their decisions on the victim's family. The mental state of the murderer is given constant consideration, but what about the mental state of the victim's families? When the tribunal made its decision to allow Biddy's murderer day release, it did not consult with Biddy's parents. Yesterday I met with members of the Homicide Victims' Support Group who had similar stories of murderers receiving better treatment than the families of victims, who have been ignored, not been consulted, or have been unable to appeal the decisions of the tribunal.



The petitioners are—reasonably—calling for parliamentary inquiries into the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Mental Health Review Tribunal, reform to the Department of Communities and Justice victim support services, and a coronial inquest to identify the underlying factors that contributed to Biddy's death to help prevent future killings of this type. When someone is murdered, we expect justice to be served, but in this case there is a strong sense that an injustice has been done. This House should do everything in its power to bring about inquiries into those areas.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:32):** In reply: I thank the member for Maitland, representing the Attorney General, as well as the members for the electorates of Tamworth, The Entrance, Wahroonga and Barwon, for their contributions to this petition take-note debate. I have no doubt this petition has broad support across the Parliament. It is demonstrated by the many members currently in this Chamber, many wearing the orange lapel ribbons provided to parliamentarians today. I appreciate the support of my parliamentary colleagues. I could not think of a more tragic set of circumstances than those addressed by this petition. It is unimaginable what Bridgette had to endure. Bek, Dom, Mauritz, all the family and friends and the Central West community of Orange have been rocked to the core. The petition seeks inquiries into a number of government departments. The matter is a most serious one and deserving of that. A number of members speaking in this debate talked about similar issues and incidents affecting their electorates or happening across the State. This needs to be the catalyst for change.

I thank Advocacy Australia and Clare Collins. I also thank Martha Jabour from the Homicide Victims' Support Group. Michael Usher and Tim Sheridan from the *Spotlight* program really did shine a spotlight on this story, and I thank them for it. Without the support of all of those people, there is no doubt we would not have got the signatures required to trigger this debate today on the floor of this House. This is only the beginning, and there is a lot of work to do. I assure those family and friends in the gallery that they have the Parliament's support. We will do all we can to respond to what has happened by improving the system for the families of victims, especially those of homicide.

I will finish with this. I know my time has expired, but this is important. This afternoon saw a brief function in the Jubilee Room emceed by Michael Usher and attended by many members and those in the gallery. The event was a fitting tribute to Bridgette. I thank my parliamentary colleagues for coming along, including Premier Chris Minns. *Roar* was Biddy's favourite song. I ask members to hear Biddy's voice roar, like we did in the Jubilee Room this afternoon, when calling for vital changes to systems currently failing all victims of serious crime. I commend the petition to the House.

**The SPEAKER:** I know it might seem to those in the gallery like a small gesture to take note of this petition, but I assure them it is a very important step in this House. I thank all those involved in bringing it to Parliament.

**Petition noted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **GANESH CHATURTHI**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:38):** On 7 September I had the honour of celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi with residents of East Leppington and the United Multicultural Association of Australia. Ganesh Chaturthi is a significant festival for the Hindu people that marks the birth of Lord Ganesh. This event not only symbolises new beginnings and prosperity but also unites our diverse community in shared values of devotion and hope. Ganesh Chaturthi is a time for reflection and renewal, where individuals seek blessings for their endeavours. It fosters a spirit of collaboration and support. The festival's vibrant rituals and communal celebrations highlight the cultural richness that Hindu traditions bring to our multicultural society. Participating in the Ganesh Puja with the community was a profoundly enriching experience. I extend my gratitude to the Ganesh Puja committee and all who were in attendance. Their efforts ensured the event was a wonderful celebration of unity and shared purpose in Leppington.

#### **SORRENTO PIZZERIA**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:39):** I congratulate Sorrento Pizzeria of Empire Bay on being one of nine Australian businesses honoured globally in the Square 50 Awards Program. The prestigious recognition celebrates businesses that are making waves in their communities and industries across retail, restaurants and services. Sorrento Pizzeria was recognized for the authentic experience it offers diners, a testament to the vision and dedication of owner and head chef, Elia Eliopoulou. The award is a wonderful accolade for Elia, whose hard work has kept alive a century-old family tradition started in Naples by his nonna. It is a well-deserved honour, and I feel that the dedication to carry on his family's legacy has been more than vindicated with the recognition. Elia's late mother, Stella, was the inspiration for Sorrento, and she taught him everything he knows about resilience, traditional Neapolitan pizza and the importance of community. In challenging times, businesses like

Sorrento set a shining example. I congratulate Elia once again and thank him for supporting a wonderful community on the Central Coast.

#### **BURWOOD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL AND THE MCDONALD COLLEGE**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:40):** I recognise the contributions of students from Burwood Girls High School and the McDonald College in engaging creatively and thoughtfully with the debate around young people and social media. I acknowledge Larta Hagimola, Talia Bae, members of the Strathfield Youth Advisory Board, and their friends from Burwood Girls High School, as well as students from the McDonald College who created powerful and insightful short videos capturing the insights and experiences of young people. Many of these videos were vox pop style interviews in the playground where students gave unfiltered answers to questions on camera. In their interviews, students canvassed concerns about addiction, time wasting and anti-social behaviour as well as exposure to harmful content. One student noted poignantly that without social media she would gain freedom and miss nothing. Many of them agreed on the need for some kind of age restriction, with concern that young people should not have the same unrestricted access to content as adults. This important work fed directly into last week's Social Media Summit. It is so important that the voices of young people are heard directly and authentically. Congratulations to the young people involved.

#### **MARK SEAMAN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:41):** Mark Seaman is one of the State's longest serving Rural Fire Service volunteers and has justifiably been honoured with the presentation of a 70-year long service medal. A lifetime of commitment and dedication to the NSW RFS Bruinbun brigade by Mark Seaman has been recognised, but the enormity of his contribution to the community is something that will go down in local folklore. Mark joined the brigade in 1953 and has been a valued member for all these years. He was the brigade's president from 2004 to 2009 and filled the role of training officer from 2004 to 2014, always ensuring his team were up to date and familiar with all firefighting techniques. However, his dedication to the role in the early days sets Mark apart from modern day firefighters, having gone with his father as a child to help fight local fires, including attending incidents throughout the Turon during the 1950s and 1960s. Mark filled the captain's role for some time, and firefighting back then consisted of walking into the fires with an axe or mattock, hessian bags or a tree branch as the only tools to put out the blaze. I congratulate Mark Seaman; he is an RFS legend.

#### **BELINDA AND PHIL DONOVAN**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:42):** I recognise and congratulate Belinda and Phil Donovan from Wildlife Rescue South Coast on their incredible dedication to rescuing and caring for wildlife in the Shoalhaven over the past 10 years. Belinda has 35 years of experience as a qualified vet nurse and former zookeeper and has dedicated her life to wildlife care. Belinda is the only carer on the South Coast qualified to handle marine reptiles, while Phil supports the essential work undertaken by Belinda by managing much of the building and maintenance work while also assisting with wildlife rescues. Together Belinda and Phil are a remarkable team. With the help of a small group of volunteers, the Donovans have made a significant impact by saving the lives of injured wildlife, and they currently have eight orphaned baby wombats in their care as well as a number of orphaned joeys. The South Coast is lucky to have passionate and skilled people like Belinda and Phil living in our community.

#### **TAHMOOR UNITING COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:43):** While heading to the Southern Highlands, I made a stop at the Tahmoor Uniting Church markets on Thirlmere Way. It was a wonderful experience to catch up with the members of the Uniting Men's Shed and to witness the lively activity of the local village markets. The atmosphere was vibrant, with stallholders showcasing a variety of unique goods. A standout feature of the event was the fresh, homegrown produce from the Tahmoor Uniting Community Garden available for purchase. It was truly a pleasure to see the fruits of local labour being enjoyed by the community. For anyone interested in gardening, the Tahmoor Uniting Community Garden is an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow green thumbs. The group meets every Monday and Friday morning from nine to 12, welcoming all who wish to learn, grow and share gardening knowledge. The garden not only serves as a space to cultivate plants but also fosters a sense of community and belonging. Whether an experienced gardener or just starting out, this is a fantastic way to get involved in a rewarding and sustainable activity. I encourage everyone to head down and be part of a thriving community initiative.

#### **RIVER OF ART FESTIVAL**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:44):** I congratulate the Eurobodalla's River of Art Festival on celebrating its twentieth birthday. I attended the official opening and announcement of the winners of the River of Art prizes on Friday 27 September in Narooma. The River of Art is the South Coast's largest cultural event, bringing approximately 10,000 people to the region and contributing over \$11 million to the arts and general

economy. Over 11 days, the arts trail extends over 100 kilometres from Durras to Bermagui, offering about 100 events. It concluded at the Bay Pavilions with *Barunguba - A Tale of Noorooma*, a wonderful fusion of traditional storytelling and modern technology performed by the Djaadjawan Dancers. The performance was generously supported by the New South Wales Government's Create NSW program. The River of Art festival highlights the vibrant culture of the arts in the Eurobodalla. I congratulate the organising committee, volunteers, performers and contributors.

#### UNITED TOGETHER COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:45):** I recognise our vibrant Jewish community. On 7 October 2024 I joined over 12,000 at the United Together Community Commemoration on the one-year anniversary of lives being lost and others taken captive on 7 October 2023. We gathered to remember over 1,200 innocent Israelis who died, the largest loss of Jewish life on any single day since the Holocaust. We gathered in hope that the hostages will be set free, from fear and isolation, having been held in captivity. I recognise Michal Ohana, who shared her story of survival. She was shot at Nova festival. She demonstrates so much bravery. I recognise the president of the Zionist Council of NSW, Orli Zahava, and the president of the Jewish Board of Deputies, David Ossip. I thank them for helping to bring our community together to reflect and never forget. We must all hold onto hope.

#### NORMA SMITH

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:46):** I wish a very happy birthday to local bookworm Norma Smith, who turns 90 today. She shares that remarkable milestone on 17 October with another local icon, Padstow Library, which celebrates its sixty-fifth anniversary this week. Norma has been a patron of the library for over 60 years, working her way through an astonishing 100 to 125 books each year, exploring a wide range of genres. Her passion for reading is only matched by the friendships she has forged with the library staff and fellow book lovers. It seems only fitting that Norma will celebrate her ninetieth birthday among the books she holds dear and the people who have shared this journey with her at the Padstow Library sixty-fifth anniversary celebrations. I congratulate both Norma and the library on their incredible milestones. May there be many more books, friendships and celebrations to come.

#### CAPE CABARITA

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:47):** I recognise the Cape Cabarita twenty-fifth anniversary fair, which will be held on 2 November 2024. This year marks 25 years since residents first moved into the development at Cape Cabarita, and the exciting event is a celebration of a wonderful community. There is a real sense of belonging and friendship at Cape Cabarita, and it has the feeling of a small town where everyone knows one another. From the beautiful buildings to the gym, tennis courts, swimming pools, picturesque foreshore walk, the community newsletter—which has been around since it first opened—and the many events held in the community room, Cape Cabarita is a sociable and hospitable place to call home. The estate is a wonderful community, and I have had the pleasure of meeting many kind and welcoming residents who are dedicated to our community. I extend my congratulations to all residents who have made Cape Cabarita their home and who have shaped our community for the better. I thank everyone involved in organising the twenty-fifth anniversary fair, including Hilary Streatfield. I wish all residents the very best.

#### KAVERI SANKRAMANA

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:48):** Today is the auspicious day of Kaveri Sankramana, when the people of the Kodagu region celebrate the birth of the sacred Kaveri River, whose timeless flow has symbolised life, nourishment, strength and prosperity. The river has shaped the history and culture of the region for generations, just as the Georges River has shaped the history and culture of Liverpool. For all Kodavas, the river Kaveri is more than a life giver; she is revered as both a goddess and the protector of people. Kaveri Sankramana is a cherished festival for all Kodavas, reminding us of the sacred bond we share with nature. It is a time for devotees to perform rituals, to pay homage to the river and to take sacred baths in her waters. The festival signifies the renewal of life and the beginning of the harvest season. It brings people together in prayers, cultural activities and community gatherings. As we honour the abundant river, I extend my heartfelt wishes to all Kodavas for a blessed Kaveri Sankramana. May the land and also the spirit of our community be nourished as we strive for prosperity and harmony for generations to come.

#### LINK WENTWORTH

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:49):** I acknowledge the Link Wentworth organisation for its work in hosting a community support hub for Hawkesbury. Integrating a range of free support services, the hub aims to be a one-stop support shop for community residents. The Hawkesbury community support hub was recently introduced following its successful operation in neighbouring electorates. Members of the community

can attend and speak with support service representatives about advice on financial matters, legal aspects, housing, employment, disaster recovery services, disability and medical services. I thank Link Wentworth for its efforts in organising and hosting these hubs. These monthly hubs provide helpful information and ongoing support to many members of the community.

### **MAZU PARADE AND LUNA DOUBLE NINTH FESTIVAL**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:50):** On 12 October 2024 I had a fantastic time at the fourth Mazu Parade and Luna Double Ninth Festival held at Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta. This vibrant event showcased the rich cultural heritage of the local community, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to celebrate. Each year the festival features many captivating dances performed by talented local groups, and this year was no exception. The performances were not only visually stunning but also filled with the energy and spirit of the community. I was particularly impressed by the creativity and dedication of the dancers, who brought their traditions to life with colourful costumes and intricate choreography. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr Henry Wu and the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association for their kind invitation to this wonderful celebration. Events like the Mazu Parade and Luna Double Ninth Festival are essential for fostering connections and promoting understanding among different cultures in our community. I look forward to attending future celebrations.

### **KATE CLEARY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:51):** I congratulate Kate Cleary on being awarded the Central West Adult Volunteer of the Year at awards held in Orange recently. Kate is the founder of The Farm in Galong, a rehabilitation centre dedicated to supporting women facing addiction, family violence and other severe challenges. Kate's work is underpinned by the belief that whatever has been lost in a person's life can be restored. This belief is not just a statement; it is a promise that supports the centre's mission and encourages the team to help women rebuild their lives. Residents undergo a long-term program, specialising in holistic support, receiving expert educational and psychological care to ensure they acquire the skills and a sense of self-worth to not only aid their recovery but also permanently turn their life around from the previous setbacks they have endured. I commend Kate on establishing this unique place of peace and restoration for women. I am thrilled that Kate's efforts have been recognised more broadly.

### **COUNCILLOR OLA HAMED**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:52):** I congratulate Councillor Ola Hamed on her election as the Mayor of Cumberland City. I also congratulate her deputy, Michael Zaiter. Ola, who is in her third term on the council, becomes the first Muslim and the first Lebanese Mayor of Cumberland City. She is a lifelong resident of Granville and Merrylands and a graduate of the Granville South high school and the Western Sydney University. She is a proud unionist, with strong community connections. Ola has been an incredible councillor and a strong advocate during her time on council since 2017. I am proud to see her become the mayor. She negotiated an unusual arrangement between Labor and Liberals to bring a sense of unity and improve the standard of behaviour at Cumberland City Council.

### **HILLS OFFROAD RC**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:53):** The Hills Offroad RC is the club that hosted the Australian Titles at the Fred Caterson Reserve on the October long weekend. The racing was just like Formula One but with smaller 1:10 radio-controlled cars. It was a wonderful weekend of racing with drivers, pit crews and spectators coming from across the nation and even a few from the United States of America. The two main classes, which are internationally recognised, are the two-wheel drive modified and the four-wheel drive modified. I recognise the winners in these two premier classes. The two-wheel drive modified winners were: first place, Spencer Rivkin from the United States; second place, Lachlan Donnelly from Australia; and third place, Chase Lemieux from the United States. In the four-wheel drive modified category, the first-place winner was Lachlan Donnelly from Australia, the second-place winner was Spencer Rivkin from the United States and third place went to Ari Bakla from Australia. Conducting the Australian Titles requires months of preparation. I recognise and commend Hills Offroad RC—in particular Peter Couper, Ben Cribbin, Scott Hill and Chris Muffet—for organising a successful Australian Titles event.

### **KHADIJAH HABBOUCHE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:54):** I congratulate Khadijah Habbouche on her remarkable achievement in winning the People's Choice Award and being named a commendable finalist for Young Sydneysider of the Year at the 2024 Sydney Awards. Khadijah's commitment to advocating for Palestine and her tireless efforts to raise awareness about the struggles faced by its people have had a profound impact on our community. Through her passion for justice and equality, she inspired many to engage in meaningful dialogue

and action. Khadijah's work sheds light on important issues and encourages a sense of solidarity among diverse communities. Her dedication symbolises the strength of youth leadership in shaping a better future. Khadijah's initiatives have created spaces for discussion, empathy and understanding, encouraging others to stand up for what is right. As the Bankstown electorate celebrates her accomplishments, I recognise her vital role in amplifying the voices of those who are often unheard. I congratulate Khadijah once again. Our community stands with her in support and admiration, inspired by her vision and tenacity. I hope she continues to advocate for those whose voices are so often unheard and to bring awareness to those lives that have been so tragically taken.

#### **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AWARENESS**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:55):** I acknowledge the domestic and family violence awareness event, hosted by DarulFatwa in partnership with the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ]. It brought together a wide range of community leaders, experts and advocates to address one of the most pressing issues in our society. The event was moderated by principal solicitor Hani Skaf and Mrs Sandy Al-Aweik. Keynote speaker Dr Sheikh Ibrahim El-Shafie, Deputy Chairman of DarulFatwa, highlighted the vital role of religious and community leaders in supporting victims and fostering a safer society. Acting Commander Darren Sly from the Bankstown Police Area Command shared valuable insights from a law enforcement perspective, emphasising the need for vigilance and collaboration. The legal panel included experts from Legal Aid, Metro Assist and the Justice Support Centre. A panel discussion featuring youth and religious leaders explored the challenges faced by families and youth, offering community-driven solutions. I commend DarulFatwa, DCJ and all participants for their dedication to addressing domestic violence and supporting those in need.

#### **24 HOUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (16:56):** The 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer is an incredible local charity dedicated to raising money for cancer centres in the Macarthur region. Last weekend I was grateful to join Minister Park, the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Leppington and Dr Mike Freelander, MP, to see the start of this amazing local event. The opening ceremony was packed out, with 1,500 locals registering to walk and many community clubs and sponsors showing up to help out. I give a special shout-out to the DawnBreakers, who walked from Camden palliative care all the way to Campbelltown Memorial Oval. Established by the late Paul Borg, and now run by Councillor Warren Morrison, the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer has raised over \$5 million since its establishment 20 years ago. These funds assist with extra services and equipment needed for treatment at local centres, including the Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre and services at Camden and Campbelltown hospitals. I am honoured to have helped deliver a \$50,000 donation to this charity alongside the New South Wales Government.

#### **DUNCAN BENNET**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:58):** It was a true honour to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our volunteers at the 2024 Central Coast Volunteer of the Year awards recently. These awards shine a spotlight on the extraordinary dedication and hard work of volunteers across a wide range of organisations in New South Wales. I extend my sincere congratulations to Duncan Bennet of Davistown, who has been named the Central Coast Senior Volunteer of the Year. Duncan's unwavering commitment to the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club over the past two decades is truly admirable. As a vice-president, patrol captain and an active participant in beach patrols, along with his fundraising and community engagement, Duncan's dedication is a beacon of community spirit and service. Hosted by the Centre for Volunteering, these awards give us a special opportunity to hear the inspiring stories of volunteers like Duncan, who give their time and energy to make the Central Coast a better place for everyone. I say to Duncan and all our volunteers on the Central Coast that their commitment does not go unnoticed. They are essential to the health and strength of our communities, and we are deeply grateful for everything that they do. I congratulate Duncan.

#### **DREAMS COME THROUGH EXHIBITION**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:59):** His Excellency Zsolt Csenger-Zalan, the Ambassador of Hungary, and Mr Peter Nagy, the Head of Trade and Consular Office of Hungary in Sydney, held an art exhibition featuring the works of the late Hungarian graphic artist and illustrator Liviusz Gyulai, titled *Dreams Come Through*. Liviusz Gyulai was an award-winning graphic artist and illustrator who exhibited in numerous international exhibitions as well as books and animated films, resulting in an award at the Cannes Film Festival. Liviusz Gyulai actively participated against the Soviet control during the revolution and gained many of his significant Hungarian civic awards after the regime change. He was awarded artist of the nation in 2014. Unfortunately, he passed away in 2021 at the age of 83 and is survived by his wife, Emmy Vennes, who is also a notable actor, appearing on both stage and screen. Emmy Vennes is visiting Australia to proudly exhibit her husband's work. We thank the Hungarian Government, representatives in Australia and Emmy Vennes for sharing the provocative and wonderful works of Liviusz Gyulai.

### MID NORTH COAST LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:00):** Staff at the Mid North Coast Local Health District are renowned for their pursuit of excellence in caring for our community. Their extraordinary efforts to improve the public health system have been recognised in the list of finalists for the 2024 NSW Health Awards. The Daalbirrurr Gamambigu (Safe Children) model of care is a finalist in Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare for their work in providing culturally safe care to Aboriginal children and their families. The team includes Coffs Harbour-based Joe Bryant and Tara Flemington. The Mid North Coast Local Health District was a partner in the NSW Dried Blood Spot Validation Study, which is a finalist in Health Innovation. This first-of-a-kind project aims to make dried blood spot testing a standard diagnostic tool and, if successful, will change how testing is offered for people at risk of hepatitis C. The Mid North Coast Local Health District manager of HIV and Related Programs, Coffs Harbour-based Jenny Heslop, played an integral role in this validation study. I wish our local finalists every success at the 2024 NSW Health Awards.

### COUNCILLOR COLLEEN FULLER

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (17:01):** I speak about a good friend of Penrith and a frequent visitor to the electorate of Penrith, Councillor Colleen Fuller. I congratulate Councillor Fuller on her election as Mayor of Gunnedah after almost 21 years on council. It is indeed well deserved. I acknowledge that Gunnedah is in safe hands with the election of not only Colleen but also Kate McGrath as deputy mayor, the first all-female leadership team on a council of six women out of nine councillors—a first. Councillor Fuller is a life member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association [ALGWA] and the past president. Penrith has frequently hosted the ALGWA executive. We heartily congratulate Mayor Fuller, who has devoted so much of her life to supporting Meals on Wheels among dozens of other community charities. Well done to Colleen and Kate.

### THE GLEN GROUP

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:02):** It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge and congratulate the Glen Group, which recently celebrated 30 years of outstanding achievement in helping people. Over the years, the Glen Group has grown remarkably, now widely recognised in our local community, statewide and even nationally and internationally. The Glen Group operates two exceptional residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres—the Glen for Men at Chittaway Point, established in 1994, and the Glen for Women at Wyong Creek, established in 2022. The centres offer a culturally safe, supportive environment for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women from across Australia. Its 12-week program provides not only addiction recovery but also practical life skills that empower clients to overcome challenges and build a brighter future. Importantly, the Glen Group takes a holistic approach. It does not just treat addiction; it addresses the root causes of addictive behaviours, helping clients manage triggers and rebuild their lives. I congratulate Joel Coyle and all the dedicated staff and supporters of the Glen Group on their tireless work helping vulnerable members of our community.

### ST LUKE'S PARISH

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:03):** I give warm congratulations to St Luke's Parish on its seventy-fifth anniversary. The parish has been a pillar of support in our community, from its early contributions to establishing schools and churches in Revesby to its ongoing efforts in caring for the elderly and hosting educational and social events that bring people together. Last year I had the privilege of attending St Luke's feast day mass, where I witnessed firsthand the vibrancy and diversity of this welcoming parish. St Luke's is not just a place of worship; it is a gathering point for the community where faith, inclusivity and a deep sense of belonging thrive. I thank Father Dariusz Basiaga and everyone who has helped sustain and grow this important part of our community. I look forward to celebrating another feast day with the St Luke's community this weekend and hope it will be another great event enjoyed by the many and varied ethnic groups from right across our community.

### WAITARA PUBLIC SCHOOL EXHIBITION OF LEARNING

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:04):** Recently I was happy to attend Waitara Public School's annual Exhibition of Learning, where students displayed the culmination of projects from throughout the term. The students at Waitara proudly presented their work, with a particular focus on project-based learning and the nine Ds of solution fluency. The students' creations were very impressive, with a whole range of different projects on show for their proud parents and teachers. Some of the young students, from kindergarten to year 6, showed me their dioramas on natural disasters such as tornados and tsunamis. The students' parents and friends watched on. They were proud of the projects the students had created and showed a lot of passion and enthusiasm for them. It is important that students are taught the dangers of natural disasters and what to do if they ever find themselves in one. I congratulate all the students on their outstanding work and detailed, creative projects. I look forward to attending another exhibition and thank the principal, teachers, parents and students for welcoming me and sharing their projects.

### BLACKTOWN AND DISTRICT TENNIS ASSOCIATION

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:05):** I congratulate Blacktown and District Tennis Association on celebrating its centenary. A group of Blacktown tennis players met at the Tivoli Theatre in Blacktown on 3 September 1924, with inaugural President Mr Pond and Secretary Treasurer Mr Bromfield. In 1925 the association purchased land on Balmoral Street in Blacktown and in 2016 it moved when Blacktown council built a new tennis facility at Stanhope Gardens. The Blacktown and District Tennis Association also has a facility in Rooty Hill. The association has produced many State and national junior age players. Alan Haswell played in the 1971 Australian Open and the 1972 Brisbane and Sydney opens. Significant past volunteers and life members include Flo Ewens, who was for many years competition secretary and played tennis into her 90s; Ken Feebrey; Betty Lawrie; John Payne; Kevin Kennedy; Brian Armstrong; Coral Stephenson; John Rawson; Geoff Brackin; Maria Clark; Leonie McKenna; and Yvonne Tucker. *[Time expired.]*

### BENDIGO BANK AND CRESTANI SCHOLARSHIPS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:06):** I acknowledge and thank the East Gosford, Lisarow and Kincumber community bank branches of Bendigo Bank for their incredible ongoing support of the Crestani Scholarships cancer foundation. Recently it announced an increase in its annual contribution to \$20,000 for 2024, enabling the foundation to continue its critical work in funding pancreatic cancer research. Bendigo Bank has been a steadfast supporter of the Crestani Scholarships for nearly a decade. That ongoing commitment allows the Central Coast cancer research group at the University of Newcastle and Gosford to focus on finding new treatments for pancreatic cancer, which is one of the most difficult cancers to combat. Funding is essential to ensure that skilled researchers can continue their vital work and make progress in the fight against this devastating disease. The foundation, founded by Yvonne Crestani in tribute to her late husband, Chris, who was chief radiotherapist at St Vincent's Hospital, is a legacy. I thank Bendigo Bank for its generosity and dedication to this important cause.

### TIMOR CHINESE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:07):** I congratulate the twenty-third executive committee of the Timor Chinese Association of NSW on its recent inauguration and especially the new president of the association, Mr William K. Leong. The priority of the incoming committee is to strengthen the organisation so that it can continue to provide valuable connection to culture and identity, particularly for the younger generations. I was joined by the Vice-Consul of Timor-Leste in Sydney, Mrs Nidia De Castro Andrade, and my colleagues the member for Cabramatta and the member for Fowler, as well as representatives from many other community organisations. We were all treated to a wonderful evening of food, entertainment and good company. I even learnt a traditional Timorese dance. I acknowledge the service of the outgoing and honorary president, Mr Tony Von. He was president of the association for the first time in 1999—25 years ago. Although he looks forward to less stress, he will still have a big responsibility in providing mentorship and guidance to the new committee and president. I extend my appreciation to the outgoing members of the committee and wish them well.

### PENNANT HILLS TREFOIL GUILD

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:08):** The Pennant Hills Trefoil Guild has been operating for almost 30 years and has continuously served our community throughout this time. Recently I attended a recognition ceremony for three incredible women and their years of service to both the guild and Girl Guides. Julia Morgan celebrated 35 years, Elaine Bright celebrated 40 years and Barbara Fairbairn celebrated an incredible 60 years of service. I congratulate those women who have selflessly given their time to bring up the next generation of female leaders. Girl Guides are absolutely exceptional in the way that they mentor and develop the talents of young women. I am so impressed when I go along to our local Girl Guides groups and see the way in which these young women are being developed into the leaders of the future. I congratulate these three women for their many decades of service to developing the young women in our community.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### WAHROONGA ELECTORATE HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS DINNER

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:09):** The learners of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Quite often our young adults' interests and engagement with society will influence their success in future occupations and academic achievements. Nurturing their budding leadership skills now gives them the confidence to improve our community and prepares them for leadership roles throughout their lives. Recently I had a wonderful night hosting high school leaders from the Wahroonga electorate in Parliament for a tour, followed by a wonderful dinner in the President's Dining Room.

The leaders included Lily Thornthwaite and Nanetta Washaya from Abbotsleigh Senior School; Broden McLaughlin and Ruby Day from Barker College; Rachel Gibson and Elizabeth Vizor from Hornsby Girls High School; Heath Turner and Kieumars Jahromi from Knox Grammar School; Lucy Harrison and Louise Gunn from Loreto Normanhurst; Sidharth John and Jonathan Adji from Normanhurst Boys High School; Nia Michelson and Harrison Smith from Pennant Hills High School; Bella Walker and Julie Sheng from Pymble Ladies' College; Holly Belcastro and Kaylan Vila from St Leo's Catholic College; Soumya Sharma and Anna Manton from Turramurra High School; and Katie Miller and Jasper Small from Wahroonga Adventist School. The students joined me for a great dinner and an engaging conversation.

I always enjoy hearing the views of young people from so many diverse backgrounds. Quite often, as I explain democracy and politics to younger generations, I am reminded of the importance of nurturing debate and interest about political issues. I took the students on an informal tour of Parliament, during which we visited the two parliamentary Chambers, and I told the students about the great history of this place, which is Australia's first Parliament. Something that I try to impress upon students is that democracy is a precious inheritance that many people around the world do not have the benefit of. The vast majority of the world's population do not live in countries where they can vote in democratic elections and change governments without guns, cannons or war. We saw an example of our democracy at work only last year during the change of State government in New South Wales. We had a peaceful changeover of governments without riots and protests as we see in many other countries across the world.

I like to tell students of my father's background in Europe before he came to Australia. My father's country was invaded on the day before his fifteenth birthday, and he joined the Dutch resistance at 17 years of age during World War II. I believe it is incredibly important to tell our younger generations about history and wars so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. The students asked many insightful questions and showed interest in the processes and procedures behind New South Wales laws being passed. It takes courage and confidence to discuss and debate important issues, and I was greatly impressed by the students' maturity, conviction and willingness to consider others' points of view. Hopefully they took inspiration from our discussion and came away realising their views are important and taken seriously.

The students then joined me for a dinner in the President's Dining Room, where I found out more about what each student's hopes are for the future and what careers they all want to pursue in the coming years. I also valued hearing from the students about what it is that they are most concerned about for their future. It is interesting to hear the topics that are on the minds of our younger generation, because their perspectives will form part of the electorate's views in the short-term future. It was a fun night. It was great to spend time with enthusiastic, intelligent and interesting students. The students were incredibly friendly and relaxed, and happy to meet each other. I had an enjoyable time, and I know that these students have bright futures ahead of them. They may even be inspired to enter politics, demonstrated by the keen interest that they displayed.

I have hosted this dinner every year for almost 10 years since I became a member of this place, with the exception of one COVID year. Whenever I do these dinners, I am always reminded that our future is in incredibly safe hands. The young leaders are incredibly impressive. They come from a broad range of schools within my electorate. We have private schools, selective schools, single-sex schools, co-educational and non-selective comprehensive schools, like the one that I attended when I went to school. All of those leaders were able to easily mingle with each other and have vibrant discussions about the future of our country, the current state of our society, and their hopes and dreams for the future. I always find the experience incredibly inspiring.

### **REVESBY COMMUNITY OP SHOP**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:14):** Community spaces are vital to our neighbourhoods, offering places where locals can come together, share experiences and build meaningful connections. These spaces are not just physical locations; they represent the heart of our communities, fostering a sense of belonging and unity. One such space was the BEHHA Op Shop in Revesby, just a few doors down from my electorate office. Earlier this year the sudden closure of the BEHHA Op Shop came as a shock to many. The decision, made by the BEHHA board, was heartbreaking for volunteers who had kept it running for decades. Those volunteers had worked tirelessly to keep the shop open, raising much-needed funds to support the intellectually disabled. For the community, the shop's closure was more than the loss of a place to buy second-hand goods. It was the loss of a meeting place and a space where people could share a cuppa, connect with neighbours, form friendships and discuss local issues.

In the weeks following the closure, many community members reached out to my office, expressing their disappointment and seeking assistance. The shop had become a lifeline for many living in my community, offering not only material support but also emotional connections. Many of its customers lived alone in poor circumstances and in the need of social contact, which the op shop provided. The volunteers who worked in the shop certainly knew of the benefits that people in our community received from feeling connected to this local place. Determined



not to let the space disappear, community members and former volunteers came together to forge ahead so that, last week, the new Revesby Community Op Shop opened in the same spot where BEHHA once stood.

The reopening was a joyous event, filled with smiles, laughter and cakes brought by locals eager to reconnect in familiar surroundings. While the shop had been refurbished, the sense of warmth and connection remained unchanged. Much of this success can be attributed to the determination of Judy Camac, a local community member who took the lead in ensuring that the shop's legacy would live on. Judy, a long-time resident of Picnic Point, now living in Revesby, managed to register a new charity, successfully applied for funding, and spearheaded the reopening of the new shop. The reopening was supported not only by local community members but also by our important institutions, such as the Revesby Workers' Club, which provided grant funding. The East Hills Men's Shed jumped on board and installed a fantastic wooden counter for the shop.

Many of the original volunteers returned to help, reuniting with the BEHHA family and ensuring that the shop continued to feel like a home away from home for the locals who frequently visited it. On the opening day, long-time volunteer 85-year-old Thi serenaded the crowd with a rendition of *My Heart Will Go On* on a small karaoke machine as locals mingled, smiling and catching up with old friends. It was a heartwarming reminder of the power of community and the connections that spaces like the op shop foster. The Revesby Community Op Shop will continue to serve the local area, with proceeds now going towards supporting local charities. Amazingly, on its opening day the shop raised approximately \$500.

Without people like Judy and the many others who contributed to the new shop, this vital community space might have been lost forever. Thanks to their determination, the Revesby Community Op Shop—or ReCOS, for short—not only has reopened but is thriving, ready to continue bringing people together, fostering connections and enriching the lives of all who visit. It shows what can be achieved when members of a community come together, united in their commitment to preserving the spaces that matter to them. I congratulate and thank all of those involved in the opening of ReCOS. They are an important part of our community. I am delighted to see this important community space open for locals to enjoy once again.

#### KIOLOA RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:18):** Last weekend the Kioloa Rural Fire Brigade marked its ninetieth birthday. It was a wonderful occasion. The Kioloa brigade was formed in 1934 and was the first bush fire brigade in the Shoalhaven. It is the oldest operational brigade in the district and one of the three oldest brigades in the whole of New South Wales. The main driver to establish a firefighting capacity in the village was the aftermath of the devastating 1928 fires, which also destroyed the Kioloa mill. That timber mill was reputed to be the largest in the Southern Hemisphere at the time. The mill was not rebuilt, which led to a subsequent decline in the local population and caused the small settlements along the coast to become a resilient and self-sufficient community.

In 1934 the district forester Don Moir called a meeting and the first Kioloa bush fire brigade was formed. The brigade consisted of 10 men and five women, with locals including the Evans, Collins and Moore families making up most of the membership numbers. The first captain was Windsor Evans and the first deputy captain was Hum Moore. The first secretary was Flora Collins, whose two sons, Reginald and Innes, gave many years of service to the Kioloa bush fire brigade. The location of the original Kioloa brigade was at a Kioloa homestead on a Murramarang property owned by the London family, which is now the Australian National University Kioloa Coastal Campus.

At the time, they used rudimentary tools including rakehoes, axes, shovels, hessian bags and, later, knapsack fire sprays. Those were placed under the verandahs of houses in the area and the homestead for quick access in an emergency. It is hard to imagine the courage of our early RFS firefighters in confronting and battling the major fires of 1938, 1948, 1952 and 1968 with only those very basic tools. It shows their true commitment. The 1994 fires have their own history to tell, and the Kioloa brigade had a strong involvement fighting those devastating fires. It was at that time that brigade member Mary Reeves, whose husband, Ross Reeves, was Kioloa brigade captain, began her catering career. Mary formed a group of local ladies to help feed the hundreds of firefighters on the 1994 fire lines.

Mary went from that beginning to form the Group 5 Catering Committee, to then becoming captain of her own brigade: the Shoalhaven Catering Brigade, which to this day is based next to the Milton Fire Station. The Kioloa RFS and the Bawley RFS are still renowned for their amazing food when there is a disaster. During the Currowan fire, we were feeding brigades from all over when we could not get the food through from Milton to the area. Whenever you talk to people about the fires at Currowan and when we protected Bawley, they always mention the food. The Currowan fires were the most recent challenging time for the brigade at Kioloa, assisted by the Bawley Point brigade. Who could forget the jet flying over Kioloa to spray pink retardant to protect the borders of the community from going up in flames?

The Kioloa and Bawley brigades protected the area for nine days while the community was shut out. I do not think any of us will forget that time. Last weekend's event was amazing. Members past and present attended. I thank the community engagement officer, Gabrielle Meyer, Captain Trevor Hodgetts, and the president, John Meyer, for the work they put into that wonderful event. Lots of people came back to the area to celebrate. Wonderful stories were told. Margaret Hamon, a historian from the area, took us all on a fabulous walk to the homestead and gave us a history of the area. It was an extremely special day. I was glad I could be a part of it. The fact that it was in my hometown made it even more special. I look forward to celebrating with all of them in the near future.

### COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE CROP MANAGEMENT

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:23):** During the last weeks of September, farmers across the Cootamundra electorate were expecting a bumper crop. The conditions had been ideal, if not a little on the dry side, throughout winter, and producers were preparing to harvest high-quality canola, grains and legumes to meet the demands of not just our domestic markets but also international markets. Overnight, unfortunately, subzero temperatures and moist conditions formed the perfect storm across paddocks and pastures from Ganmain to Young, Coolamon to Cowra. Frost covered the South West Slopes, Riverina and Central Tablelands, and impacted farms even in the north-west of New South Wales.

In just days, a crop destined to be one of our best in recent years has become, at best, an average yield. At worst, some farmers are not harvesting at all and instead are letting grazing stock onto their pastures. Following the front, I visited the Hollands' farm between Young and Greenethorpe. I felt the damaged wheat crops with my own hands. The grains literally turned to mush between my fingers. The canola seeds had turned brown and rotten in their shells. Fourth-generation farmer Broden Holland considered himself one of the more fortunate in the region, estimating a 20 per cent total damage to his harvest. Further west and south, he told me, farmers could be facing an up to 70 per cent reduction, similar to that of a drought year. That was later confirmed when I visited areas of the west including Ardlethan, Barellan and Weethalle, amongst other communities. Mr Holland said it best:

A frost event like this can have a much bigger impact on the bottom line than a drought because we've spent the money - in a drought, you can see the impact, so you don't spend the money ... We've spent so much in a big year and to lose it in the click of a finger, that's when it hurts.

Farm debt remains at near record-highs and, with steadily high interest rates, the hope of a large, healthy and profitable crop is hard to let go. Average farm profits across the country are in the red, plummeting towards lows not seen since the 2008 global financial crisis. Right now, every dollar on farm counts and every loss cuts deeply into farm table budgets. Farmers are still counting the cost of the damage after using nitrogen, urea and spraying tools and maintaining large crops up until the frost. An agronomist in Coolamon estimates that damages could total about \$500 a hectare in badly affected paddocks, with crop losses of up to 70 per cent. Explaining that they had never seen such a severe frost in their career, they said the only comparison that seemed fitting was that of a natural disaster for our farmers.

Agronomists and farmers have voiced their desire to see more research and development underway. They know that work is being done to improve long-range forecasts to help producers prepare appropriately for conditions. On the ground in Boorowa and Cowra, researchers are doing their part in helping to grow more resilient crops in our regions that can bounce back from frosts and preserve quality. The CSIRO centre at Boorowa is conducting specific frost resilience trials on canola, with its trial sites becoming real-world tests in recent weeks. The Cowra Agricultural Research and Advisory Station also leads the way in grains and legume research, with trial paddocks snaking along the Mid-Western Highway.

Every farmer knows there is no easy solution to preventing frost damage. Farmers are some of the most brutally realistic workers in the country. When I have spoken with agronomists and producers, they have all acknowledged that you don't count your chickens before they hatch, a statement that rings painfully true after this great year across my electorate has been shattered in a matter of nights due to this unexpected and far-reaching frost. The most recent frost event is proof of the need for further research and development to understand how best to reduce frost damage through resilient crops, and how better to predict long-term weather patterns so that farmers can prepare. Working with the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Tara Moriarty, and our Commonwealth colleagues, we can innovate towards new methods to identify severe weather anomalies and breed the best crops for our conditions so that we can continue to produce the best food and fibre our region has to offer.

### COOGEE ELECTORATE PAEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:28):** I acknowledge the incredible generosity of people in the Coogee electorate who are supporting sick kids in hospital. I am very fortunate to represent a hub of healthcare excellence. We have four hospitals in my electorate, one of them being the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick,

which is part of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, is an absolute beacon of paediatric healthcare excellence. Earlier this year, the Minister for Health and I attended the topping-out ceremony for the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, stage one redevelopment. The redevelopment is a \$658 million investment of State and Federal governments, which will strengthen our children's hospital in Randwick to be one of the best in the world.

However, as we all know, the care we give kids is better when it is supported by our community. Governments cannot do everything. An example of that is the Sydney Children's Hospital stage one redevelopment. In 2019 the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation committed to helping government reshape the future of children's hospitals in Sydney. With a \$75 million philanthropic contribution to two major redevelopments at Randwick and Westmead, Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation is helping to bring truly innovative and world-class hospital care to sick and injured kids across New South Wales and Australia. New departments at Randwick, such as the Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre, will come to life thanks to an extremely generous \$20 million gift from the Minderoo Foundation. The Minderoo centre will include advanced laboratory spaces and will deliver integrated specialist cancer treatment, education and research to transform childhood cancer treatment.

I am honoured to represent an electorate that will house Australia's only children's comprehensive cancer clinic and one of the world's leading paediatric cancer centres. Today I acknowledge and thank the donors to Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation who have helped to raise \$75 million for two new hospitals in Sydney. For our electorate, 812 people have given over \$2 million over the past five years. Fundraising efforts, like the City2Surf and the Gold Dinner, have brought together an incredible group of people who will have an impact on sick and injured kids. In particular, I thank the Coogee Bay Hotel and its managing director, Chris Cheung, for committing \$1 million to the Sydney Children's Hospital parents and carers lounge in the redevelopment. That is a great act of generosity that will help families tremendously during the difficult time of having sick kids in hospital.

Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation is one of the largest and most trusted kids' health charities in the country, providing all children with access to the best possible health care whenever and wherever they need it. It is the exclusive charity partner of Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. I applaud its inspiring network of donors for their ongoing determination and drive to have the biggest impact possible on sick and injured kids across New South Wales. For some kids, instead of playdates, there are appointments; instead of firsts, there are lasts; and instead of sleepovers, there are hospital stays. The children who go through that deserve our best. I am proud to represent an electorate that is home to a world-leading hospital for sick kids, giving them the highest standard of clinical care, access to cutting-edge research and the best possible patient experience. I thank the Coogee and eastern suburbs communities for giving generously to support sick kids receiving care at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. It is a world-leading hospital, supported generously by the community.

#### UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE TOURISM

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:33):** I provide an update on the tourism industry in the Upper Hunter electorate. I start with the Government's recent release of the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 Review, which I want to use as a rallying call for the local industry. I also issue a plea to the Government to ensure there is fair dinkum support for regional tourism and caution it against making the State's next strategy too Sydney-centric. The review contains several reasons for Upper Hunter tourism to be optimistic about its future—especially the near future. Of specific interest is the proposed role of Newcastle Airport's new international terminal, which opens next year, and the commitment by the Government to support Newcastle Airport to attract more international airline routes.

Upper Hunter already has an impressive inventory of tourism product. At the heart of my electorate is the World Heritage listed Barrington Tops National Park. The Tops is home to native wildlife conservation in action at Aussie Ark, a unique tourism experience complete with accommodation at Quoll's Cottage and Devil's Retreat. Upper Hunter has fine wine from the vineyards of the Hermitage Road, Pokolbin and the Broke-Fordwich region west to the picturesque countryside of Muswellbrook shire around Denman, and the historic vineyard areas of Dalwood and Gresford. There is food, a diverse offering of accommodation and a landscape filled with experiences to be savoured, challenged and enjoyed. Importantly, there are our annual events, such as the Scone Horse Festival, Tocal Field Days, Aberdeen Highland Games, Dungog PedalFest, King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge, Merriwa's Running of the Sheep, and the autumn and spring local agricultural shows.

The historic village of Broke is a fine example of a community rolling out the welcome mat for guests to enjoy themselves in the great outdoors. Last weekend I joined with the Broke community for the Bicentenary of Broke celebrations. Broke has been building its tourism product for a number of years with events such as the Broke Village Fair, Folk in Broke, Smoke in Broke and A Little Bit of Broke among the festival offerings. I note that the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 Review recommendations include anchoring the strategy around

experience tourism to leverage leisure events, to grow seasonal visitation and to showcase the State's strengths to achieve future goals.

I say to the Premier, the tourism Minister and Destination NSW that one would be hard-pressed to go past tourism's already impressive track record in my electorate. That is why I say to the local industry that, with the prospect of international visitors soon touching down at Newcastle Airport, we have to be ready to make the most of the opportunities that are fast approaching. Let us aspire to have international tourists for the Scone Cup racing carnival during the horse festival, for Tocal Field Days, Merriwa's Running of the Sheep and the events at McNamara Park at Broke.

The strategy 2030 review has identified challenges, especially for regional tourism, such as accommodation quality to boost occupancy, meet visitor expectations and encourage longer stays. Stakeholders have stressed the importance of upgrades to roads, rail and digital connectivity. Staff shortages and skills gaps are other issues, and there is demand for affordable worker accommodation. The NSW Education Standards Authority 2024 HSC enrolment snapshot released recently provides some reason for optimism. Figures for vocational education and training show the highest enrolment numbers this year are for hospitality, with 7,500 students; business services, with 2,400 students; retail services, with 1,600 students; and the entertainment industry, with 1,200 students.

I have to agree with my shadow ministerial colleague and neighbouring member of Parliament the shadow Minister for Tourism, the member for Tamworth: New South Wales tourism needs more than a policy review and timelines if it is to achieve growth in visitor expenditure by 2035. It will also require a whole-of-government approach, as well as leveraging the potential that regional New South Wales has to offer. It is one thing to be aspirational, but we do need to see a detailed real plan for tourism in regional areas. Here is the Premier's opportunity. If the glacial pace of rejuvenation for coal regions is repeated with the Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, the Premier runs the risk of regional tourism withering on the vine.

#### ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH CONFLICT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:38):** Following on from my speech a few weeks ago about the impact that Israel's invasion of Lebanon had in my electorate, I now speak about the impact that it has had in the past few weeks. The Granville electorate is home to more than 15,000 Lebanese people and more than 2,000 Palestinians. The past 12 months have been harrowing for people in my community. Three of my very close personal friends, who are constituents, had immediate family members on evacuation flights out of Lebanon last week. I place on record my thanks to the Federal Government for providing those evacuation flights.

The mothers of Baraa Hawchar and Lara Taouk were both on evacuation flights. They had spent time in Lebanon caring for their elderly parents, who are not Australian citizens. Their parents cannot easily leave Lebanon to escape the bombing, which has now spread to the north. The sister of the Mayor of Cumberland, Ola Hamed, was also on one of those evacuation flights last week. The process of getting on that flight was a huge ordeal for her and her entire family. At the moment one million people, including 400,000 children, have been displaced by Israeli bombing in Lebanon. To make matters worse, the bombing has moved to places in the north where displaced people from the south had moved to. That bombing included an attack on the area of Zgharta along Aitou-Ehden Road.

Some 23 people from Nabatieh were killed when the apartment block they were staying in was bombed. It is not enough to drive people from their homes; they are bombing them again. We have seen that over and over again in Gaza, where over two million residents have repeatedly been displaced and moved around. They are told to relocate to a safe place and then that place is bombed. In the past few weeks, the Israeli Defence Forces have attacked United Nations peacekeepers in Lebanon who have been patrolling the Blue Line. Those workers have maintained peace there for some decades. The bombing is a breach of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701. The idea that UN peacekeepers would be attacked by an invading army is absolutely repugnant and unacceptable.

Israel was created by the United Nations in 1948. We all accept and respect the sovereignty of Israel. But we should also accept the sovereignty of Lebanon, which has been a sovereign nation for much longer. I absolutely support and respect the role of UN peacekeepers along the Blue Line. They should not be shot at. There are allegations that they were attacked with white phosphorus, which has been used widely in Lebanon and Gaza. The use of white phosphorus as a chemical weapon is a war crime, as is firing on UN peacekeepers—so we have two war crimes for the price of one. That is an absolute disgrace.

In addition to the horrors in Lebanon, in the past few weeks we have seen many images and reminders that the death toll in Gaza has gone beyond 42,000. That is just horrible. Gaza has become uninhabitable. Everyone was particularly struck by the images of Shaban Al-Dalou, a 19-year-old software engineering student, who was

burnt alive in his tent at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, the IV drip still in his arm. That image will stay with me for the rest of my life, as it will for many others. This conflict must end. We must have a ceasefire. Ceasefire talks have not taken place for weeks. We need the war to end. We need Palestinian sovereignty.

### **SYDNEY METRO NORTH WEST**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:43):** I acknowledge the success of the Sydney Metro. It has been a game changer for many residents in Greater Sydney. For the electorate of Hawkesbury, which covers over 3,000 square kilometres and dozens of localities, the Sydney Metro North West has been particularly well received and embraced by commuters. I bring to the attention of the House the growing demand for that infrastructure to be made more accessible to members of the Hawkesbury community in order to improve their connection to metropolitan Sydney. Located up to 50 kilometres north-west of the Sydney CBD, residents of the Hawkesbury region can utilise the Richmond train line services, private transport or the Sydney Metro to get to the Sydney metropolitan area.

The regular train journey to the CBD takes about 1½ hours, which is a long time. One must sit quietly and keep occupied. The drive typically takes between 55 minutes and 85 minutes during peak periods, which can be challenging. As we saw this evening with the closure of parts of the bridge, at times it can even take many hours. Add to those issues the fact that trains are often at capacity, there are regular disruptions, services are often scheduled half-hourly, and there is regularly traffic and extended travel times on major motorways like Richmond Road—I am pushing for an expedited upgrade to that road—and the reasons for commuter frustration become obvious. Residents of Hawkesbury are no strangers to separation from busy metropolitan areas, and they are familiar with those pre-existing limitations to travel on public transport.

However, as housing is built and the population in those areas increases, the demand for transportation services will also increase. Many residents have started using the Sydney Metro by driving to Tallawong station. For growing areas like Box Hill and Kurrajong on the North Richmond side, there are new issues related to the insufficient provision of parking at and near the station. It is increasingly difficult to access transport services safely and effectively, particularly for those who arrive outside peak travel times. There is no parking at or near Tallawong station after 7.00 a.m. I have received several appeals for help from constituents who would like that issue to be addressed, and I support them.

The State Government should make that a priority—alongside other existing priority projects such as further Sydney Metro lines and the Western Sydney airport—so that members of the Hawkesbury can access their workplaces and other destinations. I call on the Minns Labor Government to strengthen those transport developments and futureproof their functionality. Those problems can be addressed promptly by increasing the number of parking spaces at existing stations, offering alternative means of transportation to metro stations and increasing the number of bus services between Hawkesbury localities. I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the Minister for Transport to improve access to the game-changing piece of infrastructure that is Sydney Metro North West, which we enjoy. In fact, I spoke with the Minister briefly this week, and she has invited me to speak with her and her team.

There is a rapidly increasing need for those services and for improved access to them. If those issues are not tackled swiftly, there may be further issues. Action can be taken immediately by implementing park-and-ride options for suburbs like Box Hill and McGraths Hill, whose residents have expressed their frustration with the issues. They would like to know more about the park-and-ride options. The way that would work is that commuters would use an existing car park that has little use during the day, like a council car park or private club car park, and a bus would take them directly to and from Tallawong station each day. That would take more cars off the road and improve access to the metro as well.

On-demand bus services such as those that operate at Stanhope Gardens are extremely efficient. I would like to see them in Hawkesbury. We should look at the park-and-ride approach. We should also identify vacant parking spaces at council areas like community halls and sporting grounds, which sit vacant during the week from Monday to Friday, and use them as drop points so that people can park their cars safely and take a bus directly to the metro station. I spoke about that issue in my maiden speech, and I will continue to advocate for its resolution.

### **WYONG ELECTORATE STORM RECOVERY**

**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) (17:48):** In 2021-22 severe storms and coastal erosion occurred in my electorate, particularly at Soldiers Beach and Jenny Dixon Beach. At Soldiers Beach, the stairs at the front of the surf club down to the beach were undermined. The vehicle access ramp collapsed. The surf club uses that big concrete ramp each day to get inflatable rescue boats and other boats and all of the gear onto the beach and back to the club. The stairs at

Jenny Dixon Beach became unusable. The good news is that, under the Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Package, the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government made a grant of \$2,443,750 to Central Coast Council, which the council added to its own resources to undertake four projects to repair the damage.

The first project, which was probably the easiest one, was the stairway in front of the surf club. An additional platform down the bottom of those stairs has been built to give people greater accessibility and make sure that, when the stairs are undermined, people can use those steps more easily. The difficult projects were for the vehicle access ramp and the northern stairs to the top car park. They have taken longer, and I know that locals were frustrated to have them out of action last summer. The council did some temporary work by putting sand in place to create ramps so that people could access the beach. That was not ideal, particularly at the northern car park, where it was quite steep and older people and some of the younger people, including me, struggled. It was a bit of a ramp up, and it created some challenges. But both of those projects have now been completed, as have the stairs at Jenny Dickson Beach. That means, as we come into the new summer surf season, the locals and the tourists who use the Norah Head caravan park will be able to more easily access beautiful Soldiers Beach.

Patrols have started across New South Wales. At Soldiers Beach, the start of the school holidays was the first week. I am going for another season. I have signed up again and done some of my online work. I am now preparing to do my requalification by 31 December. Generally, I get that done on 30 December because I need a lot of time to train to get ready for that swim. But it is good to know that we will be able to get our new trailer, which we use for patrols, onto the beach. One of the concerning things this year is that we are struggling for volunteers. I give a call-out to the community. Once upon a time at Soldiers Beach, we had 10 patrols of at least 10 people. Last season we were down to seven, and we are down even more this year. That means that the people who continue to volunteer are having to put more and more time in over successive weekends, sometimes with no break, to make sure that the beach has a patrol in place. That puts pressure on families and people cannot go on holidays, which means in the next season we lose more volunteers. It becomes too hard. We need younger people and people who have moved into the area to come on board.

The northern part of the Central Coast is getting thousands of new residents, but I am not seeing those people becoming volunteers, particularly on our beach. The training is at a really high level. We are very welcoming. Whilst conditions at Soldiers Beach can be difficult on occasions and it can get quite big surf, which challenges people, we manage to make sure that everyone stays fit enough to get out and do the rescues we need to do. I encourage people to come, join the club and make sure that we have a safe season, using the new ramp and the stairs in place. We look forward to a safe summer with no major problems.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I thank the member for Wyong and all of our surf lifesaving volunteers throughout the State.

#### **LIVERPOOL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC PRECINCT**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (17:53):** Today I speak about a momentous achievement for the people of south-western Sydney: the completion of the first phase of the redevelopment of the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct. This \$830 million investment, initiated by the previous Liberal Government, marks a significant step in securing the future healthcare needs of one of the fastest growing regions in our nation. It is vital to recognise that the groundwork for this remarkable redevelopment was laid by the former Liberal Government. It understood the pressing need for expanded healthcare infrastructure in our rapidly growing region, ensuring that south-western Sydney would not be left behind. Its vision has brought us to where we are today, witnessing the transformation of Liverpool Hospital into a state-of-the-art facility that will support the healthcare needs of generations to come.

The redevelopment of the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct has been years in the making, and today we are witnessing the culmination of those efforts. At the heart of this redevelopment is the new five-storey Integrated Services Building, which heralds a new era in health care for our region. This facility has been meticulously designed to meet both the current and future demands of south-western Sydney. In just a decade, over 1.2 million people will call south-western Sydney home. Liverpool Hospital will be at the heart of their healthcare journey, delivering first-rate services across a range of specialties, including emergency care, maternity and critical care.

One of the most exciting aspects of this redevelopment is the expanded neonatal intensive care unit [NICU]. This world-class facility now boasts 10 single rooms, additional accommodation for parents, and negative-pressure rooms, usually used to care for immunocompromised newborns. As someone who personally benefited from the NICU services, I know just how invaluable this expansion will be for families with newborns in need of specialised care. The NICU will allow for greater parental involvement, including kangaroo care, which is vital for both the child's and the family's wellbeing. Furthermore, the introduction of 10 new state-of-the-art birthing suites is a welcome development, particularly given that south-western Sydney has one of the highest

birth rates in the State. Those suites provide a safe, comfortable and nurturing environment for mothers and families, reflecting the hospital's commitment to compassionate care.

The upgrades to Liverpool Hospital are not just about expanding its capacity; they are also about providing timely and high-quality health care. The expansion of the emergency department, set to open its new entrance in 2025, will be critical in addressing the healthcare needs of our growing population. It represents a vital piece of the former Liberal Government's vision for ensuring that residents of south-western Sydney have access to the care they deserve. Phase two of the redevelopment, which is set to begin in early 2025, will bring even more enhancements, including new inpatient units, an integrated cancer centre and expanded women's and children's ambulatory care services. These expansions will further solidify Liverpool Hospital's role as a leader in health care for our region and beyond.

This redevelopment is not just about healthcare infrastructure; it is also an investment in our community's economic future. Over the course of the project, 1,400 direct jobs have been created, with thousands of indirect jobs generated. This redevelopment is helping to build a prosperous future for south-western Sydney, with Liverpool Hospital serving as both a healthcare and an economic hub for our region. I express my sincere thanks to the former Liberal Government for its hard work and dedication in making this redevelopment a reality. Its leadership ensured that south-western Sydney has the healthcare infrastructure it needs to thrive as our population continues to grow. The Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct is a testament to what visionary planning and investment can achieve. The previous Liberal Government laid the foundation for a healthcare system that will serve south-western Sydney for decades to come. This redevelopment is more than just a collection of new buildings; it is a lifeline for our community, ensuring that we have the world-class health care we need to support our growing population.

#### CAMDEN ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:58):** Many communities around New South Wales are held together by the volunteers who do tireless work, day in, day out, and Camden is absolutely not immune to the needs of our incredible volunteers. Earlier this year, I sent out a recognition form for our local community groups to ask for volunteers to be nominated, and today I can share some of the people who were nominated. They include Lynette McKay, who was nominated by Jessica MacDonald for her time in Camden Meals on Wheels. Lyn has been volunteering with Meals on Wheels since 2017. She volunteers multiple times a week, taking clients to their appointments and out for shopping. She treats the clients as if they were her own family members, and the clients are extremely grateful for the kind and caring assistance Lyn consistently provides to them. Lyn truly cares about the wellbeing of clients and goes above and beyond to ensure they have a great experience each time. Lyn also drives the bus for all the Camden Meals on Wheels' social group outings. She picks up the clients, takes them out for the day with a staff member and then drives them home. Lyn is a true asset to Camden Meals on Wheels and deserves to be recognised for her hard work and dedication. She is the first one to volunteer when the need arises. There is no limit to her kindness and her caring nature for the elderly within the Camden community.

That is similarly the case with Pauline Finlay, who was nominated for the work she does with the Camden Hospital Auxiliary. The auxiliary is an important group in Camden that raises money for our beautiful hospital. During her 16 years as a volunteer with the auxiliary, Pauline has held the position of secretary and has twice been president. She works on the stalls and in the hospital shop and is constantly sewing, knitting or crocheting things for the group to sell. She sources things the auxiliary needs and attends all its meetings. Nothing is too much trouble for her, and she is an asset to the group. When visiting Camden Hospital, turn left after entering the main doors and most days you will see Pauline in the auxiliary shop, wanting to sell you a lovely knitted or crocheted item to give the person you are visiting or to take home in order to raise money for the hospital.

Previously I have spoken in this place about my good friend Tom Gersbach. He has submitted two nominations of volunteers from the Camden/Oran Park conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society: Patrick "Pat" O'Flynn and Helena Wickert. Pat O'Flynn has been a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society for 60 years, holding many positions during that time, including State council president from 1998 to 2003. Pat and his wife, Trish, moved to Mount Annan over 14 years ago, when he joined the society's local conference. Currently he is conference president and president of the society's Camden-Wollondilly region. Pat also serves as an acolyte at St Paul's Parish Camden and assists the parish with pastoral care, primarily serving residents in the Carrington Aged Care facility, which is just around the corner from my house. He is a dedicated and loving father to his children, grandchildren and extended family members. Sometimes many of us in Camden feel like we are part of his extended family.

Pat leads a Christian life, committed to his Catholic faith and the mission of the St Vincent de Paul Society by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy. Pat is kind, compassionate, empathetic and helpful to people in strife and those struggling to cope with the current cost-of-living crisis. He engages with the disadvantaged and marginalised members of our community with dignity and encouragement. Often, in

collaboration with others, he advocates to eliminate the causes of poverty and challenge the causes of human injustice. One of Pat's recent achievements since the relaxation of COVID-19 lockdowns was establishing the conference's outreach cottage in Elizabeth Street, Camden. It is a centre where conference members can provide emergency assistance to those in need and access other services provided by the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Helena is a mother and grandmother married to Rob, with whom she lives in Mount Annan. She has been a very active and dedicated member of the conference for the past seven years. Her main role is conference treasurer, along with visiting those in their home who are in need of emergency assistance. I will speak further about Helena on a later occasion.

### DUBBO ELECTORATE GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:03):** Today I focus on access to health services, an issue that affects a significant number of people across rural and regional New South Wales. More specifically, I focus on the availability of general practitioner services in the communities of Mudgee, Gulgong and Wellington in my electorate of Dubbo. In rural areas like ours, access to primary health care is the foundation of community wellbeing. GPs are often the first, and sometimes only, point of medical contact for many people. They provide essential health services, manage chronic conditions, offer preventative care and refer patients to specialised treatment when necessary.

Unfortunately, rural and regional areas are facing a significant shortage of GPs, including in our hospitals, and Mudgee and Gulgong are no exception. For example, the town of Gulgong does not currently have a GP at all, and in nearby Mudgee both the local GP clinics recently advised that they have had to close their books. The challenges faced in Mudgee and Gulgong are not unique but are felt deeply by the community. Members may themselves have experienced long waiting times to see a GP, simply because sometimes there are not enough doctors to meet the demand. The result in regional areas is that residents often need to travel long distances to neighbouring towns or cities for care. That is difficult, especially for the elderly and those with mobility issues and financial constraints.

Recently I chatted with a resident of Mudgee who told me his wife had been experiencing nosebleeds on and off, which got worse. It might not sound that bad, but it kept happening. They were worried. However, they did not want to be a burden on the hospital so contacted their local GP practice. They were told to call back sometime this week to see whether they might be able to get an appointment by the end of November. The couple could not get in to see a GP in Dubbo, Orange or Bathurst and ended up driving to Sydney to catch up with a GP they know. As another example, recently I spoke with a bloke from Gulgong who was concerned about not being able to see a GP locally to get a simple check for his driver licence renewal. He was aware of a few people finding themselves in the situation where it is almost impossible to get in to see a GP in the time between receiving a notice requiring them to get, say, a referral for an eye test and the date of their licence renewal.

In a recent email to my office a Mudgee mum expressed her concern and distress in relation to accessing health care for her seven-year-old daughter with high needs, who is currently undergoing medical diagnosis. According to this mum, who was born and raised in Mudgee, it is a minimum four-week waiting period to see their GP. She says the hospital is already struggling and Mudgee is in desperate need of help. In another email, I heard from a resident that patients from Gulgong are routinely turned away from medical centres in Mudgee and are travelling as far away as Sydney and Cessnock just to receive basic medical care, including routine consultations and medication renewals—in other words, getting a script redone. These are just a few of the stories, but there are many more like them I could share.

What is hugely concerning about the closure of the books at both South Mudgee Surgery and Mudgee Medical Centre and the lack of any GPs in Gulgong is that the Mudgee-Gulgong region is facing a major population increase, with workers moving into the area as a result of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. It is something that both State and Federal governments have failed to properly consider over the past 18 months—and that needs to change as of now. All members know that attracting and retaining qualified medical professionals in rural areas is a constant battle. Recently my upper House colleague the Hon. Sam Faraway and I caught up with Dr Ian Spencer in Wellington. Dr Spencer has been practising medicine for about 48 years and was happy to chat about what he has seen, including what has or has not worked and the different bandaids solutions for the health system over the years. Dr Spencer shared fantastic insight about what he thinks are potential short-term and longer-term solutions to the problem.

Like many regional areas, Mudgee, Gulgong and Wellington have an ageing yet increasing population, which places even more pressure on already stretched GP services. While telehealth has provided a partial solution, it is certainly not a complete substitute for person-to-person care. Conditions that require examination and treatment can only be done face to face. Telehealth can help, but we need more. Whether it is about incentivising rural practice, better supporting local training pathways, revamping Medicare provider numbers,



investing in infrastructure, facilitating collaboration with allied health professionals or enhancing telehealth services, the State and Federal governments definitely need to prioritise rural health care. I again call on both the State Government and the Feds to focus on health services for regional areas, particularly those for the people of Mudgee, Gulgong and Wellington.

### **BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:08):** Today I talk about Blacktown Hospital and the health challenges within the Blacktown electorate. Two weeks ago my electorate was very happy to welcome back the Minister for Health, together with members representing the electorates of Riverstone and Prospect. We toured the hospital to look at the improvements undertaken to various departments since Labor came to office. We were also joined by Secretary of NSW Health Susan Pearce; Graeme Loy, CEO of Western Sydney Local Health District; Brad Ceely, General Manager of Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals; and many staff of the departments we visited. The record number of people presenting at our emergency departments is putting pressure on those facilities.

In the 12 months to June 2024, approximately 65,000 people attended Blacktown Hospital emergency department and 41,000 people attended Mount Druitt Hospital emergency department. The combined Blacktown and Mount Druitt area had 106,000 emergency department attendees in the past 12 months, which is a reasonable number when compared with Westmead with 78,000, Liverpool with 88,000, Campbelltown with 91,000, Northern Beaches Hospital with 65,000 and Royal North Shore with 92,000. Emergency departments are incredibly important to Western Sydney, which is demonstrated by the number of attendees who visit them. Most of the hospitals across Western Sydney are at least 20 minutes apart and service a growing population.

To relieve the pressure on our emergency departments, we are creating more pathways to care outside hospital, which was the purpose of the Minister's visit. He spoke about improved patient flow. The Labor Government has introduced Hospital in the Home, treating thousands more patients from the comfort of their own home rather than in a hospital bed and relieving pressure on our busy emergency departments. The trial has allowed over 5,000 patients to recover safely from the comfort of their own home, and the expansion means 3,000 more patients a year will benefit. The New South Wales Government is investing \$31.4 million to expand capacity. It is reducing wait times, not just for the patients who can be treated at home but also for the patients who need to be treated in the hospital. The additional funding will free up more than 9,000 hospital beds each year. The New South Wales Government will ramp up staff as well as roll out virtual care infrastructure to support the scaling up of the service.

The improvement and increased adoption of virtual care technology allows hospitals and staff to conduct videoconferencing, as well as remote patient monitoring. NSW Health will also increase the eligibility of patients who can use Hospital in the Home to allow them to be cared for safely at home. Blacktown Hospital has an integrated community health hub, which includes Hospital in the Home and InTouch urgent care services that allow voice calls or virtual care video links to patients, with nurses and doctors in the room to deal with patient needs. Rather than waiting in the emergency department, patients can receive immediate assistance and be looked after in their home, either through video or voice technology or a nurse popping into their home to administer routine care that would otherwise have been administered in the hospital.

Another initiative at Blacktown Hospital includes a new section for aged-care patients to be seen away from emergency departments. The ambulance or patient transport delivers the patient into a specially designed unit that has soothing music, with doctors and nurses undertaking initial examination, reviewing the patient's medicines and getting them back to their facility within 24 hours or placing them in a ward. Doctors are flat out with seeing surgery patients and visiting homes and aged-care facilities. People living in aged care may not have regular access to doctors and their medicine may need adjustments over time. As the medicine does not fully meet the needs of the person in the aged-care facility, they may become more susceptible to falls or injury. Blacktown Hospital doctors can review the medication and make adjustments. All those programs are making a difference to the people of Blacktown and improving wait times at Blacktown Hospital.

### **BANDU ORGANISATION**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:13):** I acknowledge Bandu, a majority First Nations-led not-for-profit organisation committed to improving tertiary education and employment outcomes for young First Nations people in this country. Bandu was co-founded in 2022 by Manly local Edward Morgan and Wiradjuri man Aidan Porter. Edward's 10 years working with Indigenous students across secondary schools and Aidan's own lived experience led both to become aware of a concerning breakdown in the system of support on hand for First Nations people as they transition from high school into the wider world, particularly when studying tertiary education.

While completion rates of Indigenous students at secondary school have seen dramatic improvement over the years, the numbers at the tertiary level paint a very different picture. For too many young Indigenous Australians, the critical academic, financial and other support and care they have relied on to thrive throughout their secondary schooling is all but cut off the moment they leave school. Without the continuation of those support services, the barriers that young Indigenous students face as they navigate the transition into tertiary study and a career can be significant. Often encountered in combination, they can range from a lack of family and peer support to financial hardship, geographical distance and isolation, difficulties adjusting to self-directed learning, and cultural and racial discrimination.

To Edward and Aidan, removing those barriers to address the gap between education and employment for non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians required a simple fix: connecting Indigenous students with the right people in the right places under a comprehensive support program that enables them to grow, thrive and succeed on their chosen paths. Together, they formed Bandu, a Wiradjuri word meaning "fly". In working with tertiary education and corporate sector partners, they embarked on a journey to provide student participants with support services and direct pathways to organisations and workplaces that best suit each individual and their aspirations. From covering accommodation costs and offering university enrolment guidance to arranging work placements and providing wellbeing and mental health support, Bandu has grown to assist over 75 young First Nations people from across 30 schools across the State as part of its transition program.

In addition, imparting to student participants fundamental life skills is at the heart of Bandu's mission, such as how to fill out a rental application, formulate a cover letter or determine what clothes are appropriate for an interview—skills which so many of us take for granted due to the family and peer networks we are privileged to have. As part of its mission to support young First Nations people post-school, Bandu prides itself on its ongoing commitment to supporting culturally safe employment and workplace processes to ensure cultural awareness and understanding within workplaces across Australia. To achieve that, Bandu offers a range of complementary training and support services for companies and organisations they partner with. The educational and training services aim to deepen and enrich the understanding of First Nations people, culture and heritage in organisations across the country, which all workplaces would benefit from.

In everything they do, Edward, Aidan and their team are constantly striving towards closing the gap through promoting inclusion and enhancing cultural awareness and understanding within workplaces across Australia. In creating Bandu, they have built an organisation unlike any other and one which is committed to empowering young First Nations people in New South Wales during what are arguably the most formative years of their lives. I commend Bandu, and I particularly commend Ed. I encourage all members to get in touch with Bandu to learn more about the incredible work it is doing.

### **WESTERN SYDNEY AIRCRAFT NOISE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:17):** I speak today on an issue that, if not corrected, will affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents in Western Sydney, south-west Sydney and the Blue Mountains: unnecessary additional late-night aircraft noise. Do not get me wrong, I am very aware, as is my community, that when a new 24-hour airport is built, aircraft noise comes with it. We understand that Western Sydney International Airport [WSI] will be a boon for the region. However, this issue is about fairness and ensuring eastern Sydney's problems are not dumped on the west.

Kingsford Smith airport is constrained by a series of frankly bizarre and archaic rules that restrict the time and frequency of flights. The curfew at Kingsford Smith airport is borne out of an aircraft noise dispute of the 1990s, a remnant of an outdated local political dispute that no longer reflects modern reality. The curfew, established in 1995, restricts flights between 11.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.; however, a limited number of domestic flights and early morning international arrivals are allowed between 5.00 a.m. and 6.00 a.m., as are a dozen or so overnight freight flights. Crucially, those flights are required to operate over water, meaning they do not disturb residential areas.

With the opening of the new Western Sydney International Airport, the Federal Sydney Airport Curfew Act 1995 mandates that the exceptions relating to freight, propeller and small jet aircraft will cease to apply at Sydney airport. Instead, they will be rerouted over land and over the homes and communities of western and south-west Sydney and the Blue Mountains. That means an estimated 15 additional night-time flights, 11 freight and four passenger flights, will operate over residential areas every single night. In 2023 alone, there were about 5,000 such flights operating under the curfew at Kingsford Smith. Once WSI opens, the flights must be rerouted, flying directly over communities in Western Sydney.

It is estimated that by 2055 more than 100,000 people living across Western Sydney, south-west Sydney and the Blue Mountains will experience additional noise disturbance on at least 200 nights per year. In areas like Silverdale, Warragamba, Luddenham, Wallacia and Mulgoa, up to 10,000 residents will be affected by night-time

flights for as many as 292 nights a year—effectively, every single night of the year. Hundreds of thousands of people will have their sleep disrupted and their quality of life diminished, all because we are unable or unwilling to address a political headache from the 1990s that should have been solved years ago.

This is not a minor inconvenience. Studies have consistently shown that sleep disruption due to noise pollution can lead to long-term health problems, including heart disease, cognitive decline and mental health disorders. Yet, once again, Western Sydney is being treated as a dumping ground for eastern Sydney's unwanted problems. The Western Sydney International Airport will be transformational for our region, creating jobs, driving economic growth and providing much-needed infrastructure. We are eagerly waiting for the opportunities it will bring. But let me be clear: We will not accept WSI becoming a dumping ground for issues that should be resolved elsewhere. We deserve better than to have our quality of life sacrificed for the sake of the political expedience of the inner west. This issue was recently raised at a Senate inquiry into aircraft noise at WSI, and it is clear that the current policies are not working for the people of Western Sydney.

Only two other airports in Australia have curfews: Adelaide and the Gold Coast. But even at those locations, modern, quieter planes are exempt from curfew restrictions, which is something that should be seriously considered for Kingsford Smith airport. So what is the solution? It is clear that we need to amend the Sydney Airport Curfew Act 1995. The curfew should allow Sydney Airport to retain its overnight domestic freight flights and early morning international arrivals. It should also allow modern aircraft with higher noise standards. This would help to more fairly share the noise burden across the entire Sydney basin, rather than dumping it all onto Western Sydney during the night. Additionally, we must remove the outdated requirement to use specified freight aircraft that are not subject to modern noise standards.

We should introduce a uniform noise performance standard that reflects advances in aviation technology and the use of more efficient, quieter aircraft—as they do in Adelaide and on the Gold Coast. That is not a radical solution. It is simply a solution that reflects the modern realities of modern aircraft. It is also about fairness and equity. It is about ensuring that the growth and development of our region come with the protections and considerations that our communities deserve. I have written to the Federal transport Minister, Catherine King, calling for a review of these outdated laws. I urge all members of this Parliament to consider the impact of night-time aircraft noise and back this issue.

#### **OUR HOUSE CANCER CARE ACCOMMODATION**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:22):** Our House is a wonderful organisation in my community. I give a little description of its history, past and current, that comes from its website and to which I will add some comments. It is a joint project run by the Northern Rivers Community Cancer Foundation and Our Kids, which is another wonderful organisation that looks after kids in our hospitals. They do great work across the community. Our House provides purpose-built, 20-unit accommodation for cancer patients and their families who are receiving care at the cancer unit in Lismore, which is another wonderful service. The unit is one of the best in the country—in fact, it was the first of its kind in regional Australia. Our House also provides accommodation for parents who have children in the children's ward or babies in the special care unit at Lismore Base Hospital. It provides accommodation for carers and guests of patients receiving medical care in Lismore. The accommodation is lovely, light and spacious; it is very comfortable. It is also situated across the road from the hospital so people do not have to drive and can just walk there.

Our House would not have been possible without support from the Government and the local community, which saw the need, rallied together and raised \$5.6 million to complete the build. Work on Our House commenced on 16 September 2011 and it officially opened its doors in December 2012. I was involved in the project at the time and managed to secure Federal Government funding of \$3.6 million. The State Government and the Cancer Council NSW contributed \$500,000 each. Significantly, the Northern Rivers community raised an additional \$1 million, which included \$220,000 from Dry July; a contribution from the Ballina Shire Combined Services Clubs, because everyone in our region uses this service; \$180,000 from the Goonellabah Senior Citizens; \$105,000 from Casino-based Northern Cooperative Meat Company; \$101,000 from locally based Newcastle Permanent; and \$68,000 from the Australian Lions Foundation, the Lions Q1 Northern Rivers Community Trust and the Lismore City Lions Club. These were significant amounts of money from local community organisations, which still support Our House today.

Individuals, service clubs and local businesses also gave generously. Our community donates meals twice a week. There is a waiting list of people who want to donate, which says something about how important the service is. Everyone wants to be involved. They do beautiful meals and serve everyone. Everyone gets together two nights a week in a communal area to have a meal and a glass of wine, if they want—which is sometimes nice. People enjoy that. On the weekend of 17 to 18 August Our House organised and hosted the Rural Accommodation Providers Conference in Lismore at Invercauld House. The Rural Accommodation Providers Group, which is a not-for-profit, offers services similar to Our House. The group includes Albury Hilltop; Fight Cancer Foundation;

Coffs Harbour Rotary Lodge; Macquarie Home Stay, Dubbo; Griffith Group; Our House Cancer Care Accommodation, Lismore—the host; Maitland HealthStays; Cancer Care Western NSW Inc., Orange; Port Macquarie Rotary Lodge; and Lilier Lodge, Can Assist Wagga Wagga. I was delighted and honoured to be there to speak to them. It was not a normal speaking engagement because I was so involved with helping them set up and raise money. They wanted to know how to attract funding and raise more money. We had a Q and A session, where they questioned me and I walked them through the process.

### LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:27):** In 1991, aged seven years old, I asked my grandmother, "Nanna, who do you vote for?" Without hesitation, she replied, "The Liberal Party." This was the beginning of my love of politics and later, most importantly, a love of the Liberal Party. Although I was young, I quickly worked out why my family were Liberals. They were the forgotten people in Australia, a term coined by Robert Gordon Menzies. My grandparents were not poor, but they were not wealthy either. Raising a family in Penrith in Western Sydney, they embodied the selfless individualism that Menzies often spoke about. They worked hard and were aspirational in every sense of the word.

This week we mark 80 years of the Liberal Party of Australia. It was founded in 1944 by Menzies. The first meeting did not happen in Canberra, Sydney or Melbourne. It took place in a small hall in the regional town of Albury. Its purpose was to create a strong non-Labor party that would unite all Australians. Eighteen parties and organisations came together and took the name "Liberal". Menzies said:

What we must look for, and it is a matter of desperate importance to our society, is a true revival of liberal thought which will work for social justice and security, for national power and national progress, and for the full development of the individual citizen, though not through the dull and deadening process of socialism.

He also said:

We took the name "Liberal" because we were determined to be a progressive party, willing to make experiments, in no sense reactionary but believing in the individual, his rights, and his enterprise, and rejecting the Socialist panacea.

My political hero, John Howard, also put it best when he said that the modern Liberal Party is:

... a broad church and we should never as members of the Liberal Party of Australia lose sight of the fact that we are the trustees of two great political traditions.

Those two traditions are classical liberalism and conservatism. As a proud 23-year member of the Liberal Party and now a Liberal member of Parliament, those timeless traditions are my North Star. I believe in the freedom of the individual and in a government that allows individuals to reach their full potential. That means a lean, efficient government that minimises unnecessary interference in our daily lives, and maximises individual opportunities and free enterprise.

Over the past 80 years the Liberal Party has been in Australian government for over 51 years and in New South Wales government for over 30 years. Federally, we have been in government from 1949 to 1972 under Robert Menzies, Harold Holt, John Gorton and William McMahon; from 1975 to 1983 under Malcolm Fraser; from 1996 to 2007 under John Howard; and from 2013 to 2019 under Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison. In New South Wales, we have been in government from 1965 to 1976, 1988 to 1995 and 2011 to 2023. Liberal governments should be proud of their many achievements in New South Wales. Firstly, under governments led by Premiers Robert Askin, Tom Lewis and Eric Willis from 1965 to 1976, achievements include completing the Sydney Opera House, pioneering consumer protection laws, and establishing the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Law Reform Commission.

Secondly, under governments led by Premiers Nick Greiner and John Fahey from 1988 to 1995, achievements include winning the Sydney 2000 Olympics, embracing corporatisation to deliver infrastructure and services, and embracing integrity by establishing the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Environment Protection Authority. Finally, under governments led by Premiers Barry O'Farrell, Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian and Dominic Perrottet from 2011 to 2023, achievements include building world-class infrastructure, whether it be the Sydney Metro, WestConnex, NorthConnex, the International Convention Centre, or the CBD and South East Light Rail, and so much more; establishing institutions such as Service NSW and Infrastructure NSW; and seeing us through the COVID-19 pandemic. All members are familiar with the wonderful 11.00 a.m. "Gladys o'clock" update.

Although we are currently in opposition in New South Wales and Australia, now is our opportunity to start thinking about the future with our timeless Liberal values. We must stick by and embrace those values. As I said earlier, they are my North Star. The Liberal Party's best days are still ahead of it. Happy eightieth birthday to the Liberal Party of Australia.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:32):** I acknowledge the member for Davidson and his loyalty and dedication to the Australian Liberal Party. I too wish it all the best on its eightieth birthday. As a member of the oldest political party in this country, the Australian Labor Party, which has been in existence for over 130 years, I remind the House that the Liberal Party is a collection of miserable conservatives who are only united in their dedication to resisting Labor in any way they can. They have been reasonably successful in that regard. The Liberal Party's legacy of success is the burden we carry today in this new Government, having been handed the largest debt ever delivered from one government to another and, amongst all the other things, having inherited the worst and most unfair housing system this country has ever had—something that my forebears in the Labor Party did all they could to correct during their time in office.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:33 until  
Friday 18 October 2024 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**WOOLOOWARE WOMEN'S GOLF COMMITTEE CHARITY DAY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—**I congratulate the Woollooware Women's Golf Committee on their Golf Charity Day at Woollooware Golf Club. In all, the charity day raised \$10,215 for local not for profit charity Bay Babes. The charity focusses on raising awareness around breast cancer, funding research to improve treatment practices, and supporting women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. I especially highlight the leaders of the Charity Committee, Therese Baker and Sue Wyse. I also acknowledge the work of the following Woollooware Women's Committee members, among others, who lent their support to the day: Lynne Willis (Women's President), Viv Tasker (Women's Vice President) and Lyn Millican (Secretary) I recognise the generosity of local businesses who supported the day and ensured that an important charity can continue to do their good work. Finally, I congratulate the new committee elected at the AGM, and wish them luck for the coming year: Lynne Willis (President), Liane Nowak (Vice President), Lynnette Goodwin (Captain), Leonia Stannard (Vice Captain), Maryanne Thompson (Treasurer), Lyn Millican (Secretary), Belinda Hammond, Barbara Foy, Margi Collins and Jennifer Dadd.

**IAN AND LEANDA GUY**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—**Ian and Leanda Guy are an extraordinary couple from Coal Point, who embody selfless dedication and excellence as volunteers with the Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie unit. They have not only committed themselves to serving our community but have also showcased their remarkable skills in the angling categories of the 2024 Police and Emergency Services Games held in Shoalhaven last month. Ian and Leanda won an impressive 12 medals between them, with Leanda awarded the gold medal in the overall women's competition and Guy taking home the silver in the overall men's category. They braved horrific weather conditions over the three-day-long competition but still managed to bag a swathe of medals including five each in the offshore and species categories. The Guy's have been members of the Teralba Fishing Club for more than a decade, and volunteers with the Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie unit for about three-and-a-half years. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Ian and Leanda on their outstanding accomplishment and thank them for their ongoing service to our community.

**MICHAEL WRIGHT, PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—**I congratulate Michel Wright on receiving a Pride of Workmanship Award from the Rotary Club of Kenthurst. The Club held its Annual Awards night on 30 September 2024. Micheal was nominated by Gil Kommer. The award recognises Michael's contribution in his role as the Production Manager of All Metal Products. All Metal Products was founded by two Dutch immigrants in 1962. The company if a as manufacturers of light metal products, the company has had several production managers. The principal task of a production manager is to have customers' orders made correctly and delivered on time. Any profitable job can turn into a loss job through mistakes, requiring rework. Imagine a job delivered to the customer and rejected as incorrect. This requires the job to be picked up again, unpacked, stripped of any coated finish, then reworked in the factory, recoated, repacked and redelivered. Gil Kommer, who is the Managing Director, said, "Micheal is the best production manager we have employed, when it comes to job quality and delivering on time." It is an absolute pleasure to be able to congratulate and recognise Michael on receipt of the Pride of Workmanship Award.

**PETER KOMMER, PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to congratulate Peter Kommer on receiving a Pride of Workmanship Award from the Rotary Club of Kenthurst. The Club held its Annual Awards night on 30 September 2024. Peter was nominated by Gil Kommer. The award was given in recognition and gratitude of the job that Peter does working as the Technical Development Manager working for All Metal Products. When the company needed a more comprehensive and robust computer system, Peter did some research and recommended M1. For a full week, Peter technical experts to not only to understand the complexity computer-system but also to be able to instruct our staff to operate the various sections, such as job estimating, payroll and accounting. Peter quickly gained the knowledge to be able to ensure that staff were trained on the new computer system. Managing Director, Gil Kommer stated, "When we decided to cease manufacturing, Peter became my best helper and advisor. He accepted the responsibility to dispose of all plant and equipment, which he has done successfully and with sound negotiating skills." It is an absolute pleasure to be able to congratulate and recognise Peter on receipt of the Pride of Workmanship Award.

**BEN WHITE, ROTARY, COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I congratulate Ben White on receiving a Community Service Award from the Rotary Club of Kenthurst. The Club held its Annual Awards night on 30 September 2024. Ben was nominated by Lachlan Donachie and Hudson Smith. Ben White has several roles including the General Manager of Transit Advertising and Head of Nurture for JCDecaux, a global advertising company. Ben is also Head coach of a semi-professional Waratah basketball team, St. George RED. Notwithstanding having a busy life schedule Ben finds time to give back to his community as the coach for the Dural Dunkers, an under 13s, school basketball team within the Hills District basketball competition. Ben brings a handful of key principles to the team to help them create a foundation for their team culture and growth. He uses the acronym 'HEADER' (hustle. effort. attitude. discipline. equals results) to bring out the best in every player. Coaching the Dural Dunkers is one of the highlights of Ben's life and the team is incredibly lucky to have this young man as their coach. It is an absolute pleasure to be able to congratulate and recognise Ben on receipt of the Rotary Community Service Award.

**GRANNY SMITH QUEEN QUEST – LILY HANNA**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising Lily Hanna who is the 2024 Granny Smith Festival Queen competition runner-up. Growing up locally and attending the festival every year, Lily has seen firsthand the joy and unity this event brings to our community, and now she hopes to give back by taking on this prestigious role. Lily has been a strong advocate for our local traditions, introducing friends and family to the festival each year and sharing her excitement for the parade, fresh apples, and the vibrant atmosphere. As a candidate for Granny Smith Queen, she aspires to champion our local heritage and inspire others to appreciate our unique traditions. Beyond her involvement with the festival, Lily is a dental professional committed to keeping smiles bright and healthy, and she enjoys activities such as gymnastics to stay active. Her artistic side shines through her passion for calligraphy, where she transforms simple words into beautiful designs, reflecting her attention to detail and creative spirit. I wish Lily the best of luck in her future endeavours and thank her for her efforts to promote and celebrate the wonderful community we have here in Ryde.

**GRANNY SMITH QUEEN QUEST – LUCY CLUGSTON**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging Lucy Clugston, who was a finalist in the 2024 Granny Smith Festival Queen competition. Lucy's dedication to her community is nothing short of inspiring. She aspires to represent young women and empower them to make positive choices—an admirable goal that speaks to her character and leadership. Lucy has been a lifelong attendee of the Granny Smith Festival, a cherished tradition she's embraced since childhood. Now, she seeks to take on an even greater role, engaging more deeply with the local community through this opportunity. Her love for the festival and the lessons she's learned from being part of it have shaped her commitment to making Ryde a better place for all. In addition to her community work, Lucy's interests span from baking apple pies and reading to volunteering and the arts, all of which reflect her well-rounded and creative spirit. I wish Lucy the very best in her future endeavors, and commend her efforts to uplift and engage with the Ryde community. Her passion for making a difference and empowering others will surely inspire those around her.

**GRANNY SMITH QUEEN QUEST – SOPHIA DAHER**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the incredible contribution of Sophia Daher, a passionate young leader from Ryde who is making a real difference in our community. Born and raised in Ryde, Sophia is a proud local and second runner-up in the 2024 Granny Smith Queen competition. Through this role, she aims to inspire young people to give back to our wonderful community, continuing her dedication to making Ryde the best place to live. Sophia embodies the spirit of service and commitment. Whether

she's out cleaning up the local area or actively engaging with young people, her efforts help foster a sense of pride and connection in Ryde. She's driven by a desire to give back to the place she calls home, a true testament to her character and the values we hold dear in our community. Sophia's interests are as varied as they are inspiring—from cooking and playing guitar to photography and education, she's a well-rounded individual committed to growth and learning. I wish Sophia the best of luck in her future endeavors and thank her for her ongoing efforts to make Ryde a better place for us all.

#### **SHOALHAVEN LADIES PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Shoalhaven Ladies Probus Club. When the Shoalhaven Ladies Probus Club was established on 2nd June 1987, among the first 19 members were Marie Whelan and Norma Reid. More than 40 years on since it was first established, they are still active in the club, that meets in the Bomaderry Bowling Club at 10am on the first Thursday of each month. I acknowledge Marilyn Owens, Frances Flack, Sue Gregan and Pat Donovan who were all in attendance enjoying a cuppa during a recent Shoalhaven Ladies Probus Club meeting. I also acknowledge Aline Harris (Newsletter editor), Denise Marney, Maggie Garety, Gaille Christensen, Secretary Ronnie Gale, President Margaret Duncan and Vice President Maria Hutchinson. Since being the Member for Kiama, I have attended several Shoalhaven Ladies Probus Club meetings and I have hosted some of their members in the Parliament of New South Wales. I thank the Shoalhaven Ladies Probus Club for their ongoing and outstanding contribution to our local Shoalhaven community as they have been actively involved on many fronts. Congratulations on your longevity and thank you for your hard work and dedication to our region.

#### **KIAMA OZTAG**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama Ozttag. Competition in what is the club's 15th season commenced on Sunday 14th October 2024, with over 2,000 players registered across various age groups, making it the biggest participant sport in the Kiama LGA. Ozttag is a non-contact version of rugby league that focuses on speed and agility. I acknowledge the Kiama Ozttag Association Coordinators Keiron Duncan and Ross Thomas for their ongoing efforts to increase participation. There have been 70 individuals who expressed interest in joining teams. The competition will run through early January and will be played across four venues, including the newly added Kiama Sports Complex fields next to the Kiama Leisure Centre. In addition to local competitions, Kiama has its own representative team, the Kiama Phantoms, which competes in the State Cup. Players from this team can be selected for national and even international competitions, with both young and older players proudly representing Australia. Congratulations and well done to Keiron Duncan and Ross Thomas for the important work they have been doing to grow and expand Kiama Ozttag as it heads towards the 2025 season.

#### **OUR LADY OF LEBANON CHURCH**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Our Lady of Lebanon [OLOL] on hosting such an incredible event every year. With over 15 thrilling rides, engaging games, and delicious food, OLOL created an unforgettable experience for the entire community. OLOL's dedication to bringing joy and excitement to people of all ages are truly commendable. Our Lady of Lebanon church has a rich history of serving the Maronite community in Australia since its founding in 1968. From its humble beginnings in Harris Park to becoming the largest Maronite Catholic parish in Australia, the church has continuously fostered a sense of unity and faith. This event further exemplifies their commitment to building strong community ties and creating everlasting memories. Thank you, Our Lady of Lebanon church for this kind invitation and to all your hard work in organising this amazing festival.

#### **MITTAGONG MEN'S SHED VISIT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I can state as a fact that Mittagong Men's Shed boasts the best location in NSW. The spirit and connection that dwells in this shed is genuinely inspiring. I was delighted to visit the Shed to share my insights as an Independent Member of the NSW Parliament. I really enjoyed my time in there, with the beautiful backdrop showcasing the rural and bushland settings that the Highlands are known for. The Australian Men's Shed Association [AMSA] was established in 2007 by a collection of Australian independent community-based Men's Sheds to represent, support and promote the Men's Shed movement. It was founded on the principle of sharing information between sheds and those communities wishing to establish and operate a Men's Shed. It acts as a central hub for information exchange. While the Mittagong Shed holds a unique meaning for each member, the shared passion for creating, making, and repairing, as well as contributing to social projects, brings everyone together with friendship and community spirit. Thank you to the members for being good sports by starring in my video, and I can't wait to host you for a visit to Parliament House soon.

### MOBILE OFFICE SUCCESS THANKS TO RESIDENTS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Thank you to residents of Nattai, Oakdale, The Oaks, Mt Hunter, Hill Top, Colo Vale and Renwick for making the first week of my mobile office a resounding success. With an electorate so large, and so many people living such busy lives, it has always been a challenge for some people to make it to my office. This is why I am taking my Mobile Electorate Office on the road, so I can hear about concerns, queries, or ideas from the Wollondilly local community in their own towns and villages. I was touched by the efforts people made to stop by. One of the highlights was hearing from some polite and engaging year 5 and 6 kids in Colo Vale, who were riding their bikes past and stopped for a chat. They offered some great ideas on what is needed in the area for younger teens. I am so grateful for their insight, and indeed for all the people who stopped by for a cuppa, including local business people. Thank you to all residents who came and connected with me, for working together for the betterment of our beautiful area.

### MEALS ON WHEELS SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Thank you to Meals on Wheels Southern Highlands for welcoming me to join you to deliver meals and visit residents in Colo Vale, Hill Top and Yerrinbool. Meals on Wheels Southern Highlands provides more than just meals; they deliver care, connection, and peace of mind. Their regular home visits offer vital check-ins on the well-being of clients, some of whom are seniors or somewhat isolated. For some, this regular interaction is their main connection to the outside world, ensuring they are safe and supported. These visits cultivate relationships, providing support and essential care. This bond enables individuals to stay in their own homes, maintaining independence while minimising the likelihood of unnoticed health issues or decreased social interactions. National Meals on Wheels Day was on Wednesday the 28th of August, and I offer my heartfelt thanks to the volunteers who make this organisation possible. These volunteers are not only serving up nourishing meals, they provide care, connection and comradery to Australians in need.

### THE WEDDIN MUSTER RIDES INTO GRENFELL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I was once again delighted to join the dedicated horsemen and women to take part in Australia's best group trail ride, The Weddin Mountain Muster, held in Grenfell. The Muster offers a unique, fun-filled opportunity for riders and their horses to connect while taking in the spectacular countryside around Grenfell. The Muster was established in 2001 with only a handful of riders and 5 committee members, to raise funds for upgrades to the grandstand at the Grenfell showground. Since then, the Muster has grown to become one of Grenfell's major annual tourism events with 110 registered riders and makes a significant contribution to the local economy. Riders come from NSW, Victoria, and the ACT. The event is based at the Grenfell showground where committee members, registered riders, their families, and horses camp for the week. At the end of the riding week there is a finale dinner, cooked by the Grenfell Show Ladies Auxiliary and participants enjoy an evening full of laughter about the spills and thrills of the weeks riding. I congratulate all involved and thank you for inviting me along.

### NORMA THE CLYDESDALE FILLY

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I had the pleasure of attending the 2024 Good Old Days Festival held in Barellan – a bright and bustling festival celebrating the workhorses, pioneers, and draft animals of all kinds in a three-day extravaganza. The Festival Parade was started this year with the unveiling of "Norma" a life-size statue of a Clydesdale filly who was named after Norma Zigel, a longtime member and volunteer of the Committee who creates this wonderful event. Norma Zigel, who passed in 2020 is commemorated each year with the awarding of the Norma Zigel Trophy for the champion animal in the ploughing competition and now she will also be remembered in the community where her namesake filly resides. Family members were pleased to attend the unveiling and see her name on the statue which was created by Gillie and Marc Schattner. The unveiling was followed by a parade down main street of the many working animal teams celebrated in this amazing festival.

### EURONGILLY STUDENTS TAKE ACTION

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I love nothing more than visiting the 80 schools throughout the Cootamundra electorate and seeing our next generation of leaders bursting with energy and pride. It's even more rewarding when the school's students are always looking for ways to improve their school. This is precisely what happened when students noticed their current flag, which had been weathered and torn due to the harsh climate conditions of living in the bush, was looking a little worse for wear. So, they decided to write to me asking for some help in making sure their school was flying a flag which stands for its people, our state's history and to represents all the people of the state. I was deeply moved by their initiative and immediately took action to fulfill their request. I was delighted to make a special visit, past the golden fields of canola to Eurongilly Public School, recently to deliver them a new State Flag for them to fly proudly in their school grounds. The joy and pride that lit up their faces was truly heartwarming, and the handwritten thank you letter I received made my day.



### **BANK ORANGE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the evolution of an Orange financial institution, which is entering a new phase of serving the community after its establishment 60 years ago. Bank Orange, previously known as the Orange Credit Union, has a long and proud history of helping its community grow since it was founded on December 10, 1964. This happened when a group of Email employees met in the factory's canteen to discuss the formation of a not-for-profit, member-owned credit union. While Email is no longer a part of Orange's business landscape, one of its legacies is a financial organisation that has grown in membership but remains largely focussed on customer ownership. Guided by a board of directors, the Orange Credit Union expanded to service people from all walks of life from its Summer Street premises, following its ethos of putting its profits back into the community. Bank Orange will celebrate its 60th birthday in December 7 with the community invited to raise a toast to its success. This should be a wonderful walk down memory lane for many members and employees, new and former. I congratulate Bank Orange on 60 years of admirable service to its community.

### **ZANNA DOLBEL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate one of my younger constituents, 10-year-old Zanna Dolbel on her amazing effort competing at the World Martial Arts Championships in Japan. Competing at the Shidokan 43rd International Championships, Zanna returned home to Orange with a first place in her age division's sports karate (points) sparring competition. This result was a great reward for the dedication, hard work and spirit Zanna has put into her sport, dedication that is rare in someone so young. Zanna, who trains with Orange's Kumiai Ryu High Impact Martial Arts Studio, secured three national championships in her division to put her on the path to Japan, where she joined athletes from around the world at Yokaohama Budokan. Small in stature but big on spirit, Zanna isn't fazed by bigger or older opponents and takes on each bout with confidence and enthusiasm. I congratulate her on an amazing achievement in international company and I look forward to watching her sporting career unfold.

### **BOB AND ANN STEEL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, Parkes' annual homage to a rock 'n' roll legend, its annual Elvis Festival, has gone from strength to strength since the idea was floated over 30 years ago and today I would like to acknowledge the work of its pioneers. Bob and Ann Steel are among the festival founders and at next year's Elvis Festival, the 32nd, they will be inducted into a 'wall of fame'. It was 32 years ago the Steels, then owners of the Gracelands Restaurant, came up with an idea to commemorate Elvis' birthday, which would also boost visitor numbers to Parkes during the quieter January month when residents often left town for holidays. The festival now draws more than 20,000 people to Parkes each January for a celebration of all things Elvis and his music era. Cars, dances and costumes create an atmosphere that is unique to this festival which is now recognised as one of the top three festival events in Australia. There's just nothing like the atmosphere of this festival and I congratulate Bob and Ann Steel on their vision 30 years ago and following it through to the amazing festival Parkes now boasts.

### **WOOLLOOWARE HIGH SCHOOL 2025 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Woollooware High School's incoming 2025 student leadership team on their appointment. Will Burgess and Hannah Murdoch were elected as school captains, to serve alongside vice-captains Eddie Levy and Zofia Morgan. Bear Strong and Sara Davey were elected as presidents of the Student Representative Council [SRC], while Lucas Bazzano, Isabella Karpik, Sophie Matheson and Andrew Ng were elected as school prefects. Being elected to student leadership is a fantastic opportunity for those fortunate enough to be given the chance. Being a student leader can ingrain listening and communication skills, teamwork, and the value of leadership. These skills are vital not just in a school environment, but also in the workplace and in life generally. I wish the new leadership team the best of luck in their new leadership roles, as well as in their Year 12 studies next year.

### **ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE CRONULLA 2025 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the incoming 2025 student leadership team of St Aloysius College Cronulla on their appointment. Hudson Peterson and Isabelle Fletcher were elected as school captains, to serve alongside vice-captains Dylan Pisani and Alysha Mobberley Barreto. Harry McDonnell and Xanthe Waide were elected as mission leaders. Jarryd McMahon, Hannah Madigan, Solomon Freeman, Cloe White, Jett Murphy, Adelaide Thompson, Harry Payne, and Ruby Bofinger-Walker were all elected as house captains. Being elected to student leadership is a fantastic opportunity for those fortunate enough to be given the chance. Being a student leader can ingrain listening and communication skills, teamwork, and the value of leadership. These skills are vital not just in a school environment, but also in the workplace and in life generally.

I wish the new leadership team the best of luck in their new leadership roles, as well as in their Year 12 studies next year.

### **92ND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise the celebration of the 92nd Birthday of a number of members of our community at the Vietnamese Family Day hosted by the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association. On this day, we also celebrate the incredible milestone of other elderly members of the Association, who have or will soon reach the significant age of 90 and above. My heartfelt congratulations are extended to: Ms Thi Man Le, Mr Vo Manh Dong, Mr Jack Ly, Mr Van Hoach Chu, Mr Van Mieng Nguyen, Mrs Thi Thu Hong Nguyen. Their wonderful journeys remind us that wisdom, resilience, and the nurturing of body, mind, and spirit are important factors to a fulfilling life. Their longevity inspires us to appreciate every moment, grow from the experiences learnt, and cultivate positive energy that enriches our lives. On this special occasion, I wish everyone continued joy, good health, and the comforting presence of their family and friends. I also wish every one of them a joyous celebration as we come together to recognise the significance of the Vietnamese Family Day - a special annual event dedicated to cherishing and preserving Vietnamese traditions and heritage across generations.

### **93RD BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise the celebration of the 93rd Birthday of my constituent, Ms Kim Tho Tran, at the Vietnamese Family Day hosted by the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association. On this day, we also celebrate the incredible milestone of other respected elderly members of the Association, who have or will soon reach the significant age of 90 and above. The wonderful journeys that my constituents have experienced remind us that wisdom, resilience, and the nurturing of body, mind, and spirit are important factors to a fulfilling life. Their longevity inspires us to appreciate every moment, grow from the experiences learnt, and cultivate positive energy that enriches our lives. As we celebrate this remarkable occasion, I wish Ms. Tran continued joy, good health, and the comforting presence of her family and friends. I also wish her a joyous celebration surrounded by loved ones as we come together to recognise the significance of the Vietnamese Family Day - a special annual event dedicated to cherishing and preserving Vietnamese traditions and heritage across generations.

### **94TH BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise the celebration of the 94th Birthday of a number of members of our community at the Vietnamese Family Day hosted by the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association. On this day, we also celebrate the incredible milestone of other elderly members of the Association, who have or will soon reach the significant age of 90 and above. My heartfelt congratulations are extended to: Ms Nhu Toan Tran, Ms Thi Lieu Phung, Mr Quy Van Tran, Mr Cao Nam Le, Mr Van Sang Le, Ms Thi Em Nguyen, Mr Tan Khanh Doan. Their wonderful journeys remind us that wisdom, resilience, and the nurturing of body, mind, and spirit are important factors to a fulfilling life. Their longevity inspires us to appreciate every moment, grow from the experiences learnt, and cultivate positive energy that enriches our lives. On this special occasion, I wish everyone continued joy, good health, and the comforting presence of their family and friends. I also wish them a joyous celebration as we come together to recognise the significance of the Vietnamese Family Day - a special annual event dedicated to cherishing and preserving Vietnamese traditions and heritage across generations.

### **THOMAS NICOLAS (NICK) HIGGINS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—Nick Higgins has over 45 years of volunteering experience in the local Shellharbour community. He has coached young basketball players and mentored young individuals in the community in various capacities. Nick has displayed his exceptional ability to guide young people towards achieving their goals. Using theatre and sports, he has encouraged and challenged the young people of the Shellharbour Electorate to explore their unlimited talents and grow within the community. Nick Higgins spent many years as a youth worker for Shellharbour City Council. Despite his official retirement, he is still actively involved in the community, with many people vouching for his work, commitment, and integrity. I would like to congratulate Nick and thank him for his ongoing involvement in our local sport and theatre community.

### **BRIAN HOST**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Mr Brian Host of ICT Educators of NSW, for his nomination of the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award. Brian is a valuable member of the teaching community and the Secretary of ICT Educators NSW. His involvement in this wonderful organization extends to supporting ICT, STEM and Computer Science educators in New South Wales. Brian's wonderful work has a long history. To go along with his nomination this year, Brian has previously won the NSW ICT Educator of the Year award in 2020. The nomination for the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award is a testament to his dedication and hard work in the educating industry. It is amazing that members of the Shellharbour

Electorate are going above and beyond in their industry, and I am strong in my convictions, knowing that Brian has helped many students throughout his teaching career. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Brian on his nomination for NSW Volunteer of the year and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

#### **MOLLY FENTON**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Ms Molly Fenton of Disaster Relief Australia, for her nomination of the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award. The nomination is a testament to her incredible dedication and selflessness, giving back to those in need through DRA. Disaster Relief Australia provide invaluable services to help communities prepare for and recover from disasters. Molly, a part of the DRT NSW South Team, provides a range of services to keep those in need safe. It is amazing that a member of the Shellharbour Electorate was recognised for their tireless work in the community. Molly's efforts do not go unnoticed, and I thank her for her service within the community. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Molly for her work and wish her all the best in her volunteering efforts for Disaster Relief Australia.

#### **SYDNEY ROOSTERS NRLW CHAMPIONS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaughan)**—I would like to congratulate the Sydney Roosters on becoming the 2024 NRLW Premiers, winning 32-28 over the Cronulla Sharks. This was the Roosters fourth grand final and second premierships in the NRLW era. After leading 24-0 at halftime, the tricolours were able to hold off a strong comeback from Cronulla. Ultimately it was the Dally M Medallist Olivia Kernick who put the game to bed with a 66th minute try, her second of the game. Congratulations to captain Isabelle Kelly (2024 RLPA Players Champion) and coach John Strange on a successful season. This sustained success is the result of a star-studded lineup, experienced coaching staff, and state of the art facilities. The girls rule the roost once again.

#### **KIDS GIVING BACK COOK4GOOD MEGA MARATHON**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaughan)**—I would like to recognise a local organisation Kids Giving Back, who hosted their annual Cook4Good Mega Marathon on Saturday 22nd September. Founded in 2012 by local mum Carole Schlessinger, Kids Giving Back is a not-for-profit organisation that provides volunteering opportunities for children, teens, and families across NSW. They now have over 99 charity partners and have enabled more than 53 223 kids and their families to make a difference. This year's marathon raised over \$30,000, with hundreds of volunteers cooking meals to distribute to those in need. Congratulations Carole and Kids Giving Back.

#### **SYDNEY CHILDRENS HOSPITAL FOUNDATION DONOR AWARDS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaughan)**—I would like to recognise the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation and congratulate them on a record-breaking year of contributions to the frontline and future of children's healthcare. Last financial year the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation contributed \$52 million to kids' health including \$50.1million to the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. I recently attended their annual Donor recognition event which recognised individuals and organisations who reached significant giving milestones. Their generosity supports essential roles, services, and equipment that are crucial for the care of sick children and their families. The Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation reminds us there is nothing more important than the health of our children. I pay special mention to constituents and Gold Committee Co-Chairs Linda Penn and Joshua Penn whose fundraising efforts at the 2024 Gold Dinner surpassed all expectations. I look forward to following their continued success.

#### **KYOGLE COUNCIL ELECTED FOR 2024-2028 TERM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to Kyogle Mayor Cr Danielle Mulholland who returns to the job after being elected unopposed at the council's first meeting of this new four-year term. Cr Mulholland will lead the council for the next two years and I also congratulate Cr John Burley on being unanimously elected Deputy Mayor. I enjoy a good working relationship with Kyogle Council, supporting its representations for community betterment, and we have had success in this regard, particularly with major road and bridge upgrades. I congratulate all councillors on their election in the following wards: A Ward – Cr Kieran Somerville, Cr Brett McNamara, Cr Janet Wilson. B Ward – Cr Olivia Taylor, Cr John Burley, Cr Robert Cullen. C Ward – Cr Danielle Mulholland, Cr Tom Cooper, Cr Robin Harley. In a referendum, 62.70 per cent of voters were against the Question 1 Do you favour the election of the Mayor by electors for a four-year term with the number of Wards reduced from three to two, each ward comprising of four councillors, plus a popularly elected Mayor? I thank retiring councillors Hayden Doolan, Kylie Webster and Maggie May, as well as outgoing councillor James Murray, for their community service.

### **TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL ELECTED FOR 2024-2028 TERM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to Tenterfield Shire Mayor Cr Bronwyn Petrie who was re-elected unopposed by nine councillors who attended the first meeting of this four-year term. Cr Petrie will lead the council for the next two years and I congratulate Cr Greg Sauer on also being unanimously elected Deputy Mayor, a position he has previously held. I congratulate all 10 councillors on their election in the following wards: Ward A—Cr Tim Bonner, Cr Gregory Purcell. Ward B—Cr Bronwyn Petrie, Cr Roger Turner. Ward C—Cr Peter Petty, Cr Peter Murphy. Ward D—Cr Owen Bancroft, Cr Kim Rhodes. Ward E—Cr Greg Sauer, Cr Tom Peters. In a media release, Mayor Petrie described it as an honour to represent Council and the community. "Our focus will continue to be financial sustainability, accelerating our approved road infrastructure disaster repairs, efficient service delivery, and advocating for the best outcomes we can for our community," Cr Petrie said. I pay tribute to outgoing councillors John Macnish and Geoff Nye for their community service. First elected to council in the 1990s, John had several stints as deputy mayor, including the most recent term.

### **TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL ELECTED FOR 2024-2028 TERM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Last Friday, I met with the Tweed Shire Council's newly-elected councillors and senior staff to discuss local issues as they begin another four-year term. Being a community leader has not been easy in recent years as the Northern Rivers region has faced the challenges of bushfires, Covid-19 and floods. We work well together; I support Tweed Shire Council's representations for community betterment, and we have had good success in this regard. Firstly, I pay tribute to retiring stalwart councillor Warren Polglase OAM, who was first elected to council in 1991 and served his community as a former mayor. Cr Chris Cherry has been re-elected unopposed as Tweed Shire mayor for her fourth term. She will serve as mayor for two years until the mid-term mayoral election in September 2026. Deputy Mayor Cr Meredith Dennis OAM has also been re-elected unopposed and will serve one year in the role until September 2025. Six sitting councillors were re-elected to Tweed Shire Council -- Cr Rhiannon Brinsmead, Cr Reece Byrne, Cr Chris Cherry, Cr Meredith Dennis, Cr Nola Firth and Cr James Owen, with Cr Kimberly Hone elected as the sole new councillor. Congratulations to all.

### **SPOT ON**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Every Thursday from September 26th 2024 through to the 24th of October 2024 starting on Thursday, Spot On will turn up the heat in one of Randwick's coolest areas with street dining, live music, and entertainment. The council have done a fantastic job in creating an event that promotes community development and social cohesion by fostering community pride, creating a sense of community, and improving social relations. Visit The Spot with your loved ones for a unique experience that includes delicious food, live music, and a few surprises!

### **RANDWICK HIGH LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On the 11th of September, I had the privilege of presenting the new leadership team for 2025 and say farewell to the outgoing Leadership team. These bright young faces will be the first generation of student representatives of the new co-ed Randwick High School. Goodluck everyone I can't wait to see what these young leaders achieve.

### **CLOVELLY CROCS GRAND FINAL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I am very proud of the Clovelly Crocs Junior Rugby League Club's under 17s who in September played their grand final against Mascot. The Crocs are a wonderful, family friendly local rugby team. Not only did the Crocs bring competitiveness, fitness and fun but they brought a sense of community into the crowd. The Crocs did a fantastic job and played with amazing team spirit. Despite the trials and tribulations throughout the year, the team was able to overcome the many challenges and come through on the top. With Crocs taking home the grand final winners for 2024, the score was 36-18. Congratulations boys and thank you to all the phenomenal volunteers and everyone involved.

### **ST PAUL'S STUDENTS' SUCCESS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Congratulations to St Paul's outstanding athletes, Amelia W. and Wilton T., who shone at the NSW All Schools Athletics Championships in Sydney over the holidays. Their dedication and hard work paid off, making their community proud. Amelia's performance in the 2000m steeplechase was nothing short of heroic. Competing fiercely against talented athletes, she secured an impressive second place with a time of 7:42.64. This remarkable achievement earned her a coveted spot at the Australian All Schools Championships 2024, set to take place in Queensland in early December. Wilton also showcased his talent, representing St Paul's with great determination. While he may not have qualified for the national championships this time, his commitment to the sport and perseverance inspires the whole community. His

unwavering spirit exemplifies the resilience needed to excel in athletics. Amelia and Wilton exemplify the spirit of hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship. Their accomplishments not only highlight their individual talents but also the supportive environment at St Paul's. We celebrate their achievements and look forward to witnessing their future successes on the athletic stage, where their journeys continue to inspire us all!

### **CELEBRATING OUR NETBALL HEROES**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Sarah Buls has hit the court, competing in the Regional State Cup, and proudly representing the North Coast team at Netball Central in Sydney. Her journey to this prestigious competition began with outstanding performances for the Macleay Valley Netball Association in the North Coast regional league earlier this year. Sarah's selection for the North Coast team is a testament to her exceptional ability and talent on the court. On Day 1 of the competition, Sarah and her teammates faced fierce challenges but held their ground ending the day in 3rd place on the ladder. Sarah's contribution been pivotal to the team's success, showcasing exactly why she was chosen for this honour. This remarkable achievement not only highlights her abilities but also marks a significant milestone in her sporting journey. A special mention to Laura Buls, who is also representing our community as a train-on partner for the North Coast team. Together, Sarah and Laura shine brightly, embodying the true spirit of sportsmanship and community pride. We celebrate these remarkable athletes and eagerly anticipate their future successes as they continue to make their mark on the netball scene!

### **2 YEARS OF GROWTH**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Who would have thought that mixing scones with community spirit could create such a heartwarming recipe for success? The Country Women's Association Nambucca Valley Evening Branch is celebrating its second anniversary, and what a journey it has been! This year has seen a remarkable increase in membership and a host of engaging community events that truly reflect the heart of their mission. Just last weekend, dedicated members gathered at the Valla Beach Community Markets, sharing smiles and stories while promoting their initiatives. From the very beginning, the Branch has been a pillar of support for local groups, leaving a positive mark throughout the Nambucca Valley. They've participated in various events, from active markets to local agricultural shows. Their outreach extends even further, supporting the Nambucca Youthie and a women's refuge centre, with plans for more donations on the horizon. Embracing the mantra, "It's not just about making scones and jams; it's about building friendships and empowering women while supporting the community," the Branch is a testament to the power of connection and compassion. Here's to their continued success in bringing people together and creating even more cherished moments!

### **CROWD SAFETY RESEARCH**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I was recently contacted by Annikka Burge, a UNSW Honours Candidate who is conducting research on the safety of crowd dynamics an important topic for community safety. Annikka and her fellow researcher and chief investigator Milad Haghani are both local residents who are conducting an assessment called 'Developing Self-report Instruments for Quantifying Crowd Safety Culture, Risk Preparedness, and Safety Valuation'. Their research aims to have wide-reaching implications for crowd safety and counter-terrorism measures, as well as future safety policy. When I heard about their research project, I thought it was very interesting and very important for our community, and wanted to help them out by promoting a flyer in the front window of my office and in the neighbourhood notice boards. Annikka and Milad also reached out to our local paper the Leader to assist them in gaining more exposure for their research. It is great to see talented young people like Annikka and Milad, who researching important topics for the future of our community. I commend them on this important research and wish them well for their studies.

### **ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW VISIT TO KOGARAH'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the privilege to attend the Greek Orthodox Parish of Kogarah for the visit of His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The event included performances by the parish's youth, with gift presentations and cheerful hymns, creating a joyful atmosphere. It was such an honour to be a part of. The Patriarch delivered a heartfelt address and reminisced about his previous visit 28 years prior. He highlighted his appreciation for the parish's role in preserving Greek Orthodox traditions and fostering a sense of belonging among immigrants. His All-Holiness also noted the church's contributions to the community, including charitable works and cultural outreach, and emphasised the Orthodox Church's mission to combat modern challenges such as racism and poverty. It is always a great honour and privilege to attend events such as these and celebrate our diverse local community. The hopeful future for the Orthodox community was clear to see in this spirit of celebration. I would like to thank the organisers at Kogarah's Greek Orthodox Parish for their warm invitation and for hosting such a meaningful event as well as all attendees and performers.

### CONGRATULATING STEM ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise some recent outstanding achievements in STEM across the high schools in my community. The Orbispace Initiative recently hosted their annual competition titled, 'Pitch for the Plant'. The event consists of teams from schools across NSW who compete to impress real investors, successful startup Founders, and sustainability experts. This year, seven Year 8 students from St Ursula's College Kingsgrove worked together under the team's name of 'WattWay', to solve a real-world sustainability case and presented an eight-minute pitch to investors. WattWay won the competition against 28 other teams. What an amazing effort! At Shire Christian School, two Year 7 students won the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge 2024. Their game called 'Shooting Stars' will be presented on a panel at the biggest video game event in the southern hemisphere in Melbourne. As the Shadow Minister for Science and Technology, I am always inspired by the young minds in our community who continue to amaze us with their initiative and commitment to learning and innovation. I would like to congratulate all the students on their tremendous achievements and wish them the best of luck for the future.

### TERRIGAL WPL PREMIERS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Terrigal Club on their thrilling victory in the Central Coast Women's Premier League grand final. In front of an enthusiastic crowd of locals, Terrigal avenged their 2023 defeat by edging out a determined East Gosford side 1-0 in extra time, completing an incredible treble-winning season. After an intense, back-and-forth match, Tahlor Thackray emerged as the hero, chipping the ball beautifully over East Gosford's goalkeeper Chloe Smith in the 105th minute to score the decisive goal. It was a moment of composure that crowned a hard-fought battle. Credit also goes to Mackenzie Walker, Terrigal's goalkeeper, who made crucial saves to secure a clean sheet, standing strong despite East Gosford's multiple chances, including those from Golden Boot winner Jessica Dominello. Terrigal's solid defence and resilience ultimately shone through, as they gradually gained control, pushing for victory. This remarkable result sees Terrigal crowned 2024 WPL Premiers, capping off an unforgettable season. Congratulations to the players and Coach Gab Blanch for their hard work, grit, and determination. You've made the Central Coast proud, and this is truly a well-deserved achievement. Well done, and here's to more success in the future!

### PAMELA MEAGHER

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It is with great pleasure that I recognise Pamela Meagher for her outstanding community service and dedication, which earned her the esteemed Life Membership Award at the Terrigal 50+ Leisure & Learning Centre in 2011. Pam's remarkable contribution spans over eight years on the Management Committee, beginning in 2003 as Treasurer, then as Senior Vice President, and finally as President from July 2010. Although Pam stepped down in 2011 due to ill health, her impact on the Centre is profound and lasting. Pam joined the club's bushwalking group at the age of 52, inspiring a love for bushwalking across the Central Coast. With her previous bookkeeping experience, Pam put up her hand and seamlessly transitioned into the role of Treasurer, where she oversaw critical improvements at the Centre, such as purchasing air conditioners, enclosing the veranda, and installing water tanks to name a few. As President, Pam had a clear vision for the Centre's future, introducing and supporting various activities such as mahjong, line dancing, and even starting Zumba classes. She also chaired the Fete Committee, further enhancing our community's vibrancy. Thank you, Pam, for your tireless dedication and countless contribution to our community.

### THE COWRIE RESTAURANT AT TERRIGAL

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate The Cowrie Restaurant in Terrigal for their remarkable achievement at the recent 2024 Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence for Sydney and Regional NSW. The Cowrie Restaurant took home the award for the premium dining category, a well-deserved recognition after being finalists for the past two years. Congratulations to owner Dimitris Aronis and the entire team for this exceptional accomplishment. As a young restaurant, just three years old this October, winning this prestigious award is truly a testament to their dedication and passion. Competing at this level and being recognized alongside some of the finest restaurants in the region is an incredible honour. It's worth noting that The Cowrie Restaurant had been established for about 30 years before Dimitris took over following the challenges of COVID, breathing new life into the restaurant after it had been dormant for 12 months. This win is not only a great reward for the restaurant but also highlights the strength of our region's culinary landscape. Congratulations once again and thank you to our wonderful community that continues to support small businesses.

**CHARLOTTE BUTLER - MAKING WAVES AT THE WAKE PARK WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Congratulations to local athlete on Charlotte Butler on being crowned World Champion at the WWA Wake Park World Championships. Charlotte took up wakeboarding at the age of 12 after visiting Penrith's Cables Wake Park for a school holiday program. Having competed at the World Championships in London and Thailand in previous years, the 16-year-old was determined to impress in judges, taking home gold in the 14-17 Girls Elite Park division and silver in the 14-17 Girls Elite Features Division. With athletes representing over 30 countries competing in 37 divisions ranging from amateur to professional, I believe this is a significant achievement and I wish to commend Charlotte for her dedication and hard work within the wakeboarding community. Congratulations, Charlotte, on your tremendous efforts; Penrith will be cheering you on as you leave your mark on the wakeboarding world.

**ELISSA SIMMONDS - ROTARY INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN'S AWARDS 2024**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—On the 29th of September, I attended the prestigious Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards 2024, a significant event presented by Rotary District 9675 that celebrates the achievements of exceptional women. I am thrilled to share that our own Penrith resident Elissa Simmonds was named Young Inspirational Woman for 2024. As a proud Gomeroi and Wiradjuri woman, Ms Simmonds is breaking barriers as the first in her generation to study for a Doctorate in Medicine at UNSW while living with chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy. Elissa Simmonds is the definition of Inspirational, balancing full-time studies with community service, and participating in mutual aid projects and mentoring peers. Her resilience and determination shine through her work at Blacktown Street kitchen, where she distributes supplies and offers compassionate support. Despite managing a chronic illness, Elissa's unwavering commitment to service above self and her potential as a future doctor make her an inspirational figure. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Rotary for hosting such an inspiring event and honouring all the fabulous women from across our state. Congratulations to all the women nominated for this year's Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards you are truly making a difference.

**PENRITH BROTHERS NSWRL TAKE HOME THE SYDNEY SHIELD**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Penrith Brothers Rugby League Football Club are setting the bar high for next season after securing this year's Sydney Shield. The Brothers secured their first major title after destroying Wentworthville United in an impressive 43-18 win in the NSWRL Sydney Shield Grand Final at Leichardt Oval. After falling short to St Marys in 2022, the Penrith Brothers worked hard and fought their way to victory. The Premiership triumph for Brothers completed a remarkable run that saw them remain undefeated since Round 19 to clinch fifth spot on the Sydney Shield ladder. Congratulations to Brothers five-eighth and goal kicker Donovan Boney, with his stellar performance naming him Player of the Match. Penrith Brothers, initially formed in 1968, is notable for being completely run by volunteers. The club is now a fully-fledged development club, with its players benefitting from a recently formed pathway with the Penrith Panthers. Congratulations to Penrith Brothers President Troy Cooper and all the coaches, volunteers and athletes on a fantastic 2024 season.

**BEXLEY NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY CELEBRATION**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate Bexley North Public School as they celebrate their Centenary Anniversary. I congratulate Bexley North Public Schools Principal Danielle Scott, Vice Principals Maria Bajic, Lidia Cicala, Lauren Davis and Carmen Rice and their team on their outstanding achievements. I also acknowledge and congratulate the Parents and Citizens Association, namely, President Jen Semple and Vice Presidents Jill Thompson and Elena Giapitzis for their dedication and support to the school and for organizing the Centenary Celebration event being held this weekend. This school is a cornerstone of our community, where dedicated teachers and supportive families come together to ensure every child feels valued. Over the years Bexley North Public School has built a reputation for nurturing not only smart minds, but kind and resilient spirits, shaping generations. As we celebrate this incredible milestone, we take pride in the fact that Bexley North Public continues to prepare students to step into the future. While the world changes, the school's values—confidence, persistence, and resilience—remain constant. Today, I recognise and thank the present and past principals, teachers, students, and families who have been a vital part of this school's journey.

**ULLADULLA CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate the Ulladulla Christmas Committee for their dedication to bringing Ulladulla alive this festive season with beautiful decorations. The hard work and creativity of this group of volunteers is set to make this Christmas in Ulladulla spectacular for both locals and tourists, creating a truly magical atmosphere in the Shoalhaven. This is

more than just decorations—it is a chance to showcase the incredible community spirit that Ulladulla is known for. The committee's commitment to making our town shine will not only enhance the holiday experience but also attract visitors, benefiting local businesses and adding a festive charm that everyone can enjoy. From twinkling lights to festive displays, the Ulladulla Christmas Committee is ensuring that the streets, shops, and public spaces reflect the joy of the season. It's this kind of community-driven effort that makes Ulladulla such a special place to live and visit. Congratulations to everyone involved for their passion and hard work and I look forward to seeing Ulladulla transformed into a vibrant, festive wonderland this Christmas.

#### **VINCENTIA HIGH SCHOOL VISIT TO PARLIAMENT**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate the Year 10 Commerce students from Vincentia High School for their recent visit to the Parliament of NSW. These students undertook an almost 400km round trip to immerse themselves in the history and function of Australia's oldest Parliament. During their visit, the students explored the Parliamentary chambers and connected their classroom studies with the practical workings of democracy in New South Wales. Deputy Principal Micheal Matuschka shared that the students had a wonderful time on their visit. "Our Year 10 Commerce students had a fantastic time exploring NSW Parliament House, enhancing their understanding of citizenship and democracy. The visit was both educational and enjoyable, providing students with valuable insights into the workings of the Parliament of NSW". Congratulations to Vincentia High School for encouraging such an enriching learning experience.

#### **COROWA PUBLIC SCHOOL – NATIONAL AWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Corowa Public School, Principal Helen Duncan, Project Manager Christine Munro, and volunteer helper Kerrie Ormond for winning the National Award for Sustainable Solutions. This recognition, announced by respected food writer Stephanie Alexander at Parliament House in Canberra on September 11, highlights the school's commitment to sustainability through innovative practices such as composting, recycling and a comprehensive waste management system. A special mention to teacher Neil Ormond for his visionary idea in 2012 and to Christine for nurturing the belief that "from little things, big things grow". Their inspiring dedication sets a powerful example for our community about the importance of waste and recycling solutions. I am proud of Corowa Public School's initiatives which offers the hands-on learning platform that not only educates students about the environment but also creates a culture of sustainability. I look forward to seeing more schools adopt these principles and participate in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Education Program. Together, we can ensure that the seeds of sustainability sown today will flourish into a greener, healthier world for future generations.

#### **110TH WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2024**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the celebration of the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, on September 29, in honour of the incredible journeys of those who have left their homes in search of dignity, safety, and a better life of opportunity. As I reflect on our rich multicultural history, I am reminded of the profound contributions our migrant and refugee community have made to Albury and surrounding areas. This vibrant mix of culture is on show on the border in our diverse music, art, dance, and food experiences. I thank Mirambeena Community Centre and the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau for their ongoing support in regularly hosting community prepared, traditional lunches showcasing delicious flavours from around the globe. I celebrate the diversity that strengthens us. It is also an invitation to reflect on the challenges migrants and refugees face and to reaffirm our commitment to building a community where everyone is welcomed and supported. Here's to celebrating diversity, building solidarity, and the promise of a future built on understanding, acceptance, and shared humanity.

#### **BAKERS MOTORS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Bakers Motors Albury, on receiving the prestigious Australian Automotive Dealer Association [AADA] Chairman's Lifetime Achievement Award. Founded by Alf Baker more than six decades ago, the Lifetime Achievement Award highlights the fourth-generation family-owned business' outstanding commitment and continuous service to the Albury retail automotive industry. Now guided by CEO David Baker, as the Mercedes-Benz Dealer Principal and Group General Sales Manager, the local dealership has significantly expanded its operations. Bakers Motors stands as an example of how a family business, deeply rooted in its values, can thrive and lead in an ever-evolving industry. To David and the Baker Motors team, thank you for your ongoing community service, your contributions to the automotive industry, and your continued partnerships with leading vehicle manufacturers. This award is truly commendable.



### DEEPWATER PLAYERS

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Deepwater Players on the longevity of their home grown amateur theatre group, staging productions for more than 40 years. The cast and crew are local talent, with productions rolled out every two years for the enjoyment of their community and visitors alike. I congratulate all involved in this wonderful achievement both past and present, with special thanks to the current Deepwater Players: Cathy Wheatley, Denis Haselwood, Katie Newsome, Michael Burge, Catie Macansh, Richard Moon, John Westcombe, Wendy Lockwood and Jen Daley. Thanks also to this year's crew, including Director Chris McIntosh, Producer Jen Lanz, Assistant Producer Michael Burge, Stage Manager Mari Grantun and Choreographer Lindy Alt. I commend all involved in the Deepwater Players, especially for taking the opportunity to raise money through ticket sales to give back to the community, supporting local groups, charities and not-for-profit organisations. The community spirit in Deepwater is certainly inspirational. We wish you all the best for your upcoming 'Uncle Jack' production, which we are sure will be a continuance of the group's many successes.

### MUNGINDI MENS SHED

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Mungindi Mens Shed, for bringing the men of Mungindi and surrounds together to share common interests and activities, in the spirit of mateship. I congratulate all involved in the day-to-day operations of the shed and regular group activities, which typically incorporates wood and metal working, as well as the restoration of old furniture, objects and machines. Special thanks to the committee behind the success of the organisation, including President and Secretary Tom Healy, Treasurer, Grants, Medical and IT Officer Brendan Norris, Project Officer Lewis Black and committee members Paul Rullis, Nathan Steff, Kevin McCosh and Stephen Whitehouse. I commend the committee on their tireless efforts over the years to support the local community and improve the lives of others, particularly those of men. The people of Mungindi and surrounds thank you.

### JACK LOCKYER

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Guyra Shearer Jack Lockyer, on winning a scholarship to broaden his knowledge of the shearing industry and gain an insight into how shearing is run in different areas of the world. As such, Jack will travel to New Zealand to learn how to encourage more young shearers to join the industry. The scholarship was at the back of Jack and his employer GA & A Mayled Shearing Contractors participating in the Global Footprints Employer Supported Stream, a program working in partnership between scholar, employer and Global Footprints. I congratulate Jack for making his mark in the shearing industry over a relatively short time through a school-based traineeship. During this time winning the NSW State Sports Shear Intermediate Title, propelling him to compete for NSW at the National Shearing Titles held at Jamestown SA, where Jack placed an impressive 5th in 2023. I commend Jack for the commitment shown to broadening his career and for the foresight to attract other young people to join the shearing industry. Special thanks also to Jack's employer Garry and Annette Mayled for supporting Jack throughout his remarkable journey.

### FRANGO GLENMORE PARK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate the owners and team at Frango Glenmore Park for the opening of their store, located at HomeCo. Glenmore Park Town Centre. The store opened on 11 September 2024 and is one of 13 Frango stores in Sydney, with the original store having opened in Petersham in 1989. I appreciate the hard work and many further attributes of our community's franchisees and recognise the value they bring to our region and economy. I look forward to trying out one of Frango Glenmore Park's famous meals and wish them the very best as they serve our community and visitors alike.

### MR JOSHUA FERRIF – SELECT FENCING

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I congratulate Glenmore Park local Mr Joshua Ferrif, owner and operator of local Glenmore Park business 'Select Fencing' for having his business win the Fencing Category of the 2024 Australian Trades Small Business Champion Awards. The ceremony for the prestigious awards was held on 23 August 2024 at The Star Sydney. Select Fencing scored highest in the Fencing category, which was judged by an expert panel who considered a variety of aspects of small business operations. I recognise the important role that small businesses such as Select Fencing play and I thank them for the extraordinary value their hard work and many attributes bring to our community and economy. Mr Ferrif has been fencing since a young age and founded Select Fencing in 2011. I commend Mr Ferrif and Select Fencing on their success and wish them the very best.

### SAPPORO DINING

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate the owners and team at Sapporo Dining on the recent opening of their store, located at the St Clair Shopping Centre. Locals and visitors alike were thrilled to learn that Sapporo Dining was opening in St Clair, whereby one may enjoy an extensive menu featuring famous Japanese dishes including Sushi, Sashimi, Gyoza, Udon and Ramen. Local businesses are the fabric of our community and they provide great value to the economy and area. I am thankful for the hard work, expertise, risk and sacrifice that local businesses put in, for the benefit of the community. I look forward to visiting Sapporo Dining to enjoy one of their delicious meals and I wish them success and the very best.

### ANDREA THOMSON MAKING A SPLASH FOR CHARITY

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to send my well wishes to Andrea Thomson of Grafton, who will be participating in raising funds for Oceans to Outback during the month of October. Oceans to Outback is a nationwide fundraiser that supports the Royal Flying Doctor Service and during the month of October they hold a fitness and fundraising challenge. Throughout the 31 days of October 16-year-old Andrea is aiming to complete 100km of swimming along with a weekly 5km run each Wednesday with the Bent Bridge Run Club. Andrea's target is to raise \$1000 for the not-for-profit organisation which provides lifesaving medical services and emergency support to Australians in rural and remote areas 24/7. Along with raising vital funds, Andrea hopes to raise awareness of the invaluable work provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. I congratulate Andrea on her efforts in support of the fundraiser and wish her all the best for a good outcome.

### CLARENCE VALLEY SWIMMING STARS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Jett Burke, Chase Burke and Hayden Whyte, who represented the Maclean Manta Rays Swimming Club to compete in the 2024 Speedo NSW Senior State Age SC Championships. The swimmers travelled to Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre and came away with some fantastic results. Jett won a gold medal in the 16 years 200m butterfly, and Chase scored a silver medal in the boys 14 years 1500m freestyle and a bronze medal in the boys 14 years 800m freestyle. Hayden gained new PB records in all seven races he competed in. What an achievement. The head coach of the Manta Rays Swimming Club, Ruth Everuss, commended the boys for staying dedicated to their training schedules throughout winter. Their dedication is what allowed for their great results. Jett has qualified for the 2024 Australian Open Championships and will head to Adelaide to compete. Congratulations to all three swimmers on your efforts and results.

### GRAFTON DRAGON BOAT CLUB SUCCESS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Grafton Dragon Boat Club who recently took home silver at Camden Haven's Dragon Boat Regatta. The superstar paddlers Karen Traby, Sharon Rowles, Marianne Ross, Debbie Scattergood, Nicole Lloyd, Kate Chaponnel, Francine Nash and Rowena Mustard joined with Kalang Dragon Boat Club and made the final of the women's 200m race. The team focused on getting a strong start and maintaining their paddling as best as possible to get to the finish line. It was such a close race that they didn't even realise they came second until the presentation. Dressing up with dragon wings and head pieces in celebration must have been what helped get them over the line to take home the silver. Congratulations to all involved and well done on the much deserved second place.

### SYDNEY COMMUNITY GROUP - FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS 2024

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Friday 11 October 2024 the Sydney Community Group hosted the Festival of Lights celebration at the Epping Club. Diwali is a festival of lights that go back to being established centuries ago. It symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. The Sydney Community Group epitomises the spirit of the festival of lights. A not-for-profit charity, their aim is to help Sydney's homeless community and all others in need by providing food, clothing, shelter and educational programs where they are needed. In their own words, they are dedicated to inclusivity in building a more just and equitable society. I recognise Sydney Community Group President Indu Harikrishna; Chief Executive Officer Manjula Viswanath; and their entire team who work tirelessly. I thank them for their kind invitation for me to join them in the warmth and joy of the time-honoured Diwali celebration.

### JAMES PATERSON

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise James Paterson who served our local community in the Davidson Electorate Office in the summer of 2023 / 2024. As a member of parliament, James was very supportive in assisting me with public policy research, in particular reviewing NSW Government agency annual reports. I first met James when he was the Youth Member for Davidson in the 2023 NSW Youth Parliament organised by the Y. He advocated passionately for formally recognising disability access in the NSW Building Code. James

has a passion for making a real difference. Currently, he is studying for a degree from the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation at Australian Catholic University in Sydney. I wish him well in his studies. Thank you, James, for your public service for the people of Davidson and the Parliament of NSW.

#### **LIONS CLUB OF CHATSWOOD EXECUTIVE BUSINESS - BOWEL CANCER AUSTRALIA FUNDRAISER**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Tuesday 8 October 2024, I was invited to be a guest speaker at the Lions Club of Chatswood Executive Business. The night was to raise funds and awareness for Bowel Cancer Australia. Willis Phong, Dennis Phong and Leanne Buchbach are undertaking "Hike for Health Nepal 2024" and have raised over \$53,000. This is amazing! At the Lions Club event that donated \$3,000 to the hike, I was joined by speakers Natalie Phong and Associate Professor Graham Newstead AM. We spoke passionately about the need to raise awareness and that you can be #Never2Young to be diagnosed with bowel cancer. I recognise Natalie, who like me, is currently receiving treatment for cancer. She is brave, inspirational and gives all of us hope! I recognise Associate Professor Graham Newstead AM, a colorectal surgeon, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Sydney Colorectal Surgical Society, the Colorectal Surgical Society of Australia and New Zealand and the International Council of Coloproctology. He shared much wisdom. Finally, I recognise the Lions Club President Hendra Wijaya and Immediate Past President Michelle Lam who helped organise this wonderful event. Thank you.

#### **MANLY AQUATIC CENTRE LIFEGUARD HEROICS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the recent quick-thinking, lifesaving actions by members of the public and staff at Manly's Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Swim Centre, also known as the Manly Aquatic Centre. Not long ago, local man Peter Land was revived by Northern Beaches Council lifeguards when he was found unconscious in the pool. A woman swimming nearby noticed Peter's condition, and with the assistance of another member of the public who miraculously happened to be a theatre nurse at the Royal North Shore Hospital, notified lifeguards while keeping Peter's head above water. I acknowledge Operations Supervisor Scott who without hesitation contacted emergency services and organised an oxy breather and defibrillator to be rushed to Peter's side. I also pay special tribute to lifeguard Lexie who sprung into action to deliver the equipment, and lifeguards Steve and Ian who were the first responders. I extend my sincere gratitude to those who were involved in saving Peter's life and am pleased to inform the House that after recovering in hospital, Peter is now back in the pool and recently boasted a 600-metre swim. We are exceptionally fortunate to call these heroes members of the Manly community.

#### **SYDNEY N SCALE MODEL RAILWAY CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I wish to recognise and acknowledge the Sydney N Scale Model Railway Club, located in my electorate of Rockdale, for helping N scale modellers for over 50 years. From humble beginnings, the membership has been growing and includes members ranging from six-year-olds to grandparents. The members find this a great way to learn new skills, to exchange and share ideas and information and, most importantly to enjoy and have fun together. The club meets once a week and occasionally runs clinics where specific skills are taught besides the basic skills needed like building benchwork, laying tracks, wiring, and scenery. The club has a permanent layout, named the Cascade Union Railway, as well as other portable layouts used for exhibition purposes. I wish success to the club as it celebrates its annual open day on 19th October 2024, and I encourage all the railway enthusiasts to join in the excitement and see tracks of a more traditional kind. I also wish to extend my appreciation to this niche group for pursuing their passion and making their hobby a reality.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING THE SERVICE OF CR HUGH ERIKSSON**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I am pleased to pay tribute to Councillor Hugh Eriksson for his 12 years of dedicated service to the people of Willoughby in the Sailors Bay Ward. Hugh has been a tireless and hardworking representative focused on the needs and wellbeing of his community. Throughout his career, Hugh earned the respect and support of his colleagues and constituents for his commitment to ensuring the community was heard and fostered. His dedication to local issues and his thoughtful approach to decision-making have left a lasting impact on the Willoughby area. Hugh's legacy is one of care for his community, and his contributions will be remembered and valued for years to come. I extend my heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Hugh for all that he has achieved during his time on council, and I wish him every success in his future endeavours.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING THE SERVICE OF CR SARKIS MOURADIAN**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I am honoured to acknowledge Councillor Sarkis Mouradian for his committed service to the Willoughby community. Over the last term, Sarkis was a passionate and committed

representative, always working tirelessly to address the needs of our community. Sarkis is known for his strong connection to the area particularly through his ties to the Armenian Community. His commitment to improving the quality of life for the people of Willoughby is commendable. Whether advocating for better services or ensuring local voices were heard, Sarkis put the community first. I extend my deep thanks and congratulations to Sarkis Mouradian for his outstanding service and wish him all the best as he moves into the next chapter of his life. His contributions will be appreciated and remembered by all those whose lives he has touched.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING THE SERVICE OF CR JAM XIA**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It is a privilege to recognise Councillor Jam Xia for his dedicated service to the Willoughby community. Jam has been a passionate advocate, particularly known for his strong focus on improving local transport infrastructure, a cause he championed throughout his time on council. Jam's dedication to the welfare of the community was commendable, supporting better connectivity and accessibility in the area has left a lasting impact on the community. His work has always reflected a genuine desire to make local transport safer, more efficient and sustainable for everyone. I extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to Jam Xia for his dedicated service. His contributions to local transport infrastructure and the Willoughby community will be remembered and appreciated for years to come. I wish him every success in his future endeavours.

#### **MOSTAFA JAMALIFARD - ANATOLIA TURKISH CUISINE**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Mostafa Jamalifard, the owner of Anatolia Turkish Cuisine in Forster, for the outstanding service he provides through his restaurant. Moz has created an inviting space where locals and visitors can enjoy authentic and flavourful Turkish dishes, always paired with warm and friendly service. Anatolia has become a beloved spot for celebrations, including my own family's birthday gatherings, and it never disappoints. From savory meals to Anatolia's Bazaar next door, offering delicious homemade ice cream, baklava, and Turkish delights, Moz goes above and beyond to ensure every visit is special. In celebration of Small Business Month, I want to thank Moz for his hard work in creating a unique dining experience and bringing a taste of Turkey to Forster.

#### **SUE BREWER**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—As October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I would like to recognise Sue Brewer from Rocks Kids in Forster for providing expert fittings for breast prostheses, an essential service for women following a mastectomy or partial mastectomy. Sue and her team are the only qualified fitters on the Mid Coast, ensuring that women have access to well-fitting prostheses and bras that not only restore balance and comfort but also help rebuild confidence. With support from the Great Lakes Breast Cancer Support Group, Sue's service makes a real difference for many women in our community. I thank Sue for the important role she plays in supporting breast cancer survivors, ensuring they have the care they need during a challenging time.

#### **TAREE TORNADOES BASKETBALL**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Taree Tornadoes Basketball Club, along with president, Steve Atkins, for their contributions to the expansion of the Iron Arena, an important project for our region. The Iron Arena Expansion will not only provide much-needed sporting infrastructure but will also serve as a hub for community events, trade shows, and national competitions, bringing many benefits to Taree. This project, which my predecessor, Stephen Bromhead, supported, has faced many challenges, but thanks to the support of sporting groups like the Taree Tornadoes, it is set to become a reality. With the addition of four multi-purpose courts, the Iron Arena will be a state-of-the-art facility, supporting not only basketball but also futsal, volleyball, and other sports. I commend Steve Atkins and the Taree Tornadoes for their vision and commitment to local sports, ensuring that the Iron Arena will provide future generations with a place to play, compete, and thrive.

#### **SISTERS DANCE THEIR WAY TO USA TITLES**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to congratulate sisters Alexis and Harlow French for their astounding achievements at a dance competition in California last month. I am very proud to say both sisters grew up and developed their talents in my electorate of Bankstown. Their perseverance and commitment to get this far have astounded me, demonstrating that Bankstown is brimming with talent. After winning a place in the Australian national competition 'Get the Beat' last year, which meant that the sisters automatically qualified to be part of the team competing in the USA last month. At the dance competition in California, Alexis was named Miss Teen Dance America while Harlow was a Miss Petite Dance America runner up. They both came first in their three age-group categories – High Elite Open, High Elite Lyrical and High Elite

Broadway. They also took part in a group team event in which they placed first. Both sisters joined Ignition Dance Academy in Condell Park since it opened six years ago. They are now preparing for their next Australian national competition in October. Good luck girls and I'm sure you'll do amazing.

#### **ST THERESE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—St Therese's Catholic Primary School in Lakemba contributed to the community by collecting trolley loads of donated goods to assist St Vincents Bankstown during the Winter Appeal. After hearing that the charity store was having to turn away families who were suffering hardship, St Therese Catholic Primary School sent a wish list of needed items home with each student. The children and their families dug deep to come up with several carloads of donations that were delivered to St Vinnies Bankstown in early July. Students from Kindergarten to Year 6 brought in a range of items including hygiene products like toothpaste and soap, non-perishables like noodles and canned fruit, tea and biscuits while the staff donated blankets and feminine hygiene products. It is so touching and incredible to see students contributing to such an amazing cause and helping those who are less fortunate in our community. This act of generosity and kindness displays the values we set in our Bankstown community. Thank you to St Therese Catholic Primary School and all families of the community who supported this incredible school initiative to assist the good works of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

#### **DEPUTY MAYOR KHODR (KARL) SALEH OAM**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I join our community in welcoming the new Deputy Mayor of the great City of Canterbury, Councillor Khodr (Karl) Saleh OAM. With a wealth of experience in Local Government, Karl was first elected to the City of Canterbury and then the City of Canterbury Bankstown in 2004 and re-elected in 2008, 2012, 2021 and 2024. He served as Deputy Mayor thrice in 2008, 2012 and 2015. Councillor Saleh has always been passionate and committed to promoting cultural understanding to address many of the community's needs in the Canterbury Bankstown area, which is home to more than 150 different nationalities. Apart from his role as Councillor, he has also been involved in various other Council committees and Community groups. Most notably, he is the President and co-founder of the Canterbury Harmony Care group, established in 2006 which consists of over 25 different local cultural communities. In 2015 he was elected as the Deputy Chair of the Riverwood Community Centre. He has also been appointed as a "White Ribbon" Day Ambassador for his work against Domestic Violence. I wish the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Saleh, all the best in his new role.

#### **JULIE KEATING**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—As part of Wallsend's 2024 150th celebrations, local history buff Julie Keating was very pleased when her 21st April talk "Wallsend Lifestyle of the 1800s" attracted over 40 guests to Wallsend Library. Julie was born and raised in Lambton and, loving local history and research, helped with the Lambton 150th celebrations. Her Wallsend presentation included slides of Ralph Snowball photos depicting early miners' cottages (most of which have been demolished), saying that they were haphazardly built (there being no local government rules) – no windows, outdoor cooking and washing in a basin, finding their own water and burying their own sewage. Sadly, the youngest miner killed was a boy, aged 11, at Plattsburg Cooperative Colliery. Julie has been a University, TAFE and school Librarian, over forty years in all, and has written eight books on aspects of Newcastle in the 1800s. You can see her Wallsend Heritage Walk on the CoN website. Julie continues to give talks at U3A and Probus clubs – mainly to attentive older audiences. Thankyou, Julie, for being a contributor to Wallsend's 150th!

#### **LESLEY GENT, OAM**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Guest Speaker at Wallsend Library on Sunday May 5 was local historian and researcher Lesley Gent talking about "School of Arts and Mechanics Institutes of Wallsend and Plattsburg", noting the village-like nature of Wallsend, how there are generations of families living in the area and how communities can band together to achieve wonderful outcomes. Lesley focused on three Schools of the Arts in Wallsend, saying that these and the Mechanics Institute were sources of learning for miners who had no schooling. She is particularly fascinated by architectural plans and old, historic buildings. Lesley grew up in country NSW and later moved to Sydney, working as Press Relations Officer for David Jones. She has led a busy and interesting life: serving on the Education Advisory Council, official historian Secretary/Treasurer to RAAF 77 Squadron at Williamtown, RAAFA-NSW and ADFAS historian. Lesley was awarded an OAM for her work with veterans and their families, has been a member of University of Newcastle Hunter Living Histories group, organiser/convenor/fundraiser for the University of Newcastle Book Fair and Member of the National Trust. Thankyou, Lesley, for helping to celebrate Wallsend's 150th anniversary.

### MARA WATTS

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—56-year-old Novocastrian Mara Watts was celebrated on June 3 at Accor Stadium in front of 76,798 fans. An attacking midfielder, she was a member of the Australian women's football squad from 1983 – 1989. Mara had waited 40 years for Football Federation Australia to present her with her representative cap. Mara first represented her country at an eight-team tournament in China, 1984 – involving Japan, Italy, America and four Chinese provinces. The high school home economics and physical education teacher debuted against Shaanxi province but the achievement of representing her country had not been acknowledged until last year, when Football Australia announced 42 former Australian representative players would be recognised. These players had been selected by the national governing body but did not play in games classified as "A" internationals. Mara started as an 11-year-old (girls were not allowed to play before then) and improved by playing against her two older brothers and at school. She moved into coaching after some major knee surgeries and eventually helped to establish a football program at Hunter Sports High. Congratulations and well-deserved, Mara. We are proud of your contributions and achievements.

### TWEED SKATERS

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Tweed skateboarders have excelled at the World Skate Games held in Rome last month. 13-year-old Summer Rackley, from Pottsville, is the current Australian Women's Bowl Skateboarding Champion and was the youngest of five skaters selected to represent Australia at the World Skate Games. Summer competed in the Vert (a half pipe with a vertical section at the top) and placed 19th. Jada Ward, also from Pottsville, also competed in the Vert competition and placed 6th. And Ash Wilcomes, another Pottsville skater, come in second place in the world in the qualifiers. These talented skaters then went on to compete at Jackalope in Montreal, where impressively Jada took home the win and Summer placed third. Adding to the success in Montreal, Summer's ten-year-old sister Coco placed fifth in the Open Women's competition and second in the Open Groms. Congratulations to Summer, Coco, Jada and Ash. I'm sure we will be seeing many more accomplishments on the world stage from these very talented Tweed skaters.

### THE TWEED COAST RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—The Tweed Coast Rural Fire Brigade celebrated the 10th anniversary of the renovation of its Pottsville fire station earlier this month. The 2014 renovations added a second level and modernisations to the original station. The upgraded station is a hub for meetings and training, including district and brigade training, first aid courses and leadership programs. The anniversary is also an opportunity to highlight the need for more volunteers to join the Tweed Coast Rural Fire Brigade, with people as young as 16 able to begin as cadets. I encourage any prospective volunteers to contact the brigade or visit the New South Wales Rural Fire Service website to fill out an application. Congratulations to the Tweed Coast Rural Fire Brigade on the anniversary of the station renovations and thank you for your ongoing commitment and service to the Tweed community.

### SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW AWARDS

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Artisans Soul in Mooball in the Tweed Electorate was recently recognised at the Sydney Royal Fine Food Show, taking home an impressive five awards. The company's Tweed Real Good Wild Raspberry Splash Vinegar was awarded silver as was its Tweed Real Food Classic Caramelised Splash Balsamic Vinegar. In addition, Artisans Soul also took home three bronze medals for its Tweed Real Food Cheese Board Splash Balsamic Vinegar, its Smokey Bacon Splash Balsamic Vinegar and its Sticky Plum Splash Balsamic Vinegar. Nathan and Julia Foyster are the clever Tweed locals behind Artisans Soul and Tweed Real Food. Fifth-generation farmers, they use as many local ingredients as possible and use recycled, reused or biodegradable materials wherever possible. Congratulations to Nathan and Julia on your success at the Sydney Royal Fine Food Show awards.

### SURF LIFE SAVING ILLAWARRA

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—I am proud to be a patron for Surf Life Saving Illawarra. It is not secret that one thing our beautiful region is known for is our fantastic beaches, which we could not enjoy as much as we do without every single member of the Surf Life Saving Illawarra community. Our life savers are some of the most selfless people in our community and represent what it truly means to be a part of a community. That's why I am extremely proud to be a part of a NSW Government that is investing in our Surf Life Savers and the safety of our community, with the installation of Emergency Response Beacons at Woonona and Austinmer Beach. As we approach our warmer months and our life savers begin their duties of patrolling the beach, it is important to remember sun and swim safety. We must remain in the flags, apply sunscreen, find shade, and stay hydrated. On

behalf of the beach goers of the Keira electorate I would like to thank every member of the Illawarra Surf Life Saving Community and commend you for volunteering your time.

#### **2024 LEADERSHIP TEAM, NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to take this opportunity to formally recognize and congratulate the 2024 leadership team of Newbridge Heights Public School. These students have been chosen by their peers and teachers to lead their school community, a role they are fulfilling with great dedication and enthusiasm. It is my privilege to acknowledge the exceptional 2024 leadership team: Captains Jesinta Davies and Blake Waugh, Vice Captains Elena Djurdjevic and Aymen El Masri, and Prefects Lilah Dao, Alisha Khan, Angad Aujla, and Wael Khaled. These students are already demonstrating the qualities of effective and compassionate leaders, and their contributions are fostering a spirit of respect, teamwork, and excellence within the school. With the ongoing support of their teachers and fellow students, I am confident that this leadership team is setting a positive example for their peers and making a meaningful impact on the school community. I extend my best wishes to them as they continue to develop their leadership skills and represent Newbridge Heights Public School with pride throughout the year.

#### **NEWTOWN JETS PREMIERSHIP AND VALE BARRY VINING OAM**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—Congratulations to the Newtown Jets who added to their rich club history by winning the NSW Cup, beating the North Sydney Bears 28-22. Winning their first premiership since 2019 the Jets bravely hung on in the final minutes of the game as the Bears threw everything at them. Thank you to all the many dedicated fans who show up to support the Jets; at 117 years and going strong they are not just one of the oldest clubs but clearly the coolest! Congratulations to Coach George Ndaira, Captain Billy Burns, all the players, supporters, volunteers and everyone associated with the Jets on an amazing season. Sadly, we cannot celebrate this great victory without also acknowledging the passing of Mr Barry Vining OAM, long time president of the club. Barry was President for 32 years, keeping the club alive, along with Terry Rowney, through the long years with no teams playing. Also a recipient of the Order of Australia medal, Barry made a significant contribution to business as well as rugby league. I offer my deepest condolences to Barry's wife Vicki, immediate family and all those who knew and loved him.

#### **CABBAGE TREE ISLAND RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM AT KOORI KNOCKOUT 2024**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I commend the Cabbage Tree Island Rugby League Club for their outstanding achievements at the 2024 NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Koori Knockout. Two men's teams and the women's team from 'Cabbo' - as they are affectionately known - qualified for this prestigious tournament. The Women's team dominated in their first round, securing a 22-0 victory against the Next Generation Kangaroos and made an impressive run all the way to the semi-final. In the Men's division, both Cabbage Tree Island teams triumphed in the first round, defeating Darkinjung Waters and overpowering the Enngonia Outlaws respectively. While they faced fierce competition in later rounds, the Cabbo teams' efforts and teamwork are to be celebrated. This success is particularly inspiring given the adversity the Cabbage Tree Island community faced in the aftermath of the devastating floods of 2022, which displaced their entire community and disrupted local life. Despite these challenges, the community's resilience, determination, and team spirit continue to shine through. I congratulate the players, their families, and the broader community for their results, and I wish 'Cabbo' continued success in future competitions.

#### **SIMONE CLARK - 2024 NORTHERN RIVERS ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—I acknowledge Simone Clark, who has been named the Northern Rivers Adult Volunteer of the Year for her selfless contributions to the community. Simone has shown remarkable dedication through her work with Wardell CORE, Orange Sky and Mary's Place, where she tirelessly provides essential services to those in need. During the devastating 2022 floods, Simone was a constant presence, offering non-stop support to affected residents, embodying the very essence of community spirit. Her volunteer work extends far beyond disaster relief. Orange Sky, a homeless Charity, creates a safe and supportive space for vulnerable individuals while Mary's Place, a drop-in service run by Vinnies in Ballina, provides vital resources such as meals, refreshments, healthcare, legal aid, counselling services and housing support to the community. Simone's unwavering commitment has positively impacted countless lives in the Northern Rivers region, particularly in times of crisis. Her altruistic efforts are a true reflection of the compassion and resilience of our community at its best. I commend Simone for her incredible work and congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

#### **KAREN SPARKES – AUSSIE BATTLERS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise a wonderful charity based in the Camden Haven called Aussie Battlers and the founder Karen Sparkes who saw the need to create a community based

organisation that focussed on supporting people facing financial hardships. Karen Sparkes is a respected and admired advocate for our most marginalised in the Camden Haven community. Her charity Aussie Battlers has been instrumental over the past 10 years in supporting individuals and families providing access to the essentials they need to live and survive on low incomes. Karen has lived experience in the area and understands the constraints people are facing, especially in this current cost of living crisis. From humble beginnings with her husband Steve, the couple has supported countless people during times of distress. During the 2019 Black Summer Bushfires and the 2021 floods, Karen, Steve and their hardworking volunteers were on the ground, providing essentials to those who were displaced from their homes. Over the years, Karen has established connections with local business owners and service providers that wish to donate food for people doing it tough. Aussie Battlers mission is 'Paving the Way to a Better Tomorrow'. A wonderful organisation, serving our community. Thank you.

#### **NSW SES PORT MACQUARIE UNIT WIN NATIONAL DISASTER RESCUE CHALLENGE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I am honoured and excited to share with you the news today that Port Macquarie's State Emergency Service [SES] Unit has now claimed its third gold at the National Disaster Rescue Challenge held on 27-29 September 2024 in Sydney. I congratulate the nine members from Port Macquarie that strained and exerted everything they had to win the major award; Michael Brumby, Kathryn Blake, Alfred Portenschlager, Sereena Ward, Brendon Field, William Steggall, Aaron Dart, Deborah Scarr and Mirella Baker. Michael Brumby also won the Best Team Leader award on the weekend against some fierce competition. The National Disaster Rescue Challenge started in 1988 and involves more than 200 teams from around Australia, competing in twelve different scenarios. The interagency exercises focus on enhancing capabilities and building safe communities through the sharing of best practices. This year, teams from NSW SES, Queensland SES, South Australia SES, Western Australia SES, Victoria SES and ACT SES competed in the challenge. Arguably, the SES Port Macquarie Unit are the envy of State Emergency Services, for their exceptional management practices and professionalism when faced with an emergency or national disaster. An extraordinary achievement - congratulations!

#### **SHARK BITE KITS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today, I recognise a new initiative inspired by shark attack victim Kai McKenzie - Shark Bite Kits. In July of this year, local surfer Kai McKenzie was attacked by a three-metre great white shark on the North Shore of Port Macquarie. He sustained major injuries to his leg, requiring surgery and tragically the loss of his limb. As is often the case, true Aussie spirit in helping one's mate has fuelled a major fundraising campaign, focussed on the installation of shark bite kits at unpatrolled beaches across the Mid North Coast. Kai's close mate, Danny Schouten is leading the charge to ensure the next shark victim has the basic medical equipment available until help arrives. The Shark Bite Kits contain two tourniquets, compression bandage, two dressings, foil blanket, gloves and step-by-step instructions to treat shark bite. Danny's campaign has raised \$2,475 with ten kits purchased, with credit to Jye and Lachlan Kelly from Bonny Hills, for funding the first set of emergency kits. Initial locations to be rolled out include North Wall in Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie, Bonny Hills and Queens Head beaches. I thank Danny and his mates for establishing this significant and potentially lifesaving initiative.

#### **BISHOP OF PARRAMATTA AWARDS FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE – EMMANUEL CRICHTON**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Emmanuel Crichton on receiving a Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence on 6th September 2024, presented by the Rev. Bishop Vincent Long OFM at St Patrick's Cathedral. Emmanuel is an exceptional student at Patrician Brother's College, Blacktown. As College Captain, Emmanuel approaches all situations with humility, compassion, and care. His generous nature extends to his volunteering for social justice initiatives at school, including at fundraising appeals, Vinnies Van and the College Community Breakfast. A confident advocate, Emmanuel is an integral member of the Public Speaking and Debating Teams, and actively participates in liturgies. He truly embodies the College Patrician Pillars. The Bishop of Parramatta Awards celebrate all-rounded excellence, acknowledging the empathy, courage, generosity and service students offer their schools and our Western Sydney community. The awards recognise Catholic Education's legacy to champion every person for the common good. Thank you, Jack de Groot, Executive Director Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese, Bishop Vincent and the Catholic Education community for facilitating this showcase. Thank you as well to Brian Edmonds, Acting College Principal, and the school community for developing high calibre, compassionate students. Congratulations again, Emmanuel, on this prestigious Award.

#### **BISHOP OF PARRAMATTA AWARDS FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE – CHEVONNE LOBO**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Chevonne Lobo on receiving a Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence on 6th September 2024, presented by the Rev. Bishop Vincent Long OFM at St Patrick's Cathedral. Chevonne is an extraordinary student at Nagle College, Blacktown. Inspired by



Nano Nagle's service to those in need, Chevonne participated in the Winter Sleepout and Feed the Five Thousand. A natural leader, Chevonne represented her parish and school as a World Youth Day pilgrim, and provides youth leadership at her Parish. Chevonne epitomises the Nagle College motto, "In Deed Not Word," with faith guiding her energetic pursuit to make our world a better place. The Bishop of Parramatta Awards celebrate all-rounded excellence, acknowledging the empathy, courage, generosity and service students offer their schools and our Western Sydney community. The awards recognise Catholic Education's legacy to champion every person for the common good. Thank you, Jack de Groot, Executive Director Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese, Bishop Vincent and the Catholic Education community for facilitating this showcase. Thank you as well to Delma Horan, Nagle College Principal, and the school community for developing high calibre, compassionate students. Congratulations again, Chevonne, on this prestigious Award.

#### **COLES - WETHERILL PARK CUSTOMER FULFILMENT CENTRE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Friday 11th October, I was delighted to join workers, dignitaries and officials for the grand opening of the Coles Wetherill Park Customer Fulfilment Centre. Founded back in 1914, Coles operates more than 800 supermarkets and employs more than 120,000 Australians, delivering fresh groceries to households across the country. As a state-of-the-art facility in the heart of our Prospect Electorate, Coles have designed this facility with a sustainability focus, including a two-megawatt solar installation, water recycling and 100 percent cardboard recycling. After the opening ceremony, I conducted a tour of the 87,000 square metre site, the size of 6 Sydney Cricket Grounds, and observed the innovative centralised hub known as 'The Hive,' where 700 automated bots will be able to fulfil a customer order containing 50 items in just five minutes. At full capacity, the Wetherill Park CFC will be able to process more than 10,000 customer orders per day and have a total capacity of over 3,000,000 units of stock. My congratulations go out to Leah Weckert, CEO, James Graham AM, Chairman, and all 1,000 members of the Coles Wetherill Park Customer Fulfilment Centre team on a wonderful event. Happy trading!

#### **QUAKERS HILL DESTROYERS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Congratulations to the Quakers Hill Destroyers on what has been another great season of local rugby league. I was proud to attend their presentation night last Sunday and it was incredible to witness the dedication, teamwork, and passion that every player, coach, and supporter brought to the field and I look forward to this continuing next year. I know each of our players have put in hard work and training, honing their skills and learning the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship. It's not just about winning; it's about the friendships forged and the lessons learned along the way. The camaraderie and support amongst Destroyers teammates is to be admired and with this attitude I'm sure theirs will continue to be an incredible team. I also thank and congratulate the dedicated coaching team and volunteers - your guidance, support, and commitment to developing our young athletes is invaluable. I extend this to the loyal supporters, standing by our teams and fuelling the team spirit the Destroyers are known for. I especially thank Dom and Jenny Veal for their devotion to this great club! Enjoy the off season, keeping fit and ready to go again next year! Go Destroyers!

#### **MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION OF QUAKERS HILL**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Mr Speaker today, I rise to acknowledge and thank the Malayalee Association of Quakers Hill for inviting me to be the Chief guest at their Onam Festival this past weekend. Onam is a beautiful celebration that embodies the rich traditions and heritage of the Indian state of Kerala. It is a harvest festival that 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 for one day each year. Onam commemorates King Mahabali's annual visit. The festival is celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm. It features Kerala's rich cultural heritage with traditional music, dance, and Onam Sadhya feast. It is a time for families and friends to come together, strengthen bonds, and celebrate. Exactly the type of activities you'd expect to do if you only had just one day per year on Earth. I am truly honoured to be included in such a significant cultural event. Thank you.

#### **EINSTEIN KIDZ ABACUS THE PONDS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I congratulate Priya Wani and her team at Einstein Kidz Abacus The Ponds. Ms Wani played a pivotal role in hosting and coordinating the "Mathopedia Math Abacus Award Program". An event which I had the pleasure of attending. Children from ages 4 to 15 partake in extra-curricular math classes, bolstering their understanding of information they gain in school. I want to commend Ms Wani on her commitment to education and her vision to see the mathematical potential fulfilled in every child who walks through her doors. In my discussions with her it was clear the high regard she held for education and the passion she had as an educator. Her dedication to throwing an award ceremony which saw all children involved speaks to the inclusive environment she has fostered at her centre. The night also included a fun fashion show

segment – which highlights how Ms Wani is fostering a love for math in her students by fun and engaging activities. I want to again congratulate Priya Wani for her work at Einstein Kidz Abacus The Ponds – her dedication to education is a shining example of those committed to our youngest learners.

#### **GERRINGONG STUDENT CAMILLA ADDISON**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises local Gerringong Public School student Camilla Addison. The St. George Illawarra Dragons have recently crowned Gerringong student Camilla Addison for their 'The Best You Can Be School Learning Icon Design Competition'. Camilla's artwork included an illustration of Buriburi, a spiritually significant figure in the Dreamtime that takes the form of a humpback whale. Camilla's winning artwork was a brilliant illustration with a lot of effort applied and I congratulate her and the Dragons for sponsoring this learning initiative. The competition began as a way for schools and students to discuss the importance and relevance of Aboriginal history on the lands of which their schools sit and from where they learn each day. The competition task is to design a 'learning icon' which reflects on the ancient history of First Nations people. Gerringong Public School recently opened the Buriburi playgroup, a dedicated space for Koori children in the community. Gerringong Public School was one of 11 schools entered in the competition that had close to 120 entries. They have won a Dragons jersey to aid fundraising efforts, a breakfast and skills clinic hosted by the Dragons.

#### **CHRIS LANE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—On behalf of the St George community, I would like to thank photographer Chris Lane, for his service to the St George & Sutherland Shire Leader. Mr Lane began working for the Leader in 2000, however, his professional career in the media industry has developed from a hobby at the age of 14, starting out capturing his friends competing in sporting events. Mr Lane worked in Canberra for a few years in 2004 but later returned to the Leader. After almost a quarter century behind the camera, I wish Mr Lane all the best in his future ventures and once again thank him for his outstanding service to the St George community.

#### **JOHN VEAGE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate John Veage on his exceptional career as a photographer for the St George & Sutherland Shire Leader. John Veage began his career for the Leader in 1985, shooting sporting events every weekend. In 1987, he joined the full-time staff and was appointed Chief Photographer for Fairfax Community Newspapers, tasked with overseeing 20 photographers. He also worked for The Sydney Morning Herald. Throughout his distinguished career, he has photographed countless dignitaries and major events, conveying a plethora of stories from sports, community and hard news through his camera lens. After 39 years of service, Mr Veage is now leaving. On behalf of the St George community, I want to sincerely thank Mr Veage for his momentous service and wish him all the best in his future endeavours, particularly in the realm of surfing media. His service and dedication are greatly appreciated and will be missed.

#### **SHARON TIVEY**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Dr Sharon Tivey who was awarded the 2024 South Eastern Sydney Local Health District CORE award. The CORE awards celebrate excellence, innovation and commitment to the delivery of healthcare within our community. Each year, NSW Health recognises and honours individuals who are making a significant contribution to improving patient care, health outcomes and service delivery. Dr Sharon Tivey along with Professor Julia Maclean, led a multidisciplinary team of clinicians to devise a system that alerts staff to the special airway needs that some patients need in hospital. Dr Tivey and Professor Maclean have worked together for over 20 years to come up with solutions to ensure staff have the correct information available to them to keep patients safe. This innovation is a testament to the dedication and expertise of the team at St George Hospital and their unwavering commitment to improving patient outcomes. On behalf of the St George community, I extend our sincerest congratulations to Dr Tivey for this well-deserved recognition.

#### **BRONTE PEEL AND MAITLAND FC**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Bronte Peel and the Maitland FC NPLW team on their amazing season and their success at the recent Northern NSW Football Van Egmond Jennings Awards. Maitland FC striker, Bronte Peel, convincingly took out the prestigious Emily van Egmond medal. The medal is for the Player of the Year in the NPLW, and Bronte won by 16 points and was presented her medal by NSW Minister for Women Jodie Harrison MP. Bronte also won the Golden Boot award with 41 goals for the season and the Players' Player award. Maitland's keeper Annabella Thornton was awarded the Debra Carlin trophy for Goalkeeper of the Year. While Goal of the Year went to midfielder Paige Kingston-Hogg. Coach Keelan Hamilton was named Coach of the Year for the NPLW too! Maitland FC, not surprisingly but most deservedly, were named NPLW Club of the Year! A big congratulations

to Thornton Redbacks Senior FC who won League One Club of the Year and the Fair Play award. Maitland's Bronte Peel, Paige Kingston-Hogg and Annabella Thornton, Keelan Hamilton as well as Brayden Crawley were also all named in the Team of the Year. Congratulations to all!

#### **COUNTRY MUSICIAN DANNY STUCKINGS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I'd like to congratulate Maitland musician Danny Stuckings who walked away from his first talent quest with a swag of awards and a recording contract! Danny entered his first Wine Country Music Association and dominated proceedings. Danny walked out with six trophies from entering four sections, including being named overall winner. He won first place in the senior male vocal, Australian country vocal and country rock categories, second place in the country gospel senior category, best bush ballad for his Australian country performance and overall winner, which won him a contract to record a six-track album with Footloose Recording Studio. Danny is a third-generation country musician, comes from pure Country Music stock. His pop performed as does his mum, Helen Stuckings was inducted into the Australian Country Music Stars of Fame in April as part of the 'Ebony and Ivory' singing duo with Rosie Smith. His father, Robert Threlfo is a fellow Maitland musician. Danny Stuckings still performs locally every week, but that may soon change with his growing musical status. Well done, Danny!

#### **WALCHA HOSPITAL AUXILIARY'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—This year the Walcha Hospital Auxiliary will celebrate its 90th Anniversary. Since its founding on 18 October 1934, the auxiliary has raised funds to purchase items and equipment to support local healthcare. The Walcha Hospital Younger Set Auxiliary, a youth committee of which I was once a member, was formed on 7th December 1964 with Mrs Molly Hunt being an inaugural member. The two groups amalgamated on 12th July 2001 forming a stronger team of ladies who continued to volunteer under the banner of Walcha Hospital Auxiliary. Today, membership numbers are 29, ranging in age from their mid-20's to their mid-80's, indeed a diverse group. Molly Hunt has been their long-term Patroness along with Walcha Mayor, Eric Noakes as their Patron. The auxiliary's combined fundraising efforts to support their Local Health Service since 1964 have totalled \$322,998, a wonderful combined community effort. These funds have purchased new equipment to make it easier for staff and patients alike. Congratulations to the Walcha Hospital Auxiliary, I am sad that I cannot join in the celebrations but send my deep appreciation for their long-term efforts for the community of Walcha.

#### **BUTCHER BIRDS LADIES LEAGUE TAG TEAM**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It has been a big year for Central Newcastle Rugby League Club, and I was so pleased to attend the Club's presentation evening last weekend. I'm very proud to be able to congratulate the Butcher Birds Ladies League Tag Team who have had an outstanding season, winning all of their games and taking both the minor and major premierships.

#### **CHARLESTOWN KOORI NETBALL TOURNAMENT**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Next weekend, Charlestown Netball Club is hosting the 2024 Koori Netball Tournament which is now in its twenty-fourth year. This is a truly wonderful community event where teams from all over New South Wales converge on Charlestown Netball Courts for two days of netball, and just as importantly, for catching up with family and friends. In its first year, nine teams initially competed, and this has grown exponentially, with one hundred and sixteen teams competing in this year's gathering. A "Spirit Award" is presented to one team in each division based on tournament organisers observations of team sportsmanship, on and off the field, comradery amongst teams and showing respect to officials, other players, and spectators over the course of the weekend. I'm very much looking forward to attending the tournament next weekend and want to particularly thank Dianne Pascoe, Peta Forder, and all at Charlestown Netball Club for hosting this very special tournament.

#### **NEWCASTLE NORTHSTARS ICE HOCKEY CLUB**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I'm very pleased to be able to congratulate all players, officials and supporters of the Newcastle Northstars Ice Hockey Club who have recently just finished another very successful year of competition. The Northstars have really gone from strength to strength over recent years and I'm proud that their base is in the Charlestown electorate. Congratulations to the under seventeens team who came fourth in their competition, the senior four team, who also finished fourth in theirs, the senior three team who came second in their division, and finally, I'm very proud to report that the senior two team are the New South Wales Champions for 2024, which is just an outstanding achievement. Sporting clubs are such an important

part of our communities, and who we are as Australians, and whilst I regularly acknowledge the achievements of soccer, netball, cricket and rugby league clubs in Charlestown, it's a particular pleasure to be able to congratulate and send my best wishes to the mighty Northstars, in this brilliant game many associate more with Canada and the United States, but which has a very growing presence in Australia. Good luck for 2025 Northstars

#### **COMO JANNALI JRLFC**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—Another incredible rugby league season has concluded for the Como Jannali Junior Rugby League Football Club. Season 2024 saw the Crocs excel across the Cronulla Sutherland District Junior Rugby Football League competitions. Impressively, the Crocs won the Southern Sydney Under 15 Boys Silver, Southern Sydney Under 17 Boys Gold, Blues Tag Under 12 Silver, Blues Tag Under 12 Gold, Blues Tag Under 14 Gold and Blues Tag Under 18 titles. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of the Como Crocs Management Committee. I recognise Nathan Sykes, Chris Bowden, Justine Goldsbrough, Jay Putterill, Scott Frater, Felicity Rayner, Dane Kearns, Peter Anderson, Rowland Beckett, Barry Hulbert, Dennis Joyce, Gary Wicks, Hayden Garn, Gareth Hughes, Kellie Stubbs, Matt Stubbs, Shane Hulbert, Sean Bateman, Shareen Moran, Faith Perryman, Sue Lennon, Leigh Evans, Alex Harding, Peter Melville, Katie Stedman, Kim Hughes, Melissa Sykes, Melissa Ashmore, Jens Lindhardt, Llew Dowley, Chris Coleman, Paul Douglas, John Hughes, Tony Robinson, Nathan Sykes, Daniel Beckett, Sally Bridgland, Brianne Gorman, Shannon Hughes, Helen Hulbert, Felicity Rayner and Cherie Zara for their efforts. I congratulate everyone at the Como Jannali Junior Rugby League Football Club on their success this year. Go the Crocs!

#### **KEN MARSLEW**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Ken Marslew on being a Westfield Miranda Local Hero finalist for 2024. Ken is a truly incredible individual who has devoted his life to supporting the needs of victims of crime, violence, anti-social behaviour and road trauma. In 1994, following the tragic murder of his son Michael, Ken founded the Enough is Enough Anti Violence Movement Inc ("Enough is Enough") which provides counselling services, educational programs and support to perpetrators of crime and their victims. In addition to his work with Enough is Enough, Ken has also served on the Premier's Council on Crime Prevention, the Attorney General's Victim Advisory Board, Victims Support Australasia, Corrective Service Restorative Justice Advisory Committee, NSW Sentencing Council, Young Offenders Advisory Council and the NSW State Parole Authority. Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with three finalists per Westfield centre being awarded a grant for their organisation. The \$5,000 donation will go towards Enough is Enough's work in reducing violence. I commend Ken on being named a 2024 Westfield Miranda Local Hero finalist and thank him for his important work in our local community.

#### **CHRIS LANE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the exceptionally talented Chris Lane of GyMEA who recently finished up with the St George and Sutherland Leader after almost 25 years behind the camera. Chris' passion for photography began when he was just 14, taking photos of his friends competing in community sport on his mother's old kodak camera. This quickly led to his first photo credit in the Macarthur Advertiser and being offered a job by an NRL photographer where he photographed the NRL Grand Final and State of Origin at the age of just 16. Since then, his career has gone from strength to strength and included a stint at the Sydney Morning Herald. But it is at the St George and Sutherland Leader where he has left the greatest mark since he joined the team in 2000. During this time, he has been on hand to photograph some of our area's most significant moments including the 2015 Kurnell tornado and I was grateful he photographed me with my family following my election to Parliament. I thank Chris for his work with the St George and Sutherland Leader and wish him all the best as he continues to make his mark through photography.

#### **BRIARS WOMENS RUGBY TEAM**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the Briars Sports Women's Rugby team who recently travelled to the Solomon Islands for a series of international matches. The Briars Women have worked alongside the Solomon Islands national team, developing their game, and supporting the growth of female sport internationally. Off the field, the team took the opportunity to visit local schools and villages. It is wonderful to hear of community groups working across borders to share their passion for sport and improve the lives of others. I sincerely congratulate Jacinta Tui, Madison Swan, Charlotte Cawthorne, Chloe Bromage, Bianca Bennetts, Serahnade Roache, Ruthie Aunei, Ameena Kanj, Josephine Maejiirs, Charlie Hyde, Lauren Goodacre and Brooke Gray for representing our Country, State and local community on the international stage. I acknowledge the contributions of Women's Rugby President, David Lannan. David's tireless efforts in promoting women's sport across the community is truly commendable and I thank him for his dedication. Congratulations to all involved in Briars Women's Rugby for representing our country. You have made our community proud, and I look forward to seeing your continued success both on and off the field.

**DINOS CAFÉ FIVE DOCK**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the 2nd anniversary of a most treasured local café and community hub in Five Dock, Dino's. Dino's is a family owned and operated café that has quickly become a local hotspot for their wonderful coffee, authentic Italian panini and focaccia, delicious pastries, and handmade pizzas. Everything is baked fresh at Dino's and that's what makes it so special. What sets Dino's apart is their welcoming atmosphere and commitment to the highest standards of customer service. I offer my sincerest congratulations to Dean Benigni and the extended Benigni family. The success of Dino's is a testament to your vision and passion for sharing your Italian culture and hospitality with our community. I extend my congratulations to all the hard-working Dino's staff. Your dedication to providing outstanding customer service to our community is truly commendable. On behalf of our community, thank you to everyone who has made Dino's into the local success it has become. I wish you all the very best as your business continues to grow.

**VINCENZA VISCIANO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate Mortlake local resident and business owner, Vincenza Visciano on the 25th Anniversary of her business, Soul Earth Therapies. Soul Earth Therapies focuses on alternative therapies which provide personal support for the mind, body, and spirit. The practice offers services including nutrition, readings, energetic healing, grief support, and a range of personalised services to help improve the well-being of individuals going through personal experiences. I offer my sincerest congratulations to founder and director Vincenza Visciano on this significant milestone for her business. I recently met Vincenza as part of a local Women's networking group and she told me about herself and her life story. She genuinely wants to help everyone and should be proud of her resilience and commitment to her business. Vincenza's experience as a qualified Aromatherapist and background in kinesiology and breathwork therapy has equipped her to develop a welcoming and supportive environment for all clients. Congratulations once again and I wish Vincenza all the very best in the future.

**WSL AT NEWCASTLE**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—I wish to acknowledge and thank the City of Newcastle, the Port of Newcastle, and the World Surfing League for their incredible new partnership that will see the WSL Challenger Series brought to Newcastle. The City of Newcastle has a long history of supporting local surfing through the annual SURFEST event. Thanks to this new partnership, Newcastle will watch as SURFEST 2025 will host the WSL Challenger Series. This event will make SURFEST one of the world's top 16 surfing contests and bring more than 120 of the world's best surfers to Newcastle in hopes of qualifying for the 2026 Championship Tour. This is a massive win for tourism and surfing culture in Newcastle. My congratulations go out to the City of Newcastle, the Port of Newcastle, and WSL for their fantastic work.

**NAYROUZ NEW YEAR**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—As we come together to celebrate Nayrouz and the beginning of a New Year, I wish to acknowledge and extend my best wishes to the Coptic Orthodox community, both in Holsworthy and across Australia. Nayrouz, the Coptic New Year, is a deeply significant celebration that honours the lives of martyrs and saints who have shown incredible faith, courage, and perseverance throughout history. This occasion reminds us of the strength that comes from faith, and the importance of standing together as a community in times of challenge. It also marks a new beginning, a chance to reflect on the past and look forward to the future with hope, unity, and a renewed sense of purpose. The Coptic community has made valuable contributions to our multicultural society, enriching it with vibrant traditions, strong family values, and a deep commitment to service and faith. In a diverse and inclusive society like ours, these contributions are a testament to the strength that lies in cultural and spiritual diversity. As we enter this New Year, I wish all who celebrate Nayrouz peace, prosperity, and joy. May this year be filled with new opportunities and continued blessings for you and your loved ones.

**SPERO DAVIAS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—I would like to honour the huge legacy of Novocastrian icon Spero Davias, who sadly passed away earlier this month. Spero was born and raised in Hamilton East and was an active member of the Newcastle community. An avid music lover, Spero opened several Sound World stores across the Hunter to share his love for live music with the wider community. Spero was also fascinated with technology and innovation, and became a pioneer of wireless networks and fibre optic cable in Newcastle. Furthermore, Spero also created the History of Hunter Street website, which is considered as an important catalogue for Newcastle through its thorough historical documentation of one of Newcastle's most popular streets. Newcastle will miss Spero and his lively contributions to our community. Rest in Peace.

### TAMIKA UPTON

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Newcastle Knights fullback Tamika Upton has made Newcastle proud, being named as the Knights' NRLW player of the year. This is the second time that Tamika has received this recognition in as many seasons, and after her performance this season it's not hard to see why. Tamika played in every Knights game of the season, scoring seven tries and supporting her team with 13 try-assists, 25 tackle-breaks, and seven line-breaks. Impressively, Tamika's success doesn't end there. Earlier this month, Tamika was also nominated for the Dally M fullback of the year and was a finalist for the Players' Champion Award. It seems that Tamika was not finished with all these achievements as she was also named in Australia's team for the Pacific Championships. Congratulations Tamika for your incredible season and your many achievements. Your success exemplifies the spirit of resilience and leadership and is an inspiration for the next generation of female athletes in Newcastle.

### MAY GIBBS' CARTOON TURNS 100

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker This year marks the 100th birthday of iconic Australian cartoon strip Bib and Bub. Bib and Bub was authored and illustrated by Neutral Bay local May Gibbs, Australia's first female cartoonist. May Gibbs' first Bib and Bub strip ran from 3 August 1924 until 1967. It remains the longest-running cartoon strips in our country's history. One hundred years since the first appearance of Bib and Bub in Sydney's Sunday News, a new exhibition is open to the public at May Gibbs' original heritage listed cottage in Neutral Bay. The waterfront cottage "Nutcote" has beautifully preserved the history of May Gibbs' life and illustrations through the hard work of the May Gibbs Foundation. May can be credited for some of the most quintessentially Australian illustrations and characters, including Snugglypot and Cuddlepie, the Gumnut Babies, Mrs Kookaburra, and the Big Bad Banksia Men. I recognise May Gibbs' immense impact on Australian history and culture and am thrilled to see the lasting impact her stories and illustrations have had on our community. I thank the volunteers of the May Gibbs Foundation for all the wonderful work they do ensuring none of May's work is lost.

### MOSMAN PREP GOLD MEDAL READERS

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate Mosman Church of England Preparatory School students on their outstanding achievement in conquering the Olympic Reading Challenge. The boys have successfully become Gold Medal Readers. The Senior Primary boys have taken on five difficult yet exciting reading challenges. The reading challenges included Marathon Reading, which involved reading 20 books of different genres, Synchronised Reading, involving partnering with a friend and reading the same books and discussing afterwards, Triathlon Reading, involving reading three books in any series, Coach Time Challenge, meaning reading to a sibling or a parent, and finally Athlete Focus, which was learning about athletes from a biography. Junior Primary students at Mosman Prep have also gotten involved through focusing on Olympic-themed books. I congratulate the Gold Medal Readers at Mosman Prep on their outstanding dedication and exciting achievement. I always love to see that tomorrow's generation are falling in love with reading.

### RECOGNISING GANG SHOW 2024

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Cumberland Gang Show highlights the absolute best of Scouts and Guides in their creative and performing arts skills, with this year's revue style show "Off the Record" demonstrating yet again that Gang Show is a great way to introduce young people to the performing arts. Cumberland Gang Show is a variety show for scouts and guides made up of a cast of 8 to 30+ year olds who perform dance routines, singing and comedy sketches. Gang Show has a special place in my heart as all my family, especially my sons, have been involved in one way or another over many years. I love attending every year and 2024 was no exception. Red Scarf Night lived up to its reputation as a great chance to catch up with the Gang and congratulate all the recipients of the Red Scarf, a signifier of 10 years or more membership of the Cumberland Gang Show. A special mention to Johanne Provins, John Gale, Lyndall Lee, Mike Richards who all received the 40-year scarf, and Andy Davis who received a 50-year scarf. Gang Show continues to provide youth of Western Sydney a practical and fun introduction to the performing arts.

### ROTARY GRANVILLE CHANGEOVER

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I was pleased to attend the Rotary Club of Granville Changeover meeting. Held at the Parramatta Leagues Club the dinner was a nice opportunity to thank outgoing President Sanjeev Goyal, for his service from 2023 to 2024. I congratulate incoming President Stephen McKee as he steps into the role. His enthusiasm and the innovative approach presented in his speech to his new role builds upon Sanjeev's term to further the Club's goals and execute excellent projects and events for the benefit of the community. I extend my congratulations to Ben Stevenson on receiving the Paul Harris Fellow award for his commitment to Rotary and his involvement with a project to recognize VET students in the local area. It was a

pleasure to be invited to speak at the Changeover Dinner and I took the opportunity to talk about my experiences as a Rotary Youth Exchange Student to South Africa, acknowledging the significant role Rotary played in shaping my future. Good luck to the new Club committee as you pursue your local, national and international projects and foster firm friendships amongst your members.

#### **LET'S GO GREEK FESTIVAL 2024**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to President of the Hellenic Orthodox Community of Parramatta and Districts Kos Dimitriou and Event Coordinator George Londos of Let's Go Greek Festival on another successful year of this wonderful celebration of Greek culture in Parramatta. The festival hosted many Greek artists, such as Konstantinos Pantelidis, the Iho Nyx Band, Jamison Athanasiou and DJs Jimmy V & Georgie D. Held on the 8th of September, at the St Ioannis Greek Orthodox Church in Parramatta, it was great to attend the festival alongside the Minister for Multiculturalism and share in the celebrations of resilience and vibrancy within the Greek culture in NSW. Thank you to Mr Ioannis Mallikourtis, the Consul General of Greece in Sydney for speaking about the strength of Greco-Australian relations. His message of peace and prosperity was inspiring to listen to. Thank you as well to Fr Christophoros Krikellis, who delivered a message on behalf of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia. Let's Go Greek 2024 was a day of joy and culture, and I look forward to seeing the festival grow and evolve into the future.

#### **CENTRAL COAST AMBULANCE STAFF**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Every day, our paramedics and ambulance staff right across the Central Coast provide exceptional care to our community. Each day, they diligently perform commendable acts of courage, going above and beyond in their roles, saving lives across the Central Coast. When they pull up, lights flashing, into the driveways of our residences, arrive on our ovals, at our schools, aged care facilities they bring a calm composure that brings peace of mind to our community. It is no surprise that NSW Ambulance paramedics and emergency call-takers in NSW recently received the highest patient satisfaction rating of any ambulance service in Australia. If you've ever been treated by a paramedic, you will have experienced, firsthand, the dedication, compassion and the courage that our ambos show every day in their line of duty. As the Member for Gosford, I'd like to acknowledge ALL Central Coast paramedics and ambulance staff for putting patient care at the heart of all they do. I am extremely proud of the paramedics, doctors, nurses, control centre staff, corporate staff and volunteers for their hard work and exceptional skills.

#### **MAX POTENTIAL 2024**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—As the name suggests, Max Potential 2024 did not disappoint! I want to applaud everyone involved in the Max Potential program for your unwavering efforts and positive energy that electrified the whole event! I also want to acknowledge Gosford RSL for supporting this event since 2008 as it is an amazing opportunity for our local youth to shine and show off their talents to the world. Unsurprisingly, the program has grown from 15 students and 12 coaches to 30 students and 30 coaches for each year. I had the privilege to talk to the youth stall holders who shared their vivid visions as well as their thought-out plans for the future of our region and beyond. From marvellous projects such as improving sports, connecting pals, to the importance of water safety conversations. We all know that these budding ideas will make the world a better place. I'm very pleased to see the fruitful results from this program and I am grateful for our local champions who has spent their time and energy to mentor our ambitious students and help spread their wings even further!

#### **START OF THE 2024-25 PATROL SEASON**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—On Saturday the twenty-eighth of September, a welcome sight appeared on the Central Coast's patrolled beaches. These are the bright red and yellow patrol uniforms worn by our community of volunteer surf lifesavers and paid lifeguards. September twenty-eight is a special day for us Coasties. September twenty-eight is the start of the 2024-25 NSW beach patrol season. Our trusted lifesavers and lifeguards do fantastic and important work - setting up designated swimming areas between the red and yellow flags, so that beachgoing regulars and visitors know where it's safe to swim. Monitoring surf and weather conditions. Watching, with their highly-trained, eagle-like eyes while us beachgoers relax and enjoy – with confidence - the company of friends, families and loved ones - AND the hot sands and salty seaspray of our sunny beaches. I take my sunhat off, so to speak - to our 'army' of surf lifesavers and lifeguards for their valuable service to the community. As the Member for Gosford, I want to acknowledge the valuable contributions that our volunteer network of surf life savers and paid lifeguards will make this patrol season.

#### **CLAIRE LANG**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate local woman Claire Lang who has been named Employee of the Year at the 2024 Justice Health NSW Awards. Claire, who is now the Health Centre Clerk for Macquarie Correctional Centre, began her career fourteen years ago when she had

just finished high school and applied for the Health Centre Clerk role at Wellington Correctional Centre. Having only ever worked in a cafe before this new role, Claire felt rather overwhelmed in her first few months. Luckily though, Claire found her passion for healthcare and providing patients with positive healthcare experiences while in custody and at potentially one of the most vulnerable times of their lives. When patients require health care specialists beyond the correctional health centre's scope, Claire takes up the challenge of working with regional health care services and specialist doctors to source local appointments and reduce travel time or disruptions to the patients visit schedules and programs they are working through. In a process that can be tricky, Claire excels at building rapport and working relationships with providers in the Local Health District to best serve her patients' needs and that is clearly acknowledged by this award. Well done, Claire!

#### **DOLLY PARTON FESTIVAL**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate the Narromine Dolly Parton Festival Committee on the success of their Dolly event on Saturday 12 October 2024. In May the committee made the difficult decision to cancel the festival due to lack of Government funding and rising costs. However, an announcement a month later that Dolly was back thanks to funding from the Open Streets Program, meant the committee had to dust off their boots, pull out their cowgirl hats and get back to planning again! Plan and prepare they did, working more than "9 to 5", and Narromine was lucky enough to enjoy an outstanding weekend of all things Dolly! The festival transformed the town into a vibrant celebration of music, fun and community spirit, drawing over fifteen hundred people for an unforgettable day. The event featured outstanding live performances, delicious food, market stalls, children's activities, and, of course, Dolly and Kenny lookalikes! The realisation of the festival was made possible by a dedicated team of volunteers led by Susie Rae and Skye Rush, and I commend the entire team on their hard work, passion and dedication in bringing this year's event to life.

#### **FIBREFEST**

**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)**—Knitters' Guild NSW volunteers hosted their second annual event Fibrefest at Wyong Racecourse attracting knitters, crocheters, spinners and weavers from across NSW. The event attracted more than 2,000 people and held more than 50 stall holders. One of those stall holders Fibre Arts Shed located at Jilliby displayed their fibre, blends and yarn creations for the second time at the Fibrefest event. I have visited the Fibre Art Shed and meet the creators Clare and Paul Thornley who are dedicated in producing their own range of yarns primarily from Australian and New Zealand fibre. People coming from far and close by enjoyed the day with yarn and craft demonstrations by other NSW craft guilds sharing their expertise, a fashion parade, food stalls and live music. The day encourages all knitters and crochets to present a show and tell to show off their latest projects to everyone.

#### **STEPHEN CLARKE**

**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)**—Congratulations to Central Coast Town Crier Stephen Clarke for being recognised as the 2024 National Town Crier Championships held at Parkes. Mr Clarke was the overall winner, the Champion of Champions, and won Best Cry of the contest hosted by Parkes Shire Council in September. Criers are judged on poise, bearing and confidence, sustained volume and clarity, content of the cry and accuracy in delivery as well as their regalia. The 9 town criers had to present a cry about Parkes, better known as the Elvis Capital of Australia thanks to its annual Elvis festival, and their hometown cry which for Clarke promotes the Central Coast. Mr Clarke's regalia is in gold, blue and green which stands for golden beaches flanked by sparkling surf and lush, green hinterland, and represents our colonial era 1788-1810. Instead of Mr Clarke ringing a bell for an attention seeking device, he plays a fanfare on the bugle. This is very significant because at the top of the Gosford city coat of arms there is a cockerel standing on the bugle. Well done to Mr Clarke for achieving the highest honour in Australia Champion of Champions.

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