

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 12 November 2024**

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

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

## *Members*

**MEMBER FOR LISMORE**

**MEMBER FOR CAMPBELLTOWN**

**MEMBER FOR BLACKTOWN**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the birthdays of the member for Lismore and the member for Campbelltown. Who would have known that the member for Lismore would have a birthday? She is just so timeless—but apparently she does. I also acknowledge that this particular day is the actual birthday of the member for Blacktown. Happy birthday.

## *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to school leaders from Marist College Eastwood, who are guests of the member for Ryde. I imagine that is them seated in the Cooper gallery. I also welcome Felix Christmann, who is a guest of the member for Heathcote. I welcome members of Dynamic Dora Creek Toastmasters, who are guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I draw the attention of the member for Maitland to the fact that we have as guests students from Maitland Christian School who are attending the parliamentary education program. I am sure the member is pleased to have you here.

## *Announcements*

### **COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE**

**The SPEAKER (12:05):** Over the past week, following preparations of almost a year, the Parliament of New South Wales hosted the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. I acknowledge that it was an excellently run conference that was well received across the board. I acknowledge our staff, who went above and beyond in delivering the conference. It was fantastic. There was a prestigious presentation at which the member for Sydney was named the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Parliamentarian of the Year for equality and diversity—and he is not even in the Chamber! He was not there to receive the award either, and I picked it up for him. Now he gets a nod in this Chamber and he is not here.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** Just keep it. Cross out his name and put yours on it.

**The SPEAKER:** It is a piece of glass and does not have his name on it, so I could do that.

*Bills*

**WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (WATER ACCESS LICENCE REGISTER) BILL 2024**  
**REGIONAL COMMUNITIES (CONSULTATION STANDARDS) BILL 2024**  
**EQUALITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LGBTIQA+) BILL 2023**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (CERTIFICATION) BILL 2024**  
**ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SPEED CAMERA DETECTION) BILL 2024**  
**HEALTH INSURANCE LEVIES AMENDMENT BILL 2024**  
**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT BILL 2024**  
**24-HOUR ECONOMY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS) BILL 2024**  
**AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER BILL 2024**  
**STATE EMERGENCY AND RESCUE MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

**Assent**

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

**FINES AMENDMENT (PARKING FINES) BILL 2024****First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**The SPEAKER:** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Announcements***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform members that a staff member from the Department of the Legislative Assembly will be taking photographs during the swearing in of new members.

*Members***ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF EPPING****ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF HORNSBY****ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF PITTWATER****Issue of Writ**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that, in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I issued writs on 27 September 2024 for the election of members to serve in place of Dominic Francis Perrottet, Matthew John Kean and Roderick Gilmore Amon, resigned. Particulars of the writs were:

Nomination day	Thursday 3 October 2024
Polling day	Saturday 19 October 2024
Return of writs	Friday 8 November 2024

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF EPPING****Return of Writ**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that my writ issued on 27 September 2024 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Epping in place of Dominic Francis Perrottet, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Acting Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of Monica Joan Tudehope to serve as member for the electoral district of Epping. I acknowledge Monica Joan Tudehope's family and friends who may be joining us in the Chamber today. Particularly, I acknowledge the member's proud mother and father, Diane Tudehope and the Hon. Damien Tudehope, who are in the Speaker's gallery.

**PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

Ms Monica Joan Tudehope took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the Roll of the House.

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF HORNSBY****Return of Writ**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that my writ issued on 27 September 2024 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Hornsby in place of Matthew John Kean, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Acting Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of James Robert Michael Wallace to serve as member for the electoral district of Hornsby. I acknowledge and welcome the member's friends and family who are joining us here today.

**PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

Mr James Robert Michael Wallace took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the Roll of the House.

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF PITTWATER****Return of Writ**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that my writ issued on 27 September 2024 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Pittwater in place of Roderick Gilmore Amon, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Acting Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of Jacqueline Claire Scruby to serve as member for the electoral district of Pittwater. I acknowledge and welcome the member's friends and family, including her two daughters, who are joining us here today. It is lovely to have them here.

**PLEDGE OF LOYALTY**

Ms Jacqueline Claire Scruby took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the Roll of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** I congratulate all our new members. I am sure they will all make their mark in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. It is a pleasure to have them here and an honour to preside over their swearing in. I wish them all the best.

*Question Time***ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:17):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. The Electrical Trades Union [ETU] industrial bans are stopping thousands from occupying their new homes. If the Minister applies to the Fair Work Commission, it must make an order stopping the ETU industrial actions against Transgrid, Ausgrid and Endeavour if they are causing significant damage to an important part of the Australian economy. When will the Minister apply to the commission to put an end to the ETU industrial chaos?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:18):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. We have to remember his former Government. What did it do? It privatised. The former Government privatised Transgrid. It privatised Endeavour. It privatised Ausgrid. It privatised the three energy companies, and the Leader of the Opposition was a member of Cabinet.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. Opposition members may have issues with the Minister's answer, but that is not how to react. The member for Dubbo will come to order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** When those opposite brought forward legislation to privatise those three entities, we on this side of the House told them what was going to happen. Have a look at the speeches that those opposite made.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Be a better government. Do your job.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** We are doing our job.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Let us not forget that when those opposite were in government, they were the Government of privatisations. They privatised \$90 billion of assets.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was about whether or not the Minister will take action by applying to the Fair Work Commission. It is a simple question. It is not a question about history; it is about when the Minister will make the application—or will the Government cop out and abrogate its responsibility?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: The Minister cannot be asked a question about her ability, or the status of the New South Wales Government, to make an application to a Commonwealth commission without explaining why she is taking the action that she is taking.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. I am confident that the Minister can come closer to being relevant in her answer.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** In the 12 years of the Coalition Government, we are aware of only two section 424 applications to suspend or terminate industrial action.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** One was in 2018 against the rail union, and one was in 2022 against the rail union. The 2018 application succeeded and the 2022 application failed. Now, energy companies operate— [*Time expired.*]

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

#### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (12:21):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the work of the New South Wales Government in strengthening our State's Police Force?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:21):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his question. It is an important one for New South Wales. Members would know that police officer turnover more than doubled in the last term of the Liberal-Nationals Government, from 513 per year to more than 1,286 per year. Under the previous Government, experienced police officers were leaving the service and going to other professions. Under a structure that had the wages cap in place, authorised strength for the NSW Police Force was down 2,500 police officers. As a result of that, this New South Wales Government has negotiated a historic generational change to wages and conditions in New South Wales.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The change includes a four-year pay agreement as well as one-off payments and improvements to allowances and pay scales for New South Wales police officers. That is a 19 per cent base pay increase to non-commissioned officers over four years, plus allowances; accelerated pay scales and allowances, which will enhance that base pay rise. Crucially, we will consolidate pay scales at the point where an officer can reach the level of senior constable within 10 years, which is six years faster than the current system. That is deliberate, negotiated with the union, precisely because that is the point when we were losing experienced police officers from our Police Force in New South Wales.

Changes made to training supplements at the Goulburn academy are already working. This year we have seen a 50 per cent rise in application numbers since the changes were implemented. I report to the House that class 364 is at maximum capacity. A parade ground full of New South Wales police officer recruits are to go into our community to fight crime and keep the public safe, ensuring that young people know that they can have a career with the New South Wales police. That is a 180-degree turn from the previous Government. By any objective measure, the previous Liberal-Nationals Government ran down our Police Force. Is there any other way of looking at the statistics?

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Goulburn on two calls to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The People Matter Employee Survey shows that employee wellbeing has improved by 14 per cent this year. We have a long way to go. That is why we have negotiated this deal with the Police Association of New South Wales. Broadly speaking, people appreciate that this needed to happen. [*Extension of time*]

There is just one objection, as far as I can tell, and it is from the Leader of the Opposition. He says, "At the end of the day, the money is coming from consolidated revenue, and that is where any pay increase for public sector workers will come from. This is a government that has let the genie out of the bottle, and it all goes back to broken election promises." He goes on to say, "Every time there is a generous wage increase that is unfunded, it just makes things worse." That is what he says to New South Wales police officers. Does it remind members of a condescending barrister looking down his nose at a New South Wales police officer? That is what happens when

we have a woke snob as the Leader of the Opposition. When he was the Attorney General, he did not provide police with the laws that they needed to keep us safe, and now he does not support a wage deal to keep them in their positions. Only Labor has come to the table to ensure that police officers have a profession and a career so that they stay in the NSW Police Force. At the end of the day, the Leader of the Opposition drives a Volvo and is out of touch.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Vaucluse rises on a point of order.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** The Premier is—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has concluded his answer. Therefore, there is no point of order.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** He is a mean Premier who is flouting your rules.

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Vaucluse that if she behaves in that manner again, she will be removed from the Chamber. I issue that general warning to all members, particularly those on the Opposition front bench. Members will not behave in that manner towards the Speaker—and nor will the Premier, by the way.

[*Interruption*]

That is my call. It is a rule of this House. Members might not like it, but the Presiding Officer is always right.

### NURSE WAGES

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:26):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister guarantee that improved wages for nurses will not be funded through cuts to health services?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:27):** Dixers are normally asked by members on this side of the House, but I thank the member for the question. I thank the members of the Nurses and Midwives' Association who are in the gallery today. Let me talk about what the Government has done for nurses and midwives, and then let me talk about what an alternative universe looks like.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Vaucluse will come to order. She is on thin ice.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Firstly, after taking over in government, we immediately removed the wages cap. Why did we remove the wages cap? Because it stopped any form of negotiation above 2.5 per cent. Last year we gave the nurses and midwives, and other essential workers, their largest pay increase in over a decade. We removed the cap; members opposite supported the cap. We removed it; they supported it, and they want to bring it back. Combined with the 10½ per cent that we have offered over three years in this current discussion, those two issues would leave an RN8-level nurse about \$15,000 a year better off. Number two—

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** No, I will not be interrupted.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** I have been put in my place.

**The SPEAKER:** I have called on the member for Vaucluse. She will cease making conversation. I will hear the point of order.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. It is clearly relevance. This is not about the wage history; this is about whether services are being cut.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Number two, nurses and midwives for well over a decade, probably close to two decades, have rightly fought hard against oppositions and governments around ratios. That is the reality and that is accurate. We are the first government in the history of New South Wales to begin the reform of rolling out ratios in our hospitals.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** That will see 2,500 additional nurses over the next four years. We already have 100 additional nurses in place as a result of that, and with the nurses and midwives we are working through that

as fast as we possibly can. Thirdly, under the Opposition there was going to be 1,100 nurses who would lose their jobs this year. This Government saved those jobs.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I will put my record and this Government's record—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** —in 18 months against anything—

**The SPEAKER:** Minister—

**Mr RYAN PARK:** —you lot did in 12 years.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will come to order. He cannot behave in that manner. It is a flagrant breach of the standing orders, and the Minister knows it.

**Mr Chris Minns:** He can't hear himself sing.

**The SPEAKER:** If the Minister had let me preside, I could have found out whether the member for Vacluse is seeking an extension of time.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Mr Speaker, I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to grant an additional two minutes.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** What the members of the Opposition failed to say was that not only did we save the 1,112 nurses, but during COVID they provided a 0 per cent increase in pay, of which the former finance Minister said—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Myall Lakes to remove herself from the Chamber for 10 minutes.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** They're not listening to you, Ryan!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Myall Lakes will be directed to leave the Chamber for the rest of the day if she says one more word.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Myall Lakes left the Chamber at 12:31.]*

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The former finance Minister said when questioned that it was "a good decision" to offer a 0 per cent pay increase. I am also unsure—

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order: I apologise for interrupting. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister has still not answered the question. Will there be cuts?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will be directly relevant.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I am also not sure why the member for Vacluse has asked this question because she said on 27 June last year—

**Mr Gurmeh Singh:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister is refusing to answer the question. Will he guarantee that the—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. I have ruled on the matter. I will not direct the Minister how to answer the question.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** There are some people in the gallery who may be interested in this. The member for Vacluse said:

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to have a debate with the member for Vacluse, he should do so during debate.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has concluded his answer.

#### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:33):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Following the Police Officer of the Year Awards earlier this month, will the Minister

please update the House on some of the incredible achievements of officers and staff within the NSW Police Force and the Minns Labor Government's plan to increase support for this workforce?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:33):** I would be delighted to update the House. I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his ongoing support of his local police. He is the most fantastic Parliamentary Secretary in this place. I was so pleased to see so many fantastic police officers recognised at the Police of the Year Awards, and they were very well deserved. But while awards are a great way to recognise the great work that police do day in and day out, a great pay deal is even better. This Labor Government supports the New South Wales police, unlike those opposite. What we are hearing from those on the other side today is the absolute height of hypocrisy. They had the power to pay—

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: I ask that the Minister be requested to withdraw her statement about us not supporting police officers—and I'll tell you why.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** No, I won't!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Goulburn will resume her seat.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** You had the power to pay our cops properly for 12 years.

[*Interruption*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Goulburn will resume her seat. Does the Minister wish to withdraw the remark? It is up to her.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I absolutely will not because it would be fake news if I did.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: I find the Minister's remarks absolutely offensive.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Mr Speaker, can the clock be stopped?

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

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** As a former police officer for almost 15 years, saying that I do not support police officers is totally offensive.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Then why didn't you do something about it? You were at the Cabinet table. Why didn't you stick up for them and ask for a pay rise? What about that? You were there.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Mr Speaker, this is outrageous.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will note that I am on my feet. Members on both sides of the House will come to order. There is too much general conversation on the Government side of the Chamber and too many interjections from the Opposition side. I have given members a lot of leeway. One member has been removed from the Chamber for 10 minutes and other members are testing my patience very sorely. I assure the member for Goulburn that much worse has been said in the House during my time in this place.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** By me?

**The SPEAKER:** No, not by you. But the member is being oversensitive. I will not permit that kind of interaction across the Chamber between the member for Goulburn and the Minister. Members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Opposition members had the power to pay our cops properly for 12 years. What did they do? They supported an unfair wages cap. They supported the suppression of police wages. They drove their incomes backwards until they started leaving in droves. How long did it take? Twelve long years. It is our Labor Government that supports the New South Wales police, and they love it. The truth is that those opposite did not have the guts to stand up for the cops and give them the pay rise that they deserve, and yet they have the absolute gall to claim it today. Can members believe that? I even heard this morning that the member for Bathurst said that the police do deserve a pay rise. Finally, he has had a moment.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. The Premier will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** What a pity that he could not manage to form that view when he was the Minister. Shame on the member for Bathurst. It is so clear that he sat in the Cabinet and he refused to support the cops when he was Minister. [*Extension of time*]

What did the member for Bathurst do? He did not stand up for the cops. When he was the Minister, he had the opportunity. He absolutely did not stand up for them and seek a funding increase for them.

**Mr Paul Toole:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The police Minister is not informing the House that 1,300 police officers have left under her watch. Under her bungled insurance scheme, 300 experienced officers have walked out the door.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bathurst—

**Mr Paul Toole:** We have police exhausted because of protests, knife crime, regional crime—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Bathurst to remove himself from the Chamber for the remainder of question time under Standing Order 249A.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Bathurst left the Chamber at 12:38.]*

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** All members of the Opposition have done since they have sat on the benches opposite is come into this House and bag cops. That is all they have done. They blame them for the road toll. They blame them for regional crime. They blame them for protests. It is shameful. They are going to be on those benches for such a long time because they come into this House criticising us for giving the cops a pay rise. Labor is the party that supports the New South Wales police.

I clear up a few misconceptions—a bit of fake news that is coming from the other side. This reform will cost \$697 million over four years. You got that, Leader of the Opposition? I want to clear up his fake news. Nothing like the rubbish that he has been bandying about over the past two days. We have offered our police a significant pay rise: 19 per cent over four years for non-commissioned officers, 15 per cent over four years for inspectors and 13.5 per cent for commissioned officers. This historic pay rise for our police will be the first in decades. Let me tell members, only a Minns Labor Government can deliver it.

#### COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE WORKERS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:39):** My question is directed to the Premier. I have in my hand documents indicating that the Government will be closing Community Justice Centres and sacking mediators across the State, who provide a valuable service. Will the Premier reverse these cuts?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:40):** I will take the question on notice.

#### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:40):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is increasing support for the NSW Police Force as it continues work to keep the communities of Western Sydney safe?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:40):** I thank the member for Parramatta for this very important question. Like me, she is passionate about ensuring that our hardworking and brave police men and women in Western Sydney are supported to do their essential work in our community. Some 140 police officers in the member's electorate are among more than 5,500 police officers who live in Western Sydney. They do brave and dangerous work every day, keeping us safe in complex situations in all of our communities. We know as local members just how much they do. It might sound like a cliché, but they put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe. The least we can do is support them in that work.

I thank the police Minister for detailing in the previous answer how she made sure that this once-in-a-generation, transformative adjustment to the way that New South Wales pays police was achieved by agreement between the Government and the Police Association. I know that it will make a difference for police officers in all of our Western Sydney communities. Police officers, like the rest of the community, are struggling in a cost-of-living crisis, raising families and ensuring that their heads are above water. This pay rise will do the crucial work of ensuring that we can attract young officers into the force and keep them there.

On top of getting rid of the Opposition's unfair, draconian wages cap—which was a freeze on the wages of cops, teachers, nurses and paramedics—the Government is doing this not just because it is the right thing to do but because we inherited a chronic staff shortage in areas like the Police Force. Members have heard me talk ad nauseam about the chronic teacher shortage we inherited from the Opposition. In reaching agreement with the Police Force, the police Minister is sending a signal to police officers in Western Sydney, throughout New South Wales and in the regions—everywhere—that they are valued and that if they work in the NSW Police Force, they will have a chance to go up the scale and be remunerated because of the respect that this society has for them.

*[Extension of time]*

This is a transformational pay rise for police officers throughout our Western Sydney communities—600 police officers in Camden, 300 in Penrith, 260 in Riverstone and 240 in Holsworthy. I could go through the whole list, but it will make a big difference to these people's lives.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. If the Minister is to answer this question properly, she needs to explain why her Government's budget papers show cuts to police spending of \$140 million.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not want to do so, but it is not beyond the realms of possibility that the Leader of the Opposition will be directed to leave the Chamber if he continues to take such points of order. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** As evidenced by the Leader of the Opposition, Opposition members are all over the place when it comes to this. One minute they say that essential workers do not deserve a pay rise, then they say what about this for the force?

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** One of them says, "That was actually our idea," even though they had more than a decade to do it and they did not, and then another says, "It is because of your union mates." Actually, that is not it.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The Government is getting to the bottom of the retention and recruitment crises in our essential services. The Opposition is on record time and again. Members opposite seem to forget that when they say things in this place, it is in *Hansard*. The member for Hawkesbury said that clearly the priority for the Minns Labor Government is "to fatten its union support base with pay rises". I dare her to say that to the 340 police in her electorate. This Government is committed to recruiting and retaining police officers and I thank the police Minister.

#### NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:45):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. How many elective surgeries will be cut tomorrow because of the nurses strike against his Government?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:45):** I say very clearly that the Government does not believe that this industrial action should take place. The reason for that is that a little over a month ago, the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Government, through the Industrial Relations Commission, reached an agreement that, as part of trying to work through this in a constructive way, the Government would pay an initial 3 per cent, and make sure that it is back paid from 1 July, and, at the same time, that industrial action would not take place to ensure that we could work through this issue. I am disappointed that that has not taken place and I am disappointed that strike action will take place tomorrow.

In relation to elective surgeries, last time many hundreds of people—and I was very clear and transparent about this—missed out on elective surgery. Anyone who knows me knows that, first and foremost, that is a huge concern of mine in relation to this action. It should be a concern of everyone's. I will not say one thing in this place and then stand for another in another area. I do not do that. Members will not see me pretending one thing in here—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The question was about how many elective surgeries will be cut tomorrow because of the strike. The Minister has said how many were cut last time but has not answered the actual question he was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I do not want to state the obvious. It is like trying to explain something to my 14-year-old. It is a little bit hard to say how many when it has not occurred yet. Cut me a bit of slack. There is stupidity and then there is that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Wairoa to order for the first time.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The Government will not say one thing in this place to the workforce, who we care so deeply about, and another thing in a different Chamber. We made it clear that we would remove the wages cap. This Government removed the wages cap.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We made it clear that we would provide the largest remuneration increase to our frontline nurses and midwives they have had. We did that.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We made it clear that we would be the only government in the history of New South Wales to move to a ratio-based system, which was lobbied, campaigned and advocated for by nurses and midwives. We are doing it.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We said that we needed to keep the 1,112 nurses to make sure that our hospital services remained in place. We did that.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Port Macquarie to order for the second time. I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the third time.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I will put the Minns Labor Government's record on essential healthcare workers in its first 18 months against anything from the Opposition.

### TOLL ROADS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (12:49):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport in her capacity representing the Minister for Roads. Can the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to repair the damage caused by the former Government's toll road privatisation agenda and create a fairer system for drivers across Sydney?

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128. Questions should not contain argument, inference or imputation. That question contains contentious material.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: Standing Order 128 (2) sets out the criteria from (a) to (h). The question, "Can the Minister update the House on the Minns Government's plan to repair the damage caused by the former Government's toll privatisation agenda?" is—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order while I hear from the Leader of the House.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** That is exactly the subject of Government legislation that the Minister for Roads proposes to introduce to this Parliament. Asking a question as to what the Government will do to create a fairer system for drivers across Sydney is neither argument, inference, imputation, ironical expression, nor the expression of opinion. It is asking a factual question.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House. I appreciate our barristers coming to the table once again; I could never pay for the counsel I receive. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:51):** I thank the member for Camden for her question and for her continuous advocacy for her electorate, particularly for motorists in Western Sydney. They are paying more because of what those opposite did in Government. The former Liberal-Nationals Government privatised toll road after toll road and made Sydney the most tolled city on earth. Those opposite do not like it. It makes them pretty uncomfortable.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kellyville will come to order. The member for Oatley will come to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** They are trying to move points of order. They are trying to do a range of things. They do not like it, but it is a fact. Our independent tolling review shows that Sydney's toll road network is a poorly functioning patchwork of numerous price structures. We have 13 different toll roads and 10 different contracts. It is a system that is not simple, and it is not fair.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We know that Sydney's toll network will cost motorists a whopping \$195 billion by 2060. That is on top of the billions of dollars that they have already paid. The motorists of Western Sydney pay the most. That is what the privatisation agenda of those opposite delivered for the people of Western Sydney. When we came to office, we promised that we would undertake tolling reform—and that is exactly what we are doing. We have completed the independent tolling review.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We have now begun direct negotiations with Transurban to work on price reform. This week the Minister for Roads will introduce legislation to set up NSW Motorways, a new State-owned tolling entity that will oversee a reformed toll network. That legislation will not only create that State-owned body but also establish a role for the independent pricing watchdog, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, to monitor toll prices. It will also allow the Government to establish an independent tolling ombudsman to hear customer complaints. This is all about creating a fairer, simpler system that lowers tolls for the majority of motorists. Most importantly, it is about making sure that Western Sydney motorists, who travel further and have fewer public transport options, are no longer penalised. At the conclusion of his review, Professor Allan Fels said high toll prices were driving people off the motorways and onto local roads. [*Extension of time*]

That is the direct opposite of what those opposite promised. In fact, members will remember the signs along freeways and local roads that said, "When we complete this new expensive toll road, your local communities will have less congestion and your local roads will be less congested." Our independent review has shown that the exact opposite is true. It is getting worse for local communities and costs are going up. The data shows that over 900 motorists in New South Wales spent between \$10,000 and \$20,000 on tolls. The top thousand toll payers across our State are from places like Bankstown, Blacktown, Marsden Park and Moore Park. They are based in Western Sydney. This data is from our government e-toll provider; it does not even include other data from Linkt and other business accounts. Overall, every year motorists are paying \$2.5 billion in tolls.

Along with comprehensive tolling reform, our Government introduced the \$60 toll cap because drivers right across Sydney are paying too much. They need that relief because the privatisation agenda of those opposite has meant that those who have fewer choices are paying more. It is delivering cash right into the pockets of motorists. So far, the suburbs of Blacktown and Baulkham Hills have collectively claimed more than a million dollars in toll relief. Other suburbs like Auburn, Marsden Park and Merrylands are also now reaching that same milestone. In fact, the electorate of Camden is benefiting from the actions of the Government. Unlike those opposite, we are getting to the root of these problems—the privatisation of our roads—and making sure there is toll relief for motorists in Sydney.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (12:56):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will he guarantee that there will be no new or increased taxes to fund wage commitments across the public sector?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:56):** We do not have any plans for revenue increases. If there was a Great Depression, if there was a gigantic natural disaster—I mean, I do not know what is around the corner, and a responsible government—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Kind of like COVID.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Yes, I think that is a fair point. COVID came to the New South Wales economy, to the world, to the Australian economy. We exponentially increased the State's debt because of a global emergency. If there was a global emergency, if jobs were on the line, if lives were on the line, then I would make a decision to lift spending in those circumstances. But I think the Government's record in relation to spending, which has been heavily criticised by the Opposition through our two budgets, has been to do what we would regard as responsible when it comes to government.

**Mr Matt Cross:** The largest debt in history.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I think we have a real-time rebellion on the Liberal Party backbench. Come on over, son. We do not have a lot of space but we will squeeze the member for Davidson in. We have been responsible when it comes to spending. We have been criticised by those opposite for that. I know that Matt Kean has gone on to bigger and better things; he is cosyng up with our colleagues in Canberra now. But it should be remembered that he spent \$27 billion in nine months in the lead-up to the election campaign—and that was after COVID had ended.

The reason the Government is locked in an industrial dispute with the nurses' association is that we have found provision, and set it aside, for an increase on what the Liberal Party was offering during the election campaign. Everybody knows that has been identified by the nurses' association as not enough, and we are locked in a dispute with that union. Other than that, that money has been allocated and set aside. We were very clear about the budget process. Members opposite criticise us for it and now they cannot get their story straight about whether they support wage increases or whether they want us to go back to the wages cap.

I refer members to a member of the other place, and his name is the Hon. Damien Tudehope. I do not mean to pick on the member for Epping's dad on her first day of school, but I cannot help it because he said it. I remember in budget estimates not that long ago I said, "I think it bodes well for engaging with the trade union movement.

A lot of people can't forget that during COVID you didn't have a 2.5 per cent wages cap; you wound that all the way down to zero." The Hon. Damien Tudehope said, "Yes." I said, "Was that a good decision?" He said it was, "A very good decision." We cannot work out what side they are on. Sometimes they are out the front with the nurses and the CFMEU, demanding wage increases and smashing the Government for being anti-union, and other times they are saying that we are not fiscally responsible.

### PROTESTERS AND RAIL SAFETY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:00):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to strengthen penalties for people who block railways, endangering the safety of rail workers and disrupting passengers?

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (13:00):** I begin by congratulating the three new members who have taken their place in the Chamber. The first day we take our seats in this magnificent room is a very special time. Congratulations, from us. Today the New South Wales Government announced, and I gave notice of, a bill to increase financial penalties for individuals who obstruct rail lines in New South Wales. The Government is proposing amendments to prescribe a fine of \$22,000 for the offence of obstructing a rail line under section 213 of the Crimes Act. These changes will mean that offenders will face up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to \$22,000, or both, in the Local Court.

Currently section 213 does not specify a fine. The lack of a prescribed financial penalty amount for section 213 means that, when heard in the Local Court, the fine is limited by another Act to \$11,000. This amendment effectively doubles the available penalty for a section 213 offence in the Local Court—where, I should highlight, all recent charges relating to the Hunter protest activity were heard—and aligns the penalty amount with that of section 214A and section 144G of the Roads Act 1993, colloquially known as the 2022 protest laws.

Frankly, we have done this because there has been a spate of unacceptable and dangerous behaviour. We have engaged with the Freight on Rail Group and other rail stakeholders who have raised serious safety concerns, particularly arising from recent activities that took place on the Hunter line. People were dangling from powerlines, chaining themselves to rail lines, blocking rail lines and shutting down rail from the Hunter. The Government is very concerned about those behaviours. Those actions pose a threat to safety, cause significant inconvenience to the citizens of New South Wales and are a drain on police resources.

Our Government acknowledges and respects the longstanding Commonwealth freedoms of assembly and speech. Freedom of assembly and freedom of speech have long been recognised by Australian courts as integral to our democratic system of government. We support the peaceful assembly of people, but we do not support disproportionate and illegal actions that risk people's safety and lives. We want to send a message that this behaviour is unacceptable. While we are sending this message, I have to say that in New South Wales we are very privileged to have strong, experienced and independent judicial members. As Attorney General, I steadfastly defend the independence of the judiciary. Judicial officers impose sentences in accordance with the penalties that are made available to them by us. [*Extension of time*]

By increasing those penalties, as a legislature we are sending a message that we take this behaviour more seriously. Effectively, this change doubles the maximum fine that will be available in the Local Court, giving greater sentencing scope to properly address the seriousness of the conduct. That scope will be given to judicial officers. One group of people that we should keep in mind when dealing with this behaviour is train drivers. As members from the Hunter have told me, coal trains in the Hunter are sometimes kilometres long. They cannot stop on a dime. They have emergency brakes, but it still takes them a long time to stop. Train drivers proceeding along those routes at night are terrorised by some of this behaviour. They are the last people who want to hurt someone doing the wrong thing. It is them we keep in mind. Police are taking time out from responding to their biggest demand of domestic violence at night in the Hunter and other areas of New South Wales because of these acts by protesters. Their actions are disproportionate, unnecessary and selfish.

Over the past year we have seen in New South Wales, particularly in the CBD of Sydney, that the right to peaceful protest is alive and well. Protesters do not have to dangle from a port container, glue themselves to Stoney Creek Road, or put a truck in the Harbour Tunnel. They can do it peacefully, like other people have chosen to do and continue to do every day in New South Wales. If they do not, then this Legislature will make no apology for imposing tougher sentences on them.

**MOSQUITO INFESTATION MANAGEMENT**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (13:05):** My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Water. Why has it taken the Government so long to act on the mosquito plague in south-western Sydney?

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Why are you trying to cancel Christmas?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Leppington to order for the first time. All members will come to order.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Holsworthy. Members will come to order.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** I would like that comment to be withdrawn. I am of the belief that it contains some connotations of racism and prejudice. I am the only Muslim in the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Holsworthy will resume her seat. I ask the member for Leppington whether he will withdraw his comment, which was an interjection and out of order.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** I will not withdraw it. There are media reports—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for North Shore is not helping. This is an interesting situation that will not be resolved by an argument. The member for Leppington will resume his seat. The member for Holsworthy will come to order.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: I have to say, listening to the comments that are being made—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda is making a statement. What is the point of order?

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** My point of order is that comments were directed to the member for Holsworthy that were clearly racist in nature. Mr Speaker, you then called the member to order when she did not open her mouth. She was silent when you called her to order.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will resume her seat.

*[Interruption]*

Order! I direct the member for Miranda to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A.

*[Interruption]*

Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member from Miranda from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Miranda left the Chamber at 13:08 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**The SPEAKER:** All members will be more considered in the way they interact in this Chamber and in the language they use. I have tried to deal with this issue before. It is not reasonable to expect the Speaker to manage every interjection that is made across the Chamber, particularly when the comments are out of order. I had no option but to remove the member for Miranda from the Chamber until tomorrow. I do not wish to remove any member from the Chamber but there comes a point when I will not take any more offence directed towards the Chair.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:09):** I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. It is an issue that NSW Health, along with a range of different government agencies, is working on as we speak. It is sending out some very clear messages to the community. Sydney Water understands that the broader Liverpool and Georges River area has a long history of mosquitos. A mosquito expert from NSW Health Pathology has advised that this species is a known nuisance pest but it is not considered an aggressive biter of humans, and it is not considered a risk to human health in the spread of mosquito-borne pathogens.

Liverpool council contacted Sydney Water via email on 25 October 2024 to report a mosquito issue. Sydney Water responded promptly. On 31 October it hosted a meeting with council onsite to investigate the situation and coordinate a comprehensive inspection. On 1 November Sydney Water declared a significant

incident and put an incident team in place. A mosquito expert from NSW Health Pathology provided Sydney Water with recommendations and work has commenced based on the advice received. Licenced contractors have been engaged and appropriate treatments commenced as per the recommendations from NSW Health Pathology. The identified areas are undergoing treatment, including spraying in line with the expert recommendations.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order: The Minister has not answered the question. Why has it taken so long for the Government to act? The question was not about what the Government is doing or what is happening.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Holsworthy will resume her seat. I call the member for Auburn to order for the first time. The Minister has been relevant but he will be more directly relevant.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I am not sure I can be any more relevant than explaining the situation, what we are doing and how government agencies are responding. In line with advice from the Department of Primary Industries, Sydney Water has also commenced the removal of aquatic vegetation, known as frogbit, growing on its oxidation pond to proactively manage any further outbreaks. Liverpool City Council has subsequently issued an individual biosecurity direction to Sydney Water about managing the frogbit, which is classified as a high priority weed. Ongoing monitoring and further inspections will be conducted as required to ensure the effectiveness of the treatment and manage any potential recurrence. I am more than happy to meet with the member on behalf of the Minister to provide information should she or those at Liverpool council or her local community require any more information about what the Government is doing to address this important mosquito issue.

### FAR WEST DISASTER ASSISTANCE

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:13):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, and Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's ongoing commitment to support communities in Far West New South Wales following the recent power outage?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:13):** I thank the member for Granville for her question. I join the Attorney General in welcoming our three new members. It is an incredible privilege to be in this place. I hope they have great careers. I loved last week. I was on the road with the member for Barwon and we travelled the whole countryside. We started in Cobar and went from there to Bourke and up to Packsaddle and Wanaaring.

**Mr Paul Scully:** He said something different.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Mate, leave the sledges for them. Travelling through the west with the member was like travelling with Elvis. The only difference is there were no jumpsuits. I will let the member for Barwon explain how we changed not one but two tyres in 48 degrees Celsius heat.

**Mr Roy Butler:** Three.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Three tyres. I missed the third one! What is important—this is serious—is that we were there to join members of the Far West community who had been affected by that terrible power outage. We wanted to spend time with the community. We also popped in to see the recovery centres across different parts of the State. At one of the recovery assistance points, I met with a person called Judith. She was pretty straight up with me. She said, "Look, we're pretty unhappy but we understand this has happened. We just want to get on with it." She was grateful for the fact that there was some assistance there.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Everywhere we travelled we saw a community that was incredibly resilient. It is a tough community that deals with things on a regular basis. But this particular situation was a direct result of a privatisation agenda from the previous Government, which privatised the assets that were not maintained.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I would have the member for Oatley removed from the Chamber if not for the fact that Government members are also interjecting. All members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Members opposite do not like to hear it, but that is why this Government will support the member for Barwon's call for a parliamentary inquiry to work out what went wrong and how we got to this point. It is important that we look at not only how we got into this situation but also what we need to do to ensure that something like this does not happen again. Power outage support grants are now available to impacted communities. That means \$200 for every resident over 18 and \$400 for impacted businesses. [*Extension of time*]

Since applications opened on Thursday Service NSW has approved almost 2,000 grants, with over 1,500 of those being paid out. Effectively, people have now got money in their accounts. That is no easy feat. I give a shout-out and thank you to Service NSW. It was able to set up that really bespoke small grants system in an incredibly tight time. It took one-quarter of the time it took to set up a similar system for the recovery grants after the Northern Rivers floods. The Premier, Minister Scully, Minister Kamper, the member for Barwon and I visited the recovery centre. We saw great partnership because it has now moved into a recovery phase. The Reconstruction Authority is taking this on, but the partner agencies include Vinnies, Services Australia, mental health support organisations, Foodbank and the Insurance Council.

We have got better at how we support communities and how quickly we can activate support. They are the key important learnings that we have had. The recovery outreach program is now the next step. We are using our Kangaroo Bus, our Mobile Service Centre, to go to those most remote communities so that nobody misses out on that support. If support is available, we want to make sure that everybody can access it. We are not going to rely on people coming to us; we will go to them and ensure that they get support. Again, I thank the tireless worker, the member for Barwon. I note three key points: This issue was a result of privatisation, this Government will support the parliamentary inquiry, and \$200 and \$400 is being offered to support communities. We are there for the long run.

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

### SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:19):** My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. How will the Government protect residents in boarding houses, including those long-term residents the Minister and I met with on a recent visit to the Selwyn Street boarding houses in Paddington?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (13:19):** I thank the member for Sydney for that very important question, for his continued advocacy for the residents of Selwyn Street in Paddington, and for inviting me to meet with those residents and the broader community to talk about the importance of boarding houses to the people of Sydney. Boarding houses make up an important part of New South Wales' affordable housing supply. That is why the Minns Labor Government is committed to improving fairness and access to housing for all, including the members of our communities who currently live in boarding houses.

There are over 1,400 boarding houses registered on the New South Wales boarding house register, including 324 located in the City of Sydney local government area. No doubt that is the reason the member for Sydney is such a strong advocate for his constituents who live in boarding houses. Boarding houses play a very important role not only in the supply of affordable housing in New South Wales but also in the diversity of our neighbourhoods. The boarders I met with, like Steve, Barry, Ray, Rod, Brian, Richard, Manny, Alfie, and the rest of the residents of the boarding house on Selwyn Street are great examples of residents of this type of affordable housing, and they make a valuable contribution to the community. The boarding house at Selwyn Street has been operational for almost 100 years. I understand how disappointed the residents are that the house is to be closed and that they have received their eviction notices. I have been working very closely with my colleague the Minister for Housing and Minister for Homelessness, Minister Jackson, on that very important matter.

I assure members that the Government is working tirelessly to ensure that all residents are supported and relocated to safe, secure and suitable accommodation. I am advised that my colleague Minister Jackson has contacted Homes NSW to provide residents with weekly onsite meetings to help them connect with available support services. Let me be clear that the Government will ensure those residents are given the help they need, including help to find suitable accommodation for each resident by February 2025. While I acknowledge that may not be the preferred outcome for Selwyn Street residents, the situation further highlights the importance of stable and low-cost housing. That is why the Minns Labor Government is investing \$5.1 billion in more than 8,400 new public homes, \$1 billion to upgrade 30,000 existing homes and \$528 million to address homelessness. That is a \$6.6 billion package to address that very important issue. [*Extension of time*]

Our social housing program is the largest investment ever made by any New South Wales government in public housing. That will provide greater stability and an improved quality of life for our society's most vulnerable. On top of supply, we are also working towards enabling residents to live better in boarding houses. That is why we are exploring the sensible recommendations for reform to the Boarding Houses Act 2012, which will provide greater protections and clarity for residents of boarding houses. A statutory review of the Act was conducted by the former Government in 2020. It made 21 recommendations to provide more protections for boarding house residents and clearer responsibilities for boarding house owners. Recommendations include establishing what

constitutes "reasonable notice" for eviction, broadening the application of the Act, ensuring fire safety and overcrowding protections, providing new minimum standards, and introducing a greater role for NSW Fair Trading and Fire and Rescue NSW.

I have instructed the Department of Customer Service to continue to work with the Department of Communities and Justice to better implement the recommendations of the statutory review. Again, I thank the member for Sydney for his continued advocacy on this very important issue to him and his constituents and for his commitment to working with the Government as it considers the recommendations of the statutory review. The Government recognises the unique and essential nature of shared accommodation in our changing housing landscape and acknowledges that there is more work to be done to reform that particular area of the housing sector. We are working to strike the right balance between the rights and responsibilities of boarding house residents and owners as we consider the recommendations of the statutory review. I thank the member for Sydney for his advocacy on behalf of those residents and his commitment to working with the Government on this issue.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:24):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to boost renewable energy projects across the State?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (13:24):** I thank the member for Blue Mountains and Parliamentary Secretary for her question. She is a strong advocate for renewable energy in New South Wales. The Government is getting on with the task of delivering renewable energy and rebuilding our energy system in New South Wales. Today the Minister for Energy, and Minister for Climate Change, and I released a new Renewable Energy Planning Framework. That framework creates certainty and consistency in the assessment of renewable energy projects in New South Wales both for project proponents and the communities who host those projects. I am sure some of the National Party members opposite will love that. They write to me regularly about that sort of stuff, then come up to me in the corridor and say, "Just ignore the letter. We love renewable energy. Let's get on with it." That is exactly what the Government is doing.

In this new framework we have defined setbacks to avoid some of the significant visual impacts from wind energy and transmission infrastructure. We have established a detailed methodology for assessing those visual impacts, including when they should be avoided. Importantly, we have set an expectation to share the benefits of projects with host communities. We have said that there should be a share based on the generation capacity of those projects. That alone is expected to generate more than \$400 million for communities over the next 25 years in the renewable energy zones alone. We are stepping up our own performance by committing to assessing proposals more quickly and reducing the number of requests for additional information. We are holding ourselves accountable as well. The guidelines were developed following extensive consultation with stakeholders, including industry and communities, and have been welcomed. This morning the Smart Energy Council provided support for the Government's new planning framework. It said:

These updated guidelines to the current framework provide the renewables industry and communities across NSW with much needed certainty.

Providing communities with more transparency on how planning assessments will be made is critical to ensure strong social licence and these guidelines address that need in a significant way.

That is important because while Opposition members talked a big game and brought high energy to their rhetoric, they had low energy when it came to approving renewable energy projects.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129, relevance. Communities have not been consulted on those projects. I seek clarification.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The member for Tamworth may have written me a letter in the consultation phase, if my memory serves me correctly, so he should know about it.

#### *Personal Explanation*

### MEMBER FOR LEPPINGTON

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (13:28):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: Under Standing Order 62, the events that occurred in the Chamber during question time are not appropriate to be dealt with by way of personal explanation. There are two reasons for that—and the member for Leppington should be quiet while I address the Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. This is a particularly charged issue about which I must make a determination. I do not require assistance from members. In fact, they are making things worse and inflaming the situation. I will hear from the member for Wahroonga as to whether a personal explanation should be permitted under the standing orders.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Standing Order 62 relates to a matter of a personal nature. The member was afforded the opportunity by you to withdraw the unfortunate comments he made in the House, and he refused your invitation to withdraw. The matter is not of a personal nature.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Wahroonga. He will resume his seat. I have heard enough.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I do not require further counsel. The Leader of the House will allow me to rule on the matter and move on. I will permit the member for Leppington to make a personal explanation. I remind members that personal explanations must be brief. I will withdraw leave for the personal explanation if I feel that it is not assisting the House.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Obviously, during question time I made some comments. Those comments were in relation to media reports that quoted the member for Holsworthy and suggested that Christmas could potentially be cancelled. I was then labelled a racist. I find that deeply offensive, given the type of person I am, the type of work I have done and how I represent my electorate.

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

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** The issue around mosquitos is difficult. People are doing it tough. The Government and the other agencies are working to get that resolved. But threats and fearmongering around Christmas being cancelled is absurd. This is a robust Chamber—

**The SPEAKER:** This Chamber is a place for robust debate, but I believe the member for Leppington has explained himself sufficiently. I will address the matter further at a later time. It is an extraordinarily difficult issue that has taken on a life of its own. That is unnecessary. Members will leave the Chamber quietly.

#### *Documents*

### **INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of Custodial Services for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 30 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

### **ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People for year ended 30 June 2024, received on 30 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

### **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 30 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

### **OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Special Report to Parliament by the Office of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *An audit of applications for and the execution of search warrants by the Independent Commission Against Corruption in 2021-2023*, received on 31 October 2024.
- (2) Report of the Office of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024.

I order that the reports be printed.

#### **NSW ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Electoral Funding Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report to Parliament pursuant to section 154 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 by the NSW Electoral Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **NSW CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Child Death Review Team for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **NSW AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSION**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY VISITORS**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Ageing and Disability Commissioners Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of Official Community Visitors for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Children's Guardian Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024. I order that the report be printed.

#### **NSW OMBUDSMAN**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of the NSW Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 31 October 2024.
- (2) Special report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Review of the DCJ Complaint System in respect of its Aboriginal Child Protection functions*, together with the *Community Summary Report*, dated 6 November 2024 and received that day.

I order that the reports be printed.

**OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled *Collision between a passenger train and a motor vehicle near West Dapto Road level crossing, Kembla Grange, New South Wales*, dated 20 October 2021, received out of session on 30 October 2024 and authorised to be printed.

**INSPECTOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Surveillance Devices Act 2007, I announce receipt of the report by the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Surveillance Devices Report for the period ending 30 June 2024*, received out of session on 31 October 2024 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Reports**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of report No. 1/58 of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled *Administration of the 2023 NSW election and other matters*, dated October 2024, received out of session on 31 October 2024 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***NSW BUSHFIRE INQUIRY****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Rural Fires Act 1997, I announce receipt of *NSW Bushfire Inquiry 2020 Progress Report: Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry: Reporting Period April to June 2024*, received out of session on 5 November 2024 and authorised to be printed.

**OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL RAIL SAFETY REGULATOR****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Rail Safety National Law (NSW), I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator for year ended 30 June 2024, received out of session on 6 November 2024 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST****Inquiry**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** On behalf of the Chair, in accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust has resolved to conduct a review of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 22/58*, dated 22 October 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following ePetitions signed by fewer than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

### **Worker Compensation Costs**

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly address the costs of worker compensation insurance, received from **Mr Richie Williamson**.

### **Hardwood Power Poles**

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to ensure the continued use of hardwood power poles, received from **Dr Joe McGirr**.

### **Kerrs Creek Wind Farm Proposal**

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to revoke the proposed Kerrs Creek wind farm, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

### **Nuclear Submarines**

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to legislate against the presence of nuclear-powered submarines and the associated nuclear waste in New South Wales, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

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

### **Hewlett Packard Enterprises and Israel**

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to cease awarding contracts to Hewlett Packard Enterprises and to review procurement policies with respect to any violations of international law, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

## **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Courtney Houssos—Mudgee Coalmining—25 September 2024 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Michael Daley—Bridgette "Biddy" Porter—lodged 25 September 2024 (Mr Philip Donato)

*Business of the House*

## **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1808 to 1928, and general business orders of the day (for bills) Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024, Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024, Automated External Defibrillators (Public Access) Bill 2024 (No 2), and Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024 have lapsed.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Bills*

## **CRIMES AMENDMENT (OBSTRUCTING A RAILWAY) BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:31):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes Amendment (Obstructing a Railway) Bill 2024. The bill responds to concerns about recent actions on railway lines that put people's safety at risk by enabling the Local Court to impose a fine of up to 200 penalty units for the offence in section 213 of the Act of obstructing a railway. Section 213 makes it an offence for a person to intentionally and without lawful excuse cause the passage or

operation of a locomotive or other rolling stock on a railway to be obstructed. Those who knowingly assist another person to obstruct a train or rolling stock on a railway also commit an offence under section 213. The offences in section 213 are punishable by up to two years imprisonment. Section 213 does not specify a penalty amount, which means the default maximum fine which the Local Court can impose is 100 penalty units, or \$11,000. This is as a result of the operation of section 267 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986.

In recent months there have been instances of people seriously obstructing rail lines for long periods. The Government is alarmed by this conduct. Such dangerous actions pose a threat to the safety of the persons themselves, commuters and railway staff. I note that section 214A, which contains offences for damaging or disrupting a major facility, provides for penalties of up to 200 penalty units, which is \$22,000, and two years imprisonment. Obstruction of railway lines does not come within section 214A as railway lines are not "major facilities". To deter dangerous conduct on railways, the bill will effectively double the available penalty in the Local Court for the offence in section 213 of the Act. When sentencing a person for a section 213 offence, the Local Court will now be able to impose a sentence of up to 200 penalty units, which is \$22,000, or two years imprisonment, or both. Doubling the fine that can be imposed signifies to the Local Court that the Government and the community take the offence seriously.

The amendment will bring the penalty for section 213 in line with the penalty for the offence in section 214A of the Act for damaging or disrupting a major facility and also the penalty for the offences in section 144G of the Roads Act 1993 of damaging, disrupting or obstructing the Sydney Harbour Bridge or other major bridges, tunnels or roads, both of which are summary offences. The increased penalty will better reflect the seriousness of the section 213 offences and will send a strong message to the Local Court and the community that such dangerous and disruptive conduct on railway lines is unacceptable.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill replaces the current penalty in section 213 with new subparagraphs (a) and (b) and new subsection (2), which together, firstly, provide that the Local Court can impose a fine of up to 200 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or both; and, secondly, confirm that if the offence comprises very serious conduct and is dealt with by a higher court on indictment, that court—that would be the District Court—can also impose a sentence of imprisonment for up to two years and can continue to impose a fine of up to 1,000 penalty units, or \$110,000. This is as a result of the operation of section 15 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. Our amendments intentionally retain the ability for this fine to be imposed under this section. Clause 2 of the bill provides that the amendments will commence on assent.

The amendment to section 213 to double the available financial penalty in the Local Court for obstructing a railway line will send a strong message that dangerous and disruptive behaviour in respect of railway lines will not be tolerated. This amendment will discourage individuals from putting their own and others' lives at risk, and blocking essential rail lines that members of the community rely upon for public transport and the delivery of goods and services to the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIVIL) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 23 October 2024.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:38):** On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to the debate on the Justice Legislation Amendment (Civil) Bill 2024. I indicate that the Opposition will be supporting the bill. The bill is, in short, a compass. I will very briefly raise a couple of matters with regard to the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill deals with amendments to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995. The amendments will facilitate the employment of contingent labour and allow for functions to be delegated to contingent labour under the Act. The Attorney General's second reading speech identified matters of IT cybersecurity and other business continuity risks by reason of the way in which the legislation is currently worded, but being allowed to employ contingent labour, which means private consultants, seems to step over the line of the election promise that functions would not be privatised under this Government.

At the moment, those functions are required by law to be performed by persons who are public employees under the Government Sector Employment Act. This amendment will facilitate the privatisation of functions under the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act. It is another example of a broken election promise. Schedule 2 to the bill deals with amendments under the Land and Environment Court Act to facilitate orders of forfeiture of chemical substances to the Crown. I do not think there is any controversy about that. Schedule 3 to the bill deals with amendments to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act, in particular the issue which is sought to be addressed: costs orders not being made against the council of the Law Society but rather against the

Law Society of New South Wales. The reasons for that change are adequately and reasonably explained in the second reading speech.

Schedule 4 to the bill deals with the tabling of reports under the Modern Slavery Act when Parliament is not in session. I do not think that is a matter that could easily be disagreed with. Schedule 5 to the bill deals with allowing New Zealand citizens to become New South Wales police officers—again, a matter that I think is uncontroversial. Schedule 6 to the bill deals with the important area of recognising interstate enduring powers of attorney. Facilitating enduring powers of attorney should occur. These changes are reasonable.

There are some missed opportunities in the bill. The appropriate signatories of enduring powers of attorney is a matter that calls out for reform and at least examination as to whether the category should be expanded. Justices of the peace in this State are very desirous of there being amendments in their space, particularly with regard to the indemnities that justices of the peace in other jurisdictions around the country enjoy. Although the bill is described as an amendment of various civil matters, its scope is quite limited. The same can be said about schedule 7 to the bill, which deals with an amendment to the Status of Children Act of a fairly inconsequential nature. I reiterate that the Opposition supports the bill, but I encourage greater and more extensive reforms of civil justice in this State.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:43):** I support the Justice Legislation Amendment (Civil) Bill 2024. I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General for introducing the bill to the House. The bill introduces a series of crucial amendments to several Acts within the Communities and Justice portfolio. These were outlined by the Parliamentary Secretary in his second reading speech. The bill serves to improve court and legal processes, enhance government operations, and clarify regulatory powers across key legislation. This legislation must remain relevant and aligned with the realities of a changing society. The bill represents part of the Government's ongoing effort to review and update existing laws to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the public, and support an efficient and effective justice system. The bill is practical in its approach, bringing together miscellaneous amendments that span across different Acts to ensure that the legal framework in New South Wales continues to be fit for purpose.

Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Births, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to allow the registrar to employ contingent labour and delegate functions to these contractors. This amendment is vital for maintaining flexibility and continuity in the operations of the registry, especially in areas like IT and cybersecurity, where the delegation of functions is often necessary to ensure business resilience. Currently, the Act limits the registrar's ability to engage external specialists, creating operational bottlenecks. By amending these provisions, the bill ensures that the Births, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act remains operationally viable and allows for modern labour arrangements that are crucial in today's public sector environment.

Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Land and Environment Court Act 1979 to confer power on the Land and Environment Court to order the forfeiture of hazardous chemicals. This amendment follows the Environmental Legislation Amendment (Hazardous Chemicals) Act 2024, which introduced new provisions for the management and control of chemicals in New South Wales. It is essential that the Land and Environment Court is equipped with the authority to adjudicate on matters related to chemical substance management, ensuring that legal processes align with environmental protections and public health priorities. This measure will empower the court to make orders on behalf of the Environment Protection Authority, furthering efforts to safeguard communities from the risks posed by hazardous chemicals.

Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 to ensure it contains specific regulatory powers to support clause 65 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Regulation 2015. Clause 65 concerns the allocation of costs orders in disciplinary proceedings against solicitors. This amendment seeks to eliminate any ambiguity in the law, ensuring that the Law Society of New South Wales can meet its responsibilities. Schedule 4 to the bill makes a vital amendment to the Modern Slavery Act 2018. It enables the Anti-slavery Commissioner's report to be tabled when Parliament is not sitting. This amendment implements a key recommendation from the joint parliamentary Modern Slavery Committee, addressing concerns about unnecessary delays in making the commissioner's report publicly available. The bill allows for the commissioner's report to be presented to the Clerk of the House during parliamentary recess, ensuring timely public access to critical information regarding modern slavery and anti-slavery efforts in New South Wales.

Schedule 5 to the bill addresses an important clarification in the Police Act 1990 regarding the eligibility of New Zealand citizens to join the NSW Police Force. At present, New Zealand citizens who hold a special category visa under the Migration Act 1958, while effectively permanent residents, are classified under a visa category labelled "temporary". This ambiguity could prevent eligible New Zealanders from serving as police officers. This amendment clarifies that New Zealand citizens on a special category visa are considered permanent residents for the purpose of the Police Act, thus confirming their eligibility to serve in the NSW Police Force.

This change reflects the practical realities of residency and ensures that no qualified candidates are excluded due to visa technicalities.

Schedule 6 to the bill amends the Powers of Attorney Act 2003 to address an ambiguity regarding the recognition of enduring powers of attorney created in other States and Territories. The bill clarifies that instruments that are similar in nature to enduring powers of attorney, even if not specifically called that, will be recognised under the Act. This amendment ensures that interstate instruments are treated uniformly, providing greater certainty for individuals who move between jurisdictions while relying on their enduring powers of attorney.

Finally, schedule 7 to the bill makes a consequential amendment to the Status of Children Act 1996. It removes outdated references to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages holding office under the repealed Public Sector Management Act 1988. This is a necessary housekeeping amendment that ensures consistency across the legislative framework. The bill represents the Government's ongoing commitment to maintaining a robust and adaptive legal system that reflects modern realities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (14:50):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Justice legislation Amendment (Civil) Bill 2024. In particular, I briefly discuss the schedule 6 amendments to the Powers of Attorney Act. At first glance these amendments may seem to be simply housekeeping, but for solicitors in my electorate, they will help a great deal in circumstances where solicitors deal with a client who has lost capacity but has executed a power of attorney [POA] in Queensland. In my experience, the Queensland drafting of POA legislation is not as clear as our drafting. That is not a criticism of our Queensland colleagues, but it is an issue that frequently raises its head for legal practitioners on the border and in border communities.

Schedule 6 will remove the uncertainty that currently exists by amending section 25, which will make it clear that an interstate enduring POA has the same effect as a New South Wales enduring POA, even if it is called by a different name. I commend the Government for that amendment. Again, on face value, it may seem to be a housekeeping matter but, credit where credit is due, this is a sensible amendment. It is good law and it will help the legal profession in my electorate. It will also help families in circumstances where their loved ones have lost capacity but, for whatever reason, have executed their POA on the Queensland side of the border. I thank the Government for its work on the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:52):** On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: In reply: I thank the member for Wahroonga, the shadow Attorney General; the member for Mount Druitt, the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism; and the member for Northern Tablelands for their contributions to the debate on the Justice legislation Amendment (Civil) Bill 2024. The bill has been brought about in an effort to ensure the law is regularly reviewed and updated so that it remains fit for purpose and delivers on the expectations of our communities. While varied in nature, these amendments have been developed to address emerging issues, support operational needs and improvements, and clarify uncertainty in legislation by closing gaps in the law and correcting errors.

I briefly address some matters raised during debate on the bill. I deal firstly with schedule 1 amendments of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995. The question was asked: why is it necessary to amend the Act to enable the registrar to engage contingent labour? Currently the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 authorises the registrar to employ staff only under the Public Sector Management Act 1988, which is now superseded by its successor Act, the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. Under section 8 the registrar is able to delegate functions only to people employed in the public sector. This means that the registry cannot engage contingent labour because key functions, such as entering information on the register, are carried out under delegations. The amendments are required to expressly allow the registrar to engage contractors, including contingent labour, and to permit delegation of the registrar's functions to those contractors.

The question was also asked how often will contingent labour be used? The Government is committed to reducing spending on agency hire recruitment contractors in the general government sector, excluding service delivery workers, by 25 per cent. This proposal will not detract from this commitment. The size of the current workforce will not be reduced as a result of this amendment and all costs will be met from existing budgets. Contingent labour is intended to be used as a last resort to respond to short-term issues, such as backlogs and IT incidents. Contingent labour will not be used where public service staff are available to perform the relevant tasks. Contingent labour will be hired subject to existing New South Wales Government policies and procedures relating to labour hire.

It was also asked whether there are any restrictions on the functions that can be performed by people hired under contingent labour arrangements. To be clear, delegations will be made in line with the registry's delegation instrument. Certain functions will not be delegated to contingent labour employees, including any birth or marriage registration where the required notice and registration form are not provided; registrations of adoptions,

parentage orders, changes of name and changes of sex; and corrections of the register. Delegations that are prohibited under other legislation, including the Government Sector Finance Act 2018, also will not be delegated to contingent labour. Contingent labour also will be subject to existing registry policies and procedures relating to confidentiality and the management of sensitive information.

The member for Northern Tablelands raised some interesting issues regarding solicitors and the schedule 6 amendment of the Powers of Attorney Act 2003. I again thank him for his contribution. The question is: Why is this amendment necessary? Going to what he was saying, section 25 of the Powers of Attorney Act 2003 currently recognises instruments that create an enduring power of attorney made in other States. But there is ambiguity as to whether this section would apply to instruments that are, in their nature, enduring powers of attorney but called by a different name. The amendment resolves that uncertainty by clarifying that an interstate enduring power of attorney includes an instrument in the nature of an enduring power of attorney, whether it is described as such.

For example, in the Northern Territory advance personal plans are enduring instruments created under the Advance Personal Planning Act 2013 that enable adults to appoint other people to make decisions about financial and legal matters on their behalf should they lose decision-making capacity. The amendment will ensure that advance personal plans are recognised in New South Wales. The amendment will align section 25 with inter-jurisdiction recognition provisions for enduring powers of attorney, or their equivalent, in other State and Territory legislation. The ongoing maintenance and improvement of legislation through miscellaneous amendment bills such as this is critical to the work of good governance and effective legislation. The bill provides updates across justice legislation, and related areas, to ensure the work of the Government and the legal system can continue effectively. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed.**

### Third Reading

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## PUBLIC HEALTH (TOBACCO) AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2024

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 24 October 2024.**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (14:59):** With great urgency, I strongly support the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. While vaping goods have been banned irrespective of nicotine content in New South Wales and Australia since 1 July as part of Commonwealth reforms, the purpose of the bill is to introduce supply and possession offences in New South Wales legislation that are aligned with those reforms. The changes will enable our officers appointed under New South Wales legislation to use their existing enforcement powers to enforce the new offences. E-cigarettes, also known as vapes, pose a serious public health threat, hooking a new generation of users into a lifetime of nicotine addiction. They are a danger to decades of progress in New South Wales and across Australia in reducing tobacco smoking rates.

The Government is aware from its extensive enforcement activities and from published evidence that e-cigarettes are being marketed to children and young people. In my electorate of Heathcote, numerous tobacconists selling e-cigarettes do business near schools. That is especially the case in the suburbs of Thirroul, Bulli and Heathcote, where tobacconists are across the road from primary schools and are in clear view from the schoolyard. There are now four tobacconists within a five-minute walk from my office in Engadine, half of which have opened within the past six months. After school the streets are filled with young students walking to the train station or interacting with local businesses. Young people are at risk of being targeted by the tobacco industry every time they walk past one of those tobacconists.

E-cigarettes with lolly and fruit flavours, with cartoon characters on packages or those even shaped like games and toys are a danger to our youth. Restricting appealing flavours will reduce the attractiveness of vapes to young people. The proposed amending bill will protect young people from being targeted by tobacco industry marketing strategies and becoming hooked on nicotine. All e-cigarette users are exposed to chemicals and toxins that have the potential to cause harm. When someone uses an e-cigarette, the aerosol they inhale can contain over 200 chemicals, some of which have been shown to be harmful to health and can cause cancer and heart disease. While the evidence is still emerging, known health harms associated with vaping include throat irritation, breathlessness, cough, dizziness, headaches, nausea and lung damage. Rechargeable vapes can also explode,

causing serious burns and trauma. I especially fear the effect that these harmful chemicals will have on our young people not only in my own electorate but also across the State.

The Government has been a leader in addressing this emerging public health threat. NSW Health has a comprehensive program of activities to help protect young people and the broader community from the harms of e-cigarettes and tobacco. This includes funding for public awareness and education campaigns, support to quit smoking or vaping, compliance and enforcement of smoke-free and retailing laws, and targeted programs for groups with high smoking or vaping rates. In 2023-24 the Government invested an additional \$6.8 million over three years to boost enforcement efforts against the sale of illegal vapes and increase support for young people to quit vaping.

Earlier this year, the Government launched the \$3 million "Every vape is a hit to your health" public health campaign targeted at young people, which connects young people to more information about vaping and support to quit. But more must be done. The bill introduces supply and possession offences that are modelled on references to Commonwealth laws in the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act to help facilitate stronger compliance efforts against e-cigarettes. They will enable New South Wales inspectors to efficiently and effectively carry out compliance and enforcement activities across the State.

The NSW Health comprehensive e-cigarette and tobacco compliance program has seen impressive results. In the 12 months from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, NSW Health conducted over 2,300 retail inspections, seizing over 425,000 nicotine vapes, 8.3 million illegal cigarettes and 2,600 kilograms of other illegal tobacco products, all with a street value of over \$23.5 million. The legislative changes in New South Wales will assist those efforts. I acknowledge the wonderful Minister for Health. He is extremely passionate about this issue and about ensuring that we put every possible prevention strategy in place to assist our young people and make sure that they do not become addicted to these products. We thank him, his staff and NSW Health for their efforts. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:04):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. The Opposition is supportive of measures to help combat the harmful and dangerous trade of illicit tobacco. It is a fight that is getting bigger every day, underpinned by organised criminals whose arms reach into almost every suburb and town in our State. Illegal tobacco and illegal cigarettes are primarily sold through tobacconists, which are proliferating at a rate that is, quite frankly, alarming. There are 19,500 shops in our State, growing at an average rate of 1,000 new shops every year. They are popping up in our suburbs; we see them near our schools and in prime shopping strips, selling under-the-counter vapes and illicit tobacco. I have witnessed it firsthand, and it has to stop. It is so much more than cheap cigarettes and vapes. The Australian Border Force Commander, Ken McKern, said:

There are well documented links between the distribution and sale of illicit tobacco in Australia and serious and organised crime syndicates.

Organised crime syndicates use illicit tobacco income to fund other illegal activities that cause significant harm to our community – such as illicit drugs.

Organised syndicates pressure tobacco retailers across Australia to buy and sell their illicit product. They use gangs to enforce compliance including torching tobacco shops, stand over tactics and shootings.

Evading excise duty on tobacco also costs the community millions of dollars that could be spent on essential community services.

We must act. A licensing scheme as proposed in the bill is welcome, as are increased penalties for those involved in the illicit trade of tobacco. We will support that approach. We will not stand in the way of attempts to do the right thing. But the Opposition will move amendments because we must do more, and we need to do more. This is a weak bill. It is weak when compared with the level of fines being introduced in other jurisdictions. It is weak when compared with the fines for vaping introduced in this place only a few weeks ago. It is weak when it comes to the checks and balances of a licensing scheme. We will propose higher penalties and the introduction of a fit and proper person test when considering a licence application. I will talk to the amendments later. That is a no-brainer, given the clear links between organised crime and the illicit tobacco trade. That should be clearly set out in the bill.

It is embarrassing for the Government that its Labor counterparts in Victoria today announced sweeping and comprehensive changes, the toughest in the country, including a licensing scheme with a fit and proper person test, more powers to police, more dedicated inspectors, and penalties for individuals of up to \$355,000 or up to 15 years in jail, while businesses face more than \$1.7 million compared with a maximum of \$110,000 proposed in the bill. Smaller penalties might have been appropriate a few years ago, but then the firebombing started and the number of shops started expanding. Changing times demand changed measures.

Tobacco smoke accounts for about half of the estimated preventable cancer deaths in Australia. While we have seen a decline in smoking rates in New South Wales from 18.9 per cent in 2007 to 9.5 per cent in 2022-23,

at the same time we have seen an increase in the number of tobacconists opening in New South Wales. It is important that we do more to prevent a reversal in the trend that we have fought so hard for: a declining rate in tobacco use and smoking in New South Wales. The sale of illicit tobacco—or chop-chop, as it is colloquially known—is a growing issue in this country. In stores throughout New South Wales people can easily purchase illegal cigarettes. They appear not in the proper packaging. They do not have health warnings and they are often paid for with cash.

That cash is going straight into the pockets of criminal gangs. The Australian Tax Office [ATO] estimates there were 1,656 tonnes of illicit tobacco undetected in the Australian market in 2022-23, representing 18 per cent of the total tobacco market. That is huge. The ATO estimates that the total amount of illicit tobacco either imported into Australia or grown in Australia increased from 1,073 tonnes in 2016-17 to 3,834 tonnes in 2022-23. That is worth \$6.3 billion. That is a lucrative trade for organised crime syndicates. Those criminals do not care about people's health. They are looking to make a profit. We have seen the lengths that they will go to to continue making that profit.

In Victoria there are on average two firebombings a week related to tobacco turf wars. Since last year, New South Wales has seen six alleged arson attacks on tobacconists from the North Coast to the Central Coast to inland. Those turf wars have spread to South Australia as well. We want to ensure that we have tough legislation in New South Wales so that criminal gangs do not see our State as a soft touch when it comes to the illicit tobacco trade. We must ensure that our laws are tough enough to smoke those crooks out when it comes to illicit trade. That is why, along with the amendments the Opposition is proposing today, we will once again be calling for a parliamentary inquiry into this evil and dangerous trade. The issue has now moved beyond just health; it has become a full-blown crime crisis across our country.

While the recent inquiry into e-cigarettes covered part of that ground, our proposed inquiry would have a clear focus on organised crime links to tobacconists and money laundering schemes operating within tobacconists, including the use of ATMs. It would look at landlord protections and accountability; departmental responsibility for enforcement; enforcement, resourcing and staffing, especially in regional New South Wales; and the impact on small businesses and communities in metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales. No stone should be left unturned in tackling the organised crime gangs that are making enormous profits from illicit tobacco. I hope the Government and crossbench will support the inquiry. We are happy to work on the terms of reference in a bipartisan manner.

The bill proposes to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 to create a positive licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail sale of tobacco products and non-smoking tobacco products. The bill will also increase a range of existing penalties for tobacco sales to align with community expectations and to better recognise the seriousness of those offences. The bill will require that any person wishing to sell tobacco by retail or wholesale will need a licence. The bill creates offences for the sale of tobacco without a licence that carry penalties of up to \$44,000 or 400 penalty units for an individual, and \$220,000 or 2,000 penalty units for a corporation.

The secretary may refuse to grant a licence on the grounds that the applicant has been convicted of an offence related to tobacco or vaping goods in New South Wales or another jurisdiction. If a person is convicted of a relevant offence after obtaining a licence, the secretary will also have the power to revoke the licence. Each retail premises or online shop where tobacco is sold will be required to have a licence. A wholesaler will need a licence but can operate in more than one location with that licence, reflecting that a wholesaler's office and warehouse may not be at the same location. Each licence will be for a period of up to 12 months and must be renewed annually.

The bill provides broad regulation-making powers to assist with enforcement as well as administrative matters, including fees for applications for new licences and renewal of licences, the keeping of records, the display of licences, and the monitoring and enforcement of the licensing provisions. It also provides for the secretary to establish a register of licences. Transitional provisions will enable existing retailers and wholesalers to apply for a licence and continue to trade while waiting for their application to be considered. The licensing provisions will commence on proclamation to provide sufficient time to communicate the new requirements to businesses. The Opposition would like an indication of how long the Government envisages it would take before the laws come into effect. The concern around no fixed date has been raised by the Legislation Review Committee. We certainly would not like to delay the introduction of a licensing scheme unnecessarily, but we do support the need to work with businesses further to ensure a seamless transition to the licensing scheme.

The bill also proposes increasing penalties on a range of existing offences in the tobacco Act. Penalties for sales to minors are increased to \$110,000 or 1,000 penalty units for the first offence, and \$220,000 or 2,000 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence for a corporation; and \$22,000 for a first offence, and \$110,000 for a second or subsequent offence for an individual. For sales of tobacco not in a manufacturer's package, penalties are increased to \$22,000 for individuals and \$110,000 for corporations. For sales of tobacco without a health

warning, penalties are increased to \$22,000 for individuals and \$110,000 for corporations. For obstructing a tobacco inspector, the penalty is increased to \$11,000. As indicated, the Opposition will propose amendments to increase some of the penalties.

The Opposition has also had the opportunity to consult with a range of stakeholders, including those in the health space and the retail space. By and large, all stakeholders were supportive of introducing a licensing scheme. However, retailers have told me they would be very supportive of tougher penalties and a fit and proper person test in that licensing scheme. Legitimate retailers are being squeezed out by organised crime and we need to ensure that the laws are fit to protect their businesses and the public. A number of stakeholders would also welcome the issues being further considered through a parliamentary inquiry. Stakeholders also want to ensure that, when they pay their licence fee—which I understand will be \$1,100—that money will go into enforcing the issues. Multiply the licence fee by 19½ thousand stores and we get over \$21½ million. We seek confirmation that that will be used in enforcement via regulation. Some retailers have expressed a desire to see enforcement moved out of health and into justice. A parliamentary inquiry could consider that further.

I thank the Minister and his office for providing briefings to me and my office on the bill. This is an issue that both the Minister and I are passionate about. I encourage the Government and the crossbench to work with the Opposition on amendments to the bill and to support a further parliamentary inquiry. We are doing good work in New South Wales, but we should continue to pursue ways to further crack down on illicit tobacco because we know what smoking does to people's health and that every dollar in the pocket of organised crime only helps fund further misery.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:17):** I support the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. This is a critical piece of legislation that reflects our Government's ongoing commitment to protecting public health and addressing the widespread challenges posed by tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products. The bill introduces essential reforms that seek to regulate the sale and distribution of tobacco products while strengthening our ability to combat the illicit tobacco trade, which has become a growing concern for many in our community. The objective of the bill is to introduce a licensing scheme to regulate the sale of tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products for both retail and wholesale businesses, as well as significantly increase penalties for offences related to the improper sale and display of the products, especially in cases involving minors.

The provisions are in direct response to the escalating concerns voiced by parents, educators, community leaders and legitimate businesses about the accessibility of illegal tobacco and vaping products, particularly among our youth. Tobacco use remains the single largest cause of preventable death and disease in New South Wales. While we have made tremendous progress in reducing smoking rates, with adult daily smoking rates falling from 18.4 per cent in 2003 to 8.2 per cent in 2023, the illicit trade in tobacco threatens to undermine those gains.

At the heart of the bill is the introduction of a comprehensive licensing scheme for tobacco retailers and wholesalers. Under the scheme, businesses selling tobacco products, whether over the counter, through vending machines or online, will be required to obtain a retail licence. Similarly, wholesalers who supply tobacco for reselling will need a wholesale licence. That move will bring New South Wales in line with other States and Territories, all of which already have licensing regimes in place. The bill makes it clear that selling tobacco without a valid licence will result in significant penalties. For individuals, the maximum penalty will be 400 penalty units, equating to \$44,000, while for corporations, the penalty will rise to 2,000 penalty units, or \$220,000. This robust licensing framework will not only ensure that businesses selling tobacco are properly regulated, but it will also allow us to target illicit activities more effectively.

The illicit tobacco trade is a lucrative industry that undermines public health efforts and disproportionately impacts young people. Those products, often sold at a fraction of the price of legal tobacco, do not carry the mandated health warnings and evade excise and customs duties. They are an attractive option for young people who may be drawn to their low cost and availability. The availability of those illegal products is a major threat to our public health efforts, and the bill is designed to combat that threat. The bill also increases penalties for several existing tobacco-related offences, particularly those concerning the sale of tobacco to minors and the improper display of tobacco products. The penalties are designed to reflect the gravity of those offences and provide a stronger deterrent against noncompliance.

For example, under the current law, individuals selling tobacco without proper packaging or health warnings face a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units, or \$11,000. The bill doubles the penalty for individuals to 200 penalty units, or \$22,000, and increases the penalty for corporations to 1,000 penalty units, or \$110,000. Those changes reflect the seriousness with which we regard noncompliance with tobacco laws, particularly in relation to public health warnings that are crucial to informing the public about the dangers of smoking.

To support the enforcement of those new laws, the Minns Labor Government will significantly increase the resources available to inspectors. In 2023, when the Minns Labor Government came to office, there were only

seven inspectors tasked with enforcing tobacco laws across New South Wales. That number has now doubled to 14, and we are expanding the team to 28 inspectors. In total, we will have around 68 inspectors working across the State to ensure compliance with tobacco laws. Those inspectors will work closely with the NSW Police Force, the Australian Taxation Office and Federal agencies to crack down on the sale of illicit tobacco.

In summary, the bill represents a significant step forward in our efforts to regulate tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products in New South Wales. By introducing a licensing scheme and increasing penalties for noncompliance, we are taking decisive action to protect public health, particularly for our youth. The Government is committed to tackling the illicit tobacco trade, ensuring that businesses comply with the law and providing our inspectors with the resources they need to enforce those laws effectively. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:23):** I make a short contribution to debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024 introduced by the Government. While the bill attempts to tackle the pressing issues surrounding the supply of tobacco products and the illicit tobacco trade in New South Wales, it falls short of implementing the robust measures needed to effectively combat those challenges. The bill proposes a licensing scheme requiring individuals and businesses to obtain a licence to sell tobacco products, with penalties for noncompliance. However, the measures outlined are insufficient for several reasons. Firstly, it lacks a fit and proper person test. Unlike other States such as Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, the bill does not include a fit and proper person test in the licence application process. That omission allows individuals with potential links to organised crime to obtain licences, undermining the integrity of the system.

Secondly, the penalties are simply inadequate. The proposed penalties—up to \$44,000 for individuals and \$220,000 for corporations selling tobacco without a licence—are not commensurate with the scale of profits generated by the illicit tobacco trade. For organised crime syndicates profiting from over \$2 billion in evaded duty annually, the penalties are merely a minor inconvenience—a minor cost of doing business. The Government's bill does not adequately address the severity of the illicit tobacco problem. The number of registered tobacconists in New South Wales has surged to 19,500, an increase of 4,000 in just four years. Australian Border Force Commander Ken McKern highlighted the connection between illicit tobacco and organised crime. He said:

Organised crime syndicates use illicit tobacco income to fund other illicit activities that cause significant harm to our community—such as illicit drugs.

Organised crime syndicates pressure tobacco retailers across Australia to buy and sell their illicit product, using gangs to enforce compliance including torching tobacco shops, stand over tactics and shootings.

Since 2023 there have been six firebombing attacks related to tobacconists in New South Wales. In Victoria the situation is even more dire, with over 100 arson attacks on tobacconists. Those facts underscore the urgent need for stronger legislative action than the current bill proposes. While the bill's intent is to align New South Wales with other States and Territories, it neglects crucial elements that make such licensing schemes effective elsewhere. Without stringent measures, the bill risks becoming a token gesture rather than a substantive tool against illicit tobacco and organised crime.

To address the shortcomings of the Government's bill, the Opposition will propose to make amendments, including by adding a fit and proper person test similar to Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia. The test would allow authorities to refuse a licence if the applicant has links to organised crime or fails to meet integrity standards. By scrutinising applicants more thoroughly, we can prevent criminal elements from exploiting the licensing system to legitimise their illicit activities. Another amendment will propose raising the penalties for corporations by increasing the maximum penalty for corporations from \$220,000 to \$770,000, which aligns our penalties with those of Queensland. That adjustment reflects the substantial financial gains made from illegal activities and serves as a much stronger deterrent. It also signals zero tolerance. Higher penalties convey a clear message that involvement in the illicit tobacco trade will have significant financial repercussions.

The Government's bill in its current form is a missed opportunity to make a meaningful impact on public health and to combat the escalating influence of organised crime associated with the illicit tobacco trade. It lacks the necessary provisions to ensure that only reputable individuals and businesses can operate within the tobacco industry. We cannot afford half-measures when our communities are endangered by criminal syndicates profiting from illegal tobacco sales, funding further illicit activities and perpetrating violence against those who stand in their way. I urge the Government to acknowledge those critical gaps and to incorporate the proposed amendments into the bill. By doing so, we can create legislation that not only aligns with other States but also sets a higher standard for protecting our citizens and upholding the rule of law.

Today the State of Victoria has announced further reforms to its legislation to include a fit and proper person test, a new tobacco regulator with dedicated inspectors to work closely with the police, and the toughest penalties in Australia. I acknowledge the Minister's office has been great to us by providing briefings and

discussions on the matter. I acknowledge that it is unrealistic for us expect the bill to exactly reflect Victoria's bill, given that that announcement was only made this morning.

However, the Opposition is calling for an inquiry into the illicit tobacco trade in New South Wales to address the problem in a more detailed and thorough way. Whether that includes some of the measures taken by other States, such as South Australia and Victoria, or whether it includes looking at tougher penalties, which I would encourage, an inquiry can get to the bottom of those issues. It will allow our communities to make submissions before we become subject to the kind of violence and firebombings we have seen in Victoria. What happens in some States is often easily transferred to New South Wales. The last thing we want to see is more criminal elements moving from Victoria to New South Wales because our penalties are not as severe as they are south of the border. So, in a bipartisan way, we should demonstrate our commitment to the health and safety of the people of New South Wales by strengthening this bill with our amendments and effectively address the challenges at hand.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:29):** I speak in debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. Vaping is a serious threat to health. Like smoking in the early days, we do not necessarily know the long-term consequences. But this bill is yet another step to reduce the amount of vaping across communities in New South Wales and also look at what is happening with illegal tobacco. I thank the Minister for the initial bill. Vaping has been illegal in New South Wales since July 2024, but we must move further to eliminate what is going on across New South Wales. The bill proposes to create a comprehensive licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail sale of tobacco and non-smoking tobacco products. In doing so, the New South Wales Government is sending a clear message: There is no place for illicit tobacco and vapes in our community.

I know that this bill will make people in my community happy. There have been numerous complaints as we have seen vaping and tobacco shops open up in Umina, Ettalong and Woy Woy. It is disappointing, and I definitely do not want to see this in my community. The clear goals of the bill are to enhance our regulatory powers over the supply of tobacco, align with the measures taken by other States and Territories, and address the community's growing concerns about illicit tobacco sales. The proposed licensing scheme is central to this amendment. It will require any individual or entity wishing to sell tobacco products, whether retail or wholesale, to obtain a valid licence. This will ensure that only qualified individuals and businesses are involved in the sale of these controlled products and give the Government stronger powers to control and monitor tobacco sales in New South Wales. The introduction of this scheme aims to bring New South Wales in line with existing regulations in other jurisdictions and demonstrates our commitment to meeting community expectations on this critical public health issue.

The bill will introduce stringent penalties to deter unlicensed sales. Any individual selling tobacco without a licence will face fines of up to \$44,000, and corporations could face penalties as high as \$220,000. Additionally, those with a history of tobacco- or vaping-related offences may be refused a licence or may have their licences revoked in the case of offences committed after the granting of a licence. This provision enables the secretary to uphold a high standard in granting and revoking licences, ensuring that only responsible sellers operate in this sector. The bill will further require that each retail outlet, as well as online stores, holds an individual licence. Wholesalers, meanwhile, will need just one licence, even if they operate across multiple locations. Each licence will be valid for a period of up to 12 months and will require annual renewal. To facilitate the effective operation of this licensing scheme, the bill will also empower the secretary to establish a comprehensive register of licences. That is important as we move forward.

The bill addresses penalties associated with tobacco-related offences. The bill will increase fines for several offences under the existing tobacco Act, aligning penalties with community expectations. Penalties for selling tobacco to minors will rise significantly, with first-time offenders facing fines of up to \$110,000 for corporations and \$22,000 for individuals. Repeat offenders will face even steeper penalties of \$220,000 and \$110,000, respectively. Fines for selling tobacco without health warnings and for sales not in the manufacturer's original packaging will increase, reaching \$22,000 for individuals and \$110,000 for corporations.

The bill will also introduce a penalty of \$11,000 for obstructing a tobacco inspector, underscoring our commitment to enforcing these regulations. Additionally, the bill will introduce a new offence for using a price board to advertise tobacco products, allowing us to close a loophole that has previously hampered enforcement efforts. I look forward to going around to these supposed sales locations in my electorate and actually explaining the new legislation to them, because I know that what is going on in some of those shops is definitely not okay. I thank our health inspectors. It is really important that we have doubled the number of health inspectors in New South Wales. I commend them for their work, particularly on the Central Coast, in raiding shops.

Recognising the operational impact of these changes, the bill includes transitional provisions. Retailers and wholesalers will be granted time to apply for their licences, ensuring they can continue to trade lawfully while awaiting the scheme's full implementation. The licensing requirement will commence upon proclamation,

allowing ample time for communication and adjustment. That is particularly important in my community, as we saw an arson attempt on the Central Coast. About three months ago the beautiful, sleepy little town of Ettalong was disrupted by a fireball and explosion at a business, which also disrupted a number of businesses around it. It was quite frightening for our community. Anything we can do to restrict and oversee the operations of these tobacconists is very important. With over 35,182 illegal nicotine products seized across the Central Coast by NSW Health inspectors up to August 2024, it is clear that continued efforts to stem the flow of illegal nicotine products are essential.

The bill is an important step in safeguarding public health by tightening regulations around the sale of tobacco products. By establishing a licensing scheme, increasing penalties for offences and closing enforcement gaps, we are continuing to take decisive action to combat illicit tobacco sales, protect young people from accessing tobacco and ensure that all sales align with health regulations and community expectations. In closing, I thank our passionate Minister for Health. He has two young boys and does not want to see anyone's health impacted by illicit vapes or tobacco—and neither does any of us. I thank the Minister and his team for continuing to work hard on this. In introducing this bill, the New South Wales Labor Government reinforces our commitment to a healthier and more responsible New South Wales.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:36):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. The Opposition supports the bill with amendments as outlined earlier in this debate in the excellent contribution by the shadow Minister for Health, the member for Vaucluse, and also by the shadow Minister for Regional Health, the member for Coffs Harbour. As the member for Gosford outlined, the Central Coast, including Terrigal, has seen a proliferation of smoke shops recently. Understandably, there is community concern about the rapid growth in their number. In the past four years alone over 4,000 of these shops have sprung up across New South Wales. Let us be really clear: An enormous amount of money is being raised by these businesses. Sadly, in a lot of cases that money is being funnelled back through organised crime. Not that long ago all members of this House supported removing the illegal activity around vapes. Now we are seeing the Government do the right thing by looking to put tougher penalties in place around retail and wholesale tobacco use.

But, as the member for Vaucluse outlined, this bill does not go far enough. We are talking about an industry that the Australian Taxation Office estimates to be evading over \$2 billion of duty. That is just the duty; that is not the retail sales of these products. As other members have outlined, those products are colloquially known as chop-chop, which is an attempt to diminish the severity of what smoking addiction can do to people. There is a lack of oversight of the retail sale of these products across New South Wales. The local business chambers on the Central Coast raised their deep concern about the recent firebombings in the electorate of the member for Gosford, and I have had similar concerns raised by business chambers in my community. Those organisations want to see harsh penalties applied to make it clear to perpetrators of this crime that they will be caught and punished.

I also want to note the contribution of the member for Vaucluse about a parliamentary inquiry. That is absolutely necessary. Some of us have been legislators in this place for a long time. The member for Shellharbour is in the Chamber. She knows as well as I do that legislation is always playing catch up with what is actually happening in the community. It is up to us and beholden to us as legislators—and the member for Wagga Wagga is here as well—to make sure that legislation that is introduced stays in front of the curve when it comes to dealing with criminal activity. These people are very, very good at manipulating the system and trying to find workarounds and ways to continue to ply their illegal trade. One of the clear ways to address that is to provide stiffer penalties.

I acknowledge the Government is putting penalties in place for illegal sales—that is, \$22,000 for an individual and \$110,000 for a corporation. But those corporations are turning over hundreds of millions of dollars. Quite frankly, that is not even a slap on the wrist. We need to be serious about this. There is a proliferation of individuals starting up small businesses to illegally sell tobacco. That has become clear to everybody because of the turf wars that are occurring in other States and, concerningly, are now starting up in New South Wales. I commend the member for Vaucluse for the Opposition's proposed amendment to increase those penalties to \$770,000 for corporations and \$154,000 for individuals.

While those figures are not as high as those announced today in Victoria, they will create a very clear message that if someone tries to perpetrate these crimes in New South Wales they will receive stiff penalties—stiffer than what is being proposed in this piece of legislation, as drafted by the Government. It is also important to note that other States have the test for a fit- and- proper person. The amendment proposed by the Opposition—and hopefully supported by the crossbench—will insert the need for a fit-and-proper person test. We do not want the secretary to have to retrospectively remove people who should have never been given a permit in the first place. That is a waste of time, resources and effort that could be better spent if there is a fit-and-proper person test for those people.

I welcome also the initiative of a regulator. Today it was announced that Victoria will have a regulator. It is good to have that consistent oversight. Right now, we do not know whether Health is the right agency to maintain the regulations, given the incredibly rapid growth. Does it have the resources to apply the necessary infringement notices to the perpetrators? As the member for Gosford said, 35,000 illegal products were seized on the Central Coast alone. That is an enormous amount in just one region in one part of the State. We need a parliamentary inquiry, which we have all the time for so many things. As someone who has been on many committees, I believe one of the best things about the New South Wales Parliament is its robust and detailed committee structure. Every member has served on one. They help to create clear messaging and dialogue around what can be amended and what can be improved for governments of all persuasions moving forward. Acts and regulations are living documents, and it is up to us to say in front of the curve.

While this is a good bill, it needs to be better. The reality is that the penalties need to be significantly increased to send a clear message to perpetrators that they are not going to get just a slap on the wrist. A parliamentary inquiry might find that we need to go even further with these sorts of penalties. That is what we do so well in the New South Wales Parliament. We come together in a bipartisan way to look at how to make legislation better to help and improve the situations and lives of the people of New South Wales. It is very clear to most small businesses on the Central Coast that this is a grave concern. Business chambers are contacting all members to raise significant concerns about the antisocial behaviour around the proliferation of smoke shops.

My good friend the brand new member for Hornsby was in the Chamber earlier, and he mentioned two shops that have popped up at train stations right next to schools in his electorate. That happened very recently. They do that because they know they can make a bucketload of money out of it and scoot around the rules. The regulations are welcome, but we need to do more. That is why I recommend that both the Government and the crossbench think very seriously about supporting the tougher penalties recommended by the Opposition in this place. I acknowledge that the Minister's office spent a great deal of time with the shadow Minister. That is how we work, collectively.

Let us all be very clear: We know the dangers of smoking. We are all old enough to have seen the ads and know the damage smoking does to people's lungs. We all remember the graphic ads where sponges were wringed out with tar from smoking. We all grew up with that. But there is a generation of younger people who have not been exposed and do not understand the dangers of smoking. We are getting to the point where illegal tobacco products are being sold with no warnings on the packaging and none of the imagery that we have all seen very clearly. Those images are big visual deterrents to stop people from wanting to get involved in what is a very difficult substance and habit to break. Smoking is one of the toughest addictions to give up. I come from a family with a few smokers.

The cost becomes prohibitive as well but, with the illegal activity, these products are being sold at a fraction of the normal retail price. Massive profits are still being made by organised crime. That is being indicated and made clear by the turf wars popping up and the firebombing of retail stores. It is not only the retail stores being targeted but also the neighbouring stores that are affected by that sort of behaviour. The member for Gosford knows that the smoke and fire damage spreads. It also starts to create a level of fear and trepidation in our communities, which is totally unacceptable—whether it be on the Central Coast, the South Coast or anywhere in between. We need to send a clear message to these people, organisations, individuals and corporations that this is not acceptable, and they are on notice. We need to give the legislation the teeth it needs to send that fear and monetary impost to the perpetrators.

I welcome the bill. I am really pleased the Government has introduced this legislation, but it can go a lot further to make significant inroads with the messaging to say, "This won't be tolerated. You will be found and fined, and the fine will be commensurate with the criminal activity you are taking part in." The amendment proposed by the member for Vaucluse around the fit-and-proper person test is important. We know there are no unintended consequences of that, because it has already been done in other States. They know that having a fit- and-proper person test works and cuts it off at the beginning, before it goes too far. I thank all members who have contributed to debate. I thank the member for Vaucluse for her contribution and her proposed amendments. I commend the bill and the amendments to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:46):** I speak in support of the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. Indeed, earlier this year, I was so concerned by the explosion of illegal tobacco in my electorate and across the State that I drafted my own private member's bill to require licensing of tobacco retailers and increased penalties for offenders. I am very pleased that the Government has largely reflected the content of my bill in the bill we are debating today. Since becoming aware of the escalating scale of the problem of black-market tobacco sales, I have become increasingly alarmed at the lawlessness that is driving this serious behaviour. Legitimate retailers—owners of small and large businesses who do the right thing—are paying a heavy financial price for the plague of illegal tobacco shops, which are popping up like flies at a picnic.

Quite simply, honest retailers cannot compete with criminals. As everyone can probably imagine, I do not support smoking. But we have a system of health warnings and restrictions around the sale of tobacco, and legitimate retailers comply and help us in the work to get people off cigarettes. But their business model is undermined by illegal activity, criminals and, I suggest, organised crime. In assessing the full scope of this problem, I am grateful for the advice and support I have received from other members. I note the strong advocacy of the member for Kiama. Many other members of this House have spoken to me about what is happening in their electorates. I have had good discussions with the member for Vacluse as well. I appreciate her interest in this issue.

I express my gratitude to Wagga business owners, including Neville Jolliffe and Kellie Willis, who first brought this issue to my attention earlier this year. The fact is that illegal tobacco shops have been popping up in my electorate and elsewhere for years. It is usually once or twice, and the public health unit shuts them down pretty quickly. But this year there was an absolute explosion. Within 500 metres of my office, there were 10. Some of them were clearly marked as selling illegal tobacco and some were masquerading as supermarkets. That was happening in other suburbs, and it happened pretty quickly.

There was a pattern, with movements up from the border. When I raised this topic in this House—I think I was the first to raise it—other members came to me and said what was happening in their electorates. It was pretty clear, from my subsequent discussions with police and with the Crime Commissioner, that we were dealing with organised crime—that is my view—and that this was going to explode. I thank Neville Jolliffe, Kellie Willis, and other business owners, who were among the early victims of this scourge, for raising the issue with me; they have done a great service to our State.

Many legitimate traders have faced financial hardship. They have also been intimidated by criminals who target small operators with barely veiled threats to fall into line or face worrying consequences. It makes a mockery of the law, degrades the health messaging around tobacco use and raises concerns that New South Wales could go the way of Victoria with the potentially deadly arson attacks, risking lives and destroying livelihoods. When framing my private member's bill, it was my intention to throw a spanner into the works of illegal operators by requiring them to be licensed. That would make criminals more accountable, and easier to regulate and punish. Increased penalties will provide a more effective deterrent because the current fines are seen by illegal operators as just a manageable cost of business in a very lucrative trade.

I do not pretend that licensing and tougher penalties will entirely solve the problem, but they will provide a framework that is now lacking. In that framework, we can begin to hit black marketeers where it hurts—in the hip pocket. We do not allow purveyors of alcohol to sell their product to whomever they like whenever they want. Quite rightly, alcohol retailers are licensed, monitored and expected to do the right thing, and for the most part they do. We need to apply similar restrictions to the sale of tobacco—which, after all, is a deadly product—so that we can at least begin to bring the problem under control. I note that other States in Australia have licensing regimes, but until this point New South Wales has not had one.

I acknowledge the work of the Minister and the speed with which the Government has responded to my private member's bill. I also acknowledge the work of ministerial staff and departmental staff, including Dr Kerry Chant, with whom I met earlier this year to discuss my private member's bill. It is pleasing that the Government has adopted so much of my bill, reflecting the wishes of my community and many others across the State. While the bill offers an important new weapon in the fight against crime, I will propose amendments to make it even more effective. My initial proposal included reference to a test for a fit and proper person, which is not in the current bill. I have been informed that the Government will not support that proposal because of the administrative challenges around it.

I accept there is a real degree of urgency about this issue, and it is important that we are clear about that. I have been told that when the bill is assented to, the fines will come into effect. If we can get the bill through the Houses of Parliament next week, then we can have a regime in place by July. We cannot wait any longer than that, so I am prepared to accept the Government's view that the fit and proper person test would pose a delay. I support the Opposition's amendment, but I accept that the Government does not, so I will propose an amendment that will help fill that gap by enabling the Health secretary to act upon advice from a law enforcement agency in considering whether to grant, refuse, renew or revoke a licence. That at least gives a method by which the police can inform the regulators around the presence of organised crime. That is a part-way step forward. It is not as robust as a fit and proper person test, but it does provide extra powers to weed out applicants who are manifestly unfit for the privilege of holding a licence to sell tobacco.

In recognition that the bill is a work in progress, I will also propose an amendment to provide for a statutory review of the entire bill after five years to determine what is working and what could be done better. Further, a report on the outcome of that review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of five years from the commencement of the amendments made by part 5. These amendments will help to ensure

that the bill remains fit for purpose and continues to do what it sets out to do. Mention has been made of the need for a parliamentary inquiry. I am not opposed to the need for a parliamentary inquiry because aspects of the bill could be improved, which might benefit from additional scrutiny. However, I am also convinced that we have an urgent need to get this legislation through in the form in which it is being proposed, with some amendments, because that is what is needed right now. In the form proposed, the bill will make a big difference to the impact on the community.

In preparing my private member's bill, I consulted widely with stakeholders across the industry, the health agency and the wider community to get their feedback. That feedback included calls for tougher penalties than those originally proposed in the Government's bill. I welcome the Government's support in revising those penalties upward in the bill that is now before the House. I thank the stakeholders who helped to shape this important reform. Time does not permit me to acknowledge all of them, but I particularly thank the Australian Association of Convenience Stores, the Australian United Retailers Limited, British American Tobacco Australia, Cancer Council NSW, MGA Independent Businesses Australia, the NSW Crime Commission and Phillip Morris Limited.

I acknowledge and especially thank my electorate team and my research consultant, Rachelle Kell, who did so much to source and collate the feedback, ensuring that it was all put to good use. I also acknowledge the work of my research officer, Mr Paul Terry, who has worked on the bill and on the feedback. The bill and its amendments will help to control a serious problem before it gets worse. Failure to do so is to surrender to lawlessness, to give up on efforts to manage tobacco as a health issue and to send a message to honest businesspeople that criminal competitors cannot and will not be stopped. We cannot have that. The bill is important. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:55):** I start by acknowledging the incredible work of the Minister Park and his dedicated and professional team, who are always so friendly and approachable. Minister Park is a passionate advocate for public health and always has been. I do not think that we have seen such a fantastic Minister of Health in the past 15 years or that we will see again in the next 15 years. I call out the incredible Mel Haskew, who is in the gallery today. I thank the entire team for all of their hard work, their dedication and their professionalism.

I speak in support of the Public Health Tobacco Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. I thank the Minister for bringing this important bill to the House. Tragically, smoking continues to be the biggest preventable cause of death across New South Wales. Smoking is a major risk factor for many diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke and many types of cancers. As the member for Terrigal has said, it is a highly addictive, bad habit. For over 100 years, big tobacco companies have hooked people on nicotine, preferably addicting them as young as they can so that they have customers for life.

Tobacco use creates a substantial burden on the New South Wales health system. In 2021-22 the number of hospitalisations attributable to smoking in New South Wales was over 56,000 people, which was almost 2 per cent of all hospitalisations. In New South Wales, in 2021 over 6,600 deaths were attributed to smoking. Furthermore, exposure to second-hand smoke causes disease, and premature and preventable death in children and adults who do not smoke. The George Institute found that in 2022-23 tobacco use was responsible for almost \$160 billion in economic and social costs across Australia, comprising treatment and lost productivity costs.

The bill strengthens our comprehensive approach to help reduce the use, impact and associated costs of tobacco. The bill introduces stronger controls over the sale of tobacco and tougher penalties for those who breach tobacco laws, including selling tobacco products to children—one of the most abhorrent things that any retailer can do. The increased penalties for breaching tobacco retailing and illicit tobacco offences reflect the New South Wales Government's commitment to addressing the health impacts of tobacco smoking on the New South Wales community. Illicit tobacco is tobacco grown or manufactured in Australia or imported into Australia without appropriate excise or customs duties being paid. It is often significantly cheaper than factory-made cigarettes and therefore appeals to people, especially young people, because of its attractive price. Its availability and affordability undermine the Government's public health efforts.

Daily smoking rates have declined over the past 20 years—which is great—among New South Wales adults from 18.4 per cent in 2003 to 8.2 per cent in 2023. We want those rates to continue to decrease. NSW Health takes smoking seriously and is implementing comprehensive approaches to continue to reduce smoking rates, and they are working. NSW Health is delivering a suite of initiatives, including social marketing, support to quit smoking, community programs, regulation and specific support for communities with high smoking prevalence. That work is complemented by Australian Government actions such as tobacco taxes and plain packaging laws. The set of initiatives introduced in this bill will promote better health and reduce the costs of ill health by reducing the demand for tobacco and regulating its supply.

I also speak briefly about our comprehensive statewide compliance program, which is now in place. The program employs inspectors who are authorised to conduct tobacco and vaping goods compliance activities across the State. I am pleased that the Government has doubled the number of those inspectors, as the member for Gosford said. Enforcement is a key part of NSW Health's overall response to tobacco control, which includes delivering public awareness and education campaigns, quit smoking support and targeted programs for groups with high smoking rates. NSW Health will bolster the workforce of inspectors to implement and enforce the new tobacco licensing system. Over the coming months an additional 14 enforcement officers will be recruited to strengthen compliance efforts across the State. That will double the number of inspectors employed by the Ministry of Health.

NSW Health's compliance program includes targeting the sale of illicit tobacco and illegal vapes in regional, rural and metropolitan local health districts. Across NSW Health approximately 60 staff are authorised to undertake inspections. That includes the recent addition of four enforcement officers to boost regional enforcement capacity, acknowledging that tobacco retailing is not limited to metropolitan areas only. In my electorate there are four such stores on one street, about 50 metres from each other. Clearly, something needs to be done quickly, which is why the bill is so important. NSW Health works in close partnership with State regulators like the NSW Police Force and national regulators like the Therapeutic Goods Administration and Australian Border Force. Those partnerships will continue to be fostered and will strengthen. That enhanced workforce is critical in supporting the success of the new tobacco licensing scheme. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:01):** I am pleased to support the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. The bill responds to community expectations that the New South Wales Government urgently addresses the soaring increase in the illicit tobacco trade, which is targeting young and vulnerable people in our community. I note that the parliamentary inquiry into e-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales conducted by the Committee on Law and Safety recommended that a positive licensing scheme be introduced to support comprehensive and targeted enforcement.

The tobacco licensing scheme introduced by the bill will ensure that New South Wales has accurate, up-to-date information on tobacco retailing and wholesaling activities across the State. Every retailer and wholesaler selling tobacco products in New South Wales will need to have a licence, with all licensees required to renew their licence every year. The bill will give the Secretary of NSW Health the power to reject an application or revoke an existing licence if the applicant has been convicted of an offence relating to the sale or supply of tobacco or vaping goods under relevant Australian legislation.

Between 1 July 2024 and 30 September 2024, NSW Health inspectors seized more than 3.2 million cigarettes and over 600 kilograms of other illicit tobacco products, with an estimated value of over \$3.7 million. Year on year, seizures of illicit tobacco have continued to rise. The scheme in the bill will support comprehensive and targeted enforcement to identify and penalise those retailers and wholesalers doing the wrong thing. That is why this Government is aiming to commence this much-needed scheme around 1 July next year. The cost of a licence will be set by way of regulation; however, it is anticipated to be \$1,100 per year for each premises for both retailers and wholesalers. The fees will cover the costs of developing, implementing and enforcing the licensing scheme on a cost-recovery basis, and will ensure the proper implementation of the scheme.

Tobacco licensing has become the norm in Australia. All other States and Territories either already have an equivalent scheme in place or are in the process of developing one. A positive tobacco licensing scheme in New South Wales will create a level playing field across all jurisdictions. A licensing scheme in New South Wales will also act as a deterrent for tobacco retailing businesses seeking to operate outside the law. The bill includes penalties of up to \$220,000 for corporations and \$44,000 for individuals for selling tobacco without a licence under the new scheme. This new initiative will ensure greater oversight of the tobacco retail industry and make it more difficult for illicit tobacco to flourish in New South Wales. We must act now.

I was pleased to contribute to debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill 2024, which provided an important platform in order to ensure enforcement of supply and possession of vaping goods and e-cigarettes to protect young people from the harms of vaping and the gateway to tobacco smoking. I also believe this bill will have important public health implications. Smoking kills people; smoking disables people. It causes strokes, heart attacks and lung disease. It causes numerous cancers, from the upper respiratory tract to the lung, and increases the risk of bladder and cervical cancers. It increases the complications of pregnancy, from miscarriage to stillbirth. As long as this filthy, lethal habit remains legal, governments must reduce harm from addiction. The bill will help to control supply and reduce demand. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:06):** I contribute to debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024, which is an important piece of legislation that aims to address the escalating issues surrounding tobacco sales, particularly in relation to the illicit trade of tobacco products. The

Opposition acknowledges the necessity of the bill, which proposes amendments to the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 that aim to create a comprehensive licensing scheme for both the wholesale and retail sales of tobacco products, including non-smoking tobacco options. The Government has put forward this licensing regime with the intention of providing greater powers to control the supply of tobacco. That is a critical measure, especially in light of the increasing prevalence of illicit tobacco sales that have become a substantial concern in our communities. By bringing New South Wales in line with other States and Territories, we are taking a necessary step toward better regulating tobacco sales and protecting public health.

The bill also recognises the need to enhance existing penalties for tobacco sales. It is clear that the current penalties do not reflect the seriousness of the offences, nor do they align with community expectations regarding tobacco regulation and public health. As representatives of our constituents, it is imperative that we address those concerns in a meaningful way. However, the Opposition believes that the Government's bill does not go far enough. While we welcome the efforts to increase penalties, we contend that they remain weak in comparison with the newly established penalties for vaping products. That inconsistency raises questions about the Government's commitment to tackling the broader issue of tobacco regulation effectively. Furthermore, when we compare our proposed penalties with those in States such as Queensland, it becomes evident that New South Wales must adopt a more robust approach to ensure that our communities are adequately protected.

Illicit tobacco sales have grown into a significant challenge, particularly in rural areas, where organised crime groups often operate with little oversight. Those groups pose an increasing threat to public safety and undermine the effectiveness of legitimate businesses that comply with existing regulations. To highlight the gravity of the situation, I draw attention to recent law enforcement actions. According to the Hume Police District, a joint operation conducted on 16 and 17 October targeted illicit tobacco sales in the regions of Boorowa, Young and Goulburn. During that operation, authorities seized an extraordinary total of 1,478,989 illegal cigarettes, 12.5 kilograms of loose illegal tobacco and 1,019 vaping devices. The operation underscores the scale of the issue and the need for stronger regulatory measures.

The law enforcement efforts did not end there. On the following day, additional searches were conducted in two shops in Goulburn in collaboration with NSW Health, resulting in the seizure of 187,740 cigarettes, 3.7 kilograms of loose tobacco and 108 vaping devices. This demonstrates that, even with existing measures in place, the problem of illicit tobacco is persistent and requires more substantial action. In response to these challenges, the Opposition proposes a series of amendments to the licensing scheme that would strengthen its effectiveness. First and foremost, we advocate for the inclusion of a fit and proper person test as part of the licensing application process. This test is already utilised in States such as Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania for liquor licence applications. Implementing a similar requirement for tobacco sales in New South Wales would ensure that individuals with a questionable background or connections to organised crime are effectively excluded from obtaining licences to sell tobacco products.

Furthermore, the Opposition believes it is crucial to establish that a licence can be refused if the applicant demonstrates any links to organised crime. This provision is essential to safeguard our communities from those who would seek to exploit vulnerabilities in the State's regulatory framework for their gain. Finally, the Opposition urges the Government to review and strengthen the penalties associated with the sale of illicit tobacco, particularly in relation to our proposed amendments to last session's vaping bill. By aligning the penalties for illicit tobacco sales with the strict measures the Opposition will propose for vaping products, the Parliament will send a clear message that all forms of illegal trade will be met with serious consequences.

In conclusion, while the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024 is a step in the right direction, it is essential that further action is taken. The Government must demonstrate its commitment to protecting public health and ensuring the safety of our communities. The Opposition calls for a more comprehensive approach to tackling illicit tobacco sales that includes stronger penalties, rigorous licensing requirements and a commitment to collaboration with law enforcement agencies. The Government must take meaningful steps to curb the illicit tobacco trade and protect our communities from its harmful effects.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:11):** I reluctantly support the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. This is not just about health anymore; it is about community safety and organised crime. As it stands, Minister Park's bill is so weak that it practically advertises that New South Wales is open for business to anyone looking to make a quick dollar off illegal tobacco. With six firebombings in New South Wales already, we cannot afford more. Weaker licensing schemes, regulatory controls, fines and penalties make New South Wales the go-to place for organised crime to do business. Our communities deserve better protection, not policies that fall far short. It is time for the Minister to show that he is serious by demanding a fair allocation of Federal tobacco excise for New South Wales. That is real money that can fuel real enforcement.

I know the Minister wants real enforcement—I am not saying that he does not—but there are other avenues that have not been pursued. If they are not pursued, then he needs to seriously jack up the fines to \$1 million, like

the South Australian Labor Party has done under Premier Malinauskas. I commend the South Australian Labor Party and his government for doing that. Without that, all the Government has is a weak bill and hollow promises. If the Minister does not make New South Wales a hostile environment for illegal tobacco, he will be rolling out the welcome mat for criminals. Funds from increased fines or from a fair allocation of Federal tobacco excise should be dedicated to enforcement and compliance, preferably by an agency under a jurisdiction that would better regulate this area, such as the justice cluster or Liquor and Gaming NSW.

When the Victorian Government announced its reforms today, its Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation stood with the Victorian Premier. To me, that makes much more sense. The annual report of the health department shows the number of investigations is minuscule compared with South Australia, which has its equivalent of the Department of Fair Trading overseeing this issue. Regulating the sale of tobacco is not naturally within the wheelhouse of the health department. I have even received claims, although I have not verified them, that people who work for the health department have resigned from their positions as investigators because they have been intimidated by organised crime. I do not know whether those claims are true, but they have been made.

If New South Wales is serious about combating the tobacco wars, then the right agency needs to be on the job. I am not convinced that the health department—people who are concerned with health and welfare—should regulate an industry that often deals with organised crime. New South Wales needs tougher penalties, real deterrents and an inquiry to get to the bottom of how illicit tobacco is flooding into this State. As members of Parliament we have a duty to act decisively, which is why I will back the Opposition's push for a full inquiry into the tobacco industry. People deserve more than a watered-down bill that is all smoke and mirrors. An inquiry would give us an opportunity to send a clear message that New South Wales will not tolerate being a playground for organised crime. Our communities deserve protection, and the toughest laws in the country are needed to make sure that protection is real.

Today the South Australia Government announced, amongst other things, that its penalties for individuals will be \$355,000 and up to 15 years in prison. By having delineations in rules and penalties, and by having a weaker regime, New South Wales is inviting more organised crime and more firebombings of businesses. The bill does not include ministerial shutdown orders or a fit and proper person test. Quite extraordinarily, the Government claims that it does not have time to implement a fit and proper person test, but one already exists across government in a number of agencies. That is a nonsense argument, and the Minister and the department know it. To offer that excuse to members of Parliament is absolutely unacceptable and unreasonable.

I will go through the penalties in South Australia for bodies corporate advertising tobacco products, because this is important. Its government has increased penalties from \$10,000 to \$750,000 for the first offence, or \$1.1 million for subsequent offences; the penalty for selling without a licence has increased from \$20,000 to \$750,000 for the first offence, or \$1.1 million for subsequent offences; and the penalty for sale to a minor is up to \$1 million for a first offence and \$1.5 million for subsequent offences, having been increased from \$20,000 and \$40,000 respectively. The penalty for sale of illicit tobacco, or possession for the purposes of sale, has been increased from \$50,000 to \$750,000, or \$1.1 million for subsequent offences; and the penalty for the new offences of possession for the purposes of sale of e-cigarettes or other prohibited products is up to \$750,000 for the first offence and \$1.1 million for subsequent offences.

The legislation also includes ministerial powers, which I mentioned earlier, to close down illegal tobacco shops. Orders will apply for an initial 72 hours and can be extended to up to six months with approval from a magistrate. Any business that violates such an order can be hit with a penalty of up to \$1.1 million and an individual can be hit with a penalty of up to \$700,000. I do not understand why this bill contains differences that penalise small businesses. For instance, the proposed licence fee for New South Wales is \$1,000 but in Queensland retailers pay \$474.88 and wholesalers pay \$674.16. For all those reasons, we are laggards in New South Wales compared with other jurisdictions like Queensland and Victoria. We are not following other jurisdictions. We are also not using the right agency.

Other jurisdictions, like South Australia, the Northern Territory and Victoria, are moving to systems that involve agencies that are set up to regulate this type of activity. The health department is the wrong department to be doing this. That is why this bill needs to be more comprehensive and mirror the other penalties, which the shadow Minister outlined, to make sure New South Wales has tough regulation in place, rather than this entree—this weak, insipid approach—that invites organised crime into our State from other States where there have been firebombings of businesses. There have also been impacts on insurance premiums for anyone who has a tobacconist in their building because insurers are worried about the impact of organised crime. All these flow-on effects are being felt by people in this State.

I appreciate that the police have indicated that they will be able to assist. But, as I have already mentioned, the Department of Fair Trading would be a better agency to carry out the support and enforcement mechanism. I know that the Minister, to his credit, is an ardent anti-smoker and he has been a great advocate of combating

tobacco and extolling the message of getting off nicotine. I would appreciate from him in his speech in reply a better understanding of why New South Wales seems to have a poorer, weaker approach than other States. There has to be a reason for it. It cannot just be that we are cobbling together legislation at the last minute and that this is a rush job—"Let's just get something through. At least we have some laws in place." Why not have the best laws in place? Victoria just announced them this morning; it is as simple as copy and paste. If the Government were to drop those laws on the table I would support them right now, as I suspect would the majority of members of the House.

I sincerely hope that there is not some political motivation here. I have heard it said by Government members in the corridors of this building that this is a way to have a weaker regime because they are worried about the political blowback from people in Western Sydney who like the cheap chop-chop. If that is the case, those opposite are mortgaging public health, risking people's health and inviting organised crime for political motivations. If that is the reason, then I am even more appalled. I certainly would not accuse this Minister of that. I know he is better than that, but some of his colleagues are not.

This legislation should go a lot further. This Parliament can do a lot better. We owe it to the public health of our community, but this has now gone beyond that. This is about public safety. We have seen the effects of illegal tobacco in Queensland and Victoria. For goodness sake, we have seen it in our own State in regional New South Wales. I have seen it in my own electorate. That is why I am so worked up about the weak nature of the bill, which can go a lot further. I hope that this is the start, not the end. I would have liked it to be the much stronger start that we have seen in other jurisdictions, which have had the guts to take this head on, to make sure that we get it right the first time.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:20):** I am delighted to make a short contribution to debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024. I acknowledge that the Minister is in the Chamber. I thank him for his hard work on this fundamental, iconic reform. I refer to the commentary of my learned friend the member for Kiama in relation to this bill being an "insipid" move, "not going far enough" and supposedly encouraging organised crime in west and south-west Sydney. What a load of rubbish. The bill is nothing more than a Minister and a government taking action where action has not been taken before. Can legislation go further in certain times? Of course it can. But, as members and the Minister know, legislation is about finding the balance. To do so, a government needs good stakeholder relations, good engagement and a sensible approach. Given the progressive nature of this Government and, indeed, the good Minister, I am certain that if further reforms are required in the future he will be the first one to enact them.

As it stands right now, the bill before the House is a most welcome move to tackle the insidious illegal tobacco market. To suggest that it is encouraging organised crime is an absolute absurdity. No member in this place, I believe, would do anything through legislation to support or promote organised crime. My learned friend the member for Kiama should know that. He knows the Minister and he knows the importance of the honourable process of legislative reform that goes through this Assembly. Briefly, the licensing scheme will require that any person wishing to sell tobacco by retail or wholesale will need a licence. The bill creates offences for the sale of tobacco without a licence carrying penalties of up to \$44,000, or 400 penalty units, for an individual and \$220,000, or 2,000 penalty units, for a corporation. That is no small feat. All members know that the authorities work very hard to regulate the market. This is about providing those authorities with the legislated tools to go out and do their job.

I agree with the member for Kiama that the bill is about community safety and making sure we have safe processes. No-one knows that better than the Minister. He and his team have introduced this legislation to the House. I am advised that this is only the first piece of legislative reform in this area. The previous Government potentially knew that this matter needed to be addressed and had ample opportunity to do something, but it simply did nothing. My learned colleague the member for Kiama was in the previous Government's Cabinet, and what did we see? Nothing. I would not go so low as to suggest that any member in this place would promote organised crime or support any piece of legislation that did so. However, I say to members, as is commonly said, that the standard we walk past is the standard we accept. Those opposite walked past this illegal market, but this Government and this Minister will not. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:25):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024: the member for Heathcote; the shadow Minister for Health, the member for Vacluse; the member for Mount Druitt and Parliamentary Secretary; the member for Coffs Harbour, the shadow Minister for Regional Health; the member for Gosford and Parliamentary Secretary; the member for Shellharbour and Parliamentary Secretary; the member for Terrigal; the member for Wagga Wagga; the member for Bega, who is also my Parliamentary Secretary; the member for Goulburn; the member for Kiama; and the member for Campbelltown, who is also a Parliamentary Secretary. I also thank from my office

the hardworking Dr Vivienne Moxham-Hall, who has worked tirelessly on this piece of legislation, supported by Melanie Haskew and the team from my office and ably advised and supported by the team at the Ministry of Health, in particular Hugh Percival, Meredith Claremont and, of course, Dr Kerry Chant, who needs no introduction in this place.

The bill amends the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 to create a licensing regime for the wholesale and retail of tobacco products and non-tobacco smoking products. A licensing regime will provide better oversight of the retail and wholesale supply of tobacco and will help to reduce the sale of illicit tobacco. Importantly, from my perspective, this will bring New South Wales in line with other States and Territories. I have been very clear that I wish that we had acted on this earlier, under the previous Government. The bill will also increase the penalties for a range of existing offences relating to the sale of illegal tobacco to align with community expectations and better recognise the seriousness of the offences. Smoking continues to be the biggest cause of preventable death and disease in New South Wales and Australia. It is a major risk factor for many diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke, many types of cancer and asthma. The sale of illicit tobacco undermines efforts to reduce those health risks, which the bill aims to address.

I note the Legislation Review Committee issued the *Legislation Review Digest No. 22/58* today. I thank the committee for its report. Most matters raised in that report have been considered in the debate today. As noted by the committee, the licensing scheme is to commence on proclamation for practical reasons. Businesses will be given advance notice of the date the scheme will commence. It was also noted that the bill includes transitional arrangements to ensure there is sufficient time for business to seek a licence. Listening to the debate from my office, I know that was an issue that the shadow Minister rightly raised. The bill is a direct response to community expectations regarding the need to tackle the trade in illicit tobacco and ensure robust enforcement of tobacco retailing laws. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Dr Joe McGirr and Ms Kellie Sloane.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

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

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:29):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2024-241A in globo:

**No. 1 Grounds for refusing or cancelling licences**

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

*law enforcement agency* means the following—

- (a) the NSW Police Force,
- (b) a Police Force of another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth,
- (c) the Australian Federal Police,
- (d) another authority or person responsible for the enforcement of the laws of the Commonwealth or the State, another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth.

**No. 2 Grounds for refusing or cancelling licences**

Page 8, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 39A(4). Insert after line 19—

- (c1) on the recommendation of, or receipt of relevant information from, a law enforcement agency,

**No. 3 Grounds for refusing or cancelling licences**

Page 9, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 39C(4). Insert after line 26—

- (c1) on the recommendation of, or receipt of relevant information from, a law enforcement agency,

**No. 4 Grounds for refusing or cancelling licences**

Page 10, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 39G. Insert after line 24—

- (d1) on the recommendation of, or receipt of relevant information from, a law enforcement agency.

These amendments have the effect of ensuring that, in the case of people connected with criminal organisations, information or recommendations can be made in terms of the licensing process. As I said in my contribution to debate on the bill, my original bill had a full description of a "fit and proper person". The Government has indicated that that will create administrative issues. I accept the Government's views on that because I am concerned about

the urgency of passing the bill. I have worked with the Government on a solution that will at least in part pick up the issue of making sure that people involved in organised crime or criminal elements can be identified and excluded from the licensing process. The clauses I have suggested allow that, on the recommendation or receipt of relevant information from a law enforcement agency, that can be included in the grounds for refusing or cancelling licences. I believe these are sensible amendments, and I commend them to the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:31):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his continued and tireless advocacy on tobacco regulation. This is an issue that, to be honest, needs a lot more bipartisan support. We will not make improvements to this type of reform unless we work together, and I thank the crossbench and the Opposition for that. The Government supports amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2024-241A. The amendments seek to amend the bill to provide the secretary with a basis to refuse an application for or to renew a licence or to revoke a licence on relevant advice or information provided by a law enforcement agency. The amendments define a law enforcement agency as the NSW Police Force, the police force in another jurisdiction and the Australian Federal Police.

It is critical to stop the supply of illicit tobacco. The bill currently provides that the secretary can reject an application or renewal of a licence or revoke a licence where the person has been convicted of an offence relating to tobacco or vaping products. However, I acknowledge that there may be circumstances where law enforcement agencies from New South Wales or other jurisdictions may have relevant information in relation to applicants or licence holders. I accept that. This is a sensible amendment and the Government supports it.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:33):** I place on record my sincere thanks to the member for Wagga Wagga, who has led the way in tobacco law reform. All members in the House appreciate how fortunate we are to have a member like the member for Wagga Wagga, who has such a lifetime of experience and applies it incredibly well, particularly in this area. I thank him for rattling the cage on this issue. I also thank the Minister for his comments. I reiterate, though, that I would like, at some further stage, the Government to consider what other States have done in relation to the fit and proper person test. I do not accept the notion that there is an administrative burden, when other States have managed to do the same thing and in a relatively timely manner. Having been a Cabinet Minister, I know that departments will tell Ministers all sorts of things until they push back on them to get the advice that is wanted rather than the advice that they necessarily want Ministers to receive.

In that vein, even though the bill does not go as far as I would like it to go, the member for Wagga Wagga has done a good job working with the Minister, and the Minister working with the member for Wagga Wagga, to get the best possible outcome at this point. I place on record that we can do better. Other States have done better. New South Wales should be leading, not lagging. I would like to see the law tightened in this area at a future date, although this is an improvement on the bill that was initially proffered. Therefore, I support the amendments.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that amendments Nos 1 to 4 of the member for Wagga Wagga on sheet c2024-241A be agreed to.

#### **Amendments agreed to.**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:35):** I move my amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-241A:

#### **No. 5 Review of Act**

Page 12, Schedule 1. Insert after line 31—

#### **[13A] Section 61**

Omit the section. Insert instead—

#### **61 Review of certain provisions**

- (1) The Minister must conduct a review of the reviewable provisions to identify if—
  - (a) the policy objectives of the reviewable provisions remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of the reviewable provisions remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
- (2) The review must be commenced within 6 months after the period of 5 years after the commencement date.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 1 year after the last day by which the review must commence.
- (4) In this section—

*commencement date* means the date on which the amendments to Part 5 made by the *Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Act (No 2) 2024* commence.

*reviewable provisions* means the provisions inserted into Part 5 by the *Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Act (No 2) 2024*.

This amendment seeks to incorporate a statutory view into the legislation. That is an important period. The review must be commenced within six months after the period of five years after the commencement date, and the outcomes of that review must be tabled in each House of Parliament. There has been much discussion about the need for a parliamentary inquiry. I would support a parliamentary inquiry. However, working with the Government, a statutory view, at least, is an important part of working out whether this legislation has been effective, particularly given discussions around the fit and proper person test. I commend the amendment to the House.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:36):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his amendment. I move:

That the amendment be amended in proposed section 61 (2) by omitting 'within 6 months after the period of 5 years after the commencement date', and inserting instead—

(2) by 30 June 2025.

In effect, my amendment achieves an earlier statutory review that would commence middle of next year and complete within a year. That would give us some feedback in a timely manner. We have seen a sense of urgency with the introduction of the bill. We are happy to support that urgency, the amendments and the action that we know is well and truly needed, but we seek a parliamentary review because we know that this is not just a public health issue but also a considerable law and order issue that is impacting communities right across our city and our State. There must be time to consider the findings of any parliamentary review that might be held and also the efficacy of the amendments being proposed today. I note that there is a variety of different approaches in different States, including Victoria, which announced today some sweeping and very tough penalties. I seek an earlier review so that we have an opportunity, as a Parliament, to reconsider the amendments and make adjustments if necessary.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:38):** I will break down the amendments. I understand that members have every right to move amendments. We all moved amendments in opposition. We have no problems with that at all. In relation to the member for Wagga Wagga's amendment around a review of the licensing provisions in the bill after five years, it is important that the changes in the bill operate as intended—no-one has an issue with that—and provide benefit to the community. A review of those provisions will provide important information to the Government in that regard. We have no problem with that amendment. The problem with the Opposition's amendment, respectfully—and I am not mocking it—is that the scheme will not have been rolled out until mid-next year. I am not poking fun at amendments because I understand that things happen on the run. I am not doing that. But that amendment is not sensible. In the spirit of sensible changes, that is not one. The scheme will not start until 1 July, and a review into something that has not started is not smart. We do not accept that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that the Opposition amendment to amendment No. 5 of the member for Wagga Wagga on sheet c2024-241A be agreed to.

**Amendment negated.**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:39):** As I understand it, we are now voting on my original amendment. I commend the amendment to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that amendment No. 5 of the member for Wagga Wagga on sheet c2024-241A be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:40):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos. 1 to 3 and 11 on sheet c2024-237B in globo:

No. 1 **Prohibition on certain sales**

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], proposed section 6, penalty, lines 21 and 22. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (a) for a corporation—7,000 penalty units, or
- (b) for an individual—1,400 penalty units.

No. 2 **Prohibition on packing and sale of tobacco product without health warning**

Page 3, Schedule 1[3], proposed section 7, penalty, lines 26 and 27. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (a) for a corporation—7,000 penalty units, or

(b) for an individual—1,400 penalty units.

No. 3 **Prohibited words**

Page 3, Schedule 1, insert after line 27—

[3A] **Section 8 Prohibited words**

Omit section 8(1), penalty. Insert instead—

Maximum penalty—

(a) for a corporation—7,000 penalty units, or

(b) for an individual—1,400 penalty units.

No. 11 **Proceedings for offences**

Page 12, Schedule 1, insert after line 10—

[12A] **Section 54(3)**

Omit "12 months". Insert instead "2 years".

These amendments increase the penalties across the range of provisions that deal with illicit tobacco, making them tougher so that there is less of an incentive for criminal gangs to do their work. I will give an example. A single container of illicit tobacco from overseas is worth about \$250,000. When it hits Australian shores, the value skyrockets to between \$7 million and \$13 million. It is huge. In that context, what have those criminals got to lose if they only get a slap on the wrist from the laws in New South Wales? What have they got to lose when the penalties are, as one stakeholder said to me today, a slap in the face with a feather? We do not want that in New South Wales and we certainly do not want it in the context of new laws. Our border State of Victoria has far greater penalties. Other States like Queensland also have far greater penalties. We do not want any unintended consequences by having laws that are considered to be a soft touch.

We are looking to change the range of penalties for offences in sections 6, 7 and 8 of the Act. They go right to the heart of illegal cigarettes. We should be passing tougher penalties on those that are not in the correct packaging, that do not have health warnings or that have prohibited words. In Queensland the supply of illicit tobacco as part of a business activity comes with a penalty of \$322,600 or two years imprisonment, or both, for a person. To possess illicit tobacco as part of a business activity comes with a \$161,300 penalty or one year imprisonment, or both, for a person. In South Australia it is \$350,000 for a first offence for an individual, and \$700,000 for a subsequent offence, and \$750,000 and \$1.1 million respectively for a body corporate. Victoria's proposed laws, which have been announced today, would include fines of more than \$355,000 or up to 15 years in jail for individuals. Businesses will face fines of more than \$1.7 million. Today the Government is proposing that our maximum penalty be \$22,000 for individuals and \$110,000 for corporations. In anyone's language, that is very weak.

The Opposition believes we can find a middle ground, where the maximum penalty is \$154,000 for an individual and \$770,000 for a corporation. The amendments are consistent with the amendments we introduced in this place only a matter of weeks ago for the vaping bill. Those amendments were defeated because we would be readdressing the penalties in debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2), which is this bill. I suggest that we do it properly. We are open to working with the Government and the crossbench on increasing the penalties. If the Victorian bill passes, it is clear that New South Wales will be the weakest link when it comes to tobacco laws. I acknowledge that the fines are increasing off a low base, but we simply cannot compare what happened a number of years ago with what is happening today. What has happened in the past few years is an explosion, as the member for Wagga Wagga said, in this illicit trade. Tobacconist shops are popping up all across our State. Tobacconists are proliferating, and harm and danger are growing.

More than a hundred firebombings a year occur across Victoria. That means two firebombings a week in that State and we are now seeing that activity extend into New South Wales, with alleged arson attacks in six different locations in recent times. It is time to put a stop to it. These penalties will assist. We are seeking to have a parliamentary inquiry as well, but at the moment we are seeking support for these amendments from the Government and crossbench. I thank the Minister and his advisers for the constructive way in which they have had conversations with us and the crossbench about this issue. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:45):** The Government supports Opposition amendments Nos 1, 2, 3 and 11 on sheet c2024-237B. We have some issues with the other Opposition amendments but I will deal with these first. The amendments seek to amend the bill to increase penalties for existing offences for selling tobacco not in the manufacturer's packing, without a health warning and containing prohibitive words. These penalties are higher

than those proposed in the bill, with a maximum penalty of 1,400 penalty units for individuals and 7,000 penalty units for corporations.

The Government recognises the importance of the issue to the community and the serious impact illicit tobacco has on public health. The Government supports the amendments in the spirit of trying to work across the Chamber to make sure that something important to all of us is dealt with in a spirit of cooperation. Amendment No. 11 seeks to extend the maximum period from 12 months to two years in which proceedings for offences must be brought before a court. It is important for proceedings to be dealt with efficiently; however, it is not always possible. Additional time would provide greater ability to enforce the legislation, particularly in the context of a brand new scheme we are introducing. The Government supports the amendments.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:46):** I commend the shadow Minister and the Minister for working together to have a stronger enforcement regime, which was always a concern of mine. I outlined that in the second reading debate. I do not want us to be the State with the lowest penalties. Victoria still looks like it will have the highest penalties, but ours can be examined through a parliamentary inquiry and, indeed, the statutory review, which has already been brought into the bill. The only thing that concerns me is the Government is not supporting the fit and proper person test, which is another amendment proposed by the Opposition. For reasons outlined earlier, crossbench members need to consider carefully whether New South Wales will be better off without including this in the legislation, given that other State jurisdictions, particularly on the east coast, have made sure that it was a feature of their legislation. I dare say there is no reasonable ground as to why that could possibly be the case. The Opposition's amendment to include that should be supported.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 3 and 11 on sheet c2024-237B be agreed to.

#### Amendments agreed to.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:48):** By leave: I move amendments Nos 5 and 7 to 10 on sheet c2024-237B in globo:

#### No. 5 Relevant applicants and relevant applications

Page 4, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 31. Insert after line 29—

*relevant applicant* means a person who has made a relevant application.

*relevant application* means—

- (a) an application for a licence under section 39(1), or
- (b) an application to renew a licence under section 39B(1).

#### No. 7 Deciding applications for licences

Page 7, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 39A(2), lines 37–44. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (2) The Secretary must not grant a licence unless the Secretary is satisfied the applicant is—
  - (a) of good repute, having regard to the applicant's character, honesty and integrity, and
  - (b) a fit and proper person to carry on the business or activity to which the proposed licence relates.
- (2A) Without limiting subsection (2)(b), a person is not a fit and proper person to carry on the business or activity to which a proposed licence relates if—
  - (a) the Secretary has reasonable grounds to believe from information provided by the Commissioner of Police in relation to the person—
    - (i) that the person is a member or close associate of, or regularly associates with 1 or more members of, a declared organisation within the meaning of the *Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012*, and
    - (ii) that the nature and circumstances of the person's relationship with the organisation or its members are such that it could reasonably be inferred that improper conduct that would further the criminal activities of the declared organisation is likely to occur if the person is granted a licence, or
  - (b) the applicant, or a relevant person for the applicant, has been found guilty of an offence relating to the sale or supply of tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products or vaping goods under—
    - (i) this Act or the regulations, or
    - (ii) another Act or law, including a law of the Commonwealth or another State or Territory.

- (3) The Secretary is not, under this or any other Act or law, required to give any reasons for not granting a licence because of subsection (2A) to the extent that the giving of those reasons would disclose any criminal intelligence.

No. 8 **Deciding applications to renew licences**

Page 9, Schedule 1[8], proposed section 39C(2), lines 2–10. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (2) In deciding the application, the Secretary must consider whether the applicant is—
- (a) of good repute, having regard to the applicant's character, honesty and integrity, and
  - (b) a fit and proper person to carry on the business or activity to which the licence sought to be renewed relates.
- (2A) Without limiting subsection (2)(b), a person is not a fit and proper person to carry on the business or activity to which the licence sought to be renewed relates if—
- (a) the Secretary has reasonable grounds to believe from information provided by the Commissioner of Police in relation to the person—
    - (i) that the person is a member or close associate of, or regularly associates with 1 or more members of, a declared organisation within the meaning of the *Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012*, and
    - (ii) that the nature and circumstances of the person's relationship with the organisation or its members are such that it could reasonably be inferred that improper conduct that would further the criminal activities of the declared organisation is likely to occur if the licence is renewed, or
  - (b) the applicant, or a relevant person for the applicant, has been found guilty of an offence relating to the sale or supply of tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products or vaping goods under—
    - (i) this Act or the regulations, or
    - (ii) another Act or law, including a law of the Commonwealth or another State or Territory.
- (3) The Secretary is not, under this or any other Act or law, required to give any reasons for not renewing a licence because of subsection (2A) to the extent that the giving of those reasons would disclose any criminal intelligence.

No. 9 **Investigations and information relating to applications for licences and licence renewals**

Page 11, Schedule 1[8], proposed Part 5, Division 2, Subdivision 8. Insert after line 37—

**39LA Investigations, inquiries and referrals in relation to relevant licence applications**

- (1) If the Secretary receives a relevant licence application, the Secretary may carry out any investigations and inquiries in relation to the application the Secretary considers necessary to properly consider the application.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), the Secretary may—
  - (a) refer to the Commissioner of Police details of the application, together with any supporting information in relation to the application, that the Secretary considers appropriate to refer to the Commissioner of Police, and
  - (b) ask the Commissioner of Police to inquire into, and report to the Secretary on, matters relevant to the Secretary's consideration of the application.
- (3) The Commissioner of Police may inquire into, and report to the Secretary on, any matters relating to the application requested by the Secretary.

**39LB Secretary may require further information**

- (1) Without limiting sections 39(4) and 39B(4), the Secretary may, by written notice, require a relevant applicant, or a close associate of a relevant applicant, to do any of the following things—
  - (a) give, in accordance with directions in the notice, information that the Secretary considers relevant to the investigation or proper consideration of the application and that is specified in the notice,
  - (b) produce, in accordance with directions in the notice, any records the Secretary considers relevant to the investigation or proper consideration of the application and allow—
    - (i) the examination of the records, and
    - (ii) the taking of extracts from the records, and
    - (iii) the copying of the records,
  - (c) authorise a person described in the notice to comply with a requirement of the kind referred to in paragraph (a) or (b),

- (d) give the Secretary any authorisations and consents the Secretary requires for the purpose of enabling the Secretary to obtain information, including financial and other confidential information, from other persons about the person and the person's associates.
- (2) A person who complies with a requirement of a notice under this section does not on that account incur a liability to another person.
- (3) The Secretary may refuse to decide a relevant application if a requirement made under this section in relation to the application is not complied with.

No. 10 **Proceedings for offences**

Page 12, Schedule 1[12], line 10. Omit "2,000". Insert instead "7,000".

These amendments relate to a fit and proper person test. As indicated, we want to strengthen the bill by including the provision that the secretary must consider a fit and proper person test when granting or renewing a licence. Those tests are included in other Australian jurisdictions' tobacco licensing schemes. We have sought to follow closely what is set out in the New South Wales liquor licensing laws. That will ensure some alignment between tobacco licensing and liquor licensing. Given the clear links between organised crime and illicit tobacco, it is a sensible proposal to include that a fit and proper person to hold a tobacco licence is someone of good repute and not someone who is a member of, a close associate of, or someone who regularly associates with a declared criminal organisation. That type of test is set out in the South Australian legislation and I understand that, based on today's announcement, it will be included in the proposed Victorian legislation. Western Australia, Tasmania and Queensland also require that a person authorising a licence consider whether someone is a fit and proper person. That is included in their legislation.

I understand the Government is disinclined to support the proposal because it is difficult and administratively burdensome. I am not sure why that is uniquely the case for New South Wales when other States can manage it. The bill does have prescribing powers, but the Opposition believes it is more appropriate to set out a fit and proper person test clearly in the legislation rather than in subordinate regulations. Substantive matters like considering a person's links to organised crime should be included in the legislation and not in the regulations. I note that *Legislation Review Committee Digest No. 22/55*, which was just released, makes a similar point. It said:

The Bill seeks to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 by deferring several significant matters to regulations, including eligibility requirements for retail and wholesale licences for tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products, standard conditions on licences, and processes for licence application, variation and revocation.

The Committee generally prefers substantive matters to be dealt with in principal legislation, rather than regulations, to facilitate an appropriate level of parliamentary oversight. The Committee acknowledges that the provisions may be intended to build more flexibility into the regulatory framework, and to allow regulators to better respond to changing circumstances under this new licensing regime.

However, the Committee notes the seriousness of the provisions and, as discussed above, the significant penalties for non-compliance with the new licensing regime. For these reasons, the Committee refers this matter to Parliament for consideration.

The Opposition is happy to work with the Government and the crossbench to amend the bill to include a fit and proper person test. We feel it would be a mistake to pass the bill without it. We have an opportunity to ensure strong legislation, and I do not think the test should be delayed until a review of the legislation in a few years. We do not believe it would cause an undue administrative burden for consideration to be given to whether someone is linked to organised crime. That should be basic stuff. Just like getting a Working with Children Check or a liquor licence, the same should apply to tobacco.

I note that NSW Health enforcement already works very closely with police on enforcement activities. I note also that with no fixed date for commencement, the department will have time to work with businesses to ensure the application process is efficient but also effective. We are sending a strong signal to organised criminals and their associates that if they are thinking about getting a tobacco licence to somehow make their businesses seem legitimate, they can forget about it. But we cannot dismiss that; we cannot let them sign up without the appropriate checks and balances. The majority of retailers are doing the right thing, but the amendment will ensure that dodgy retailers with links to organised crime do not have a licence.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:52):** I will go through the arguments carefully. We must strike a balance here. We must make sure we get a scheme in place as quickly as possible and without delay. My advice is that this type of approach will delay the introduction of the scheme. I note also that amendments moved by the member for Wagga Wagga have been passed that will allow us, through the secretary, to get information directly from law enforcement—and we outlined that that would be the NSW Police Force, other police jurisdictions and the Australian Federal Police [AFP]—about a person's character and whether there had been any issues. We think that is a very good compromise that takes into consideration some of the concerns raised by the member for Vacluse.

I must be honest—and this is not a political comment—I am deeply concerned that we do not have a licensing scheme in place in New South Wales. I do not want to waste another moment putting one in place. We have already passed amendments moved by the member for Wagga Wagga—and rightly so—that would allow the Secretary of NSW Health to take into consideration feedback, information and intelligence directly from law enforcement, including our own NSW Police Force, other jurisdictional police and the AFP. The Government is aware of the links between organised crime and illicit tobacco, as we have seen in Victoria, in particular. But the reality is that the majority of retailers do the right thing.

Opposition members might be surprised to hear that I am concerned that the amendments are unnecessary for legitimate businesses, and we must take them into consideration. Supermarkets and small retailers must go through a burdensome process to assess whether they are fit and proper to sell tobacco. The bill aims to stop the sale of illicit tobacco to minors and the unlawful supply of vaping goods. If a person is convicted of one of those offences, the bill already gives the secretary the ability to refuse an application or revoke a licence. Importantly, the amendments moved by the member for Wagga Wagga that we passed today—I am not taking any credit for them; those amendments were moved by the member for Wagga Wagga—allow law enforcement into that process to provide feedback and intelligence. They include police, other jurisdictional police and the AFP and will not slow down the licensing process. Only on that basis, the Government will not support the Opposition's amendments.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:55):** This does not have to be an either/or provision; the bill could be very robust by including both provisions. I pay credit to the member for Wagga Wagga for the incredible amount of work he has put in over the space of a year to develop legislation that is now achieving life through the Government's bill. That is how our democracy works. Our democracy would be strengthened if we included both the amendments of the member for Wagga Wagga and the amendments of the Opposition. Our amendments proactively weed people out. Under the amendments of the member for Wagga Wagga, we will catch people who have been through the system or whom the police already have a heads up about.

But with the Opposition's amendments we could capture the prevention side and also provide a net to grab those criminals when they are discovered. The bill states that it "may" give the secretary the opportunity to check that applicants are fit and proper persons; our amendment proposes that the secretary "must" have the opportunity to do that. Such a system is found across the board in other States. I believe we should implement this measure today to ensure that criminals do not have the upper hand and we can weed them out before they get into the shops and do damage to our communities.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:56):** In relation to the time frames that were raised by the Minister, the Government, like all governments, has the ability to delay the commencement of any particular provision through the Executive Council and gazettal process. If the Government agreed to the introduction of this particular provision, as other States have done, it does not have to start the minute the legislation passes the other place. I suspect that the matter will be further litigated in the Legislative Council. We may end up dealing with this amendment again—we will see. But just because the provision is in the bill does not mean it must start on day one of the operation of the scheme; it could start at a later point.

Ducking, weaving and ignoring the provision leaves the bill deficient when compared with other States, and that will leave us open to organised crime, as the member for Vaucluse has rightly pointed out. That is a risk, and we may see more of it in regional areas, as we have already seen in Queensland and Victoria. I agree with the Minister that there are provisions in the bill that allow police to be involved in the licensing scheme. That was a very good move. But we are not going as far as we could have done when compared with other States. This is another serious and significant deficiency that will impact on our ability as a State to combat organised crime. I support the Opposition amendments.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 5 and 7 to 10 on sheet c2024-237B be agreed to.

#### The House divided.

Ayes .....37  
Noes .....48  
Majority..... 11

#### AYES

Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Butler, R  
Coure, M

Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
McGirr, J

Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P

## AYES

Cross, M	Moylan, B	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	Preston, R	Tudehope, M
Dalton, H	Regan, M	Wallace, J
Davies, T	Roberts, A	Ward, G
Di Pasqua, S	Saunders, D	Williams, L
Hannan, J	Scruby, J	Williams, R
Henskens, A	Singh, G	Williamson, R (teller)
Hodges, M	Sloane, K	Wilson, F
James, T		

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

Provest, G

Harris, D

**Amendments negatived.**

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

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** It being after 5.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, the public interest debate will now proceed. Before calling the member for Mount Druitt, I remind members that I have a list of those members who have been placed on calls to order today.

*Public Interest Debate***NSW POLICE FORCE**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:10):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the devastating impact that the former Coalition Government's decade-long wages cap had on police wages, which saw a cut in real wages and skyrocketing increases in police officer vacancies.
- (2) Supports the removal of the wages cap by the New South Wales Government that is essential to rebuilding the NSW Police Force.

- (3) Notes the New South Wales Government's historic pay offer recognises the difficult work police do every day and will help to recruit and retain police officers.

As Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism, I am proud to move this very important public interest debate motion. Today we confront a matter of vital importance to the safety of our communities and the wellbeing of those sworn to protect us: the compensation and working conditions of our police officers. The NSW Police Force has faced immense pressure over the past decade with the former Coalition Government's wages cap of 2.5 per cent, which profoundly affected our officers and undermined the capacity of law enforcement to serve our communities effectively. For a decade, police officers endured a cap that restricted wages growth, which lagged far behind inflation and the rising cost of living. That wages cap left officers with effectively lower real incomes each year and a decline in purchasing power that added strain to their already demanding roles.

Our police confront risks on a daily basis. They risk their lives when responding to everything from everyday crime to complex emergencies. They work irregular hours, frequently missing out on family life. They face high levels of stress and, increasingly, deal with complex social issues such as mental health crises and substance abuse. Yet, instead of rewarding their sacrifices, the wages cap eroded their financial security, affecting their morale and, ultimately, public safety. Today I proudly support the removal of the wages cap by the New South Wales Government. This decision signals a turning point for our State. Removing the cap is essential to rebuild a police force that was weakened by years of inadequate compensation and soaring vacancies. With the cap lifted, we are moving towards fairer, more competitive pay to recognise that our officers deserve better and are indispensable to our society.

The New South Wales Government's historic pay offer signifies a long overdue acknowledgement of the essential work that police do every day. Under the new agreement, officers will receive a 19 per cent base pay increase over four years, alongside enhancements in allowances and escalated pay scales that allow officers to reach the rank of senior constable six years sooner than before. These changes address critical gaps in retention and offer more stable career progression and financial incentives that recognise officers' valuable experience and dedication. The plan reflects the New South Wales Government's commitment to create a safer and more resilient police force that can retain and attract skilled individuals. Under the previous Government, turnaround rates doubled. During the Coalition Government's last term, police officer turnaround surged from 513 officers annually to more than 1,286. The cap created conditions where experienced officers left the force for other professions that offered both stability and better wages.

Our Police Force lost some of its most seasoned members, resulting in 2,500 fewer police officers available to uphold the law and ensure community safety. It was no surprise that many of those leaving expressed that the wages cap and a lack of career advancement played a significant role in their departures. But change is here. The current Government's four-year agreement not only improves base pay but also introduces critical adjustments to training allowances at the Goulburn academy, which has already led to a 50 per cent rise in applications for police positions this year. Class 364 is now at maximum capacity, full of recruits ready to serve our communities. This new vision for policing in New South Wales is already bearing fruit, turning recruitments into a strength rather than a challenge. The broader generational reforms we have implemented send a clear message to aspiring officers that a career in policing is not only viable but also valued.

The Coalition's restrictive approach over the past decade drained morale, making it harder to attract and retain skilled professionals. When low morale and high turnover issues in the Police Force are not addressed, they spill over into the community. When officers feel undervalued, motivation suffers, leading to burnout, absenteeism and increased turnover. The community pays the price, with slower response times, diminished quality of service and the erosion of public trust. These reforms represent a 180-degree shift from the previous Government's neglect. By making this commitment to better wages and conditions, the New South Wales Government is enhancing public value and aligning with the expectations of citizens, who rightly demand competent, motivated officers on their streets. By supporting this historic pay agreement, we affirm our dedication to make New South Wales safer for all.

We must recognise that policing is more than a job; it is a public service that warrants our utmost respect and, yes, financial commitment. New South Wales residents benefit directly in their daily lives from a well-compensated, motivated and fully staffed Police Force. It is an investment in the long-term welfare of every resident, every business and every community. I thank the police Minister and the Government, who have worked very hard with the Police Association over a long period to achieve this result.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (17:16):** Every member of this House agrees that our police make significant sacrifices out there in our communities. They provide outstanding service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every week and all year round. There is no break for our police. They work tirelessly on public holidays. We all know that crime never stops. Crime continues. That is why our police are so important in the role they play

in our communities. Their presence in our communities is a source of reassurance. We are grateful for the sense of security they provide. Their commitment to fostering a safe and thriving environment is invaluable.

Government members come into this House, puff up their chests and talk about this proposal, but it is only part of what they need to do to support our police. They are talking about only a pay increase. While the Opposition welcomes that pay increase, it is important to note that the Government needs to give our police the resources and equipment they require to do their job effectively in our communities. The reason police are getting this pay rise now is that the Opposition has been calling on the Government to do something to retain our police officers for the past number of months. At the start of the year the Opposition called on the Government to do something to retain our police officers. Guess what? The Government was dragged to the table because the pay award ran out on 1 July. The Minister only came to the table after the Opposition called on the Government to do something.

Our police deserve recognition for what they do. This pay rise shows that the Government acknowledges the work of police. If Government members want to talk about pay awards, those awards are in place for a period of time. The award ran out on 1 July. The Minister has had more than 18 months in the role to come to the table with our police. I will talk about a number of issues today. Under the current Minister, last year our police officer numbers sat at around 16,923 in this State. In August this year, it was 16,095. We lost 880 police officers under Minister Catley in just nine months. Under the insurance scheme that was changed, which the Minister said was a great deal, over 300 police officers walked out the door. They walked out the door because the Minister bungled the situation. She did not tell them about the change that was made. Under Minister Catley we have lost over 1,200 police officers in less than 12 months. It is crippling the State's Police Force.

The morale of our police under Minister Catley is at an all-time low. The People Matter Employee Survey states, "Low morale remains a serious concern where officers are often forced to work long hours, compromising their health, their performance and quality of life." Some 46 per cent of our men and women in blue are not proud to wear the uniform under this Minister. Only 39 per cent of the NSW Police Force would recommend working there and 64 per cent feel uninspired by the NSW Police Force as an organisation. That is because of the Minister's lack of work in this space.

As I said, police are walking out the door. The Minister did little about addressing regional crime. It was only because the Opposition forced the Minister to have a regional crime inquiry. For six months we were calling for an inquiry, talking about regional communities where people were too scared to walk out their doors. They were locking their doors, putting bolts on them and installing security systems because they were worried about going out. Yet the Minister comes into this Chamber and mocks those communities.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! Government members will come to order.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The Minister's lack of action is not providing support for our communities. What about the protests? Our police continue to man protests, week in and week out. Then last year the Minister applauded the protest at the Port of Newcastle because she thought that it was appropriate. The police said it was irresponsible that our police Minister was supporting protesters in those communities. It is utterly irresponsible. Our police do an amazing job in our communities. Our police continue to work tirelessly but the Government needs to do more than just giving them the pay that they deserve. Resource them appropriately as well.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (17:21):** I start by saying that I have never been more proud or inspired by our police, particularly in recent times considering the response to the Wakeley incident in Fairfield as well as the Bondi Junction incident, alongside the day-to-day struggles that police go through. In addition, the Police Force has structural challenges that do not relate to a single year but stretch over a longer time, which this Government is addressing. I am a strong proponent for saying that pay and conditions must be commensurate with the amazing work of police officers and their sacrifices and hardships. I am sincerely thankful for their service.

My contribution to this debate relates to my interactions with police and my life experiences. I was born in 1985 and grew up in Cabramatta. My first recollection of the police that comes to mind is around 1990-91. I was driving home with my dad or my mum, and I saw a stolen vehicle hit a tree. Two guys jumped out of the car and over a fence while the police were in pursuit behind them. The officers got out of their cars and jumped over the fence to chase them. I thought, "Wow! This is like a Hollywood movie." My first observation of police was seeing them have the courage to jump over the fence and chase people, not knowing what was on the other side.

As a kid in Cabramatta, I saw drug overdoses daily and people using heroin. I grew up in a housing commission block where it was a common occurrence. But I saw the work that police did with respect to first aid treatments and law enforcement actions regarding gang crime and violent crime as well as domestic violence [DV]. As a kid I saw domestic violence in our building. When someone sees that and hopes for someone to intervene, it is the police who are there. When it comes to our society, as a government we cannot govern without

protecting our people. Whenever we are in trouble, no matter who we are, what we look like or where we come from, we have faith that the police will have our back. That is such a foundational cornerstone of our society.

I could talk about plenty of other things that I remember from my childhood about police and the work they do. Those experiences inspired me to become an officer in the Federal Police. I have worked in different areas from organised crime to counter-terrorism and drug importation. It is not normal to put a vest on to conduct search warrants or arrests. But in doing so, police are putting their lives on the line. It takes a certain mindset to do that work, but it is what police do every day. I worked in counter-terrorism and was part of Operation Appleby in 2014 or 2015, from memory. From what I understand, people intended to kill police officers, and at their home if they could, in the name of the Islamic State. Again, it is not easy carrying out a search warrant that has your name on it or having conversations with your family about it. But they do because it is their duty.

I acknowledge the many great New South Wales police mentors in my life. One of them is a very experienced detective who talked about post-traumatic stress disorder and mental trauma, and that everyone has a different-sized bucket. Every time an officer deals with a DV matter or these different matters, their bucket fills until eventually it spills over. As a parliamentarian, I commend the Fairfield police for their work. I have the names of so many officers that I want to acknowledge but, unfortunately, time will escape me.

The reality is that police officers have been let down for years. The staffing numbers are indicative of that. We require them to operate in increasingly complex and hostile environments with fewer officers by their side. They have a workload that they should not have to confront. The proposed wage increases aim to fix a structural flaw in the previous Coalition Government's treatment of cops. I am sorry that it has taken until this Labor Government to give them the pay that they deserve, the pay to ease the heavy burden that this State requires from them and the funds to ensure that their stations get more officers. I thank our police for their service.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:27):** Today I stand in this place not just as a member of the Legislative Assembly but as someone who spent almost 15 years as a police officer, and someone who witnessed the bleak, unvarnished reality of what our officers face every day. Today the police Minister chose to belittle my years of service, dismissing the dedication that I have shown, but I am here to set the record straight—not for me but for every officer who bravely serves our State. I am here to honour my fellow officers and their resilience and courage, and to call out the Minister for her shameful and disparaging remarks in question time. Such claims should never be directed at those who put their lives on the line for all of us. The Minister has no right to criticise the service, sacrifices and integrity of those who protect our communities that she claims to represent.

This Government has a Minister who today has shown no understanding of the relentless challenges that police face. She has no idea of the physical and emotional burdens that officers shoulder daily. Our officers step into situations that most people turn away from. They are people driven by a sense of duty and bravery that deserves nothing less than our utmost respect and support. They endure, they protect and they sacrifice. Service as a police officer is courage at its finest, but courage alone cannot sustain our Police Force. This is not a gratitude to be paid. Our police need concrete action from the Government. Police require modern, safe workplaces with advanced equipment so that they can respond quickly and strategically. Investment in infrastructure is not a luxury; it is a matter of safety and efficacy for both officers and the communities that they serve.

Beyond infrastructure, police need a government that is prepared to make strong legislation—laws that empower, not hinder, their work. The law should support them, not put them at risk or pull them back when they are facing difficult decisions. Police work takes an immense toll on a person. It is a job that changes a person, and there is not an officer that I know who would put a price on being prepared, supported and safe, knowing that they will get to go home to their family at the end of their shift.

I outline the facts to the Minister. I am proud to have worked with the unions in my electorate, meeting with the Goulburn branch on as many occasions as possible. I listened and I took action. The Coalition increased the policing numbers in my electorate. For Goulburn, that was 12 positions in one financial year alone, the highest allocation in the State. Because the Minister probably will not understand, I will spell out why that is important. Extra positions mean more proactive policing, more foot patrols, more visibility of police in high-risk areas, more support for victims and more time to investigate crime. The Coalition also approved \$25 million to build a new police station at Goulburn, and we still have not seen anything on the ground.

Before the Minister criticises me for not having done anything while at the Cabinet table, rants and raves in this House, and demeans me and my fellow colleagues, she would do well to take a breath and reflect on her contribution. The Coalition invested over \$100 million in reforms, the biggest ever commitment to the physical and mental health of our officers. Benefiting 22,000 members of the NSW Police Force, the package was designed to recruit, retain and holistically support officers through every stage of their career. That included \$79 million

towards Pulse, a pioneering program to enhance the physical and psychological support available to all members of the force.

A further \$27 million went towards a new recruitment and retention fund, reinforcing the strength of the NSW Police Force and ensuring that our officers remain engaged and well supported in their roles. The Coalition also committed to new and upgraded police stations, the very same police stations that Labor members have been happy to cut the ribbons for. They failed to make any real progress to ensure that other police stations progress, including the one at Goulburn. It was under the former Government that New South Wales saw the addition of 1,500 new roles, the largest increase in police officer numbers in 30 years.

The Coalition's commitment to police is clear. The Minister's comments today were dismissive, not just of police but of what it truly means to serve the community. I am proud to say that the Coalition has taken meaningful strides, investing in infrastructure, mental health support and legislation that truly strengthens and respects our police. We provided essential support that our police rightly deserved. They need the modern infrastructure to do their job. I am very pleased that police officers have received a wage increase.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:32):** First of all, I commend the member for Mount Druitt for introducing this public interest debate. It is of vital importance to all of us, and I thank him. I thank the Police Force for the vital role it undertakes in New South Wales, and I recognise how much the community relies on it. I also thank the members of the Police Association. It is because of their discipline and ability to work with the Government that we have the result of the pay rise today. I take my hat off to them for their wonderful work. While it is not my job to conclude this debate, I acknowledge the contributions from certain members. I agree with the member for Bathurst about the sacrifices that police make. They certainly make sacrifices every single day. I also agree with the member for Goulburn, who talked about her many years of service, and I thank her for that. It is a hard job, and all our police officers are brave.

The one area that I disagree with the Opposition on is the wages cap. The wages cap imposed by the former Coalition Government for 12 years had a detrimental effect on the Police Force and many of our other public sector workers. I cannot let that statement go by. Our police are indispensable to us in New South Wales. It is really important that they are recognised with a very vital pay rise. The member for Fairfield mentioned some local history. I also thank Ian Allwood, vice-president of the Police Association. I rang him a few weeks ago to ask about some local issues, and he could not have given me more time to talk about things that are happening in the area or been more helpful. He genuinely cares about his workers, and that is what we want from a union.

I also thank Mick Sheehan, the local liaison officer. I do not think a day goes by without our office ringing him and saying, "Mick, we have a problem here and a problem there. Can you sort it out?" It is never a difficulty for our local police at Waratah to say, "Yes, I'll call in to see Mrs Smith", or for them to call in to the library because we have youths proving difficult, not allowing people to get in the door, riding their bikes around and being silly. He will go and make sure there are some patrols there. That is the sort of thing we want to see from our police. We call them, and we know that they will follow up on our behalf because they care. Recruitment over the past 12 years has been a real problem in Newcastle and Wallsend because of the wages cap. With this historic pay rise, I am looking forward to seeing more people attracted to the Police Force in the future, which is really vital. Police obviously deserve a pay rise, but it also makes it more attractive for police officers to remain in the force, given the tough job that they have. It will also attract young people into the force, and I think that is vital.

I conclude with a little bit of history. In the 1980s I took a casual job in Walgett, and I felt very sorry for myself. It was a long way from Wallsend, and I did not know anyone. It was quite a different area. But I felt more sorry for the coppers. I could go to the Imperial Hotel on a Friday night with my girlfriends and have something to eat, but the coppers had nowhere to go because they were locking people from the pub up—not me. They were really ostracised in a little town like Walgett, which is so far away geographically from anywhere else. It is a tough job. I have noticed over the years, including in my role as an MP, that the job is getting tougher, and community expectations are often unrealistic about what coppers can do. One thing we can do is improve their pay and working conditions so the job is more attractive for them and so we keep good coppers in the workforce. I really applaud the terrific motion.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (17:37):** I contribute to the public interest debate, which goes to the heart of my previous career as a police officer for more than 20 years before entering this place. I was also a prosecutor in Walgett, and I never saw the member for Wallsend on a court list. During my time in Parliament, I have always believed it is important for members to maintain a positive relationship with their local police area commands and work together in order to preserve community safety and harmony. I have firsthand understanding of the difference that community leaders can make to community safety when they work together for the common good.

The NSW Police Force plays a critical role each and every day in our communities as first responders, and we are all very appreciative of what they do. The electorate of Winston Hills has three local area commands: Blacktown, Parramatta and The Hills. I thank all of them for what they do. As a local member meeting local area commanders on countless occasions about local issues, I have found that the aspect of working together makes a difference for the community. There have been several serious incidents in recent months across the electorate of Winston Hills, including in the area of Lalor Park, with a certain tragedy involving children. I know the member for Blacktown is well aware of that. Serious incidents have occurred at Northmead involving home invasions, knives and females being at home by themselves. At Kings Langley, we have had well-publicised incidents of antisocial behaviour.

When I hear of these matters, it is a constant reminder that policing is a dangerous and sometimes thankless task. Each and every day, officers face the unknown, where even performing the simplest of tasks, like knocking on a front door or stopping a car, can result in catastrophic injury or even death for the officers who serve our community. Each and every day police are also called upon to make quick, decisive and professional decisions that involve the complex interaction of the law, an understanding of human nature and the ethical use of discretion. They often make these calls on their own, sometimes—as the members for Orange and Barwon would know—in the middle of nowhere, and very often in the middle of the night. When all this is put together, our police deserve to be paid and they deserve to be paid well. There should be no argument against that from any member of this House or from the communities we represent.

Like the member for Goulburn, I find it offensive when the police Minister and other members opposite come into the House and say that members on this side of the Chamber do not support the profession that protects us. I assure the Minister that every member of this House supports the police. As someone who has lived experience beyond this place as a police officer, I am not denying that police should be paid extremely well. However, the police Minister should front Parliament and explain what savings and improvements are tied to this deal. The Parliament needs to know, the community needs to know, and I am sure the nurses who protest out the front of Parliament House also wish to know.

Regarding supporting the police, in preparation for my contribution I unearthed the Minister's inaugural speech. It seems she may be a late convert to advocating on behalf of the police. In her inaugural speech she did not miss the opportunity to thank the Maritime Union of Australia; the Australian Workers' Union; the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union; the Australian Education Union; the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association; and, importantly, the nurses, the teachers and the firies. She even thanked Anthony Albanese and Luke Foley, but we will not go there. There was absolutely no mention of the police. It can certainly be said that the Minister is a supporter of the police, for every time there is a fiasco the police Minister is not far away. Whether it is media unit misstatements or appointments or the price of cocaine or a bottle of gin, it all seems to have been priceless.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:42):** I make a contribution to the public interest debate. I thank my good friend and Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Mount Druitt, for moving the motion. I note the presence of the current and former police Ministers in the Chamber. I thank them for their attendance. I listened very carefully to the contributions of other members before me. The member for Winston Hills was my boss in the police prosecutions branch.

**Mr Mark Taylor:** Was he any good?

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** He was a good boss because he left me alone. I never saw him. We go back a long way. I show my support for our police across New South Wales, being a former police officer of 22 years in the NSW Police Force. I was the first in my family to join the Police Force. I have a long and proud association with the Police Force. I worked in Liverpool and Macquarie Fields, as well as in Cabramatta during Operation Puccini in the mid to late '90s when it was the heroin capital of Australia. Later on I worked in Wollongong and then I went to the police prosecutions branch, where I worked all across New South Wales. So I think I have a good understanding of some of the metropolitan and rural issues affecting policing. I have a very good relationship with Superintendent Brendan Gorman, who is the Central West Police District commander. He does an amazing job with his team, and we have regular catch-ups to find out what is going on.

I congratulate the Government on the steps it has taken to increase the number of police in the NSW Police Force, whether it be getting rid of the wages cap, paying recruits to go to the police academy or the program that allows officers to work in their own country town, where they can do their training and work in the town where they and their family live. I fully support that initiative. This is a once-in-a-generation pay rise, based on the statistics I have seen. I cannot recall in my working lifetime, and from my experience during my time in the Police Force, a wage offer as significant as this. I congratulate the Government on doing something to address the shortages in the NSW Police Force that have been seen in recent times.

Whether it is police leaving under the voluntary redundancy scheme or officers being discharged as a result of physical or mental illness, the scars of the work that police endure each and every day, as previous speakers have spoken about, are significant. Police often do not know what is behind the door they are knocking on or who is in the car they are pulling up. When they go out in the morning and kiss their partner goodbye, they do not know if they are going to come home that night. There is always an inkling of doubt that something catastrophic could happen, but that is the nature of police work. I appreciate the men and women of the NSW Police Force, regardless of where they work or what section, department or division they are in, because they are all brave men and women who do what is best for our local communities. That should never be forgotten by any member of this House.

I raise a couple of issues that were brought up in the debate. In 2018 there was a re-engineering of the NSW Police Force—I was critical of it at the time, and I still am—where commands were amalgamated. For example, in my area the Central West Police District increased in size from just Orange, Blayney and the surrounding areas. It now covers the Lachlan area command. Resources were stretched. Instead of having two local area commanders, there was one. Instead of having two crime managers, there was one. Instead of having five or six inspectors, there were three. Crime in the period since has gone up, and that can be significantly attributed to the amalgamation.

In the process of producing its report on community safety in regional and rural communities, the Committee on Law and Safety—of which the member for Mount Druitt is the chair and my friend the member for Bathurst is a member—travelled around the State looking at rural crime. I thank the police for all the work they do, especially the police in my local community. I have an excellent relationship with them. We may not show it at times, but I assure them that as a Parliament we appreciate the work they do in keeping our communities safe. I once again congratulate the Government on its announcement of a record-breaking pay rise for the police. It is well deserved and will go a long way to recruiting and retaining police in our State.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:48):** In reply: I thank the members who made contributions: the member for Bathurst, the member for Fairfield, the member for Goulburn, the member for Wallsend, the member for Winston Hills and the member for Orange. I will respond to some of the comments made by the members, particularly the member for Bathurst, who is also the shadow police Minister. He acknowledges the pay increase, and he is glad to see police getting it. But my question to the member for Bathurst is what have you done in the past decade? It is great to say well done to the New South Wales Government for doing it, but I say to the member for Bathurst: Why did you not do it earlier, during your time as police Minister? You are calling us to do something for the Police Force, yet you have done nothing for the Police Force in your term as police Minister and in your term in government.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Mount Druitt will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** Through you, Mr Temporary Speaker, the member for Bathurst mentioned in his contribution that pay is not the thing the police are really looking for—they are looking for other things—and he mentioned the People Matter Employee Survey. A question in the survey asked, "Am I paid fairly for the work I do?" In 2022 only 52 per cent responded yes. In 2024, it was 33 per cent. So pay is one of the most important things for members of the Police Force. This Government not only addressed the pay; it has also addressed other initiatives like consolidating pay scales.

Under the offer, a police officer would be able to reach the top level for senior constable within 10 years, which is six years faster than currently possible. We are modernising the on-call allowance and paying officers for work performed instead of giving them time off in lieu. The NSW Police Force has always run an authorised strength model, which makes it incredibly hard for officers to request part-time duties. We have done work in leadership retention payment, and in recruitment and retention. All of those initiatives were neglected by the former Government over the past 12 years. It is unbelievable that those opposite would ask why we are not doing more or even the simplest thing.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024****First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

**JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILDREN) BILL 2024****First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

**STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2024****First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Community Recognition Statements***ST RAFQA GALA FUNDRAISER**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:52):** It was an honour to attend the St Rafqa parish gala fundraiser on 8 November, with special guest His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay in attendance. This annual event has become a cherished gathering for the Maronite community, as it brings people together in support of the church and its fabulous work. Seeing so many members of the community come together with such generosity and dedication to support the church and its initiatives was truly heartening. It was a privilege to witness firsthand the immense pride and love the parishioners have for their faith and heritage. Conversations ranged from the church's vision for growth to improving the lives of those in need. I thank everyone involved in organising such a memorable evening filled with music, food, dance and performances. I give a special thank you to Father Sarkis, Father Joe and Father Boutros for their dedication to parishioners and their important work in overseeing the project to build the new St Rafqa. St Rafqa is doing truly incredible work for its community.

**ROCKSCHOOL EXAMS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:53):** I am excited to report our local high achievers who sat the Rockscool exams on 11 October at St Joseph's Regional College in Port Macquarie. Administered by the Australian Music Examinations Board, the Rockscool exams seek to create a pathway for students to become well-rounded musicians. This is achieved through qualifications and training from a complete beginner, entry level 2, to professional standard, grade 8. Seven talented drummers from the college participated and achieved distinctions and merits in their exams. The highest score of the day was achieved by year 11 student Dominic Matheson, with a score of 96 per cent in grade 5. I applaud his efforts and congratulate him on reaching this exceptional result. Distinctions were also achieved by year 7 student Gus Hornery, with a score of 95 per cent in grade 2; year 10 student Samuel Duff, with 94 per cent in the grade 6 exam; as well as year 9 student Jarrod Muller, who scored 93 per cent for grade 4. Phoenix Kitching from year 9 attained a merit and a high score of 83 per cent, along with year 8 students Matilda Coleman and Lachlan Matheson, who achieved an impressive 88 per cent and 80 per cent respectively for their grade 1 exams. Congratulations!

**SIR JOSEPH BANKS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:54):** On National Survivors Day I acknowledge the students at Sir Joseph Banks High School for their commitment to making a difference through the Walk the Talk program. This initiative, delivered by Women's Community Shelters, aims to increase awareness about domestic, family and sexual violence, and equip young people with practical knowledge on issues like relationship abuse, consent and being an ally. This year the Walk the Talk program reached a major milestone, educating over 15,000 students in years 9 and 10 across various schools. It is a significant achievement. Sir Joseph Banks students have shown strong engagement by adopting our local women's shelter, Biyani House. The school's upcoming year 10 charity floral-themed dance, which was inspired by the Biyani House logo, will donate half of the ticket proceeds to

support the shelter. I give a big thank you to Women's Community Shelters for running this important program and to the students at Sir Joseph Banks High School for their efforts to support survivors of domestic violence in our community.

#### JACARANDA DRESS-UP COMPETITION

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (17:55):** On the morning of Jacaranda Thursday, I had the privilege of joining Clarence Valley Mayor Ray Smith and jacaranda royalty Belinda Attwater as a judge of Grafton Base Hospital's jacaranda dress-up competition. It was a truly challenging day for us all as the entries were fantastic. Every department of the hospital joined in the festivities. I congratulate the education department on taking home the win with its magical "Harry Potter Hogwarts School" theme. The Emergency Department was runner-up with its "Alice in Wonderland" display; it was great to see Dr McInnes dressing up and taking part as the Queen of Hearts. I give special shout-outs to the Renal Ward, to Maternity for its "Oi oi oi" theme, to Nursing Administration for its rendition of *Memory Lane*, and to Mental Health for its disco party from the '90s theme. I congratulate everyone at Grafton Base Hospital on joining in the jacaranda spirit.

#### ERENA WALTON ST CLAIR

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:56):** I acknowledge the wonderful achievements of Erena Walton St Clair, a student at the Shellharbour Anglican College who, studying in French, participated in the Education Perfect Language Championship 2024. Erena was awarded the elite award for answering an outstanding 23,128 questions, earning 17,817 points and placing in the top 1 per cent of competitors worldwide. Erena received not only a certificate for her exceptional efforts but also a special Education Perfect pin. Erena also excelled in other competitions. She won the emerald award in the 2024 Education Perfect English Championship, the gold award in the 2024 Education Perfect ANZ Maths Championship and the gold award in the 2024 Sustainable Ocean Competition Australia. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Erena on her dedication and her enthusiasm. She participated in these competitions in her own time. The Shellharbour electorate is very proud of Erena.

#### FISHER ROAD SCHOOL

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:57):** Today I congratulate Fisher Road School in Dee Why on its 50 years as a leader in special education for students from kindergarten to year 12. Fisher Road School students present with high support needs due to intellectual disability. Many of the students also have additional physical, emotional and sensory issues. The school's emphasis is on high-quality education and authentic learning for all its students, who are involved in learning that is fun and stimulating. The milestone is a wonderful achievement for this excellent school. It prioritises communication skills with each classroom, such as having internet-linked computers, ensuring skill development in adaptive technology for all students. I thank the school's progressive and passionate teachers, who are on a journey of continuous improvement. I celebrate the dynamic and innovative staff and the school community who have made Fisher Road School such a success over these past 50 years. I love your work.

#### HILLCREST VILLAGE STANWELL PARK

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:58):** Today I acknowledge Hillcrest Village, which is an important backbone of my local community. The United Protestant Association [UPA] Hillcrest Village has evolved over decades into an accommodated living village that provides vital social and recreational support for its residents. Its vibrant scenery, open environment and kind foundations are clearly important to its residents and those of surrounding communities. I recently met with the residents of the UPA retirement village. They shared the story of Lawrence Hargrave and his box kite lift experiment at Stanwell Park Beach. Today marks the 130th anniversary of that experiment. I acknowledge his contributions to Stanwell Park's spirit and also his innovative and adventurous character that defines the Heathcote community. Through arduous research and experiments, Lawrence Hargrave successfully lifted himself off the ground under a train of box kites, significantly contributing to the work of pioneers working towards powered flight. On behalf of the community, I thank Hillcrest Village and Lawrence Hargrave for their contributions to my community.

#### JOSEPH AND CARMEN GRECH

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:59):** I recognise the extraordinary contribution to my electorate of Joseph and Carmen Grech, West Ryde locals. For three decades Joe and Carmen have brought festive cheer to our community with one of the most extraordinary and iconic Christmas house displays anywhere in Sydney. Their home has been transformed into a Christmas wonderland that has captivated families across generations and also supported important causes. Through their kindness and dedication over the years, the Grech family has raised over \$15,000 for the Children's Hospital at Westmead, embodying that important Christmas virtue of giving. Their home has become a beloved holiday stop, with families returning year after year and often bringing new

generations of children to experience the magic. This season will be the Greches final year of lights, as they celebrate this heartfelt tradition surrounded by their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and their extended family from the local community. Their humility and dedication deserve recognition, and I am honoured to commend the Grech family's legacy of light, love and community spirit.

#### **WALK THE TALK PROGRAM**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:00):** I recognise the Women's Community Shelters [WCS] Walk the Talk program, and the work the Camden community is doing to raise awareness and support this incredible cause. The Walk the Talk program is a training program provided at high schools to increase awareness about domestic, family and sexual violence and build young people's capacity to advocate. As part of this program, each school also adopts its own local women's charity shelter, supporting them in numerous ways throughout the year. Students from Camden High School and Elderslie High School have come together to figure out how to support this worthy cause. At Camden High School, students worked on a bake stall to support the Blue Wren House fundraising high tea. At Elderslie High School, students have been working on including the WCS in their community day. I thank the students and teachers at these schools for their amazing work. Keep it up!

#### **DUBBO CITY TOYOTA**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:01):** I congratulate Ben Thompson and the entire team at Dubbo City Toyota on taking home an impressive five awards at the 2024 Dubbo Chamber of Commerce Rhino Awards. The team received well-deserved recognition for Employer of Choice, Excellence in Large Business and Dubbo's Most Outstanding Business as the Gold Rhino. Two stand-out team members were also recognised. Brett Hoyle was named Dubbo's Favourite Tradie and Luke Martin earned the title of Apprentice of the Year. Brett's tenure of 19 years and Luke's dedication in commuting daily from Dunedoo to Dubbo truly highlight the strong and supportive workplace culture of the dealership. Dubbo City Toyota now employs over 90 people. Ben and the team are deeply engaged in the community through generous support for local charities, sporting organisations and events. This commitment to giving back reflects their dedication to not only the business but also the wellbeing of the community. Well done to each and every member of the team. Oh, what a feeling!

#### **SYDNEY WAR CEMETERY**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:02):** I am delighted to acknowledge that on Sunday 3 November I had the privilege of representing Premier Chris Minns at the Sydney War Cemetery for its annual Remembrance Day ceremony. John Moore was the emcee and David Clark and Enfield RSL were the organisers. I thank them for having me. I also acknowledge the cadets, who did such a wonderful job during that very special ceremony. It was the first time I had been to that war cemetery and it truly is a fitting and beautiful place. I also had the privilege of being there with Mr Mick Bainbridge, a fellow veteran and president of RSL NSW. He is an amazing bloke and has done four tours in Afghanistan and one in East Timor in the 2nd Commando Regiment. His passion is appreciated, as is that of Paul-Raymond James. They do great work with the RSL. I commend them and thank them for having me there to enjoy the day with them.

#### **DOREEN LYON**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:03):** Doreen Lyon is a local artist, author, historian and volunteer who has been recognised for her contributions to The Oaks Historical Society and the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum with the awarding of the 2024 Certificate of Achievement by the Royal Australian Historical Society. The society's objectives are to advance education in the field of Australian history. Doreen has contributed greatly to preserving Wollondilly's varied and rich history through her dedication and work. Doreen, who lives in Thirlmere, attended Lancaster Royal Grammar School and Blackpool Tech in the United Kingdom and studied museum studies at the University of Sydney. Her creativity and skills are shown in the artworks she creates—some of which I am lucky to have on display in my electorate office—as well as her bookmaking, including her first book on Thirlmere Lakes. I congratulate Doreen.

#### **TEACHERS' GUILD OF NSW**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:04):** On 25 October 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the Teachers' Guild of NSW annual dinner and presentation of awards event, which was a wonderful experience, held at the William Inglis Hotel in Warwick Farm near my electorate of Cabramatta. The event also coincided with World Teachers' Day 2024, a day dedicated to celebrating the incredible work of educators around the world. During the evening, I had the honour of presenting the World Teachers' Recognition Awards for Catholic schools. It was truly inspiring to witness the remarkable dedication and passion these educators have. I take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our teachers and educators for their unwavering commitment and hard work, and the invaluable role they play in shaping the future. Their influence extends far beyond the classroom, and the positive impact they have on students' lives is immeasurable.

### WALK IT OFF TERRIGAL

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:05):** I take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate a significant milestone—the first anniversary of the men's Walk It Off Terrigal mental health support initiative. Over the past year this walking group has grown into a powerful community, creating a safe and welcoming space where men can connect, share and support each other on their mental health journeys. Walk It Off is more than just a walk; it is a lifeline for those seeking understanding, camaraderie and a chance to get some fresh air while working through life's challenges. This free, no-strings-attached group provides a platform for men to engage in open, honest conversations about both the positive and difficult moments in life. It is a place where change truly begins with conversation and mutual support builds resilience. I congratulate Phil and all the volunteers at Walk It Off Terrigal on this incredible first year. I thank them for promoting mental health awareness, fostering community connection and reminding us all that support is just a walk away. I thank them for making me feel so welcome this year. Here's to many more years of walking, talking and making a real difference to our community.

### JAMES "JIM" CONNOLLY

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:06):** On 1 November James "Jim" Connolly of Erowal Bay was awarded life membership of Surf Life Saving NSW, recognising his outstanding 62 years of service to lifesaving. Jim's journey began at just 14 years of age and, over the decades, he has become a central figure in beach safety. From northern New South Wales to the South Coast, everyone knows Jim. His contributions have been vast, including volunteer lifeguarding, training new lifesavers and promoting water safety through community outreach programs. Throughout his career, Jim has held senior leadership positions, organised events, and led fundraising efforts to support the growth and sustainability of the Sussex Inlet and District Surf Life Saving Club. A stand-out achievement was Jim's role as a foundation member of what is now the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, a pioneering emergency response initiative that has since expanded across Australia. Jim's life membership is a well-deserved recognition of his unwavering dedication to surf lifesaving and the community. I congratulate Jim.

### GOSFORD PRIVATE HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:07):** Tonight in the New South Wales Parliament I sincerely thank all the administrative staff, midwives, gynaecologists, obstetricians and paediatricians at the Gosford Private Hospital maternity ward. While working closely with our community I have received countless compliments for the staff at the hospital. With the closure of the maternity ward next year, I know that the ward's amazing team will be sorely missed. So many Coasties have such fabulous memories of babies being born at Gosford Private Hospital. Having had my fair share of hospital visits, I understand the importance of having a team of admin and medical professionals who go above and beyond to accommodate their patients' needs. It is greatly sad that the private hospital management has made the decision to close the maternity facility, yet I am certain that the beautiful memories shared amongst the staff and the patients and their families will never be forgotten. I am forever grateful for the love and care the maternity ward has provided to our community members on the coast and beyond. I wish the beautiful staff the best of luck in their future endeavours.

### BARRABA REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATION

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:08):** I sincerely thank the Barraba community for a very special Remembrance Day 2024. Barraba has a proud history of service to our nation and that history is forever emblazoned on the town's memorial clock, which displays the names of the 57 Barraba men and members of the 33rd Battalion who gave their lives on the battlefield during World War I. This year was the celebration of 100 years since the clock was built in 1924, just six years after the Armistice. Five hundred people attended the service in Barraba, including relatives of former servicemen and servicewomen, locals and schoolchildren. It was a very special morning in Barraba, and I congratulate David Kelly and the Barraba Memorial Clock Centenary committee.

### GRAHAM HANKIN

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:09):** I recognise the work of Graham Hankin of Chittaway Point. Graham is a retired engineer. He has devoted much of his retirement to helping the community better prepare for flooding around Tuggerah Lakes. He has been a dedicated member of Central Coast Council's catchment management committee. His work has been central to ensuring that we have better flood preparedness and mitigation around the lake, and he has not stopped. He continues to do that work to make sure we do all we can to reduce flood risk around Tuggerah Lakes, most recently achieving a major breakthrough in ensuring that The Entrance Channel is maintained in a flood-ready condition. I thank Graham on behalf of our community for his work.

## PITTWATER ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:10):** Every year on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month we pay our respects to remember the loss and the suffering of soldiers who have died fighting for our nation. I thank the sub-branches of Pittwater RSL, Avalon RSL, Palm Beach RSL and RSL Anzac Village for hosting Remembrance Day services this year in Pittwater. I give a special thanks to Deborah Carter from the Pittwater sub-branch and, of course, all those in Pittwater who have served in our armed services. I attended a moving ceremony yesterday at Pittwater RSL, standing with those who have served our country and also relatives of those who have served, as well as students from local schools, including Pittwater High School, Mater Maria and Mona Vale Public School. Australia is truly fortunate to have the freedoms it has today thanks to the sacrifices made by those men and women of the armed services, many of whom lost their lives. I thank our sub-branches for ensuring that we will remember them. Lest we forget.

## OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHURCH

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:11):** Our Lady of the Rosary Church Fairfield has been a cornerstone of the Fairfield community for 100 years, providing not only a place of worship but also a centre for community support. Through ministries and outreach, the parish has offered services such as English classes, digital literacy for seniors, charity events for the homeless and youth engagement programs, fostering cultural and spiritual unity. I commend Father Bob Bossini, who has been providing service to the parish since 2020. I also thank parish staff and volunteers and acknowledge the collective efforts of the entire community. They have, with the commitment of Father Bob's leadership, made the recent centenary celebration attended by more than 800 people a true testament to the parish's lasting impact on Fairfield.

## TRIBUTE TO DESMOND ROWLEY

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:12):** I recognise Mr Desmond Rowley. Born in Bathurst and raised in Sydney, Des excelled in sports and mathematics, leading to a successful career in surveying and an Australian championship medal in squash. Moving to Goulburn in 1973, he thrived both professionally and personally, marrying Desley in 1975. Together, they shared a deep commitment to community service. Serving as a councillor and deputy mayor of Goulburn City Council during the 1980s and 1990s, Mr Rowley also dedicated over 50 years to the Goulburn City Lions Club, serving as president multiple times. He was instrumental in founding the Cancer Council's Relay For Life in Goulburn and contributed to many more community initiatives, including the Ray Harvey Sports Foundation and the Lilac City Festival. Des was also passionate about the arts, performing with the Crookwell Amateur Dramatic Society for nearly 50 years, where he provided mentorship and fostered a love for theatre. Vale, Des Rowley.

## IVAN WONG

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:13):** I recognise Mr Ivan Wong, General Manager of Strategic Support at the Chinese Australian Services Society, or CASS, whose 30 years of dedicated service have profoundly shaped the lives of multicultural communities across New South Wales. Under Ivan's leadership, CASS has transformed from a small organisation into a broad-reaching service provider, offering child care, disability support, residential aged care and vocational training. Ivan's influence reaches beyond CASS. He advocates for equity in aged care as a member of the Aged and Community Services Australia advisory committee, working with organisations like the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia and the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. Ivan leaves a legacy of compassionate, inclusive service, inspiring future leaders to continue his vision for a connected, culturally respectful community. I offer my deepest congratulations to Ivan for his lifelong dedication.

## PETER WILLIAMS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:14):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises an individual who has played a key role in Bomaderry's commemorative military services, bugler Peter Williams. For many years, Peter has stirred reflections of remembrance across countless Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies. At age 90, Mr Williams played the last post at Walsh Memorial Park in Bomaderry on a bugle that dates back to the Boer War in 1899. Over the past 20 years, Peter has performed not just at local services but also at school services. In 2024 he played in six schools—the least of any year. He asked those schools how many students attended the services and was amazed and humbled to learn that he performed for more than 4,000 students. Goodness knows how many people Peter has played for over the years. Together with his wife, Maz, this local couple are much loved and valued not just by our military community but also by our entire community. I thank Peter for his ongoing service and dedication, along with Maz, and for ensuring that our community never forgets. Lest we forget.

### ALWYN CRAIG

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:15):** On 7 November I had the pleasure of celebrating the amazing achievements of war veteran Private Alwyn Craig for his service in both Vietnam and as a peacekeeper in Singapore. Alwyn experienced much hardship upon his return to civilian life, spending 30 years sleeping rough on the streets of Newcastle. Thankfully and amazingly, his life took a turn for the better in 2023. With the help of homelessness outreach worker John Cross, Alwyn was able procure a birth certificate, pension and bank account. Nearly 49 years later, Alwyn received his nine military medals and five clasps at a special event hosted by Newcastle council last week. He was surrounded by family and friends and the Newcastle community. It is a wonderful achievement and I thank Alwyn for his service to our country.

### ST JOHN AMBULANCE PARRAMATTA

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (18:16):** I recently had the privilege of visiting the St John Ambulance Parramatta Division in Toongabbie—a group with a remarkable history of protecting and serving our community. Two years ago, St John Ambulance was awarded a grant through the Community Building Partnership program and it has been inspiring to see how that support has bolstered its work. During my visit, I had the opportunity to refresh my CPR skills—a reminder of the essential knowledge that St John Ambulance shares with our community. St John Ambulance's commitment to engaging youth in acquiring critical, life-saving skills is invaluable, ensuring that the next generation is prepared to respond effectively in emergencies. Its work is a testament to the power of community, and we are grateful for its unwavering dedication to keeping us safe and prepared for any situation. The volunteers from the St John Ambulance Parramatta Division play an essential role at events of all shapes and sizes, and always step in when needed. They not only save lives but also strengthen our community's resilience, fostering a culture of care, preparedness and responsibility that extends through the generations.

### RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:17):** The Riverstone community has come together for over 105 years to honour the brave men and women who have served our country. As part of the Remembrance Day service, President Bruce Shaw and the dedicated team members of the Riverstone-Schofields RSL Sub-Branch created a field of flags, allowing community members to show their support for veterans by planting an Australian or New Zealand flag. The sub-branch has consistently shown its commitment to preserving the spirit of the Anzacs, with heartfelt services on both Remembrance Day and Anzac Day. I was deeply saddened by an act of vandalism on the field of flags installation ahead of the service. However, rather than focus on this senseless and reprehensible act, I highlight the incredible response from the community. In the face of adversity, the North West Business Chamber stepped forward, offering immediate support to fund the replacement of the damaged signage. This act of solidarity is a testament to Riverstone's resilience, unity and enduring fighting spirit. It reminds us that, despite challenges, our community stands united in respect and reverence towards those who have served to protect our way of life. Lest we forget.

### MADDISON AND LOGAN LUPTON

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:18):** I commend two inspiring young residents of Wattle Grove, Maddison and Logan Lupton. Recently, while enjoying a walk with their father, the children engaged in an important discussion about road safety and the challenges of crossing the road safely near Australis Park in Wattle Grove. Recognising the need for improved safety measures in their community, Maddison and Logan took the initiative to start a petition advocating for the installation of a zebra crossing in the area. Their proactive approach demonstrates exceptional community spirit and a desire to create a safer environment not just for themselves but for all residents and children in Wattle Grove. Their commitment is a shining example of how young voices can make a significant impact in our community. I commend their efforts to enhance the safety and wellbeing of our community. Well done to Maddison and Logan.

### ASHCROFT PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:19):** This Halloween, Ashcroft Public School was transformed into a scary and mystical place for a successful fundraiser organised by students. At a recent meeting of the student representative council, the students of Ashcroft decided that they wanted to raise money for more sporting equipment to use at lunch and recess. To achieve their goal, the SRC organised a Halloween dress-up and disco event. Students at Ashcroft put on their best costumes for an event that was, by all accounts, a spooky success. Among the attendees were vampires, black cats, clowns, pirates, witches and multiple Wednesday Addamses. Charging a \$3 entry fee and \$2 for ice cream spiders—a worthwhile expense, if you ask me—the SRC raised enough money to have a shopping spree to purchase supplies at Westfield Liverpool last week. Thanks to

their efforts, the students now have brand new basketballs, footballs, soccer balls, handballs, frisbees and hula hoops. I congratulate Ashcroft Public School SRC on its community spirit.

#### LIFELINE HARBOUR TO HAWKESBURY SYDNEY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:20):** I would like to acknowledge Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney for their unwavering commitment to supporting our community through crisis and mental health services. I recently had the honour of attending the opening of their new Lifeline store in Northbridge, where I had the privilege of cutting the ribbon alongside Lifeline's CEO Elizabeth Lovell, Board President Graham West, dedicated shop manager Elle Foster, and Maya Tanya Taylor. This new shop will not only provide valuable funds to support Lifeline's essential services but also offer a welcoming space for our community to find pre-loved treasures. Lifeline's work, from crisis support to financial counselling and more, is a vital resource for many individuals and families in our area. Its efforts have a profound impact on those facing hardship and make our community a safer and more supportive place in which to live. Thank you to Elizabeth, Graham, Elle and all the volunteers and workers and staff at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney for your compassion, dedication and invaluable service. Our community is stronger because of your commitment.

#### TRIBUTE TO GREGORY ROSS TURNER

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:21):** I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the recent passing of Gregory Ross Turner, a respected journalist and much-loved member of the Ryde community. Over many decades he brought countless local stories to life through a great institution of Ryde—*The Weekly Times* newspaper. Known to many simply as "Greg", he was a regular fixture at Ryde and Hunters Hill council meetings, and lent his voice to many issues, community events, crime news and more. Greg's commitment to sharing our stories was tireless, but it was his weekly "cat of the week" segment that brought him most joy. Greg was an avid supporter of animal welfare, in partnership with the World League for the Protection of Animals in Gladesville. Beyond journalism, he was a devoted man of faith who cherished his connections within local churches and religious charities. Over the years, his voice became a familiar one to many, and I know his loss will be felt deeply by *The Weekly Times* team and our local community. I extend my sincerest condolences to his family, friends and colleagues. Vale, Greg Turner.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE MOSQUITO OUTBREAK

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:22):** In recent weeks, the Liverpool area has been beset with an abnormally large number of mosquitoes. Although this time of year, when the weather warms up, is known as mozzie season, this year has been worse. A major source of the outbreak has been identified as the Liverpool Water Recycling Plant in Warwick Farm. Last week I attended a briefing from Sydney Water to understand the background of the issue and learn what action was being undertaken to urgently address the situation and provide much-needed relief for our community. For the House's information, the aquatic weed frogbit was first noticed on the oxidation pond at the Liverpool Water Recycling Plant in April this year. The plant is prohibited in New South Wales under the Biosecurity Act and subject to a complicated process which meant that the weed could not be simply removed offsite.

Although the initial weed was removed from the pond, the combination of warmer spring weather and the nutrient-rich oxidation pond meant that, following a recurrence, the frogbit grew approximately eight hectares in eight weeks to almost completely cover the pond and provide ideal conditions for mosquitoes to breed and multiply. Thankfully, at that briefing we also heard from NSW Health's mosquito specialist that the species of mosquito at the site was of low risk to human health. Mosquitoes have been a problem pest in Liverpool for some time. In 2019, under the then mayor, Wendy Waller, Liverpool City Council developed a mosquito management plan in response to an outbreak of mosquito-borne Ross River virus to drive down the numbers of the pest in our community.

The plan involved identifying problem areas, hand-spraying grounds with an environmentally friendly bacterial larvicide that was safe for both humans and animals, and a public education campaign about staying safe from mosquitoes. It also highlighted the need for the ongoing implementation of the plan and the potential for a hotter and more humid climate to make mosquitoes a bigger problem for our community going forward. However, implementation was suddenly and inexplicably stopped in 2022. Some in this place and at other levels of government have sought to use the issue to assign blame and whip up panic in our communities. We have heard outlandish statements in publications about Christmas being on the chopping block. Fearmongering serves exactly no-one—except maybe the political ambitions of those seeking a run on television or in the paper.

As members of this place, we have a duty to inform our communities of action being undertaken to resolve urgent issues. I know that local and State governments have mobilised quickly to manage and treat areas affected

by the current outbreak. Mosquitoes do not see electoral boundaries, so I have sought to make sure regular updates and assistance from my office are made available not just to my own electorate but to any community member who reaches out. At the Liverpool Water Recycling Plant, there is a dedicated team working seven days a week to address the issue. In addition, there are six excavators, two vacuum trucks, three transport trucks and two boats onsite to help remove frogbit and administer larvicide. A helicopter was also onsite yesterday to treat the oxidation ponds from the air.

Thanks to that rapid mobilisation, approximately 50 per cent of the frogbit has been removed from the oxidation pond in a short amount of time. For the safety of our children and the peace of mind of our parents, the Department of Education has been treating school campuses as a matter of urgency. So far, 24 schools have been sprayed and cleaned, with another 12 scheduled for treatment this week. Those schools were treated after parents across the community let me know where the hotspots were. I thank those who reached out and shared their experiences. In times like these, this is what our community expects of local members. People do not want mudslinging, fearmongering or political pointscoring; they want, expect and, frankly, deserve action.

There will be time for an honest assessment of all the factors that led to this situation. Those from the area know that mosquitoes have been a longstanding problem around the Georges River and other waterways in Liverpool. This did not suddenly begin in the past few weeks. It requires ongoing control efforts across all levels of government. There will be time to learn from this and do better, especially as our environmental conditions change. Making sure such a panic is not repeated is dependent on the ability of representatives like us to operate in good faith and work with institutions, government departments and each other to ensure that our community is protected and informed. It is my hope that we focus on doing just that—that we focus on doing our jobs, instead of the constant mudslinging and airing of petty grievances that our community has frankly grown tired of.

### BUS SERVICES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:27):** I rise to bring attention to an ongoing problem in our public transport system that has deeply impacted thousands of residents across my community and, indeed, in many parts of New South Wales. For more than 18 months, we have patiently waited for real progress and reform from the Minns Labor Government's appointed bus taskforce, yet commuters continue to confront too often long wait times, frequent cancellations and unreliable services. The bus taskforce final report was handed down in May 2024, that work having commenced in 2023—over a year of work being committed to it. Since then the Government's response has been relative silence. We all know the root cause here is—it is no secret whatsoever—the fundamental shortage of bus drivers, but Labor's inaction has left this part of the public transport system struggling to meet the basic needs of its users, impacting not just our community's daily lives but also their trust in the Government's ability to deliver essential services.

As I visit local bus stops and speak with commuters, I hear the same frustrations time and time again. This shortage has resulted in fewer buses on the road, longer wait times and an increase in cancelled services. Despite clear promises to address the issue, the Minns Labor Government is yet to implement any effective measures to increase the number of drivers on our roads. This is not a unique problem, and that too is well known. In other parts of the world—for instance, in Auckland, New Zealand—they have tackled such shortages by implementing a proactive approach to bring in and train skilled drivers from other parts of the world. In Auckland they understood the urgency of the matter. Rather than waiting, they took action to fill the gaps. About 350 drivers were recruited and trained to meet the demand, and the positive impact on their public transport system was relatively immediate and significant. In New South Wales the Coalition in government saw this as a model worth following and proposed a similar solution, to bring in skilled drivers from overseas to fill our bus driver shortage. However, both Federal and State Labor opposed this initiative, blocking a practical, proven solution that could have alleviated the ongoing pressure on our public transport system.

Instead of taking decisive action, the current Government has resorted to endless consultation, which has done little more than delay meaningful improvements. Adding to the frustration, the Minns Government introduced a new bus timetable, based on the promise that the Sydney Metro would open on time. This was a core component of its plan to ease the burden on bus services, as the metro was expected to take some of the commuter load. However, due to delays and what can only be described as a bungled handling of the metro's opening date, the metro commencement was postponed, leaving commuters in my electorate and others stranded without sufficient alternative transport options. The Government's poorly timed and unrealistic implementation of this new timetable only made matters worse, exacerbating issues within an already struggling bus service. Instead of providing the relief promised, this created even more chaos for those relying on public transport to get to work, school or other commitments.

In addition, and at a very local level, I must highlight, without any pleasure, another promise that remains unfulfilled: Labor's committed reinstatement of the 272 bus service to connect North Willoughby to the CBD. During the election campaign, the Minns team promised to bring back this crucial service, hailing its reinstatement

as a huge community win. Yet here we are, nearly two years on, and the 272 bus remains absent from any routes, despite major timetable and route changes during this period. It is simply not going to happen. It is another broken Labor promise. The cumulative effect of these failures has eroded trust in our public transport system. Commuters feel left behind and frustrated, not only because of the daily inconveniences but because the Government has not shown any real urgency to address these issues. Almost two years of reviews and inaction, it simply does not pass muster. We cannot afford to lose more time with consultations and studies. The evidence and solutions are there, and it is time for action.

I assume Labor would not and could not allow drivers in from overseas, as other jurisdictions have done, because of union opposition. The people really running the Labor Party, union bosses, will not allow it. It is clear that commuters deserve better. They deserve a bus service that is reliable, accessible and timely. After two years of Labor, there have been enough promises, delays, indecisions and obfuscation. It is time for real action. It is time for Chris Minns and Labor to make some decisions. It is time to stop blaming others, like the former Government. It is time for the public of New South Wales, not unions and their bosses, to be put first. New South Wales deserves a government that not only makes promises but follows through on them. The Government should do its job and govern. New South Wales deserves better from the Minns Labor Government.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:32):** The Government shares the concerns of the Willoughby electorate, and, personally, I share the member's concern about the loss of the 272 bus route in his area, which was cancelled by the former Government. I grew up in Newcastle. The 322 bus was the bus that I regularly commuted on when I was a young boy, and it was an emotional tearing-apart of my childhood when I learned that the 322 had been cancelled under the former Government. The Government is doing all it can to improve bus services across the State. We are hamstrung by the contracts and the cancellations we inherited from the former Government, but I can assure the member for Willoughby that we are doing all we can to rebuild our State's public services after they were ripped apart by our predecessors.

#### CAMDEN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:33):** I hate to break it to anyone in this Chamber who wishes to come out to visit Camden and see Oran Park Raceway or El Caballo Blanco, but neither is there anymore. What has replaced them in Camden is an incredible burst of housing. We do not begrudge people moving out to Camden. It is amazing. From 2021 to 2026, we had an increase of nearly 30,000 people, and the population is projected to more than double again by 2046. Camden was the fastest growing local government area in New South Wales from 2016 to 2021, with a growth of 52.6 per cent. And, as I said, we do not mind having people arrive in Camden; in fact, we welcome it. It is fantastic. Having many lovely families has brought the average age of my electorate down to 33, and the largest five-year group in my electorate is made up of zero to five-year-olds. So the sale of prams is great in Camden. But what is not great is the infrastructure. What people do not seem to realise is that my electorate has no train stations. I cannot do a train station morning like a normal politician, because I do not have a train station in my electorate.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Welcome to regional New South Wales.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** I am not in regional New South Wales. I am in urban Sydney, and I do not have a train station. People in my electorate are 30 to 40 minutes away from the nearest train stations, which are in Leppington and Campbelltown. During the 12 years of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, we missed out on a lot of the new growth that was needed to support those families. We are now catching up. We are building Gledswood Hills High School. The temporary high school starts in term 1 next year, which is exciting. We built Gregory Hills Public School. We are working on health facilities to relieve our emergency services in the three busiest hospitals in Australia: Campbelltown, Liverpool and Nepean hospitals, which are our three closest hospitals, and we are looking at building more jobs.

But one of the things that was missed out was the capacity to expand our road system. One of the promises I made in the 2023 election was that we would look at making school crossings a priority. Two school crossings came up time and time again during doorknocking and school letterboxing. One was at Camden South Public School, which is situated on the Old Hume Highway. As you come off Camden Bypass, you turn right off an 80-kilometre-per-hour road onto a road that comes into Camden proper, and you are expected to reduce your speed to 50 kilometres per hour. Unsurprisingly, many people do not do that. Children were being asked to cross this quite major road that was without the capacity to slow cars down. We managed to get a wombat crossing, a raised crossing to slow people down, so it is easier to see; it opened for this term.

We have the same issue with Spring Farm Public School, which was built without a 40-kilometre-per-hour zone on the main road next to it, and nor did it have any crossings. Not only did we manage to deliver two crossings on Barley Road to allow students access to the school on Barley Road, but also we are looking at starting our new crossing on Springs Road next year. It is extremely exciting. Children will be able to walk safely to school by

themselves, which is what we all want. We hope to get that done by the end of next year, weather permitting. They are two of the things that are exciting to talk about.

I finish with Spring Farm Parkway, which was promised about 17 times by the previous Government. Stage one of Spring Farm Parkway opened in late August of this year. The only problem for the people of Camden with Spring Farm Parkway stage one is that it does not go to Spring Farm. Stage one is a fantastic access road for the people of Menangle and South Campbelltown to reach the Hume, but it does not allow anyone from Camden to get onto the Hume Highway to access the M5 and come into the city. It is up to us to pick that up, and we have put money into the planning of Spring Farm Parkway stage two. The people of Camden are yearning for this road to open as quickly as possible. Narellan Road is at a standstill. In fact, often it takes longer for me to get from my house to the Hume Highway than it takes for me to get from the Hume Highway to Parliament. We are focusing on making sure we get the infrastructure we need to support the amazing housing we have had in south-western Sydney, now that the Minns Labor Government is in power.

### TAMWORTH ELECTORATE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:38):** I have spoken many times in this Parliament about how this Labor Government continues to ignore the community's concerns when it comes to large-scale renewable energy projects in my electorate. The concerns fall on this Labor Government's deaf ears. The Minister responsible does not seem to understand that the fundamental part of community consultation is listening to the community and then addressing its concerns, not ignoring them. Even today, despite the announcement of a renewable energy planning framework, the Minister talked about community consultation during question time but did not talk about taking community concerns on board. The NSW Nationals are calling for a moratorium and stocktake of renewables projects across the State.

The Middlebrook Solar Farm, 22 kilometres south of Tamworth, has been given the green light by the Independent Planning Commission despite strong opposition from the local community. It is another example of the planning system ignoring the concerns of local communities when it comes to renewable energy. Those large-scale projects have been causing deep concern and angst among local communities right across the region. Time and again community voices have spoken out against the location of the projects. The major concern from communities is about location. The Middlebrook Solar Farm covers nearly 1,400 hectares of agricultural land with 750,000 solar panels. For people driving up towards it, it will look like a black landscape that a grassfire has permanently burnt through. Despite the Tamworth electorate being mostly outside a renewable energy zone, several projects like Middlebrook Solar Farm are in development. The community deserves to have their voices heard when it comes to the development of renewable energy projects, particularly when those projects could negatively impact farming businesses.

At the recent Independent Planning Commission meeting, the community expressed their strong opposition to the project, raising concerns regarding dust, noise, decommissioning, visual amenity and the loss of prime agricultural and equine land. Despite the community's opposition to the project, it has been approved. I am deeply concerned that the community's voice was ignored. I fear that other projects planned for the Tamworth region will be rubberstamped regardless of concerns raised by the community. Again, the community's concerns are about location—which, on this occasion, is wrong.

The Government needs to do more to fix the planning process. Communities are sophisticated in their understanding of the projects being imposed upon them in their own backyard. This Labor Government should be implementing the NSW Agricultural Commissioner's recommendations regarding land use conflict and agriculture. The Agricultural Commissioner's report into renewable energy and agriculture clearly identified land use conflict as a significant concern for agriculture, but the outcome of the project shows that the Government has done nothing to ensure that community voices are being heard.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:42):** I assure the member for Tamworth that the community will not be ignored in relation to his concerns about the project's progress. The Government's new Renewable Energy Planning Framework will go a long way to making sure that the community's concerns are completely understood. The member for Tamworth's suggestion that all projects be cancelled is no solution as we progress to renewable energy in this State.

### REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:43):** I speak about nutrient-rich food, food production and farmland in the Northern Rivers, which is a matter of great significance to the Ballina electorate. It also has meaning for the rest of the State and should reverberate around the nation and the planet as our species increasingly distances itself from the natural environment and the sources and production processes of the food we eat and the water we drink. The Northern Rivers is one of our nation's top tourist destinations. It is a natural paradise for those who live

there. It is a clean, green food bowl with an international reputation for quality and an ever-expanding list of new restaurants that creates a mecca for food-lovers. Yet even in the Northern Rivers we face inappropriate development encroaching upon farmland and greenfield sites. Beyond the farmlands lie the bigger picture problems facing our forests and endangered species, as well as our rivers and seas.

The harms we are inflicting upon the old growth trees flow on into the climate crisis. Despite obvious and catastrophic results, we continue to expect our farmers to grow crops, raise animals and produce primary food within this context. It is becoming incredibly hard. The Greens are permanently on high alert for all those acute challenges, but my mind has recently been given renewed focus by the updated publication of a book written by legendary former sheep farmer turned visionary ecologist, Charles Massy—whom I have met—entitled *Call of the Reed Warbler: A New Agriculture, A New Earth*. The book explores a subject that The Greens have long championed: regenerative agriculture. Massy's description of how regenerative agriculture embodies the vital connection between our soil and our health is a voice of sanity for our times, charting the way forward for the future of our food supply, our landscapes and the survival of our planet.

Industrialised food production, where profits come before the health of our people or the planet, has driven agriculture into an arid, unsustainable corner, marked by the rise of "big farmer"—vast monoculture production fed by pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilisers and high-yield crop varieties. A little over two years ago, in my capacity as The Greens NSW agriculture spokesperson, we announced a new Greens Agriculture and Rural Land Use Policy. After extensive consultation with farmers, ecologists and Greens members, the new policy drew on the principles of regenerative agriculture and agroecology. I believe we are the only political party in the country to do so.

It presented a win-win for farming in New South Wales, improving land use and food systems, and dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions over time while improving profitability and productivity, protecting ecosystems and building more resilient communities. It has all of those aspects as a selling point, not to mention maximising nutrient-rich foods in the process. As someone who aspires to grow micro greens in my retirement—which is not code for marijuana—I am very interested in anything that improves the health of the soils. The policy we developed acknowledged the wisdom and experience of First Nations people, who sustainably managed the land for over 80,000 years through complex agricultural practices and deep connection to country.

We urge the Government to give assistance to primary producers to enable them to adopt land management practices that are adaptive to climate change, and to rapidly phase out damaging practices such as intensive grazing and over-use of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides and antibiotics. Regenerative agriculture seeks to phase in a range of solutions that largely eliminate the need for nitrogen fertilisers, including the use of native nitrogen fixing species and crop rotation. Countless farmers and food growers in the Northern Rivers are already doing this. We join with Charles Massy in calling for support of small-scale and diversified farming operations that are adaptive and resilient to match the needs of our planet. Charles Massy based his story of the reed warblers on his personal farming experience, but if Australians want a sustainable future for their food supply, their countryside, their health and their planet, we need to see a fundamental change in how we all think about our soil and food. After all, we are what we eat.

### **STINGRAYS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:47):** It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the legacy and future of the Stingrays Rugby League Football Club. The club has become an integral part of Shellharbour's sporting landscape. The Stingrays were born when rugby league was first introduced at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School—which my own children attended—but it was not until 2002 that they formally established the Stingrays Junior Rugby League Football Club. In 2014 they expanded further by forming the senior Stingrays Rugby League Football Club, joining the South Coast Group 7 Senior League and giving their talented youth a pathway to pursue rugby league beyond the junior levels.

At the heart of their mission was a desire to foster the connection between their junior and senior teams. By nurturing players from an early age, they offer opportunities for growth both on and off the field. In a very short period, the senior Stingrays have grown exponentially. By 2021 they proudly fielded nine senior teams. That incredible growth highlighted the need for better facilities and grounds, as Flinders Reserve, where they currently play, has limited capacity for significant development. With juniors and seniors sharing the same fields, it has become clear that they need an additional venue to support expansion. Their future plans include securing an alternative ground to manage the growing demand.

One of the most exciting parts of their journey is the rapid growth of women's rugby league. The Stingrays now have the largest number of female teams in the region. However, with that growth comes the need for better infrastructure. Currently, the facilities at Flinders Reserve are insufficient for female athletes, with male and female players having to share the same changing rooms. As members can imagine, that is not ideal, and it affects

the comfort and experience of female players. Many of them, understandably, avoid using the showers or change rooms due to the lack of privacy.

That is why the Stingrays submitted a development application to the Shellharbour City Council to renew the amenities building. The proposed facility will include separate change rooms for men and women, toilets for both players and spectators, and a new officials room and storage space. I strongly advocated on behalf of the club, and it was successful in obtaining a government grant of almost \$1.9 million under the Level the Playing Field Program to promote women in sport. The grant will be used for the construction of a new amenities building, which is appropriate. The Stingrays Rugby League Football Club has also secured funding under the Government's Local Sport Grant Program for a brand-new electronic scoreboard, new fridges for the canteen, upgrades to the public address system and representative uniforms.

The Stingrays' commitment to rugby league goes beyond competition. They also focus on inclusivity and participation, as seen in their annual Masters Carnival, which brings together players over the age of 35 to enjoy modified rugby league. It is quite a sight to see. In 2024 they once again hosted that special event and welcomed teams from across the region, including two teams from the Golden Rays. With around 180 players, the carnival not only provides a great weekend of sport but also brings \$80,000 into the local economy. The Masters Carnival is about more than just playing the game; it promotes camaraderie, mental wellbeing and physical health, proving that rugby league is a sport for life.

Players at the carnival, some as old as 64 or even 80 years old, remind us that the love of the game never fades. I had the absolute pleasure of being invited to kick off the Masters Carnival representative game between the Dragons and Steelers. I have witnessed the level of camaraderie between the players and the tremendous community support given not only to that event but also to the Stingrays club itself. The club's vision includes better facilities, new grounds and even more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to engage in rugby league right across the Shellharbour electorate. I could not be prouder of the Stingrays club.

#### CENTRAL COAST YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:52):** I reflect on the 2024 Central Coast Youth Leadership Forum. Last month almost 80 students from 16 different schools from across the coast came together to learn how to be a leader and provide innovative solutions to issues facing our community. It was our fifth leadership forum. When I was elected in 2017, as a former high school teacher, I felt it was important to provide a space for young people to raise issues with me and for us to learn about what the issues are for future generations. I continue to be absolutely amazed at the incredible talent across our community, and by the level of poise and the intellect of the students on the day.

There are not that many opportunities for young leaders on the Central Coast to join together and network while feeling empowered to dream big and exploring the issues that affect them. It was great to see them coming together and doing the job so well. The day was all about how young people can be practical leaders. We started by trying to get to know everyone else, before sharing how young people are currently leading in their own communities. It was great to see so many students already engaging in leadership positions, whether it be within their school, while volunteering for a cause that matters to them or generally in their local community. My favourite part of the day was when we held a simulation and the students were thrown in the deep end as the government collapsed. They had to act as a brand-new government and were left feeling quite challenged, identifying the biggest issues in the community and which issues they would act on first. Most of them elected a Premier, a Deputy Premier and some of the Ministers within the 15 minutes. They then made presentations, which were very impressive.

Issues like housing reform, cost-of-living relief and public transport were front of mind for many students. For many students, the solutions included ensuring that the Government gives young people the autonomy to make their voices heard. The young people raised a number of issues their generation faces. Attendees said that if they were MPs, they would do things like renewing and rebuilding rundown buildings, getting consistent feedback from young people and better regulating teenage employment. They raised issues such as vaping, the environment, theft, stigma around being LGBTQIA+, sexism, community engagement, racism, drug use and female safety. The students were also able to interact and connect with a range of organisations that provide essential services to young people, to broaden their understanding of what support is available to young people across the coast.

I give a big thank you to the organisations that attended, including headspace, New South Wales youth health, New South Wales drug and alcohol, New South Wales youth sexual health, Coast Shelter, the University of Newcastle future students team, Central Coast women's shelters, Max Potential, the Central Coast Council Youth Services team and Regional Youth Support Services. The question-and-answer session is always a crowd favourite, and I am always excited to have the opportunity to answer questions from leaders and share my journey

into politics. I acknowledge the Federal member for Dobell, Emma McBride, and thank her for giving up her time to answer questions from students about her journey and her portfolio areas of mental health and suicide prevention, as well as regional and rural health. The member for The Entrance was supposed to come as well, but he broke a finger and it needed to be reset at the hospital. We missed him on the day.

Young people shared how the day was beneficial. They noted that they liked the ability to talk to many important people in the community and discuss ways to improve the community with other students, as well as challenges they face in their own leadership. They talked about being lonely in leadership, so it was a nice opportunity to share and connect with others. Attendees also felt that the Government should tell youth more about political events, ensure that there is diversity between formal and informal leadership, and create a better pathway between politicians and students.

I will continue to work closely with our schools and young people to ensure that their voices are heard on matters that impact them. I thank all the students for a fantastic day, which left us feeling inspired and optimistic for the future. I congratulate the member for Sydney on his Commonwealth Parliamentary Association award in recognition of his amazing work towards equality across our community. Many other parliaments are jealous of his incredible leadership.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:57):** I second the comments made by the member for Gosford about the contributions of the member for Sydney, who is in the chair, to the New South Wales Parliament. He provides a real benefit to the people of the State. I congratulate the member for Gosford on what she does. That fantastic initiative to get young people interested and involved in politics has been running for a couple of years. I look forward to attending next year and seeing those young people get more interested in our local political landscape and more involved in politics.

#### MOSQUITO INFESTATION MANAGEMENT

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:58):** I address a significant health and safety concern affecting our community, which should never have reached the critical level that it has. The residents of south-west Sydney are facing a mosquito outbreak that compromises the quality of life, health and wellbeing of families throughout eastern Liverpool. We have recently discovered that the outbreak's source is not a natural wetland or neglected pond but, rather, a mismanaged government facility: the Liverpool water recycling plant in Warwick Farm.

Mosquitoes are not just a nuisance; they are known carriers of diseases such as Ross River virus, Barmah Forest virus and other illnesses. In recent months, communities across south-west Sydney—especially my constituents in Chipping Norton, Wattle Grove, Moorebank, Hammondville and Holsworthy—have been battling infestations that make it difficult to simply go outside, send kids to school or enjoy time in their own backyards. Schools have seen classes cancelled so that the classrooms can be fumigated. Residents are spending hundreds of dollars on insecticides and repellents to protect their homes and families.

This outbreak could have been prevented. The Liverpool water recycling plant is at the heart of the crisis. Failure to control the invasive prohibited plant frogbit within the settlement ponds has transformed the facility into an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. Frogbit is known to trap moisture and create stagnant water pockets that are perfect for mosquito larvae to thrive. Rather than proactively managing the issue, the vegetation has been allowed to overtake the ponds, creating a severe public health hazard in Liverpool. This neglect shows a lack of foresight and responsibility. The New South Wales Government, tasked with ensuring these facilities operate safely, has allowed an environment that is hazardous to public health. The failure to manage the frogbit and maintain proper water circulation has allowed mosquitoes to breed uncontrollably, endangering community health and lifestyle.

To make matters worse, as this issue became critical, the Government failed to warn residents or respond to any of the requests for information I made to Ministers. With more diligent oversight, this mosquito crisis could have been prevented, sparing my community from financial, physical and emotional tolls. Once again, it appears that south-west Sydney has been forgotten by the Minns Labor Government. This outbreak and the response show a serious lapse in understanding and support for my community. I call on the Government to prioritise the health and safety of my community. The people of the south-west deserve better.

#### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:00):** Public holidays are a really important feature of a civilised society. They recognise that there is a balance between work life and community life. In the context of Australian industrial regulation, public holidays are an important feature of the industrial relations system, with awards that recognise that on a public holiday a worker will be granted a holiday with full pay or, if they are required to work, they will receive a penalty payment for being required to work on that public holiday instead of spending time with their family.

I recently received correspondence from my constituent Anthony Sache of Killarney Vale, who wanted to bring to my attention that New South Wales only has 11 public holidays while other States and Territories have more public holidays. He makes a fair point. New South Wales recognises 11 public holidays: New Year's Day, Australia Day, Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Anzac Day, the King's Birthday, Labour Day, Christmas and Boxing Day. Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory recognise 13 public holidays. South Australia and Tasmania observe 12 public holidays.

New South Wales also has some local days that have traditionally been recognised and observed, mainly in the regions, but that recognition and observance has tended to decline in recent years. We need to have a look at this, in my constituent's view. I am happy to support him; I share his concerns. He makes the point that public holidays help reduce stress, improve mental health and promote work-life balance. They also provide an economic boost, especially to tourism and local businesses. He says that introducing additional holidays in New South Wales, such as a day dedicated to Indigenous culture, environmental awareness or regional celebrations, would contribute positively to both the wellbeing of residents and the State's economy. I agree. He has asked me to write to the Premier, which I have, and I look forward to the Premier's response. I am happy to advocate for extra public holidays in New South Wales.

### OLD DUBBO GAOL

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:03):** I recognise one of Dubbo's most iconic visitor experiences, the Old Dubbo Gaol. On Friday night I attended a special event celebrating 50 years of preserving cultural heritage and unique visitor experiences at the gaol whilst also honouring those who have contributed to its rich history. The celebrations also featured the launch of a book compiled by Christopher Anemaat, entitled *Sandstone Heart: The History of Dubbo Gaol*, which chronicles some of the fascinating parts of that story. The Dubbo Gaol began as a courthouse lock-up in 1847. It was one of the first government buildings in Dubbo.

As the town and region grew, so did crimes brought about by greed, hunger and poverty. In 1846 the first Courts of Petty Sessions were held at Dubbo. Prior to that, law and order in the area was administered from Wellington. A police residence, courthouse and lock-up was constructed from 1847 to 1848. The lock-up was a slab hut connected to the courthouse, comprising two cells and a guard room. Then in 1849 Dubbo was officially gazetted as a village. Ten years later, in 1859, the Dubbo lock-up was officially proclaimed as a gaol. That allowed those facing trial in the newly expanded jurisdiction of the General Quarter Sessions to be legally held in the custody of the sheriff.

From 1863 to 1871, the gaol was transformed a couple of times. One transformation saw the construction of a new courthouse featuring two wings, with one of those wings being the new gaol. That was followed by another building that would form what is today known as the Old Dubbo Gaol. From 1887 through to 1904, the gaol was transformed several more times. Eight prisoners were executed for the capital crime of murder, and 24 other prisoners were sentenced to death but had their sentences commuted to a prison term or were acquitted. In 1914 the gaol was reduced in status to a police gaol, which meant hangings could no longer occur on the grounds and prisoners would only serve short terms. A campaign to shut the gaol due to its location on the main street, Macquarie Street, resulted in a compromise to relocate the front entrance. The western entrance was closed, sold to the Commonwealth Bank and then relocated to the eastern wall, with new gates opening onto the Brisbane Street courthouse grounds.

In 1966 the Dubbo Gaol officially closed, and the remaining prisoners were transferred to Bathurst or Parramatta. Located on prime land, the gaol began to gather dust and weeds. It raised the crucial question of what to do with this legacy of the past. According to the records, only a month after the jail closed, solicitor J.E.S North wrote to the then local MP, John Mason, on behalf of an inaugural committee of local citizens, calling for the old site to be preserved. One of the leaders in the campaign was Councillor Eddie Meek, deputy mayor and president of the local historical society. To recognise his work in saving the jail from demolition, the road leading off Macquarie Street to the gates of the gaol is now officially named Eddie Meek Avenue.

In 1973 a significant agreement was reached to transform the site into a tourist attraction. The initiative led to the involvement of the historical society, which was approached to oversee the site's management. In response, a dedicated restoration committee was established to take on the responsibility of preserving the site's historic value. Dubbo council assumed custodianship of the gaol, which paved the way for the restoration committee to secure funding for the initial stages of the restoration project. Dubbo Gaol was officially opened as a tourist attraction in December 1974 and renamed the Old Dubbo Gaol. It was State heritage listed in 2004, acknowledging the importance of the site to the history of New South Wales and ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Since opening as a tourist attraction, the site has generated millions of dollars for the local and regional economy. Visitors of all ages can explore the halls like warders or stand in the cells once occupied by prisoners. The dedication of volunteer staff and supporters in researching, preserving and advocating for history has brought

invaluable rewards to the community. I am pleased to have been part of the New South Wales Coalition Government that recognised the significance of funding for places like the Old Dubbo Gaol, which has received almost \$5 million in funding since 2019, including part of \$10 million from the Regional Growth and Tourism Fund for securing a public plaza at the gaol. There was other funding through the Stronger Country Communities Fund, and an extra \$2 million through cultural funds and the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund.

Once again, I congratulate Chris Anemaat on his remarkable book, and offer heartfelt thanks for his incredible work and time and dedication. I also thank Dubbo Regional Council, all the staff and the overall team for the commitment that keeps this award-winning tourist attraction relevant and engaging. Make sure you drop in next time you are in Dubbo.

### INNOVATIONAUS AWARDS

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (19:08):** I was really excited on 30 October to represent the Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology at the 2024 InnovationAus Awards. Congratulations to James Riley and Corrie McLeod on hosting and organising another fantastic event to celebrate outstanding Australian innovation. A bunch of awards were presented, all featuring terrific Australian researchers, entrepreneurs and startups. The GovTech category was won by a company called MyLot, which simplifies planning approvals. The Software Innovation Award was won by Nansen, which focuses on digital forensics and online personal safety, and is used by victims of domestic violence. The Health Tech Award, which I presented, was won by a company called Navbit, which produces technology and devices for surgery, including hip replacements. They are all outstanding homegrown Australian innovators.

Innovation is important. It supports our economic productivity and growth. It is obviously related to improving our standard of living. It is important to jobs and skills. Of course, we want jobs and skills in not just current industries but also future industries. We want to build industries of the future. Importantly, innovation is also critical for a society's resilience and ability to respond to challenges such as climate change, global health pandemics and disasters. Our ability to innovate determines the strength of the community to respond to adverse effects.

There is good news and bad news. The good news is that, according to the Australian innovation statistics that were released last month, more and more Australian businesses are involved in innovation. Those statistics state that 45 per cent of Australian businesses were engaged in innovation activities in 2022-23. However, there is cause for concern. Australia's recent productivity growth has been patchy and the percentage of our GDP that we spend on research and development [R&D] activities has been falling over the past two decades. In 2008-09 it was 2.25 per cent. In 2021-22 it had fallen to 1.6 per cent. That is really concerning because if we fail to make the optimum investment in R&D today, the negative impacts will be felt for many years and decades to come in our innovation capacity and productivity.

How do we turn this around? What do we need to do? There has been a lot of thinking and research on how to lift Australia's R&D intensity compared with other countries around the world. As I said, right now, 1.68 per cent of Australia's GDP is spent on R&D activities. Israel spends approximately 5.5 per cent of its GDP on R&D. South Korea spends about 5 per cent of its GDP on R&D. It has a similar-sized economy and population to Australia. The United States, Belgium, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and Japan all spend approximately 3 per cent to 3.5 per cent. We are way behind other countries, and the amount other countries and societies invest in innovation and R&D activities. We have a lot of catching up to do.

What sorts of policies support innovation? There are, of course, tax incentives. Many people have suggested an R&D tax incentive bonus for businesses that collaborate with a university or research institute. We need to double down on international collaboration and research partnerships that bolster trade ties and investment. There is skilled migration. If an international student comes here to do a PhD at an Australian university, one would argue that there should be a fast track to permanent residency. We want to keep those people in Australia, particularly in industries where their skills are in demand. There should be more R&D grants and capital to target smaller firms so they can bridge the valley of death where so many startups die. There is the creation of innovation precincts, where universities and academia are co-located with businesses. Critically, a lot of this is cultural. At the innovation awards, we celebrated innovation. Australia can do a lot more to raise the profile of and celebrate our innovators in the same way we celebrate the Australian of the Year recipients.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:13):** We sometimes overlook some of the attributes of members of Parliament and how they got here. Innovation has been a passion of the member for Strathfield for many years. The member for Wagga Wagga and Paralympic champion the member for Gosford are also present in the Chamber. The member for Strathfield attended the World Economic Forum in 2009 as one of the Young Global Leaders. It is great to have someone who adds that pedigree. As the member for Strathfield talked about, the research of today commits 85 per cent of future operational costs et cetera. If we get our research wrong, we will

screw things up the future. I thank the member for Strathfield for bringing this issue to the Parliament's attention. I congratulate him on his illustrious career before becoming a member of Parliament.

### TRIBUTE TO RACHEL TRIXIE ANNE GARDNER

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:14):** I pay tribute to my aunt, Trixie Gardner, Baroness Gardner of Parkes, of Southgate in Greater London and Parkes in the State of New South Wales and Commonwealth of Australia, who died on 14 April this year. According to Mark McGinness in *Quadrant*, Trixie was the first and, so far, only Australian woman to have been a member of the House of Lords, which she served as for 42 years. At the time of her death at the age of 96, she was, in fact, the longest living sitting member. Rachel Trixie Anne McGirr was born in Parkes, the eighth child of Greg McGirr and Rachel Miller-Hermes. Her father was Minister for Public Health and Motherhood in the 1920 New South Wales Labor Government. He was known as "Mother McGirr" for his campaigning for child welfare payments. Her mother was one of the early female graduates of the University of Sydney, graduating in arts in 1912. Her uncle, James McGirr, was Labor Premier of New South Wales between 1947 and 1952.

Trixie graduated in dentistry from the University of Sydney. After completing training as a cordon bleu chef in France, she moved to the United Kingdom with her husband, Kevin Gardner, in the 1950s, where they established a successful practice. She served for many years on the Westminster and Greater London councils. She ran for parliament for the Conservative Party several times in almost-impossible-to-win seats but performed well. As Mark McGinness noted, the Conservative Party needed good women in the House of Lords—"doers", so to speak. He said, "Trixie came from a dynasty of doers, the McGirrs."

Aunt Trixie was a great friend to my parents. I believe she actually introduced them. I remember visiting Trixie and Kevin when I was a medical student. I am not sure what she made of me, an awkward 20-something finding his way in the world. Over the years, I visited several times with my family. Trixie was always awe-inspiring and supremely competent, but also warm and genuinely interested. She and Kevin were an inspiration to my family in their professional and personal lives. As the Lord Speaker wrote, "She carved an indelible mark in history, breaking barriers and inspiring generations to come. Her tenure in the Lords was marked by exemplary service, steadfast advocacy, keen intellect, and unwavering integrity."

Baroness Boothroyd said in the introduction to Trixie's memoirs that when both women commenced in politics in the 1960s there was "more sexism than you could poke a stick at". Baroness Boothroyd said, "The first question that any journalist would ask was along the lines of 'What will voters think of a woman candidate?' There was not the faintest hint of interest in our policies." Aunt Trixie's eldest daughter, Sarah, spoke at her memorial service at Westminster Cathedral a few weeks ago, which I was able to attend. She described her mother as a force of nature and trailblazer who believed that effective politics helped people. She was formidable, highly respected and liked, and someone people wanted on their team.

I cannot speak of Aunt Trixie without mentioning her husband, Kevin Gardner, a successful politician in his own right as Lord Mayor of Westminster. They were a tremendous partnership right up until Kevin's death in 2007. Sarah noted they "shared a strong sense of social justice" and that their lives were "a great adventure that proved a huge success, together and as individuals at home, in their day jobs and in their public service ... Their priority was always family." Sarah also said, "I firmly believe so many of mum and dad's talents lie in their Australian heritage. Their energy and enthusiasm are all Australian and the UK is better off for knowing them both and benefitting from their commitment." Aunt Trixie was awarded the Order of Australia in 2003. At the memorial service, it was wonderful to hear *I am Australian* sung by Australian soprano Corine Cowling. Trixie's second daughter, Rachel, recited from Henry Lawson's *The God-Forgotten Election*.

As the celebrant, Father Matthew Blake, OCD, noted at the Westminster service, she was strong because she was gentle and humble of heart. She trusted deeply in God. She would do her utmost and then leave things in God's hands. As her third daughter, Joanna, recited from a prayer card that Trixie was given when she was 14, her motto could have been, "Forget yourself in others and give to God your best." Tonight I offer condolences to her family: daughters Sarah, Rachel and Joanna; sons-in-law Alvan and Richard; and grandchildren Christopher, Victoria, Katie, Philip and Lucy. Vale to my Aunt Trixie—a powerful force in politics, family and community, and a ground breaker whose legacy will remain in the UK and here in Australia for generations to come.

### WESTERN SYDNEY TOURISM AWARDS

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:19):** Tonight I celebrate the outstanding contributions to our tourism industry showcased at the Western Sydney Tourism Awards 2024. The prestigious event, held for the first time on 24 October and hosted by the Western Sydney Tourism Taskforce, brought together the best of Western Sydney's tourism industry. It was a night to remember, with industry leaders, government officials and dedicated businesses gathering to honour the finest achievements in our State's visitor economy. The event opened

with messages from Destination NSW and the soon-to-be-opened Western Sydney international airport—a powerful reminder of the ongoing efforts to strengthen our region's position as a world-class destination. The support of these prominent institutions highlights the strategic importance of tourism in Western Sydney, a region that holds rich historical, cultural and economic significance, both in the present and into the future.

The Western Sydney Tourism Awards is a celebration of success and a testament to the resilience and ingenuity of our local sector. This year we have seen an impressive 200 nominations across various categories. Each nomination is a reflection of innovation, dedication and commitment to quality that we have in Western Sydney. Of the many winners across the platinum, gold and silver categories, I highlight some of the platinum award winners that took home trophies on the night. From the Hotels/Tourism Business major category, the "Ready For It" campaign by Holiday Inn Parramatta took out the platinum award. The council events award went to the City of Parramatta for its ongoing Parramatta Lanes festival. The Business Event Festival for the Year went to Sydney Zoo's "Glow", while the Tour Group Experience of the Year went to Golden Dragon Travel's "GDT Journey".

From the Best Visitor Economy Event category, the Day Visitation award went to the Thirlmere Festival of Steam, held by Transport Heritage NSW and Wollondilly Shire Council, while the Night Visitation award went to my local council of Liverpool City Council for its "Most Blessed Nights" event. Two people took home the prestigious award for Outstanding Business Leader of the Year: Jake Burgess from Sydney Zoo, and Kalinya Estate's Amanda Barnes. In the Outstanding Community Engagement category, I am extremely happy to report that Leppington local legend June Young took out an award for her work with Lifeline Macarthur. Michael Foulkes at Cabravale Diggers also received an award, while a special award for outstanding contribution went to the late great Harry Hunt.

In the Best Rated Cuisine – Hotels/Clubs/Restaurant category, West HQ's China Doll—which I have yet to visit but I am sure must be an exceptional place to grab a bite—took out the platinum award. In the Best Historical Venue – Visitation category, the NSW Rail Museum, a division of Transport Heritage NSW, took out the award. I congratulate the Sydney Coliseum Theatre on taking out the Best Music and Arts Venue category and Fairfield City Council on winning Best Multicultural Show/Event for its long-running and very well-attended Cabramatta Moon Festival. Tourism Business of the Year—one of the big ones—went to Accor Stadium at Olympic Park, while a special award for an outstanding contribution to tourism went to Featherdale Wildlife Park for 50 years in the fantastic region of Western Sydney. These businesses are ambassadors that share the beauty, heritage and diversity of our region.

Western Sydney Tourism Taskforce NSW has done an exceptional job in bringing attention to Western Sydney's potential as a tourism hub. I congratulate the board of the taskforce on its exceptional work in such a short time to take the group from what it was to what it is today and the impact it is having in our region. I extend my warmest congratulations to all the finalists and winners of the Western Sydney Tourism Awards 2024. Their achievements are a testament to their hard work and dedication and a source of pride for our entire State. I also commend the Western Sydney Tourism Taskforce NSW, Destination NSW and the Western Sydney international airport for their roles in making the event a success and for their sponsorship. They have provided a platform for us to celebrate the excellence, innovation and enduring spirit of tourism in New South Wales and Western Sydney. As we look ahead to the arrival of the airport and some venues that will leverage off the arrival of international tourists in a couple of years, there is no doubt that these awards are set to be a big event into the future.

### RYDE SPRING GARDEN COMPETITION

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (19:24):** I ask the House to join me in recognising the exceptional contributions made by local gardeners in the 2024 Ryde Spring Garden Competition. The competition is more than just a celebration of beautiful spaces; it is a reflection of our shared commitment to the environment and to the community that we all call home. Ryde is fortunate to be nestled among some of New South Wales's most beautiful natural treasures. From the serene trails and waterways of Lane Cove National Park to the sparkling waters of the Parramatta River and our many open community spaces, these marvels are at the heart of what makes Ryde such a wonderful place to live. They provide places for families to gather, spaces for recreation and a peaceful refuge for both residents and local wildlife. Yet, as we all know, Ryde is growing. More people are choosing to live, work and raise families in our area than ever before, and that growth brings both opportunities and challenges. With more development, it becomes increasingly essential that we preserve these natural treasures for future generations.

That is why the work that each of our competitors is doing through their gardens, both big and small, holds even more significance. Through their efforts, they are not only enhancing our neighbourhoods but also playing a pivotal role in conserving our local environment. Ryde recently recognised a select number of outstanding efforts in this regard, and I recognise those in my electorate who were particularly successful. I offer my congratulations

to Nilgun Tarpis, who was the winner of the Back Garden category. Nilgun has created an extraordinary place of serenity and a personal connection to nature—a space to unwind and recharge, if you will. In the Native Garden category, we congratulate Sarvnaz Karimi. Sarvnaz's garden stands as a beautiful reminder of Australia's unique flora and why it is so important to preserve and celebrate native plants. It is efforts like these that keep our area connected to its roots and protect the biodiversity of our land.

The Habitat was successful in winning two awards: the Habitat-friendly and the Community Garden category awards. The Habitat is an outstanding example of community-driven conservation. This garden has transformed into a haven for local wildlife, enhancing our area's biodiversity and creating a space for residents to connect with each other and with nature. It is projects like these that highlight how community and environment can come together in Ryde to create spaces that benefit everybody. For our Commercial Garden category, we acknowledge Leisure Lea Gardens, which triumphed with an impressive display that incorporates green, vibrant spaces that add life and beauty to everyday surroundings. North Ryde Community Preschool is not just one of the many fantastic preschools in my community, but also the winner of the Preschool Garden category. I had the privilege of visiting recently and always remain impressed by the school's dedication to the families and community it serves.

In the School Garden category, I congratulate West Ryde Public School, which has demonstrated how early introduction to gardening fosters respect towards and responsibility for the environment. The enthusiasm and dedication of those young gardeners and their educators makes a huge difference, and it is inspiring to see them taking part in such meaningful projects. Another dual winner, Etty Coleman, took out the top prize in both the Sensational Succulent and the Sustainable Waste 2 Art awards. Through those works, Etty showed creativity that is both innovative and sustainable—a perfect example of how sustainability can be integrated into art and daily life. Lastly, I acknowledge Rae Roy, our Best in Show winner. Rae has created a garden that is nothing short of spectacular and is a testament to the attention, vision and passion that Ryde residents bring to making our community beautiful.

All of these gardens are more than just spaces; they are living reminders of why it is so important to care for our natural world. The competition plays a unique role in encouraging people across Ryde to engage with their environment, to care for nature and to recognise those who are already doing their bit to make Ryde a better, greener and more sustainable place. Through their gardens, they are creating a lasting legacy of environmental care that will inspire others to look after the natural spaces we are so privileged to enjoy.

Beyond gardening, each of the awardees is also playing a role in building a culture of care that says we value our land, we respect our community and we are committed to preserving it for future generations. That ethos is essential in a place like Ryde, where growth is constant but where we are united in our desire to keep our natural wonders intact for those who will inevitably come after us. I thank all of them for their dedication, passion and commitment to making Ryde a beautiful, vibrant and environmentally conscious community, and I congratulate them on their awards.

### REMOTE COMMUNITIES DISASTER RESPONSE

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:29):** When disaster strikes in our remote communities, knowing what to do and how to do it often falls on the shoulders of the local community rather than on the centralised agencies flown in to help. It is a paradox that remote communities often exist in. They are vulnerable because they are remote and on the periphery of government resourcing, but they are resilient because of that very same fact. Living remotely should not mean being vulnerable. However, setting policies and sharing resources for simultaneously vulnerable and resilient communities is often fraught. The fact that many remote communities have the capacity to manage natural disaster recovery with little input from agencies should have major implications on the share of resources and policymaking.

While remoteness refers to physical distance, remoteness as a concept is what makes those communities vulnerable. The isolation from networks, small-size communities, chronic underinvestment and ageing infrastructure are, in fact, what makes them vulnerable over and above the sheer tyranny of distance. According to the Emergency and Water Ombudsman NSW, almost every local government area in New South Wales was included in a flood or bushfire disaster declaration at least once between July 2018 and October 2023. A lot of the feedback that came back from communities impacted by natural disasters revolved around poor communication between agencies and the community, a lack of preparedness, and the adequacy and timeliness of the recovery funding. That was the consensus from all communities, not just those in remote areas.

Most communities know their vulnerabilities, and simply living in a remote area is not a form of vulnerability until that area is neglected. Bourke, for instance, used to have two electricity supply lines. One from Brewarrina was a backup in case the other from Nyngan went down. Now there is only one Nyngan supply line. We had exactly that situation in Broken Hill. Bourke knows it is vulnerable and the community is exposed to a

similar situation as Broken Hill but, because of the policy settings, they have not had a say in that outcome. The remoteness of places like Bourke and Broken Hill—and, really, most places in Barwon—means those who live there live with the understanding that response times for emergency services can take longer, appointments with specialist doctors are hard to get and accessing services in general can be tough.

During disasters, those communities understand that supply chains for food, fuel, medications and other essentials will be interrupted. But remote communities are resilient and often create solutions to the problems they experience. In thin markets, the solutions that local communities come up with are often outside the box. Traditional thinking and traditional solutions will not work in small populations with limited resources. That is particularly the case with volunteer emergency services. I also note that people in the bush have significant hands-on experience dealing with plumbing, earthmoving, wiring and construction due to where they are—something our city cousins might not have much experience with.

Volunteer agencies in remote communities are first responders, whether it be the SES, RFS or VRA. In small populations, finding enough volunteers for those services can be difficult, especially when a job is on. Finding a crew to put in a truck can be a challenge. In Burren Junction, the local volunteers have progressed with an out-of-the-box solution: a multi-agency approach where training is harmonised and resources are shared to ensure the best possible outcome for the community. I acknowledge Minister Jihad Dib, whom I spoke with over 12 months ago about the concept of cross-agency collaboration in thin markets. We are now seeing joint training, joint exercises and joint deployment. That is a model that VRA commissioner Brenton Charlton—a great guy—really believes in and is championing in the communities that are ready for a multi-agency approach.

I was in Packsaddle last week with Minister Jihad Dib and a group of SES, volunteer ambulance and RFS members where the concept of getting whoever was trained and available on the most suitable truck and out to a job was discussed. Those present were incredibly supportive of the concept. It will invigorate volunteer engagement and minimise response times for people who might be having the worst day of their life. I also see some great opportunities with Reconstruction NSW. Mal Lanyon, whom I have known for many years when he was in the NSW Police Force, is committed to learning from disaster situations to make sure that any future response integrates the learnings from previous disasters, particularly in the recovery phase. Even with the recent power outages in the Far West, there are significant learnings about responding to a disaster we have not seen for years. It is important that those learnings are integrated into future plans.

To conclude, I acknowledge the people who helped communities in the Far West during the recent power outage and recovery. Without people helping each other, the incident would have been far worse. People brought refrigerated shipping containers into town and plugged them into generators so that people had somewhere to store food. We saw people helping their neighbours, which is really lovely to see. We saw the best of people.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:35):** I know the member for Barwon does not want any accolades. He talked about the people in his community with passion, and the resilience and vulnerabilities. On behalf of the Government, I thank the member for Barwon for working so hard with the Government and all members of Parliament. I thank him for the effort he puts in. Some of the stuff he talked about—the joint training, joint exercises and joint deployment—makes logical sense for people in the country, where there are limited resources. The passion of volunteerism is massive out there. Why should they operate in silos? That is a Sydney thing. The SES takes on the RFS—esprit de corps and all that. In regional areas, that is great. The member for Barwon has almost half the State in his electorate, and he travels around it. I thank him for his hard work and for bringing it all together.

#### **HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:36):** I recognise the 2024 Remembrance Day services held in Hawkesbury. Organised by the Windsor and District RSL Sub-Branch, Richmond RSL Sub-Branch, Glenorie RSL Sub-Branch and several war memorial clubs, the services brought community members together to commemorate those who fought for our freedoms and thank them for their sacrifice. Remembrance Day, originally known as Armistice Day, was held to commemorate the end of the First World War in 1918. The term "armistice" translates to "the putting down of weapons", which was requested by the Germans to secure a peace settlement and to accept the Allied terms of unconditional surrender. At the eleventh hour on 11 November 1918, that request was fulfilled, with the guns of the Western Front falling silent after four years of continuous warfare.

Commonwealth countries and their allies began to commemorate those fallen on this day. Following the Second World War, the United Kingdom proposed that Armistice Day be renamed Remembrance Day, a suggestion accepted by Australia. The day became one on which to commemorate those who had been killed in both world wars. In November 1997 Governor-General Sir William Deane of Australia issued a proclamation formally declaring 11 November to be Remembrance Day. He urged for the day to become one of memorial for

all those who have lost their lives in any war. There is acknowledgement of service through the wearing of red poppies and one minute of silence at 11.00 a.m. is observed on Remembrance Day.

On Remembrance Day and during the few preceding days, RSL sub-branches across the State, particularly in Hawkesbury, recognised the service and sacrifice of our veterans. I am sure that many members of Parliament were very busy attending those services and paying their respects. The organisations are member-based charities geared towards supporting veterans and their families by providing members with access to services and the Australian Defence Force community. Additionally, they coordinate commemorations and events for the public to remember and respect the sacrifice that our veterans made for our country.

I bring to the attention of the House an issue of great concern regarding our veterans in Hawkesbury. Scheyville National Park is a site that operated as an agricultural training camp years ago. In 1965, in response to a shortage of defence personnel, 1,900 men were trained at the site under the National Service. Of that cohort, 363 individuals volunteered to serve in Vietnam for six months. The rich military history of this site is at risk of dissipating under current State management of the site, with buildings and structures not receiving adequate restoration and maintenance from governing bodies. Being a site of such significant heritage, the site at Scheyville is currently being forgotten by State management, disrespecting those who trained and lived in the military training establishment. Numerous invitations made to New South Wales Ministers to attend the site have not come to fruition.

Current goals to restore the site and repurpose it into crisis accommodation for veterans is an initiative supported by the Federal Government, with \$5 million being invested, and \$4 million raised privately by veterans and the community to begin the veterans community centre at Scheyville. Those funds are in danger of becoming null and void because of a lack of support and response from the National Parks and Wildlife Service to progress with development plans. Funds and other resources are wasting away whilst waiting for engagement and permissions from State government bodies. This inaction demonstrates the utmost disrespect to so many Australian veterans.

Brett Wild is leading the Scheyville veterans hub project, having secured funding through Hunter Anzac Memorial Limited. He rings me daily from his hospital bed, veterans community centre Scheyville, after just having major surgery. Brett Wild is a volunteer for this project and a former serving member. The frustration he has expressed to me about the roadblocks that the National Parks and Wildlife Service has imposed has almost brought him to tears. I implore the Government to act now to preserve the history of this defence establishment at Scheyville. I invite the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage, and the Minister for Veterans to join me in visiting the site at the end of November this year to witness the transformation and understand the strides being made and the frustrations being experienced. It is the least that Government members can do out of respect for our veterans. It will cost them nothing except their time, because this is a federally and privately funded project.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I take this moment to recognise Remembrance Day yesterday. I thank our veterans who lost their lives for our freedoms, those who have served and those who are serving today.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:42 until  
Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

#### **BENT BRIDGE RUN CLUB – 2-YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to the Bent Bridge Run Club on their recent 2-year anniversary. The BBRC whose motto is all things in moderation, is a social run club who meet once a week to run or walk and then socialise. The Run Club started with a handful of runners and has grown in leaps and bounds to become a weekly highlight of the local run scene. They regularly have over 100 attendees and run throughout the year in all conditions and temperatures. There is an obvious sense of community and connection in this group, and I want to acknowledge the organisers on creating an event that encourages people to get active and involved. The Run Club has some amazing athletes, but also welcomes those who are just starting out or who might want to walk with the pram and bring the kids along. Congratulations Bent Bridge Run Club on encouraging the community to get out and exercise and also for providing a place for people to feel connected and supported. The growth of the club is a testament to your success, well done.

**BRIAN FERRIE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I am honoured to recognise Mr Brian Ferrie of Maclean for his outstanding 16 years of service as President of the Maclean Show Society. Under Brian's leadership, the Society has flourished, growing into a respected and cherished part of the community. His dedication, passion, and tireless efforts have left an indelible mark, not only on the Society but on the entire Maclean community. Throughout his tenure, Brian played an instrumental role in shaping the annual Maclean Show, ensuring it remained a highlight on the regional calendar. His commitment to preserving the traditions of the show while also embracing opportunities for growth and change has paved the way for the continued success of this much-loved event. As Brian steps down from his role, we extend our heartfelt thanks for his years of hard work and visionary leadership. We are excited to welcome Robbie Sutherland as the new President, knowing that the strong foundation Brian has built will ensure the Society's continued success. Congratulations to both Brian and Robbie. We look forward to the 2025 show with great enthusiasm!

**GRAEME MCLENNAN – 40 YEAR MARATHON CLUB**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to recognise the remarkable accomplishment of Graeme McLennan who recently ran his 40th Gold Coast Marathon. At 82 years of age most people would have hung up the running shoes, but Graeme is still out there reaching milestones that most of us could only dream of. Graeme ran his first marathon at the Gold Coast in 1980 and since then has only missed the event a few times due to health issues. This significant achievement is even more special as Graeme is the first runner ever to be inducted into the 40 Year Marathon Club of the Gold Coast Marathon. For Graeme to be the first recipient of the 40 year trophy highlights the many years of commitment and motivation it takes to achieve such an outstanding record. Graeme is a much respected member of the local running community and can often be seen running around town and encouraging other local athletes. Congratulations Graeme on your astounding achievement, you are an inspiration to us all and we are very proud you call the Clarence home.

**WHITE HORSE COFFEE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate one of the Shire's well-known known brands, White Horse Coffee, for being crowned the prestigious 'Overall Champion' at the 2024 Golden Bean Australasia Roasting competition. The Golden Bean competition, which is the world's largest of its kind, challenges roasters to showcase their finest brews across three categories: espresso, milk-based, and filter coffee. Over three days thousands of coffees are blind tasted and rigorously assessed by some of the best coffee palates in the business, with each category's scores then combined to determine the Overall Champion. White Horse started serving coffee in 2008 and their single espresso bar in Sutherland has grown to five family cafes across the Shire. I congratulate White Horse founders Matt Sprem and Dom Majdandzic on this award – in a competitive industry their commitment to sharing a love of coffee and hospitality with local communities has been reflected in the quality of their product. Competition organisers thanked White Horse for "leading the coffee industry in not only flavour, excellence in roasting but also with pizzazz". White Horse Coffee is a Shire success story and I raise a short black to Matt, Dom and their passionate team.

**KURT BRISSETT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Kurt Brissett of Greenhills Beach who was recently honoured by CIO Magazine as the leading chief information officer in Australia. Kurt is the chief technology and innovation officer for Transport for NSW [TfNSW] and he has been recognised for spearheading technology and digital improvements, including across the Opal card system, that have improved the experience of millions of customers using the NSW public transport system. Kurt joined TfNSW in 2016 and took on his current role in 2022 where he leads a team of 700 staff to deliver \$1 billion portfolio of capital technology and digital initiatives. As a former army officer with 15 years of service including multiple operational deployments overseas, Kurt is committed to fostering employment pathways for veterans who he says, "possess unique skills and experience which are valuable and highly transferrable." Kurt is chair of the Transport Veterans Board and has positioned TfNSW as an employer of choice for the ex-defence veteran community. CIO Magazine selected Kurt for this award from among more than 50 finalists, and I congratulate him on this award and recognise his contribution to shaping better public transport for our state.

**DE LA SALLE CATHOLIC COLLEGE CARINGBAH 2025 STUDENT LEADERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate De La Salle Catholic College Caringbah's 2025 student leadership team on their appointment. As it becomes a full year 7 to 12 school in 2025, these students have the privilege of being its first year 12 leaders. Blake Klaassen will be the first college captain, with James Hughes vice captain. They lead the student body with Charlie Smith and Justin Hakin (academic captains) Taine Wihare and Jayden McConnell (cultural captains), Quentin Lassauniere and Bailey Walker (social justice

captains), and Daniel Boundy and Kyle Mason (wellbeing captains). Being selected as student leadership from among your peers is an honour and a fantastic opportunity for those who are given the chance. As a student leader you develop listening, communication and teamwork skills, and understand the value and characteristics of good leadership. These skills and experience will be valuable for these young men in the workforce and life generally. I wish the new leadership team the very best as they undertake these important leadership roles and their year 12 studies.

#### **EMILY FILEWOOD**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—I congratulate Emily Filewood and the Orchard Hills Rural Fire Brigade on their victory in the 26th NSW Rural Fire Service Championship. Emily is only 16 years old and has become the crew leader of the Orchard Hill Rural Fire Brigade as well as being a qualified firefighter. In September, six junior members of the Orchard Hills RFS went to Albury to compete in the 26th NSW Rural Fire Service State Championships where they tested their leadership skills, teamwork and cooperation against nine other junior teams from across the state. This is a remarkable achievement, and I congratulate Emily and her teammates on their win, and I thank Emily for her dedication and bravery towards protecting the community.

#### **PENRITH DISTRICT NETBALL GRAND FINAL**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—A few weeks ago, I attended the Penrith District Netball Grand Final where junior netball teams competed for the district premiership in their respective age groups. It was amazing to see so many teams of all age groups compete on such an exhilarating day. I would also like to congratulate the Jordan Springs Netball Club for winning the grand final in three divisions. The Under 11 age division was won by the Jordan Springs Jungles Cats, the under 12 age division was won by the Jordan Springs Juggers and the under 13 age division was won by the Jordan Springs Jingles. You played with determination and with good sportsmanship. Well done to everyone, you have all played your heart out and you all should be proud of yourselves for an outstanding victory.

#### **PAWS AND POSES**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—On November 9, puppy yoga is making its way to St Marys. Paws and Poses is combining yoga and playing with puppies. This is such a wonderful incentive that would bring exercise with fluffy fun. Chloe Carpenter and Julie Fing are bringing puppy yoga in their studio, Hustled Pilates in the heart of St Marys. Paws and Poses provides fun, exercise and is good for mental health and stress relief. I congratulate both Chloe and Julie on an amazing achievement and thank you for bringing this into the community.

#### **ILLUMINATE FESTIVAL OF ART AND LIGHT WINS AWARD**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Held on October 24th at the William Inglis Hotel, The Western Sydney Tourism Awards 2024 recognised the excellence and diversity of tourism providers in all of Western Sydney including Wollondilly. I am proud to congratulate the many winners, among them Wollondilly local favourite the "Illuminate Festival of Art and Light", an initiative of Wollondilly Shire Council. Illuminate was the Gold Winner in the Business Event Festival of the Year category. Held annually in Picton Botanical Gardens precinct, Illuminate brings together local artists, musicians and performers over a dazzling weekend where locals get to enjoy the festive atmosphere including a fireworks display. Events include the Long Table Dinner, the South 32 Art and Light display in Picton Botanic Gardens, along with market stalls and projections lighting up buildings, culminating with Music on the Lawn on Sunday. Bringing the community together in a joyous celebration of light and art, Illuminate continues to be a yearly highlight and they are most deserving of their Tourism award.

#### **WOLLONDILLY TOURS GOLD WINNER - TOUR GROUP EXPERIENCE OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Wollondilly Tours has been named winners in both categories that it was nominated in at the Western Sydney Tourism Awards 2024. Taking home Gold in the Outstanding Community Engagement Category and the Tour Group Experience of the year, Brent and Jasmine are putting Wollondilly on the tourist map and showing local, interstate and international visitors the best that we have to offer. With over 10 years experience working in the tour guiding industry Wollondilly Tours offers both guided walking as well as bus tours to locations including the historical township of Picton, landmarks and attractions around the Wollondilly Shire. Not your ordinary tour company, owners Brent and Jasmine have created a range of activities to showcase the amazing sites of Wollondilly, including scavenger hunts, ghost tours and high teas. Celebrating their wins at the Tourism Awards on October 24th at the William Inglis Hotel, this achievement is well deserved. Congratulations Wollondilly Tours.

### KALINYA ESTATE WINS AWARD

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Kalinya Estates owners Mandy and Chris Barnes celebrated a double win at the Western Sydney Tourism Awards 2024. Along with fellow Wollondilly Business, NSW Rail Museum Kalinya Estates has been named winner in the Best Historic Venue: Visitation category, taking home the Gold Winner award. Amanda was also the Platinum winner of the Outstanding Business Leader of the Year Award for Kalinya Estate. Amanda and Chris have worked hard over the last 20 years to restore the property's historic features, making it one of the leading venues in Wollondilly. Congratulations, these awards recognise the high quality tourism offerings we have here, your passion and vision have been rewarded.

### GRADUATION - KRISTIAN BOSNIC

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Kristian Bosnic on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Kristian's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Kristian should be incredibly proud of this significant milestone. I am hopeful that they are pleased with their Higher School Certificate results, and wish them every success as they move into the next phase of life's journey. The HSC is a demanding time for all students, and I commend Kristian on their continued determination to succeed. Undoubtedly, their perseverance and commitment will serve them well in all of their future endeavours. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I extend my best wishes to Kristian and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Kristian and their family.

### GRADUATION - LAURENCE BONGIOLATTI

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Laurence Bongiolatti on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Laurence's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Laurence should be incredibly proud of this significant milestone. I am hopeful that they are pleased with their Higher School Certificate results, and wish them every success as they move into the next phase of life's journey. The HSC is a demanding time for all students, and I commend Laurence on their continued determination to succeed. Undoubtedly, their perseverance and commitment will serve them well in all of their future endeavours. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I extend my best wishes to Laurence and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Laurence and their family.

### GRADUATION - SOPHIA APONTE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Sophia Aponte on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Sophia's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Sophia should be incredibly proud of this significant milestone. I am hopeful that they are pleased with their Higher School Certificate results, and wish them every success as they move into the next phase of life's journey. The HSC is a demanding time for all students, and I commend Sophia on their continued determination to succeed. Undoubtedly, their perseverance and commitment will serve them well in all of their future endeavours. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I extend my best wishes to Sophia and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Sophia and their family.

### INSPIRING SOUTH COAST AUTHORS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the South Coast authors inspiring local writers through National Novel Writing Month, or NaNoWriMo, workshops. Led by published authors from the South Coast Writers Centre—including Helena Fox, Garry Linnell, Erika Cramer, Jodie McLeod, and Jordan Farrelly—these workshops encourage participants to embrace the ambitious goal of writing 50,000 words in November. Aspiring writers are learning essential skills from these experienced mentors, from plot and character development to navigating the publishing world. The workshops have brought together writers of all ages, sparking excitement across the South Coast's literary community. Helena Fox, author of *How It Feels to Float*, brings her deep understanding of storytelling, while journalist Garry Linnell and memoirist Erika Cramer offer their unique perspectives on writing truthfully and powerfully. Jodie McLeod and Jordan Farrelly's insights on the craft and business of writing add further richness to this initiative. Congratulations to the dedicated participants taking on this exciting challenge, and thanks to the South Coast authors who share their time and talent to nurture the next generation of Australian writers. With such inspiring leadership, we look forward to many wonderful stories emerging from the South Coast.

### SHOALHAVEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES INC.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc. for its continued efforts in strengthening and connecting our local community. The organisation recently held its Annual General Meeting on Monday, 28th October 2024. I would like to acknowledge and thank President Debra Waddell, Vice President Judith Reardon, Secretary Emma Wood, Treasurer Alan Stasiukynas, and Committee Members Anne Talbot, Louisa Stewart, and Louise Byrne for their hard work and commitment. Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services provides vital support to a diverse range of clients, including NDIS participants, Commonwealth Home Support Programme clients, and those in targeted early intervention programs. Its community initiatives, such as playgroups, Harmony Day, multicultural events, and cooking programs, aiming to foster a stronger, more connected Shoalhaven. The organisation's vision is to create flexible opportunities that contribute to a resilient and vibrant community, while its mission is to remain dynamic, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of the people it serves. I want to thank Manager Maxine Edwards, the entire committee, direct support workers, and the dedicated team of volunteers for their continued dedication to improving the lives of many in the Shoalhaven region. Their efforts make a profound and lasting impact.

### JAMBEROO RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Jamberoo Rugby League Club, now officially rebranded as the Jamberoo Golden Valley Superoos. This exciting new chapter includes the introduction of the club's inaugural sponsor, the Fountaindale Group. A special thanks to Jennifer Macquarie, Director of Fountaindale Group, Trevor Dallas, President of Jamberoo Rugby League Club, and Vice President David Hall for their dedication and leadership. This new partnership offers a significant financial boost, relieving pressure on the club, which has faced challenges due to its small size. Mr Hall highlights that the club's connection with the local community will only strengthen with the arrival of new families from the nearby subdivision, which will bring both fresh faces and contributors to the club. After a tough 2024 season, the Jamberoo Golden Valley Superoos are optimistic about the 2025 season. The club's new jerseys and club apparel will feature the Golden Valley logo, and the clubhouse will now be known as the Golden Valley Clubhouse. Here's to a new era of growth and success for the Jamberoo Golden Valley Superoos – a local footy club with a rich history and a very bright future ahead.

### LES SMITH

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Les Smith was just 11 when the magic of a Polaroid photo taking shape before his eyes sparked a life-long love of photography. That first image sent him into a darkroom at his school, Mount Austin High, and the world of film photography opened. When Les finished school, he got a job at Wagga Wagga's Daily Advertiser and began a 45-year career as a press photographer chronicling the lives of communities in the Riverina and Illawarra. Les has now retired after capturing countless images of good news and bad. I have worked regularly with Les, finding him to be professional, thoughtful and always with an eye for a great shot. Regional newsgathering is incredibly important, and Les has been one of the best. He has thanked his wife Regina Smith for her support (and tolerance for hundreds of Saturday shifts), and recognised the guidance provided by former DA editors Graham Gorrel and Michael McCormack (now Federal Member for Riverina), as well as former deputy editor Peter Mahoney. If a picture is worth a thousand words, Les has recorded millions, and our community is better informed and engaged because of him. Congratulations and best wishes for retirement, Les.

### JULIE BRIGGS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—A great champion of local government is moving on after almost three decades of working to improve communities. Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils [REROC] CEO Julie Briggs has announced her retirement, ending an era that brought great economic, social and political advancement for eastern Riverina councils. In her 27 years at the helm, Mrs Briggs has led important changes, helping councils save tens of millions of dollars through leveraging economies of scale and scope through collaboration. The long list of achievements includes the development of 13 community recycling centres, the Southern Lights streetlighting project which saw the installation of 75,000 smart-ready LED lights, piloting of organic waste collection, the Build a Bridge skills program and highly regarded youth leadership forums. It is now time for her to focus on her law practice and passion for regional arts, but she leaves a legacy that has changed the local government game. She says 'collaboration is in the DNA' of the member councils but there is no doubt that her leadership was a key driver in a team effort that made a real and lasting difference. Congratulations to Mrs Briggs, thank you, and best wishes for your new adventures.

### ON TRAC FOR GLOBAL SUCCESS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It is a long way from Wagga Wagga to one of the world's greatest seats of learning at Oxford University in the UK, but one group of very bright young people has made the journey and returned with academic glory that puts our city on the world map. The eight students from The Riverina Anglican College have pulled off the achievement of a lifetime by winning first place in the 2024 International da Vinci Decathlon at Oxford, ahead of 12 other schools from the UK and Australasia. The year 10 students, aged 15 and 16, competed in ten subjects – English, maths, science, cartography, code breaking, legacy, creative production, art and poetry, engineering, and ideation - and ensured their city and school will be remembered for global excellence. It was a great credit to teacher, Diana Ganapathy, who has been teaching the group since year eight and always believed they could be the best of the best. On behalf of our community, I congratulate Ms Ganapathy and the students, Quintesaa Sankar, Alexander Lemech, Banruo Zhu, Jaiden Cherian, Ariane Mota, Max Harris, Phuong Nguyen and Saranya Rathnayake for their success. We are very proud of you all!

### NATHAN PENTECOST

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I would like to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of Nathan Pentecost, an inspiring athlete from Penrith who is representing Australia on the world stage in wheelchair curling. Nathan's journey is one of dedication, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Having previously represented Australia in three other sports, Nathan will now make history as he takes to the ice in wheelchair curling, marking the very first time Australia competes in this sport on the global stage. This week's 2024 Asia Wheelchair Curling Championship is a landmark moment—not only for Nathan but for Australian sports. His representation paves the way for more Australian athletes to explore new horizons and take our country into arenas we've never before competed in. As Penrith locals, we are incredibly proud of Nathan's accomplishments and the way he represents our community and country with pride. His journey reminds us of the power of sports to inspire, uplift, and unite. Thank you, Nathan, for your dedication and for showing us what is possible on the world stage. I wish both Nathan and his team all the best of luck in the competition!

### NEPEAN FOOD SERVICES

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I would like to acknowledge the incredible work and dedication of the Nepean Food Services team, whose efforts have brought immense value to the Penrith community. Recently, Nepean Food Services received a prestigious Innovation Award from Meals on Wheels NSW for their "Share a Cuppa" program—a well-deserved recognition of their impactful work. The "Share a Cuppa" program is a thoughtful initiative designed to connect volunteers with clients who have limited opportunities to engage with the community. Through one-on-one visits, volunteers provide companionship and friendly face-to-face communication in the comfort of each client's home. This support is invaluable to individuals who may otherwise feel isolated, helping them maintain a sense of connection while enabling them to continue living at home for as long as possible. With a dedicated team of over 25 volunteers, Nepean Food Services is making a real difference in the lives of many, fostering a supportive environment for those who need it most. This award not only celebrates their innovative approach but also highlights the meaningful, compassionate work they do every day. Congratulations to Nepean Food Services on this remarkable achievement—your commitment to our community is truly inspiring.

### 2024 NETBALL NSW AWARDS

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Penrith locals Paige Hadley, Liam Forcadilla, and Nathan Taylor, who were honoured as award recipients at the 2024 Netball NSW Awards. This is an incredible achievement, reflecting their dedication and impact on netball in our community and beyond. Paige Hadley, a proud Penrith Netball Junior, received the prestigious Marilyn Melhuish OAM Medal for Super Netball Excellence, a testament to her skill, hard work, and dedication to the sport at the highest level. Liam Forcadilla, also from Penrith Netball, was recognized as the Men's Netball NSW State Player of the Year, an Honor that highlights his talent and contributions to men's netball in NSW. Nathan Taylor, through his role in covering the sport across all levels in one of Penrith's local papers, was awarded the Judy Dunbar Media Award for Community Media Excellence, celebrating his commitment to bringing netball's stories to life. These awards not only recognize each of them individually but also showcase the strength and pride of the Penrith netball community. Congratulations once again to Paige, Liam, and Nathan—your achievements inspire us all, and we're immensely proud of your accomplishments.

### BINDAREE FOOD GROUP

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Bindaree Food Group on its positive impact on Inverell and local communities nationally. The group has been proactive in strengthening economic ties and cultural exchange through their international collaborative efforts, bringing Australian and

Fijian government representatives together at their Inverell facility recently. I congratulate the group on this initiative, for addressing workforce challenges, whilst offering life-changing opportunities to team members. Thank you to those representing the group at the gathering, including Amanda Ford, Kaitlin Driscoll, Todd Newton, Brad Newman and Scott Vinecombe. I congratulate the group on almost 30 years of operation at their Inverell operation, which remains the primary facility and head of office of Bindaree. With CEO Andrew McDonald at the helm, the group has gone from strength to strength, with five sites across Australia, offices in Sydney, London, Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong and presently sharing Australian grown and produced beef across to the world. I commend all involved in the Bindaree Food Group, in organising this integral event and for the impressive contribution to the Australian beef industry and importantly, improving the economic and social landscape of our local communities.

#### **KENTUCKY COMMUNITY SPIRIT**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Kentucky community for banding together to stage the inaugural Kentucky Hall Bush Dance, for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors alike. I congratulate all involved in this wonderful achievement, with special thanks to the organisers of the dance, including Kathy Caddy, Liz Bashford and Jess Worthing. Special thanks to sponsors, including Dale's Downtown Meats, Raw Fibre, as well as Fika Home and Living. Thank you for donations made by Petersen's Winery and to Kentucky Public School P & C, for organising and catering for the evening. I commend all involved in hosting the bush dance, for the selfless time and effort to host the event and especially for taking the opportunity to raise money to give back to the community. The community spirit in Kentucky is inspirational!

#### **CHARLIE WARD**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Charlie Ward of Guyra, who recently represented the Guyra Pony Club at the China Pony Club International Exchange, competing in Dressage and Showjumping. Charlie competed against riders from New Zealand, America, Canada, China and the United Kingdom at this event. I congratulate Charlie on her impressive selection and performance at the competition, coming home with a swag of medals. This included Individual Gold in the 80cm, Bronze in the 100-110cm events and Team medals of Bronze and Silver for 80cm events, Bronze for 100cm, Silver for 60cm and 80cm events. Such success has not come over night, with Charlie being a member of the Guyra Pony Club for the past 13 years, being selected and competing at Zone and State levels along with Royal Shows. I commend Charlie on her hard work, practice and preparation leading up to her selection, her excellence performance and importantly, for being a valued team member and role model to others. Thank you to Charlie's family and to the Guyra Pony Club members and committee, for enabling and encouraging Charlie to achieve her best at an elite level.

#### **MS GONG RIDE 2024**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—For nearly seventy years, MS Plus has fought to raise awareness about multiple sclerosis. They have championed those affected through the annual MS Gong Ride – a colossal cycling event spanning 82 kilometres of land from Sydney's Tempe Recreation Reserve to Wollongong's Lang Park, passing through my electorate of Keira. The track winds through the Royal National Park, along the Sea Cliff Bridge and the coastline, as riders reflect on the natural beauty of the places we call home. On Sunday November 3rd, teams and individual cyclists rode in the name of family and friends affected by MS. This year, over \$1.3 million was raised from the efforts of six and a half thousand riders. Year after year, for the four decades this event has been held, over \$40 million has been raised to fund vital MS research, assist in providing specialised advice, and help deliver NDIS services. The MS Gong Ride has made a tremendous impact to the lives of so many people. I am proud of the Kiera residents who took part or cheered on the riders, and personally thank everyone who put in the hard yards for their loved ones.

#### **OXI DAY COMMEMORATION WITH THE GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF NSW**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Monday 28 October, I joined my colleague the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, and Yannis Mallikourtis, Consulate General of Greece in Sydney for Greek Orthodox Community of NSW's 84th commemoration of Oxi Day in Lakemba. Oxi Day is an important day in the Greek community's calendar. It commemorates the day when Greece said no to occupation by the fascist powers in World War II. This annual event shares the vibrancy of Greek culture within our community, and I am glad that this year I was able to commemorate the occasion with our community. Students from Clemton Park Public School shared poems commemorating the day. The night concluded with traditional Greek dances performed by the Greek Orthodox Community's dance ensemble. In my speech, I shared the importance of remembering your roots and sharing your culture with fellow Australians. Oxi Day is relevant for us today with racism still existing in Australia

and with far-right groups being more vocal, seeking to divide us. That is why it is crucial that we reflect on the principles of Oxi Day and educate people on the dangers of racism to our democracy.

#### **HOLY SAVIOUR SCHOOL GREENACRE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Recently, the dedicated Year 5 students at Holy Saviour School in Greenacre took part in their annual "Great Book Swap" event, a unique initiative aimed at raising funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. Through this event, the students helped support the purchase of books for First Nations children in remote areas of Australia. To participate, students and teachers were invited to donate a beloved, previously read book. With a gold coin donation, they could then select one of the donated books to take home. Thanks to their generosity, the event successfully raised \$350. This annual fundraiser is a wonderful way for students to cultivate both a love for reading and a spirit of giving, as they swap treasured books to help bridge the gap in literacy resources for Indigenous communities. I am incredibly proud of our local schools for participating in such inspiring initiatives. My heartfelt thanks go to the organisers, teachers, parents and the students at Holy Saviour School. I look forward to seeing "The Great Book Swap" continue to flourish in the years to come, inspiring future generations to give generously and support those in need.

#### **GANDHI SINDYAN**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to Gandhi Sindyan from Campsie Police Area Command on the Rotary Police Officer of the Year Award. This is a well deserved award to acknowledge Gandhi and the hard work he is doing within the community. This award shows that his hard work does not go unnoticed. I have known and worked with Gandhi for over 20 years, and I am so proud of him and happy for this recognition. Gandhi's work in the community is well known and his commitment to helping people has been the cornerstone of who he is. Everyone knows that Gandhi does not stop and is always there to help others, no matter the circumstance. Much more than just doing his police work, Gandhi is a community champion who goes above and beyond all. Gandhi, thank you for always being there when the community needs you and the impact you've had on so many. I am very proud to have someone like you in our community that will always do anything to ensure we are all safe and taken care of. Well done G, so proud and on behalf of the community, thank you for all you do!

#### **KATH HARRIS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge Kath Harris for her efforts in organising a pre-loved fashion pop-up as part of the Pink Up Your Town Forster initiative, which raised over \$1,000 for the McGrath Foundation. On October 26, locals and visitors gathered at Coastal Workspace, where they sifted through donated boutique fashions, shoes, handbags, and accessories, all in support of breast cancer awareness. Locals contributed items, volunteered, and helped display the many unique pieces. Kath shared that a memorable part of the day was hearing the stories of women who attended, adding significance to the event. Kath brought the community together for a cause that means so much to so many. I thank Kath for her contributions to Pink Up Forster Tuncurry. This event shows what is possible when a community works together toward an important goal.

#### **SEAN HASSETT**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Sean Hassett, a local primary school teacher. Sean, a Year 5 teacher at Holy Name Primary School in Forster, has reached an impressive milestone in his career. On World Teachers' Day, he received Highly Accomplished Lead Teacher [HALT] accreditation at NSW Parliament House, marking over a decade of impactful teaching. After earning his Bachelor of Education from Newcastle University, Sean gained experience across several local schools before taking permanent positions at St Joseph's Primary School in Taree and later Holy Name. Sean's expertise in coaching, mentoring, and leading professional development has positively influenced the entire school community. Congratulations, Sean, on this well-deserved recognition for your meaningful contributions to education in our region.

#### **ASSOCIAZIONE SAN GIORGIO MATRIE DI SYDNEY**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I commend Associazione San Giorgio Matrie di Sydney ("San Giorgio") for its charitable work to support the Kids with Cancer Foundation. San Giorgio is a not-for-profit organisation established in Sydney in 1976 by a devoted group of migrants who sought to maintain and foster the religious and cultural traditions from their hometown of Martone, Reggio Calabria, Italy. San Giorgio held a Kids with Cancer Fundraiser Farm Day at Centro San Giorgio Centro Kenthurst on Sunday 29 September 2024. The fundraising day included delicious food, fun and dancing. The proceeds from the day support the Kids with Cancer

Foundation. On Friday, 1 November 2024 with the President of San Giorgio, George Dolores and members of the San Giorgio community I attended the offices of Kids with Cancer Foundation, located at Castle Hill in my electorate, where we packed over one hundred 'Care Packs 4 Kids' which will be delivered to children in hospital. San Giorgio handed to Kids with Cancer Foundation a cheque in the amount of \$7,105.00 which will be used to support the many programs funded by the Kids with Cancer Foundation. Thank you, San Giorgio, for supporting the Kids with Cancer Foundation.

#### **FUNFOX PROGRAM**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The FunFox Program, launched in 2020 has grown to become an influential force in primary education, focusing on developing students' communication and critical thinking skills. Founded with a mission to empower young learners to express themselves confidently and think critically, the program has since welcomed over 2,000 students. Through an engaging and supportive curriculum, FunFox equips participants with the educational tools to confidently speak in a public forum. Under the guidance of Ambreen Mushkoo Ali, who holds double master's degrees in education and English Language, FunFox has flourished. Ambreen's understanding of teaching high school students laid the foundation for her transition to primary education, where she now makes the most significant impact by instilling a love for learning and building confidence in the formative years. This year's annual speech event, held on 27 October 2024, was a celebration of the students' achievements and a testament to the success of the program. Students showcased their growth in public speaking, critical thinking, and storytelling—skills that will serve them well throughout their educational journeys and beyond. The event underscored Ambreen's commitment to nurturing articulate, thoughtful, and resilient young individuals who are prepared to tackle challenges with confidence. Well done FunFox.

#### **INALA FAIR, 2024**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recently attended the Inala Fair, a community fundraising event that has been running for 60 years. Inala, a disability service, supports 200 individuals with disability to live the life they choose through day services, community access and supported accommodation. Many of Inala's services are in my electorate of Castle Hill. The Annual Fair was held on 20 October 2024. Members of the community, families, local business, and children enjoyed the Fair. The Cherrybrook RFS, the Hills District Pipe Band, and various school groups all supported the Fair. I noted the extraordinary commitment of the West Pennant Hills-Cherrybrook Lions Club who yet again ran the extremely popular Chocolate Wheel, as they have done from the beginning 60 years ago. Congratulations to CEO Alexandra Davis and Chair Sam Holden on a wonderful event and thank you to the many community members who volunteer their time to make this event a success. In particular, thank you Nicole and Andy Eagling, Rex and Florence Chandler, Roger and Hilary McFetridge, Kimberley and Angus Holden and Family, Dawn and Steve McBride and Family, Judy Whitlam, Sue Marendy, Tim Bushell, Wiki Fox, Coleen de Saxe, Cleo Haine, Lori Farrar and Alarna Longes.

#### **FREE TRADE DAY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this moment to acknowledge the incredible success of this year's Free Trade Day, held on Friday, October 25, across the Central Coast. This event, founded by local electrician and Lions Club member Ryan Wilson, brings together a remarkable community of more than 200 tradespeople who volunteer their skills and time to help our most vulnerable residents. Free Trade Day is a powerful example of compassion in action. It sees those in need—whether they are elderly, single parents, people with disabilities, or families dealing with terminal illness—nominated by their communities to receive essential trade work, free of charge. The impact of this day is undeniable. Not only do we see recipients shedding tears of joy, but the tradies themselves are deeply moved, realising the profound difference they have made in someone's life. With the support of Lions Club Australia and Kubota Australia providing equipment and resources, we hope to see Free Trade Day grow into a national movement, bringing this extraordinary spirit of generosity to every corner of Australia. Thank you to Ryan and Yvette Wilson everyone else involved all for your efforts!

#### **RHEMA FM CELEBRATES 20 YEARS ON THE CENTRAL COAST**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge an incredible milestone – 20 years of Rhema FM Central Coast! From humble beginnings in a tiny office in Gosford to the purpose-renovated studios at Rhema Central in West Gosford, this Christian community-based radio station has shown remarkable growth. Throughout the challenges, the station has been sustained by the support and generosity of listeners, volunteers, and financial supporters who believe in our mission. Starting as the Central Coast's fourth community radio station in a small server room, Rhema FM has flourished. What began as an automated station has transformed into a vibrant Christian community radio, dedicated to empowering, impacting, and supporting families across the Central Coast. Through music, teaching, and life-giving messages on 94.9 FM, the station strives to broadcast hope, and positivity aiming to improve lives and remind each person of God's love.

Congratulations to Rhema FM Central Coast and the wonderful team of volunteers and supporters on your 20th birthday.

#### **GREAT DOLMIO COOKOFF**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to acknowledge an incredible achievement and extend my deepest thanks to the 100 amazing volunteers from Dolmio, Sodexo, and Coast Shelter. From October 14 to 17, you all worked tirelessly to prepare 10,000 nutritious meals for those in need during this year's Great Dolmio Cookoff. What an incredible milestone this is—doubling last year's effort! With the return of the cookoff to the Central Coast and its alignment with World Food Day on October 16, your hard work highlights the importance of supporting our most vulnerable. Special thanks to Dolmio for once again transforming your Central Coast facility into a meal-prepping hub. To Sodexo, your operational support and contribution of fresh ingredients were crucial in making this event such a success. And to Coast Shelter and Foodbank, thank you for ensuring that these meals reach those facing food insecurity. With the cost of living rising, initiatives like this one are more critical than ever. Together, you are part of the solution to end hunger in our communities. Thank you all for your hard work, dedication, and continued commitment to making a real difference. Here's to many more years of collaboration and generosity!

#### **CHARLOTTE WEIR**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Charlotte Weir, Year 8 student at Corpus Christi High School, who represented Corpus Christi in The Orbispace Initiative, as part of a five women team, that won the Pitch for the Planet competition. These five remarkable young women impressed industry officials with their battery swapping innovation called 'GreenBay'. The Orbispace Initiative is to train the next generation of Australian female innovators by equipping them with the skills and mindsets needed to succeed in a rapidly changing physical and digital landscape. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Charlotte on this this wonderful achievement.

#### **SOPHIE TAYLER**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Sophie Tayler, Year 8 student at Corpus Christi High School, who represented Corpus Christi in The Orbispace Initiative, as part of a five women team, that won the Pitch for the Planet competition. These five remarkable young women impressed industry officials with their battery swapping innovation called 'GreenBay'. The Orbispace Initiative is to train the next generation of Australian female innovators by equipping them with the skills and mindsets needed to succeed in a rapidly changing physical and digital landscape. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Sophie on this this wonderful achievement.

#### **PHOEBE ROGERS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Phoebe Rogers, Year 8 student at Corpus Christi High School, who represented Corpus Christi in The Orbispace Initiative, as part of a five women team, that won the Pitch for the Planet competition. These five remarkable young women impressed industry officials with their battery swapping innovation called 'GreenBay'. The Orbispace Initiative is to train the next generation of Australian female innovators by equipping them with the skills and mindsets needed to succeed in a rapidly changing physical and digital landscape. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Phoebe on this this wonderful achievement.

#### **30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF 2CR CHINESE RADIO 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 19 September 2024, I had the privilege of attending the 30th Anniversary celebration of 2CR Chinese Radio, a momentous occasion for both the station and the community it serves. As Australia's first 24/7 Chinese radio station, 2CR has played a pivotal role in connecting and supporting the Chinese Australian community for three decades. With an impressive online presence of over 280,000 unique followers in 2023, 2CR has not only kept pace with the evolving media landscape but has enriched the lives of countless individuals by providing news, entertainment, and cultural programming. This remarkable milestone is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the team behind 2CR. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to everyone involved in this incredible journey. Your commitment to delivering quality content and fostering connections within the Chinese Australian community is commendable. As we look to the future, I am excited to see how 2CR will continue to grow and adapt, serving as a cornerstone for our community and a vital link to people's cultural heritage. I wish you many more years of broadcasting and success.

#### **SYDNEY VIETNAMESE WORKER INTERAGENCY MEETING**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 8 October 2024, I had the privilege of attending the Sydney Vietnamese Worker Interagency meeting in my Cabramatta electorate. This regular meeting brings together representatives

from government and non-government agencies, all of whom are dedicated to providing essential social and welfare services to constituents in my electorate and surrounding areas. The meeting serves as an invaluable platform for these organisations to share their work, update each other on their activities, and explore opportunities for collaboration. I was deeply impressed by the passion and commitment demonstrated by all involved. Each agency, with their unique contributions, works harmoniously and collaboratively to support those in need within our community. This multilateral dialogue helps avoid duplication of efforts and fosters collaboration, thereby maximising the impact of their collective resources for the greater benefit of the community. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Ms Hanh Tran, representative of the Vietnamese Australian Welfare Association for the kind invitation. I commend the participating agencies for their dedication and wish them continued success.

#### **BAN BON PHUONG 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I had the pleasure of celebrating Ban Bon Phuong's 30th Anniversary on the 26 October 2024. Ban Bon Phuong is a musical group composed of admirable elderly individuals that are deeply involved in community activities in my local Cabramatta area. They dedicate their time assisting our community through volunteering their time and talents, especially through their musical performances. They provide local elderly people especially Vietnamese refugees and immigrants with the appropriate help and assistance and especially entertainment to adjust to Australian society. They preserve Vietnamese culture and foster a sense of unity between those who have been displaced far from their native homeland. As a result of their efforts, they inspire many other members in the local community to follow in their footsteps and continue supporting the Vietnamese community in Australia and many others including Australian Veterans. I am grateful for their kind support over the two decades from the time I worked with the local community to now. I would like to personally thank Mr Thach Tan Van and all the members of the Ban Bon Phuong for their wonderful work over the last 30 years.

#### **PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Parkes Shire Council on winning the 2024 Tidy Town award for NSW, bestowed by the NSW branch of Keep Australia Beautiful. Central to the overall win was Parkes' commitment to sustainability and community spirit and it was backed by gongs in several categories within the Tidy Towns Awards spectrum. These included top honours in the Liveable Towns, Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and Community Spirit and Inclusion categories. Parkes Raw Water Storage Lagoon, a recent initiative of the Parkes Water Security Program, was an example of the council's commitment to environment and sustainability. The Raw Water Storage Lagoon is one of a string of projects designed to ensure that Parkes Shire has a water source to meet the predicted future demand of the community. I congratulate Parkes Shire Council on being named NSW's Tidy Town, especially considering the calibre and diversity of several of the other entrants. The award recognised the Council and its resident's commitment to innovation and sustainability and is a wonderful reward for hard work. I wish it well as it goes on to represent our state at the Australian awards.

#### **NASHDALE AND CANOBOLAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOCKEY TEAM**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, small schools often punch well above their weight and today I rise to congratulate Nashdale and Canobolas Public Schools on combining to win a NSW hockey championship. With around 130 students at each, Nashdale and Canobolas joined forces, first to win the Western Regional Primary School Sports Association girls' tournament, contested by schools from throughout western NSW including hockey strongholds Orange, Bathurst and Lithgow. The Western title enabled the girls to advance to state's final eight, contested by other regional winners. Here, a tough come-from-behind 2-1 semi-final win over Taree West Public School earned the girls a spot in the NSW final. In this match, the team put on a goal-scoring masterclass to stun Goulburn East PS, winning 6-1. The finals were played at the Newcastle International Hockey Centre and I commend these two small schools for the support they have given the girls to finish number one in a competition that covers over 1000 schools. An amazing effort. Coach Elise Dennis, with the support of Bianca Grayson, must also be congratulated on a sterling effort while the girls certainly put in the work. Congratulations.

#### **FORBES PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate the Forbes Probus Club on reaching a major milestone – 40 years of keeping retired men connected and informed. The Forbes Probus Club conducted its inaugural meeting at Forbes Golf Club on May 25, 1984, with parent club Rotary presenting inaugural president Les Hawke with his sash and badge of office. The possibility of forming a Probus chapter in Forbes was explored by the town's Rotary outfit as an opportunity to provide fellowship for retired professionals and businessmen within the community. Probus offers its members a range of activities including trips away. It also provides a guest speaker at its monthly meetings, providing an opportunity to stay informed on community issues. Forbes

Probus connects the town's elder members, for not only their benefit, but the community's benefit. I congratulate Forbes Probus Club on reaching its 40th anniversary and thank the members for their contribution to Forbes and its wider district.

### **225KM FROM JUNEE TO JERRABOMBERRA**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—It is encouraging to see people coming together to support locals who are facing challenging circumstances. That is precisely what Coolamon local Gavin Lamb did to support his mate Jason Smith, who has recently been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a blood cancer. With up to 50 people on board, the group walked 225km over four days, starting on Thursday in Junee, where both Gavin and Jason live, and concluding on Sunday in Jason's hometown of Jerrabomberra, a testament to the strong local connection of this event. This trek was made possible thanks to the meticulous coordination of Mathew Cummins. His efforts, including planning the route, drop off and pick up points, and ensuring the safety of the walkers, was instrumental in the success of the event. With many of the walkers from Junee, all showing incredible determination to take on this journey for Jason, including Matthew Harris who even took up the challenge of walking 20 kms in Mongrel Boots and Levi jeans, their commitment was truly inspiring. The group raised over \$80,000 which will help support Jason, his wife and their four children. I commend everyone involved, well done.

### **CENTENARY OF BARELLAN CWA REST HOUSE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The CWA Rest House in Barellan has stood for 100 years and it was my pleasure to join with community attending this event. The building which opened in 1924 was constructed to provide a meeting place for the newly formed Country Women's Association, formed in 1922, to improve the lives of women and children in regional areas. The Rest House interior has changed and innovated to accommodate differing needs, but it still retains a calm and gentle air as you step onto the wide veranda and into its welcoming space. An atmosphere cultivated over 100 years of celebrations and gatherings and now an event to celebrate the building itself. Donna Robertson was the master of ceremonies who welcomed special guests including CWA State VP Penny Sloan, Councillor Cameron Rouse, President Lyn Manton and Member for Murray, Helen Dalton. It was very interesting to hear Val Hawker and Judy Findlay speak on the building's history and how the Rest House was funded and built. Prestige Classical Coaching dancers, taught by Jorja Nicholls entertained the crowd with their routines and after, the renown CWA afternoon tea was served with much conversation and laughter.

### **HOMEGROWN WHEAT CHAMPIONS FOR A THIRD YEAR RUNNING**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Grenfell wheat growers Rob and Mandy Taylor have scored an outstanding hat-trick, taking out the title of beat dryland field wheat in the state. The pair celebrated their outstanding achievement at a gala dinner in Dubbo, where they were crowned with the Championship Dryland Field Wheat Competition state title for the third consecutive year. The Cootamundra region is home to some of the best wheat crops in New South Wales, and it was hard going to beat Quirindi's Cory Behsman at Romani Pastoral Co and Cowra's Tom Johnstone at Illinois Farm. But with an impressive score of 226 for their 7.6 tonne per hectare yield, all the glory has rightfully gone to the Taylors. The outstanding yield rose to the challenge of low in-crop rainfall, and sudden frosts across our Cootamundra electorate, with Rob and Mandy Taylor both congratulated for their excellent agronomic management. I congratulate them both on a spectacular achievement, and acknowledge the tireless work of the Taylors, and our fellow grain growers, as we enter the busy harvest season.

### **THE REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN WOMEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I proudly acknowledge the remarkable achievements of the female athletes from the Oxley electorate in the 2024 Mid North Coast Women's Rugby League season. This year, these dedicated players have showcased their talent, perseverance, and teamwork, making a significant impact on the field. A special congratulations must go out to Sophia Dungay from the Macleay Valley Mustangs, who has had a cracking season scoring an impressive 11 tries, earning her the title of Top Try Scorer for 2024. Her exceptional performance has not only highlighted her individual skill but has also inspired her teammates and the broader community. We also celebrate the inclusion of Naokii Frail, Carissa Skrinnikoff, Belinda Andersen, and Taylor Kelly-Scholes, all recognised in the 2024 Team of the Year. Their hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship exemplify the spirit of rugby league and reflect the bright future of women's sports in our region. Together, these athletes have raised the bar, paving the way for future generations, and uniting our community through their passion for the game. I commend their accomplishments and look forward to their continued success on and off the field.

### MARTY COLE TAKES AUSTRALIAN TITLE

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Waves crashed and success was celebrated as Crescent Head's local Marty Cole claimed his long-awaited victory in the 10ft Open Men's Stand-Up Paddleboarding [SUP] Surfing title at the Australian SUP Titles on Phillip Island. Known for his dedication and years of competition, Cole made this event his own, competently navigating challenging surf conditions while maintaining a sharp focus on each wave. Not only did he compete in the Open Men's division, but he also showcased his talent in the Over-40 Men's category, where he secured third place. However, it was his standout performance in the Open Men's division that truly stole the spotlight. His ability to blend technical skill with precise wave timing made all the difference, especially when faced with tricky conditions. The Australian SUP Titles, held from October 22 to 26, brought together top paddlers from across the country to compete in various events, including SUP Surfing, Technical Racing, and Marathon Racing. It's an incredible achievement to have one of our own take the title, and the community couldn't be prouder of Marty's success! Congratulations Marty and well-done.

### A BEAUTIFUL WALK IN COMBOYNE GARDENS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Comboyne bloomed with beauty and community spirit during this year's Spring Garden Walk. The sun shone warmly over gardens filled with brilliant colours and floral scents, the village alive with nature's finest display. Local gardeners opened their stunning spaces, showcasing a range of flowers and plants—everything from fragrant roses to native wildflowers. Each garden reflected hours of dedication, and visitors were captivated by the natural artistry on display. Th Garden Walk was held to raise funds for the treasured Comboyne War Memorial Hall. And thanks to everyone's generous contributions, the committee raised over \$10,000 to cover the hall's insurance, keeping this "community-owned" gem thriving. Beyond the gardens, Comboyne Public School celebrated its centenary, while the "art deco" War Memorial Hall hosted quilting and pottery displays that wowed visitors. For history lovers, the Comboyne Museum and the Tractor and Machinery Museum opened their doors, offering a peek into the past. Congratulations to all involved in the day, with such overwhelming success, next year's event promises even more charm and excitement.

### BAPS HINDU TEMPLE - KEMPS CREEK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was pleased to recently tour the new BAPS Hindu temple at Kemps Creek and to see the progress of its construction. During the site visit I witnessed the great progress that has been made since I attended the blank canvas in 2021. It was wonderful to experience the architectural beauty and reflect on the BAPS Hindu community's commitment to fostering community and spiritual growth. I commend the years of exceptional dedication and effort by volunteers and devotees and I look forward to its grand opening in a few months.

### SOPHIA HASSAPLADAKIS

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Congratulations to Sophia Hassaplidakis of Macarthur Anglican School for being the overall winner of the 2024 Badgerys Creek Christmas Card competition, with an artistic design that I'm sure will brighten the Christmas season of all my Christmas Card recipients! It was a pleasure to visit her at school and commend her in person. I thank Sophia for her amazing work and wish her the very best in all her schooling endeavours.

### ZEHRA AYDIN

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Congratulations to Irfan College Vice Captain Zehra Aydin on receiving the Badgerys Creek Leadership Award last week and to her and her colleagues on their graduation. A huge thank you to all the parents and teachers who have supported, mentored and educated the 2024 graduating class at Irfan College, Cecil Park. With HSC exams now completed for the graduating class, the graduation event was a joyful night of celebration, gratefulness and excitement for the next chapter in the students' lives.

### MR PHILIP WATT

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—I congratulate Mr Philip Watt on being awarded a 2024 NSW Government Community Service Award. Mr Watt is a committed community volunteer who has been involved with the local Men's Shed for more than a decade. Mr Watt joined Break the Cycle Men's Shed in 2012, which later became the Macquarie Fields Men's Shed. Mr Watt oversaw the Men's Shed transition to its new premises at Macquarie Road Reserve in 2024. Over the years, Mr Watt has been responsible for the group's successful grant applications to enhance the organisation's facilities and purchase updated equipment. The Men's Shed assist in creating wooden toys for the charity, Operation Christmas Child, and making furniture for local families in need. Mr Watt's volunteerism extends to 1st Macquarie Fields Scout Group, where he held various positions over eight

years of active involvement. During this time, Mr Watt managed various activities as Group Leader and worked closely with troubled youth. Mr Watt has been a NSW Justice of the Peace for around 10 years and a regular blood donor. Mr Watt's dedicated service to the community is to be commended.

#### **MR RICHARD BROMLEY**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—I congratulate Mr Richard Bromley on being awarded a 2024 NSW Government Community Service Award. Mr Bromley is a dedicated softball volunteer in the local community. Mr Bromley joined Sydney Softball Association in 1978 and held various positions across different clubs. Later, Mr Bromley joined the Campbelltown District Softball Association [CDSA]. He served on the Board as umpire convenor, competition convenor as well as President on two separate occasions. The CDSA was successful in becoming the 4th venue for the 2009 World Masters Games. As an umpire for the representative team, Mr Bromley travelled to various locations in NSW. In 2010, Mr Bromley was proudly accepted as a Life Member of CDSA. In 2013, CDSA was rebranded Softball Campbelltown. Mr Bromley was a founding Board member and achieved level 3 accreditation in coaching. Mr Bromley continued his involvement through to retirement from the Board in 2018. He continues to mentor Board members to this day. This year, Mr Bromley has been actively involved in Softball Campbelltown's 45th anniversary celebrations. I commend Mr Bromley's long and dedicated commitment to softball in our community.

#### **VALE PHYLLIS O'DONNELL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of local legend and the first Women's World Surfing Champion, Phyllis O'Donnell. Phyllis began surfing at Freshwater in 1960, taking up the sport at 23 years of age – considered unusually late in the game even today. However, as the world quickly learnt, age had nothing to do with it, and Phyllis immediately began dominating women's competition surfing. Her most famous victory was at the first World Surfing Championships in 1964, hosted at none other than Manly Beach. Taking on Californian favourite Lynda Benson, Phyllis was a force to be reckoned with, cutting elegant shapes to secure the title with ease. She would go on to win three national surfing titles between 1963 and 1965. Phyllis is the definition of a trailblazer and her contribution to the sport of Women's surfing cannot be understated. Her success marked a tectonic shift in women's surfing, paving the way for future generations. I know that members of the surfing community around the world are grieving, and my thoughts are with Phyllis' friends and family during this difficult time. Vale Phyllis O'Donnell.

#### **GORE HILL CEMETERY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—My community is home to one of Sydney's oldest and largest remaining cemeteries, Gore Hill Cemetery. Located near St Leonard's, it occupies an area of 5.81 hectares and was originally designed in the form of a Victorian-style garden. Gore Hill cemetery was established on 19 May 1868 by the NSW politician William Tunks. The first interment was in 1877, and until its closure in 1974, approximately 14,456 burials took place between 1900 and 1930. One of these burials included the body of Saint Mary McKillop who was interred there from 1909 until her beatification in 1995. The graves of many North Shore pioneers lie in this cemetery and its historical value was recognised when it was established as a historic site with the Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery Act in 1986. I am grateful for the work that Metropolitan Memorial Parks does to tend to the cemetery grounds and preserve the memories of those who have come before us. I would also like to extend a special thank you to the Friends of Gore Hill Cemetery, whose dedication and volunteer efforts are invaluable in maintaining and preserving this historic site for future generations.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CHINESE SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Almost a quarter of residents in my Willoughby community are of Chinese origin. To cater to their needs, my community is home to the International Chinese School in St Leonards. The School was established in 2015 as an initiative of the Sydney Anglican Diocese which identified a need to serve families on the Lower North Shore through the establishment of an Anglican Chinese Bilingual primary school. Led by Principal Alastair Walker, the School offers a bilingual program through a two-way immersion model with 50% of the curriculum delivered in Mandarin. The education provided prepares students for the future where the relationship between China and Australia will continue to assume wider and deeper importance on economic, political and social levels. Dedicated to excellence, the School attains high levels of achievement in both English and Mandarin, and the development of cross-cultural awareness through a supportive learning community. In addition to its NESA-approved academic curriculum, the school provides ample opportunities for pupils in sport and music. As the only bilingual Chinese-English school in NSW, the International Chinese Schools provides an invaluable niche for local families of Chinese-speaking backgrounds.

### JAPAN CLUB OF SYDNEY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Willoughby is home to the largest Japanese-Australian community in NSW and the Japanese Club of Sydney is an important cultural institution in our community. Established in 1983, the JCS seeks to foster friendship between Japanese families, promote Japanese culture and improve mutual understanding with other ethnic groups. Managed by volunteers, it regularly conducts friendship activities, as well as publishing newsletters and supporting Japanese language education for children. Dedicated to showcasing the rich and ancient culture of Japan, the Club presents the annual 'Matsuri Japan Festival' in Chatswood featuring authentic Japanese cuisine, stage performances, martial arts demonstrations, choir and musical dances. In its efforts to foster the learning of the Japanese language, the JSC supports Japanese language schools in the Sydney CBD, Edgecliff and Dundas. Catering to the senior members of our community, the JSC also runs senior group activities including lectures, bingo games and excursions. I am very grateful for the contribution the Japanese Club of Sydney makes to supporting our Australian-Japanese community and enriching the cultural tapestry of our city.

### SUPERINTENDENT CHRISTINE MCDONALD BURWOOD POLICE AREA COMMAND – IRENE JUERGENS FELLOWSHIP AWARD (SWORN)

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I extend my warmest congratulations to Supt Christine McDonald of Burwood PAC on being named the winner of the Irene Juergens Fellowship Award Sworn Category at the recent NSW Police Officer of the Year Awards. These awards are a joint initiative of Rotary Clubs of NSW and the NSW Police Force and recognise professional excellence and dedication to service by officers and civilian staff. Since taking over the command of Burwood PAC just 6 months ago Supt McDonald has already made a significant impact in the community. Ensuring that Police have a highly visible and positive presence in the community, Supt McDonald has initiated regular school visits and organised sporting matches between police and schools. She has also engaged with community partners to ensure that important messaging reaches the many diverse community groups covered by the Burwood PAC. Congratulations Supt McDonald and thank you for your positive contribution to our community.

### MARRICKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL – FOOD GARDEN

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I would like to congratulate Marrickville High School [MHS] Garden Club on their successful installation of food cubes on the school grounds, and a bumper spring harvest. Under the passionate leadership of Alice Bell, Leila Jeffries, Lolita Garcia and Tania Milnes, the MHS P&C funded 12 food cubes and wicking beds. After working bees attended by over 50 parents, students and staff, the garden is now bursting with fresh goodies. Students and parents have been able to enjoy fresh snow peas, salad greens, rhubarb and herbs. A Wednesday afternoon garden club, with over 50 members, has been set up for students and the school community, and it's terrific that students will soon have access to this outdoor activity. There are plans afoot for a further 8 food cubes to be set up in November, and to be able to use the produce in food technology classes and the school canteen. Congratulations and thank you to the passionate MHS students, teachers, parents and neighbours!

### ALBERT MARSHALL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Mr Albert Marshall, a dedicated and committed NSW SES Volunteer with the Hurstville Unit. Mr Marshall is a student currently undergoing his HSC exams and extraordinarily manages his time to volunteer for the SES. Throughout the year, Albert has assisted the SES with local emergencies and was even involved in a mass casualty simulation exercise with units at Georges River. He continuously demonstrates the importance of striking a balance between study and outdoor activities. Albert's drive to serve his community is incredibly inspirational, particularly at such a young age, and has since decided he would like to be a paramedic after discovering his passion for disaster relief. I want to express my deepest appreciation and thanks to Mr Marshall for selflessly dedicating his time and energy to making a positive impact in our community.

### JASON AND NOELIA SALVO

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I am delighted to recognise and acknowledge Mr Jason and Ms Noelia Salvo, owners of a Hurstville Grove cafe, Gabriella's at the Grove, for their fundraising efforts and continuous support of Red Nose Australia. In honour of their daughter who was sadly born stillborn in 2020, Mr and Ms Salvo have hosted their third fundraiser for Pregnancy and Infancy Loss Awareness Month at their cafe to raise funds for Red Nose's bereavement support services. These funds will go towards ground-breaking research and lifesaving education to help save little lives. They were committed to give back to Red Nose after receiving their support immediately following their daughter's passing. I am extremely proud of the work that Jason and Noelia do to raise awareness of the long-term grief experienced by parents after unexpectedly losing a

child, and their commitment to making a difference by sharing their story. I would like to express my deepest condolences to Mr and Ms Salvo for the loss of their daughter and extend by sincerest appreciation for their support of this important cause.

#### ZOE ONG

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding achievement of Local Heroes winner, Ms Zoe Ong. Ms Ong was announced as a winner of the 2024 Westfield Hurstville Local Heroes and was awarded a \$20,000 prize in recognition of the time and energy she has dedicated as a volunteer at Shopfront Art cooperation in Carlton. In addition to her administrative efforts and class assistance at Shopfront, Zoe is a member of Shopfront's Disability Advisory Panel, designed to create an environment of inclusivity and acceptance for the young people who benefit from Shopfront. The grant money will generously go towards supporting Shopfront's 360-Degree Access and Inclusion project, demonstrating Zoe's strong commitment to serving her local community. Ms Ong's extraordinary and selfless contribution is inspiring and very well deserving of this recognition. I wish to sincerely congratulate Ms Ong on her amazing achievement and express how grateful we are to the work she does to support the younger members of our community.

#### EXODUS YOUTH WORX

**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 offer my most heartfelt congratulations to Exodus Youth Worx, the recipient of \$250,000 in funding from the July 2024 round of the NSW Government's Infrastructure Grants Program. With an inspiring mission to ensure that no Australian resident suffers in silence or isolation, this Kogarah based charity provides counselling, support and countless other services to those suffering within our community. Exodus embraces diversity, spreads compassion and supports individuals in rebuilding their lives and rediscovering their worth. The work of Exodus could not be done without the unwavering dedication of its selfless staff, volunteers and partners. I wish to extend my thanks for the extraordinary work that Exodus does to support and empower our community, and once again congratulate them on their success in receiving this impressive grant.

#### ZEN YUM CHA

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I would like to extend my best wishes to Ben and Linda So, owners of the Zen Yum Cha Chinese restaurant in Ramsgate, who have made the decision to move on after six years of running the restaurant. Zen Yum Cha, located inside Ramsgate RSL, has become well known across Rockdale for taking customers on a unique and tasteful journey through their extensive and flavoursome menu filled with authentic Asian Fusion. Linda has been a uniquely excellent host for local diners, known for greeting customers with joy, and always being a friendly and welcoming person who never forgets a face. Zen Yum Cha's dumpling bar, designed by Ben and Linda, offers a unique dining experience by allowing customers to sit back and watch their dumplings being handmade in front of them. The unique high-quality experience that can be found at Zen Yum Cha is reflected in its customer numbers; the place is known for its buzzing atmosphere and bookings are considered essential due to its popularity. On behalf of the Rockdale community, I would like to thank Ben and Linda for their hard work and wish them the best of luck and well wishes for their retirement.

#### DIWALI FESTIVAL

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I wish to acknowledge the Diwali festival held by members of the St George Indian Community on October 31st. Diwali, known as the festival of lights, celebrates the spiritual victory of light over darkness. A number of different communities in Rockdale, including people of Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist faith celebrated the festival this year through the lighting of small candles known as Diwalis. These candles represent souls exhausting their energy to ensure the victory of light and knowledge over spiritual darkness. Celebrants also made offerings to Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, so that she may bless them with good health, wealth, and prosperity for the year ahead. The core message of Diwali is a selfless one, reminding us that we need to be living for others, dedicating our energy towards creating light and happiness in the world, and always striving for a better tomorrow. The celebrations were a reminder of the rich cultural heritage and traditions brought to Rockdale by our Indian community. I wish the Rockdale Indian community well over the next Hindu Lunar year and congratulate them on a successful Diwali Festival.

#### WOMEN UP NORTH

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to Women Up North Housing CEO Jillian Knight Smith and all her team for the successful Spring Ball on Saturday 19th October, at the Lismore Turf Club. It was

wonderful to have so many people from all sectors of the community coming together to support the vital work of Women Up North. Last year I attended the event which packed out Lismore's Metropole Hotel, and raised 55 thousand dollars. This year they moved to the bigger Turf Club venue and again packed it out. This year the event raised around 95 thousand dollars to support women and children experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Rivers. Aunty Jenny Smith delivered a powerful acknowledgement of country and spoke of personal domestic violence experience. The Nini Nahri Dance Group performed to start the evening which was MC'd by the dazzling Carmen Geddit, with music by Lisa Hunt and her band. I want to acknowledge the co-sponsor of the event, Challenger and its CEO Nick Hamilton. Challenger started supporting Women Up North after the 2022 floods, and continues to stand with our community. Thank you to the artists and businesses who donated auction and raffle prizes.

#### **NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DISASTER RESILIENCE GATHERING IN LISMORE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to the National Indigenous Disaster Resilience [NIDR] Initiative for hosting their 2024 Gathering at the Lismore Showgrounds on Bundjalung Country, in September. The NIDR initiative – part of Mondash Sustainable Development Institute's Fire to Flourish program – seeks to advance the resilience and recovery of Indigenous communities in the face of increasing disasters. Along with co-hosts from Resilient Lismore, Jagun Alliance and The Koori Mail newspaper, the Gathering brought together Indigenous leaders and disaster resilience experts from across Australia and the world. The immersive three-day gathering featured keynotes, plenary sessions, workshops, yarning circles and on-Country activities, including a cultural burning demonstration in the Dorrobee Grass Reserve. This demonstration was attended by Federal Minister for Emergency Management Senator Jenny McAllister and Federal Special Envoy for Disaster Recovery Senator Tony Sheldon. I was unable to attend due to Parliament sitting in Sydney but I was delighted that NIDR chose Lismore to host this event. It is vital that we listen to, engage with, and support our Indigenous community leaders. Their knowledge of Country and their communities must be embraced for us to be better prepared and able to respond to and recover from increasingly frequent disasters

#### **NEW SKATEPARK RAIL HONOURS THE LATE TRAVIS WATSON**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I was pleased to learn that a rail in Lismore's new skatepark, under construction as part of a Youth Precinct, will be named after local legend and skateboarding pioneer, the late Travis Watson. Travis was a dear friend, a successful businessman with his shop in Molesworth Street 36 Chambers, and a mentor to generations of young skaters. He advocated for a quality skatepark in Lismore for almost three decades. Travis died in a car crash last year but before his passing he lent his expertise to helping shape planning for the skatepark. His friends Shane Bryant and Sam James not only took over 36 Chambers but have continued working to ensure his legacy is a lasting one. Both men say Travis deserves recognition for his lifetime contribution to the local skating community. They say he had such natural talent as a skater that he could have moved away for fame in the sport but chose to stay local and nurture the scene here. Expert skatepark builder Convic is constructing the new centrally located skatepark on the corner of Dawson and Uralba streets and should be completed by mid-2025. Travis would be proud.

#### **THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY LIVING**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I would like to acknowledge the Institute for Healthy Living, as a critical component in the improvement of the health and well-being of the local community on behalf of the Coogee electorate. The institute assures that individuals of all ages can attain and sustain optimal health by providing a comprehensive array of services, including nutritional counselling, fitness initiatives, and mental health support, as part of its holistic wellness approach. The Institute's dedication to personalised care is what distinguishes it, as it cultivates an environment in which each individual is accommodated with respect and customised guidance. The committed team of professionals not only offers highly qualified guidance but also teaches and encourages clients to implement sustainable lifestyle changes. In addition to its direct services, the Institute for Healthy Living is instrumental in fortifying community connections by conducting wellness seminars, events, and initiatives that emphasise the significance of a healthy, balanced lifestyle. The institute continues to motivate and assist Bondi Junction residents in living happier, more fulfilling lives through its continuous contributions. The Institute for Healthy Living is an invaluable resource for the community that it serves.

#### **LUCAS HEIGHTS COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to formally recognize and congratulate the 2024 Year 6 leadership team of Lucas Heights Community School. These students have been entrusted with the important responsibility of leading their peers, a role they are embracing with enthusiasm and dedication. It is my privilege to acknowledge the Year 6 leadership team for 2024, comprising Elijah Duckworth, Michael Hunnam, Marie Manson, Corban Reid, Stella Richardson, and Kendall Stanton. Each of these students is demonstrating strong leadership qualities and is already making a positive contribution to the school community. With the support of

their teachers and peers, I am confident that these young leaders are setting a fine example for their fellow students and fostering a spirit of teamwork and respect. I encourage them to continue developing their leadership skills, knowing that their efforts will leave a lasting impact on Lucas Heights Community School. I extend my best wishes to the leadership team as they continue to excel in their roles and guide their peers throughout the year.

#### **MELKITES CHARITABLE FOUNDATION'S LADIES LUNCHEON**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to acknowledge the exceptional Ladies Luncheon held on the 8th of October 2024, organised by the Melkites Charitable Foundation, under the patronage of Bishop Robert Rabbat. The luncheon raised crucial funds to support those in need through the foundation's impactful charitable works. The Melkites Charitable Foundation plays a vital role in our community, aiding individuals and families facing difficult circumstances. The foundation provides a wide range of services, including educational support, healthcare assistance, housing aid, and welfare programs. Their work ensures that vulnerable members of society are provided with the resources and care they need to overcome hardship. The dedication of the foundation to fostering dignity, hope, and relief has made a profound impact on countless lives. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the event organisers, Monica Chahoud and Marie Rizk, for their dedication and tireless efforts in making this luncheon a success. Their leadership and commitment is a true reflection of the foundation's values. This luncheon was a powerful demonstration of community solidarity, bringing people together to support a cause that uplifts and transforms lives for the better.

#### **SAMARITANS CELEBRATES 40 YEARS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Samaritans on celebrating an incredible 40 years of dedicated service to our local community. Founded by the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle in 1984, Samaritans has grown to become a cornerstone of support for those in need across the Hunter, Lake Macquarie, Central Coast, and Mid North Coast. For four decades, Samaritans has expanded its reach to offer more than 100 programs and initiatives, touching countless lives through compassionate care and practical assistance. Their commitment to providing emergency relief, safe refuge for those fleeing domestic violence, student accommodation for vulnerable youth, and support for families in crisis has made a profound impact on our community. The organisation's six Emergency Relief Centres have been at the forefront of crisis support, assisting over 113,000 cases in the past 15 years. This remarkable achievement underscores the vital role Samaritans plays in our region's social fabric. As Samaritans launches its annual Christmas Appeal, I recognise the increasing demand for their services and the ongoing generosity of our community. I commend Samaritans for their unwavering dedication to supporting those in need and congratulate them on 40 years of making a difference in the lives of local families and individuals.

#### **BOEING-LED STEM**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Maitland Grossmann High School students for their enthusiastic participation in the Boeing-led STEM workshops on September 24, 2024. These engaging sessions provided Year 7 to 10 students with valuable hands-on experience in aerospace engineering and sustainability. Under the guidance of Boeing engineers from the Williamstown facility, students designed and built model Mars landers and sustainable aircraft, putting their classroom knowledge into practice. The workshops culminated in exciting testing sessions, with Mars landers being dropped onto a topographical map and model aircraft taking flight. This practical application of STEM concepts not only sparked students' interest in space exploration and sustainable aviation but also highlighted potential career paths in these fields. Special recognition goes to Shane Dryden, STEM Project Officer for the Hunter Academy of STEM Excellence, for facilitating this valuable partnership between Boeing and Maitland Grossmann High School. These initiatives play a crucial role in connecting classroom learning to real-world applications and future careers in STEM. Congratulations to all participants for their innovative designs and presentations. Your enthusiasm and creativity demonstrate the bright future of STEM in the Maitland community.

#### **RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I would like to pay tribute to four incredible decades of heritage transport advocacy and service provided by members of the Rail Motor Society. The Society was formed in 1984 as a not-for-profit organisation determined to collect, preserve and operate a representative fleet of NSW Government Railways rail motors. By 1986, the dedicated members of this passionate group had achieved their goal. After commencing tourist operations, the Rail Motor Society has brought joy to the lives of thousands of train enthusiasts. Based in Paterson, the Society has continued to grow its membership numbers throughout its 40 year history. I congratulate the Rail Motor Society and its wonderful members on reaching four decades of service. Your passion for heritage transport and your commitment to sharing your knowledge with our community has made you an integral part of the Maitland region's identity. We

appreciate your service, admire your advocacy and thank you for the work you do to highlight how integral transport is to our communities.

#### **NORTH SYDNEY FESTIVAL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, this year marked the inaugural North Sydney Festival, and what a resounding success it was. The festival was in celebration of the arrival of the new Victoria Cross Metro Station and the influx of new retailers and hospitality venues into the area. This exciting milestone presented the perfect opportunity to bring the community together. The North Sydney CBD was transformed into a hub of activity, with Mount Street, Denison Street, Brett Whitely Place, and Elizabeth Plaza coming alive with live music, stunning art and installations and performances. It was a hugely successful day that offered free, all-ages entertainment. I acknowledge the work of the North Sydney Council in organising such a huge event in partnership with the NSW Government. The success of the day was a testament to all the hard work that went on behind the scenes, from the organisers to the performers and market stall owners. I also attribute some of the day's success to the vibrancy and wonderful community spirit of North Sydney locals. I congratulate all those involved, and thank my community for its support.

#### **LINK WENTWORTH 40 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I want to recognise the 40th anniversary of Link Wentworth, one of the biggest community housing providers in the country. Last month, I attended Link Wentworth's celebration of four decades of community housing in the North Sydney area. The event was held at the View Hotel in North Sydney, and presented a perfect opportunity to reflect on all the organisation has done for our community over the past 40 years. Link Wentworth offers amazing community housing services, helping over 10,000 residents across 6,400 homes. The organisation started in 1984 with the establishment of eight local community tenancy schemes across New South Wales, one of those original eight being the Lower North Shore Community Housing Association. Over the last 40 years, those schemes joined to become Link Wentworth. I thank the team behind the momentous occasion, who ensured the event was a resounding success, your hard work was evident. I acknowledge the time and dedication the Link Wentworth team pour into such a worthy cause, and the positive impacts their organisation has on our community. I especially want to acknowledge Link Wentworth CEO Andrew McAnulty.

#### **LONG WHITE LUNCH - HILLSTON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise the organising committee of the Hillston Hogs Rugby Club's Long White Lunch, an annual event raising money for Hillston Can Assist. In 2023, this incredible initiative raised a significant \$37,400 for the cause. This year, the event drew 200 ticket holders to the Hillston racecourse, with supporters traveling from as far as Canberra and Bourke to show their support for Hillston Can Assist. The remarkable event included lunch, along with silent and live auctions, generously supported by local sponsors, and even a head shave to boost fundraising efforts. Though a small town in the Western Riverina, Hillston clearly demonstrates that it can make a big difference. The Long White Lunch committee deserves commendation for their unwavering commitment to the community and their dedication to an important cause.

#### **JASON RICHARDSON - LEETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today, I acknowledge Jason Richardson—curator, educator, and artist in the Riverina—who has significantly raised the profile of Leeton's Fivebough Wetlands. His efforts have highlighted this vital ecosystem, known for supporting a rich abundance and diversity of waterbirds, including migratory shorebirds and threatened species. The Fivebough Wetlands hold international importance as a designated Ramsar site, a status that promotes the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources. Jason's interest in promoting the Wetlands led him to create a captivating artwork, along with a banner and an information session in collaboration with the Leeton Community Op Shop—symbolically reflecting the idea that "birds of a feather flock together." Beyond his environmental work, Jason has also made valuable contributions to the Griffith Pioneer Park Museum, where his curation and artistic talents have brought historical narratives—both told and untold—to life, deepening the community's connection to its heritage. Jason Richardson is to be commended for his ongoing dedication to environmental preservation, education, and culture.

#### **KELVIN AND JULIE WARD**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I acknowledge two remarkable individuals, Kelvin and Julie Ward from Silverwater whose dedication to the Lake Macquarie community and the environment is truly inspiring. As founding leaders of the Sunshine and Silverwater Landcare Group, Kelvin and Julie have been instrumental in leading efforts to protect and restore the natural beauty of the Morisset Peninsula, particularly around Johnny's Point and Sunshine Park. Their commitment to environmental advocacy has not only enhanced

the landscapes we all cherish, but also fostered a sense of community and responsibility for the environment. A great example of this is the instrumental role they played in having the boardwalk and path through Johnny's Point formalised, with a boardwalk through to Beach Road, opening the area for the enjoyment of all. In addition to caring for our environment, Kelvin and Julie have been dedicated volunteers with Southlakes Anglican Church driving buses to transport elderly parishioners to various activities and appointments on a weekly basis for some 30 years. Kelvin and Julie's longstanding dedication to the Morisset district is a wonderful example of how individuals can make a real difference in the world around them.

#### **HMAS SYDNEY (I) ENGAGEMENT COMMEMORATION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, I recognise the 110th anniversary of the sinking of the German Cruiser SMS Emden. On November 9th 1914, the Emden launched an attack on the British Cable Station at Direction Island when it was engaged by HMAS Sydney (I), commanded by Captain John Glossop. After an intense battle, the Emden was forced to run aground after 134 men were killed. To commemorate this important anniversary, the HMAS Sydney Association hosted a memorial service at Bradley's Head Reserve, where the HMAS Sydney I Memorial Mast stands as a poignant tribute to those who served. I would like to express my gratitude to Meg Shaw, Brian Yeo, and Barry Brooks of the HMAS Sydney I Association for their tireless efforts in organising this important event. I also recognise the members of the Royal Australian Navy, Commodore Terence Morrison DSM RAN, Commodore Paul Kable AM RAN Retd, and Lieutenant Commander James Strahlhut RAN. A special thanks to the family members of HMAS Sydney I and our current serving men and women. Lest we forget.

#### **ANUSHKA AND ANNIKA IYENGAR**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—I'm proud to acknowledge Annika and Anushka Iyengar of Maryland Public School who recently competed in the finals of the Premier's Spelling Bee and joined just ten others from the Hunter region at the finals of this prestigious competition. The Spelling Bee is open to students in public primary schools all across New South Wales, and it is an engaging way for these students to expand their vocabularies and improve their spelling. These students have beaten a combined eighteen hundred students in a series of regional heats to reach the finals. Anushka ("Nushi") in Year 6 and Annika in Year 3, have spent many hours together, with their parents' guidance and encouragement, perfecting their spelling and pronunciation. Anushka nominates "onomatopoeia" as her hardest word, and her favourite is "gobbledygook", while Annika's favourite is "discombobulate" and her hardest that perennial one that has stumped us all at some stage, "encyclopedia". On behalf of the people of Wallsend I sincerely congratulate both Annika and Anushka on such an impressive effort in making the finals.

#### **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HELEN ENGLISH**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Associate Professor Helen English delivered "Wallsend's Early Music Making, 1860-1880" on Sunday August 11, 2024. It was a splendid talk about music largely produced and supported by coalminers around Wallsend, its bands, choirs and music societies. Helen, a musician, is passionate about historical music-making, especially in the Hunter Valley. She played recordings of music of the time, referring to: music and traditional owners of the land; migrants and their musicality; the influence of the Welsh, Geordies, Scottish and Irish; the role of churches, notably non-conformist churches; the Primitive Methodist ideals of education, music, and equality; and the settler community's use of music to build social cohesion, providing a world away from dirty and dark mines, and as a means to gain respect. Helen discovered a letter from a 'working miner' in Wallsend in 1863 to the Newcastle Chronicle, describing the value and importance of societies to bring people together to provide an alternative to 'a dark and dirty mine'. He recommended music societies and acknowledged the musical talent of miners who typically were not respected and did not respect themselves. My thanks, Helen, for your wonderful contribution to Wallsend's 150th!

#### **ST IGNATIUS COLLEGE ROWING CLUB**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr. Speaker, I direct my most sincere congratulations to the St Ignatius College Rowing Club, led by the incredible Dan Noonan. I note that the Riverview Rowing Program is of the most successful ever designed and implemented at the high school level. This is seen through the Club's continued all-round success not only at the AAGPS Head of the River but also in the ever-increasing popularity of the sport at the college.

#### **ST JOESPH'S ROWING CLUB**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr. Speaker, I would like to Congratulate the St Joesph's Rowing Club for their success earlier this year in the AAGPS Head of the River. I know they will continue to work harder than ever to achieve another successful season as the competition is always hot on their heels. Congratulations.

### THE CHINESE BUILDING ASSOCIATION OF NSW

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge The Chinese Building Association of NSW [CBANSW]. Fantastically led by CEO Carson Gao, the association empowers its members through professional development and industry connection, this has resulted in growth to over 400 business members in just five years. CBANSW has fostered innovation and knowledge sharing by organising over 160 events with over 120,000 attendees. Their commitment to excellence helps deliver more and higher quality housing in New South Wales.

### LOWLANDS BOWLING CLUB

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—A big congratulations to Lowlands Bowling Club for being the proud recipient of the prestigious '2024 Club Innovation Award' at the Bowls NSW Awards. Known affectionately by Cooks Hill locals as 'Lowies', the club was acknowledged for their sustained growth in recent years in addition to their ongoing engagement with the local community. The oldest but one of many small clubs in the region, the club has successfully survived in an environment where many small clubs have been forced to close their doors. In addition to this incredible achievement, the club has been active in raising awareness and much-needed funds for domestic violence against women. Last month, the club held a week-long charity event that culminated in raising \$3,101 as well as 1,108 toiletry donations for local not-for-profit organisation Jenny's Place. The Lowlands Bowling Club has gone from strength to strength this year, and I would like to thank the club for their contribution to our local community.

### KATE GILL

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—I would like to acknowledge the incredible achievements of Novocastrian sports advocate, Kate Gill. After a decade of service, Kate is stepping down from her role as Professional Footballers Australia Co-Chief Executive. Throughout her career as a professional footballer, executive and advocate, Kate has championed gender equality for women players in football at both the national and international level. A former Matildas captain and Newcastle Jets foundation player, Kate made history as the first female PFA executive committee member before joining the management team in 2015. Upon her appointment as Co-Chief Executive, Kate was not only instrumental in securing the first-ever A-League Women CBA, but also played an integral role in delivering the groundbreaking gender equality CBA between the Matildas and Socceroos in 2019. Kate's outstanding leadership, passion, and dedication to women in sport has been invaluable, and I thank her for her contributions to our community. Enjoy your retirement.

### BLACKTOWN CITY COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR CAROL ISRAEL

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Councillor Carol Israel on being re-elected as Councillor of Blacktown City Council, Ward 3. Carol commenced her first job in Australia as a Crew Member at Burger King, after arriving from the Philippines in 2001. Inspired to advocate for the rights of retail workers, Carol became a Union Official with the SDA. Motivated by her fierce passion to help our community, Carol joined local government as a Labor Councillor in 2016. In her capacity as Councillor, Carol has continued to advocate for members of our community in need. She served as Chair of the Access Advisory Committee and the Multicultural Advisory Committee. Carol was the driving force behind the Doonside station upgrade, working to ensure our train stations provide an accessible transport option for all. Carol is a thoughtful leader who champions others. As a first-generation migrant, Carol's genuine understanding of lived experiences informs considerate, meaningful decision-making to keep our community connected. Congratulations again Carol, on this fantastic achievement. You have served with diligence and integrity for the last nine years, and I have no doubt that you will continue to serve our Western Sydney community to the highest standard this term.

### AUSTRALIAN AFRICAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - AAFA

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Sunday 20th October, I was delighted to address players, officials and hundreds of fans at the Opening Ceremony of the 5th Annual Multicultural Communities World Cup Football Tournament at Rydalmere Park. Organised by the Australian African Football Association – AAFA, this exciting tournament has grown to a record 44 teams in 2024, celebrating our cultural diversity, fostering social inclusion and building community engagement through football. This year's competition, played out of Rydalmere Park and Padstow Park, features Youth U16s, Men's and Women's All Age teams, competing for glory until Grand Final Day on Sunday 8th December. Our African community has shown great resilience and determination in the face of incredible hardship, fleeing from conflict, persecution and misfortune in their distant homelands and making a profound impact on our multicultural society today, settling throughout our local Prospect Electorate and across Western Sydney. Their wonderful initiative brings together young people from various multicultural backgrounds, providing a platform to promote harmony and showcase the talents of the next generation. My

warmest congratulations go out to Mohammed Omar, Secretary, AAFA and all volunteers, competitors and officials on a fantastic event. May the best team win!

#### **WENTWORTHVILLE COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was fantastic to attend the Wentworthville Community Garden Annual Open Day on 19th October 2024, and celebrate this great resource. The Wentworthville Community Garden was founded by the former Holroyd City Council in 2008 to bring people from all walks of life and cultures together. For over 16 years, it has connected our local community to garden, grow affordable fresh food, relax, meet neighbours and participate in activities that encourage harmony, cooperation and a sense of belonging. The garden has won awards from the Sydney Royal Easter Show and from Keep Australia Beautiful for the project's sustainability. The Open Day offered a great opportunity to showcase the garden's contribution to our Western Sydney community, and to help raise funds for the garden's operational costs. Featuring fresh, locally grown veggies from the garden, jams and pickles, plants and seedlings for sale, a sausage sizzle, curry stall, morning tea as well as crafts activities, it was an engaging day for the whole family. Thank you to Secretary Robyn Main and the dedicated gardening team for your dedication to cultivating this welcoming community space. I encourage everyone to go visit this award-winning community garden in Wentworthville.

#### **DUBBO KANGAROOS RUGBY CLUB CANCER FUNDRAISER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Dubbo Kangaroo's Rugby Club who recently held a "Stronger than Cancer" fundraiser in memory of Will Coy. Will was a popular member of the Kanagroos club, who tragically had lost his only sibling to cancer when she was aged just twelve. The Roos, supported by Warwick El-Mahassni, owner of the local strength and conditioning gym, the Iron Foundry, came out in full force in memory of their mate who tragically lost his own short battle with Burkitt's Lymphoma just weeks before the fundraiser. The mates who came together as members of the rugby club pitched their strength against members of the gym in a series of progressive strength and weightlifting contests. The prize at stake was massive – bragging rights! The club had been doing ongoing fundraising for Will, raising more than \$30,000. The stronger than cancer event added an additional \$500 to this impressive tally, which will support his family with funeral expenses and other costs. I congratulate the Roo's on their dedication to supporting their mate and his family. Such a great effort for a loved bloke lost too soon. Rest in peace Will.

#### **TREVOR NICHOLSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Trevor Nicholson who has recently hung up his whistle after forty years of refereeing rugby union. A passionate and vocal union fan, his journey began in an unexpected way – after being sent from the sideline during a game for being far too vocal and was told he would be given a rugby law book! This moment was the catalyst for his refereeing journey. As his skills developed, he was appointed to referee numerous first, second and third grade games including grand finals. Trevor and his family would travel all over the country, racking up many kilometres to referee games. In 1995 Trevor was transferred to Wellington through his job with Elders and took on the coaching role for the Wellington Redback's first grade team. Over three seasons, he led the team to win two out of three premierships. Most recently, before retirement, Trevor focused on refereeing junior games and coaching. He used the opportunity to educate and teach the players, ensuring their development went beyond just following the rules, making it a more enriching experience for the young athletes. Thank you for dedication and commitment Trevor!

#### **DUBBO TOUCH ASSOCIATION**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to acknowledge Dubbo Touch Association who were recently recognised as finalists at the NSW Touch Awards in two categories. As a finalist in the Affiliate of the Year category, nominees are recognised for their overall excellence in administration, operations, and on-field success. Special attention is given to strategies, programs and innovations that enhance and support participation growth in players, referees, and coaching. Club stalwart Tracey Whillock was a finalist in the Administrator of the Year category. As a finalist, Tracey was recognised as an Administrator who sets the standard for volunteer community sport and administration. Whilst they weren't successful winning the awards, their selection as finalists is testament to the dedication, commitment and passion demonstrated by the Dubbo Touch Association committee. I commend the Association for the outstanding way they continue to administer the club at such a high standard, consistently providing excellent sporting opportunities for both juniors and seniors in Dubbo.

#### **MARK "DIGGER" HOWARD**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Ensuring the values of honesty, trust, support, friendship and camaraderie are always maintained have been a feature of Mark "Digger" Howard's unwavering service to the Hill End Rural Fire Service. Mark has received the Long Service Medal for 44 years' service as a member of his local Brigade. Throughout changes over the decades towards fire response, equipment and firefighting strategies,

Mark has embraced his role as a loyal Brigade member. He served as Captain of the Beacon Hill RFS in 1994, taking on a critical role within the Brigade during the 1994 NSW fires. Today, he continues to reflect these positive values by leading Brigade training, engaging in operations – including the 2023 Alpha Road Fire – supporting the RFS and community engagement. His manner, good humour and integrity all place Mark as a highly respected member, not only of the Hill End RFS Brigade, but also the wider Hill End community. Congratulations "Digger" on a job well done. Your community owes you a vote of thanks.

#### **BILL BESTWICK**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Bill Bestwick's commitment to keeping his community safe was acknowledged at a recent NSW Rural Fire Service medal ceremony. Bill received the Long Service Medal for 44 years of service as a member of the Turondale and a former member of Duramana Brigade. Bill was the Deputy Captain for the Turondale Brigade for 12 years before stepping into the Captains role, he has attended many campaign fires over the years along with local incidents. Bill's knowledge of heavy plant has been called upon many times over the years to assist with large fires for which he was always eager to help. Throughout changes over the decades towards fire response, equipment and firefighting strategies, Bill has embraced his role as a loyal Brigade member. Congratulations Bill on a job well done. Your community owes you a vote of thanks.

#### **MAURICE MCMILLEN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—If ever there was a dedicated servant of the community, it would have to be NSW Rural Fire Service long serving volunteer Maurice McMillen. Maurice has diligently served the Eglinton community and the Chifley Lithgow area since 1964 and has maintained active membership for the past 50 years. It is therefore fitting that he has received the 45 years service National Medal Third Clasp as well as the 50 Year Long Service Clasp. During this time Maurice has held numerous positions within the Brigade, including Captain, Senior Deputy, Deputy, Deputy Group Officer and Group Officer for 20 years, only retiring from this role in July 2024. Although he has now retired, Maurice will remain a vital part of the Chifley Lithgow team in a consulting role with the SLT and the District Manager on volunteer relations. In 2022 Maurice was inducted as a Life Member of the Eglinton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade and in 2023 was recognised as a worthy recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal. Congratulations Maurice McMillen on a job well done. Your community certainly owes you a vote of thanks.

#### **AUSTRALIANA PIONEER VILLAGE REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and thank the Australiana Pioneer Village of Wilberforce for their Remembrance Day service. Held on the 10th November 2024, park attendees on this typical Sunday of operation were able to witness and partake in the service ahead of Remembrance Day. Vice President Laurie Archer led the service on behalf of the organisation. Volunteers paused their store fronts and events of the living museum to assist and pay their respects. Members of the Light Horse Brigade were also in attendance, laying red and purple poppies to acknowledge the service of both defence personnel and animals. This was a special occasion for children and visitors to the village, observing traditional customs and outfits worn by residents of the early 19th century. Attendees connected to the historic site, assembling in the Village Green just as members of the community did in the past. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

#### **CLARENDON CLASSIC MACHINERY, TRUCK AND HOBBY SHOW**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the Sydney Antique Machinery Club Inc. for hosting the Clarendon Classic Machinery, Truck and Hobby show. Held on 21st and 22nd September 2024, attendees joined at Clarendon Showground to marvel at various displays of tractors, engines, vintage cars, bikes and tools. Hosted annually, the show provides a range of exhibits for all members of the community. These include collectables, art and craft displays, amusement rides and demonstrations. There are also historical displays showing the significant transformation of technologies and materials over time. Complimenting these historical displays is the Double Decker Bus Ride, linking Richmond Station to the machinery Show and undoubtedly being a highlight of the event for children and motor enthusiasts. I thank the Sydney Antique Machinery Club for hosting this event, allowing for such a fun and informative day for attendees. It is wonderful that so many community members were able to discover and connect with the rich history of transport, machinery and hobbies. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

#### **JIE ZHAO**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Jie Zhao of Hawkesbury District Hospital. Jie moved from a projected career in accounting to one as a registered nurse, aiding the staff and patients of Hawkesbury. Relocating from China to Australia at the age of 16, Jie began his studies in finance. Juggling work and study, he faced some of the loneliness and financial hardship that many international students can encounter. It was these experiences that led him to pursue his calling to be a nurse. Jie completed his studies

and is now a registered nurse at Hawkesbury District Hospital's operating theatres. Jie is passionate about his role and ensures that professional development, camaraderie and holistic care for patients remain his primary focus. I thank Jie for his service and wish him all the best in his career development. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

#### **CANCER COUNCIL OF NSW 7 BRIDGES WALK**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the NSW Cancer Council's annual '7 Bridges Walk', designed to raise funds and awareness for cancer research, prevention advocacy and support services. The walk, which traverses 28 kilometres over the scenic paths and iconic bridges of Sydney Harbour, helped to raise over \$2.2 million this year, in support of the work of the Cancer Council. I was delighted this year to join organisers and participants at Rozelle Village and appreciate the great community atmosphere. I want to congratulate the many staff and volunteers at the Cancer Council of NSW, including Jacqui Greenfield, and Maddi McEnaney, whose efforts made this event possible. I extend my congratulations to all the participants in the walk and their supporters. The organisers deserve our thanks for their hard work in bringing together such an enjoyable event to support a cause that has touched many lives. This is an event that resonates deeply within our community, and I look forward to supporting the 7 Bridges Walk again next year.

#### **REMEMBRANCE DAY WITH THE BALMAIN-ROZELLE RSL**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Remembrance Day is a solemn occasion where we pause to honour and reflect on the sacrifices made by the men, women and animals in wartime. It is over 100 years since the guns fell silent in "the war to end war", yet we have seen no end to global conflict. It is an important time for us to reflect on the lasting impacts of war —not just on the battlefield, but on families, communities, and future generations - and reaffirm our collective commitment to peace. I was privileged to share this sombre and reflective occasion with the Balmain/Rozelle Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia. The opportunity to lay a wreath on behalf of the Balmain electorate and recite a poem was extremely meaningful, and I want to extend my thanks to the organisers for this beautiful event. Thank you to RSL organisers Ron Glew OAM, President, Matthew Davies, Acting Secretary, and to everyone whose tireless efforts ensure our community comes together for peace and extends our respects to the fallen and to those who served every year.

#### **CALLAN PARK VETERANS - A CENTURY OF CONNECTIONS**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I recognise the ongoing efforts of the Friends of Callan Park to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of Callan Park, particularly through their work on 'A Century of Connections', an exhibition that relaunched at Leichhardt Library just last night. Callan Park served as a treatment and care centre for returned soldiers following WW1. Hundreds of veterans were accommodated there until care facilities closed in 2008. The Friends of Callan Park strive to share this story with the community through their self-guided historic exhibition, which initially ran during April and May of this year as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival. This important exhibition was so well-received that it has been picked up by Leichhardt Library for re-presentation in the month of November. I was pleased to attend the Remembrance Day relaunch last night and recommend everyone visits. I thank the Friends of Callan Park, especially President Hall Greenland, Secretary Cynthia Nadai, and Roslyn Burge; and Amy Zar from Inner West Council, for their work on the exhibition.

#### **SCHOOL LEADERS AT OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE PARRAMATTA**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to the new student leadership team at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta on their recent selection. Gabrielle Ann Fleming on her selection as Head Girl, Ashwini Aravinthan as Assistant Head Girl, Emma Maroun as SRC President, and Isabelle Boshell as SRC Vice President. I trust that you will all serve your term as school leaders dutifully and diligently, developing vital leadership skills that you will use for the rest of your lives.

#### **JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE FINDING SAFETY PROJECT**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—On Thursday 28th August, I attended the Australia Finding Safety Project Forum hosted by the Jesuit Refugee Service [JRS] at Club Parramatta. The forum acknowledged the benefits and educational elements to the Finding Safety Project along with an opportunity to discuss the important challenges Family and Domestic Violence victim-survivors from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities face. JRS has advocated for the rights of people seeking asylum, refugees, and migrants for more than 15 years in Parramatta and their work as part of Women's Spaces in the Heart of Parramatta is to be commended. Western Sydney is home to the largest asylum seeker and refugee women population in Australia, and sadly domestic and family violence is a key concern for too many of these women and their children. Finding Safety Project Coordinator Sara Muzamil and Magdalene Konneh brought together professionals and women with lived experience to shine a light on the systemic barriers faced by victim-survivors on temporary visas. It was a pleasure to speak to those gathered about the NSW Government's commitment and initiatives that we are funding to address Family and Domestic Violence, particularly amongst our CALD communities.

### CATHERINE MCAULEY NEW SCHOOL LEADERS

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Catherine McAuley at Westmead has a strong history of school leadership and determination. Demonstrating values of faith and service is so important to being a school leader, as it presents a great opportunity for students to develop leadership and communication skills, that they will utilise throughout their lives. The role of a school leader is so important to everyone within the school community as these young people are often the conduit between teachers, parents and their fellow students. Congratulations to recently selected school captains Kaitlin Commodore and Emily Gonzlez, alongside the following leaders; Elisha Zammit, Leader of Liturgy; Isabella Limjap, Leader of Social Justice; Sophie Bousalim, Leader of Culture; Brinda Srinivas, Leader of Environment; Tahlia Houssarini, Leader of Hospitality; Niamh Malone, Leader of Learning; Genevieve Allen, Leader of Sport; Ann Clivin, Leader of Technology; Jade Seghabi, Leader of Caritas House; Zarah Mowbray, Leader of Clare House; Rochelle Nuner, Leader of Coolock House; Teresa Maka, Leader of Dobson House; Florencia Wanandy, Leader of Mercedes House; Chloe Chen, Leader of Ryan House; Isabella Pace, Leader of Veritas House. May this cohort of young women both enjoy and rise to the challenge of leading their peers.

### CADENCE CAMPBELL

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Cadence Campbell, the Captain of Lambton High School has recently been presented with an Order of Australia Association (NSW Branch) Youth Community Service Award 2024 by Governor Margaret Beazley. Cadence has been recognised for her involvement in three main areas: the 211 Army Cadet Unit at Adamstown, her service as School Captain and for her commitment to the mountain bike community. An exemplary leader, Cadence has risen to Cadet Under Officer where she has fostered a commitment amongst her fellow cadets to service, courage, integrity, excellence, and respect, and also provided emotional support to youth facing struggles in various aspects of their lives. As School Captain, she has led idea-sharing among staff and students, organised school events such as charity drives, cultural celebrations, fundraising for the Smith Family Foundation, creating positive change within her school, guiding younger students and nurturing future leaders. Cadence also helps to empower young females in mountain biking, showcasing her passion for inclusivity and support, through coaching and encouragement. Congratulations, Cadence, on your award and I look forward to hearing about the great things that you will do in the future.

### THE MIND CAFÉ

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I want to acknowledge The Mind Café in my electorate of Pittwater. The Mind Café is a safe space that promotes social inclusiveness and kindness. It is a hub for everyone, including those with disabilities, mental health struggles and a place where not-for-profits can offer their services. The Café is founded by Guy Morel, and is inspired by his personal story. Guy tried to take his own life in 2018 after battling with his mental health and gambling and has shared his story at a recent Northern Beaches Gambling forum to progress policy in this area. Earlier this year, the cafe faced closure, but the community rallied and it continues to be a wonderful place for people to be able to go and have chat over a coffee, particularly for those who are really struggling. It also won the 2023 Northern Beaches Disability Inclusion Award and was highly commended this year.

### NEWPORT SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I want to congratulate the Newport Surf Life Saving Club on its recent award for its 'Fit to Learn' program at Surf Life Saving Australia National Awards of Excellence. This program teaches surf awareness, beach safety skills for at risk and vulnerable youth from South West and Northern Sydney. Guyren Smith, the club president, and all those involved should feel proud of this achievement. Over the last year, surf lifesavers have performed over 8,800 rescues, 2.4 million preventative actions, 49,000 first aid treatments and completed 1.4 million hours keeping watch over Australia's beaches.

### BILGOLA SURF LIFESAVING CLUB

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—On the weekend Bilgola Surf Lifesaving Club celebrated its 75th anniversary. I would like to congratulate all the members past and present for reaching this significant milestone. Since 1949 the Bilgola surf lifesavers have not only saved many lives, they have also been involved in developments of the lifesaving movement including the first trials of the torpedo tube and the introduction of synthetic lines. Over the years the Bilgola surfboat crews have won many significant awards including in 2006 when the Gold Women's Open Crew won the world championship. They continue to having a thriving Nippers program that has one of the highest retention rates in NSW.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE POLICE AREA COMMAND AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2024**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the outstanding individuals recognised with NSW Police Medallion Lapel Pins and Commissioner of Police Long Service Awards at the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command Medals and Awards Presentation Ceremony on 29 August 2023. The NSW Police Medallion Lapel Pin is for unsworn members and former unsworn members of the New South Wales Police Force who have completed ten or more years of diligent and ethical service. The medallion portrays the NSW Police Force wedgetail eagle, Nemesis Scroll and the State badge, surrounded by the inscription "NSW Police – diligent and ethical service". I commend the individuals that were recognised. I acknowledge the recipients of the NSW Police Medallion Lapel Pin and the Commissioner of Police Long Service Awards namely, Melissa Kehane for 15 years and Debra Sweeny for 25 years of service. I also acknowledge Former Senior Constable Emily Mackay for being presented with her Certificate of Service and Inspector Timothy Carter for receiving a Certificate of Commission. I was pleased to join members of the NSW Police Force to celebrate their exceptional achievements and again take this opportunity to formally thank them for their ongoing service to our community.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE POLICE AREA COMMAND NSW POLICE MEDALS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge our outstanding police officers recognised with National Service Medals at the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command Medals and Awards Presentation Ceremony on 29 October 2024. Amongst the awards presented on the day was the NSW Police Medal which recognises ten years eligible service with clasps awarded for each additional five-year period thereafter. I commend our police officers that were recognised. I acknowledge the recipients of the NSW Police Medal namely Michael Quick, Jake Chalmers, Elisha Francis and Jacob Heagney. I also acknowledge Trisha Laughlin, Nathan Kirkwood, Mark Johnstone and Howard Cunliffe for receiving their First Clasp to the NSW Police Medal and Trevor Hill, Nathan Kirkwood, Paul Watson, Grayson Withers, Karlee Ball for receiving their Second Clasp to the NSW Police Medal. Furthermore, I acknowledge Jane Scrivens, Matthew Hecimovic, Richard Hill and Anthony Cordina on receiving their Third Clasp and Michael Stuart who received his Fourth and Fifth Clasps marking an extraordinary 35 years' of service in the NSW Police Force. I was pleased to join our police officers to celebrate their exceptional achievements and again take this opportunity to thank them for their service in keeping our community safe.

### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE POLICE AREA COMMAND NATIONAL POLICE MEDALS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge our outstanding police officers recognised with National Service Medals at the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command Medals and Awards Presentation Ceremony on 29 October 2024. Amongst the many awards presented on the day was the National Police Service Medal which recognises the special status of police officers in protecting the community and the National Medal for long and diligent service to protecting the community in the enforcement of law. I commend our police officers that were recognised. I acknowledge the recipients of the National Police Service Medal and the National Medal namely, Trisha Laughlin, Peter Wilkes, Casey Beldon and First Clasp to the National Medal recipients Mark Johnstone and Jane Scrivens, Matthew Hecinovic and Richard Hill. Furthermore, I acknowledge Anthony Cordina who in addition to receiving his First Clasp to the National Medal also received the State Crime Commander's Citation. I was pleased to join our police officers to celebrate their exceptional achievements and again take this opportunity to formally thank them for their ongoing service to keep our community safe.

### **ST LUCY'S ART SHOW 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Thursday 7 November 2024, I officially opened the St Lucy's Art Show. The art show featured two inspiring exhibitions. The first, "I Am Australian", was a collaboration between St Lucy's School and Abbotsleigh School in Wahroonga. The second, "Down to Earth", was a collection of photographic artworks by St Lucy's student, Karuka Uthayakumaran. I understand from an early age, Karuka has communicated through art including painting, drawing and now photography. I am passionate about ensuring our local and wider community is part of a society that brings out the very best in all individuals, and that each and every individual reaches their full potential. This includes supporting the arts. I recognise St Lucy's School Principal David Raphael and Abbotsleigh School Headmistress Megan Krimmer for leading their respective teams of staff and volunteers. Our community has the highest levels of volunteering rates in all of NSW. We should be very proud of this fact. Finally, I recognise and congratulate to all the students for their effort, dedication and passion.

### **ERYLDENE HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDENS IN GORDON**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Eryldene Historic House and Gardens in Gordon. Famed for its early twentieth century architecture and its renowned gardens, Eryldene attracts thousands of visitors each and every year. It is a very special place in our local community. Eryldene was designed by William Hardy Wilson

and built by Rudolph G. Ochs from 1913 to 1936. It was built for Professor Eben Gowrie Waterhouse CMG and Janet Waterhouse. Importantly, the garden was jointly designed by Wilson and the Waterhouses, that would cultivate over 700 varieties of camellias. In 1999, Eryldene was appropriately listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. This will allow all future generations to appreciate, embrace and experience Eryldene. I recognise the Eryldene Foundation members Marianne Broeng, Penny Holden, Rosemary Milkins, Don Perlgut and Michael Waterhouse. I recognise the Board of the Eryldene Trust, Dr Claire Baddeley, Chris Bluett, Mark Brandon, Natalie Boyd, Sheridan Burke, Wendy Dellit, Jonathan Karanikas, Simon Lennon, Juliet Muras and Helen Wallace. Thank you for your dedication to Eryldene Historic House and Gardens in Gordon.

#### **NORTH FOUNDATION: FIVE YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the NORTH Foundation on marking five years in 2024. On Friday 22 November, the NORTH Foundation will be recognised by the Governor General, Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC at Admiralty House in Sydney. This is very special and appropriate. The NORTH Foundation's mission is to raise funds for the Northern Sydney Local Health District, including Royal North Shore Hospital, Ryde Hospital, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital and the Kolling Institute. Their fundraising pillars of purpose is to support research, education, care and nature that will deliver better patient outcomes by bridging the gap between the needs of today and what is possible for tomorrow. I recognise CEO Gilbert Lorquet, Amelia Seeto and Randy Wood, as well as the wider NORTH Foundation of Patrick Foong, Bronwyn O'Leary, Marina Khou, Adele Leathan, Bea Owen, Anastasia Bernardo, Carla Lewis, Natalea Iskra, Hazel Ng, Rameshika Perera, Sarah Barbour, Ian McCarthy and Chloe Marks. I recognise the Board of Directors, Chair Michael Ellies and directors Anthony Schembri, Jonathan Morris, Tim Parker, Penny Williams, Tanya Bowes, David Singer, Michelle Tea, Sophie Macintosh and Stephanie Allen. Thank you, NORTH Foundation, for making a real difference to the lives of so many individuals.

#### **JOHN VEAGE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise an incredible talent who has been telling the stories of the people and places in my community through his camera lens. John Veage is a dedicated photographer and storyteller who has worked with the St George and Sutherland Shire Leader for nearly 40 years. His exceptional ability to capture everything from community events to the serene dawn over our mangroves has left a lasting mark in the community. John joined the Leader in 1985 and quickly became a beloved figure, serving as Chief Photographer, and later as a photojournalist. His favourite moments came not from big events, but from unexpected encounters with locals, reflecting his deep love for our community. Beyond his work with the Leader, John has published three books and curated a successful exhibition and is now embarking on new adventures in surfing media. I would like to thank John for his passion and dedication which he has poured into the St George and Sutherland regions through his talent, and I wish him all the best for this next chapter in his life.

#### **NICHOLAS REMY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise a local talent from my community, Nicholas Remy, who has received a highly commended award in the International Wildlife Photographer of the Year awards in London. Nicholas is a Mortdale resident whose talent was recognised for his photo of a crested horn-shark eating a Port Jackson shark egg. This prestigious award is often likened to the Oscars of wildlife photography. He has been entering the Wildlife Photographer of the Year awards since 2016, and previously won the Ocean Photographer of the Year for his photo of a grey nurse shark in 2022. Nicholas and his wife have since started an online underwater photography school called the Underwater Club, with members from 18 countries. It is always a privilege to share the amazing achievements that arise from our local community and witness the nurturing of local talent that is essential for a thriving, interconnected community. I would like to congratulate Nicholas on achieving this prestigious award and commend his efforts in showcasing the beauty of nature to the world-stage. I wish him all the best for his next big adventure.

#### **GEORGES RIVER LIFE CARE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I have worked alongside Georges River Life Care for some time and am always thrilled to hear about the great work they do to support our local community. The Peakhurst-based food rescue charity has recently received a \$15,000 grant from Jemena's Community Grants program. This funding will help the charity provide additional food hampers and support for people facing food insecurity in the St George area, particularly as cost-of-living pressures rise. This outreach program sees Georges River Life Care partner with local supermarkets to save food and distribute it to families in need. As a community it is so important that during these cost-of-living challenges we support community organisations like Georges River Life Care who do fantastic work to ensure no one in our community is left behind. I would like to congratulate Karen Power and the entire Georges River Life Care on receiving this funding to continue this successful and important program and thank all staff and volunteers for their commitment and service to our community.

### GRAZE CRAZE GRAND OPENING

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate local business Graze Craze who officially opened the doors to their Five Dock business on Friday 1 November 2024. Graze Craze provides charcuterie style catering for events including birthdays, weddings, and other milestone occasions. Their product offering includes antipasto boards, fruit platters, cheese boards and even vegan alternatives with an emphasis on quality ingredients made in-house. I sincerely congratulate Pina Roda on this wonderfully exciting. It is always amazing to hear of locals embracing their entrepreneurial spirit and starting their own business. Taking the step to start your own venture is truly a remarkable achievement and I wish Pina all the very best as she enters this next chapter of her life. Congratulations on the grand opening of Graze Craze Five Dock. On behalf of our community, I wish Pina, her family, and the entire Graze Craze team all the very best and look forward to seeing the business continue to grow into the future.

### SUPERINTENDENT CHRISTINE MCDONALD

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to congratulate Superintendent Christine McDonald, Commander of Burwood Police Area Command who was awarded the Irene Juergens AMP Fellowship Award at the 2024 Rotary NSW Police Officer of the Year Awards. The Irene Juergens AMP Fellowship Award is awarded to an officer who has shown outstanding dedication to the community through their service and local engagement. Since her appointment as the Commander of Burwood Police Area Command earlier this year, Superintendent McDonald has actively engaged with our community, addressing the concerns of local residents and leading a united and energetic team of officers. Her previous service includes roles across NSW, starting as a Constable in Regional NSW and later as part of the Marine Area Command, Sex Crimes Squad and Chief of Staff to NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb. Our community is blessed to have a dedicated and committed local Police Force led by a compassionate and approachable leader. She always has time to listen to local residents, and her officers are actively engaged in addressing local issues. On behalf of our community, I sincerely thank Superintendent McDonald for her commitment to ensuring the safety of our community, and for her steadfast leadership.

### LIANA DEERY

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Liana Deery a Year 10 student at Yass High School. Liana was recently recognised at the 2024 Swimming ACT Awards night held in August. Former Olympian, Petria Thomas OAM, who represented Australia at the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympics was in attendance and presented Liana with the fifteen Years Girls Champion trophy at the awards night. Liana competed in multiple events and medalled in the Open (15 years and over) 200m Individual Medley event, placing third, receiving a bronze medal at the ACT Swimming Championships in February earlier this year. Liana had previously reached Australian National Age level, competing on the Gold Coast in 2023 in both butterfly and backstroke events. I sincerely congratulate Liana on these wonderful achievements and recognise both the dedication required to compete at this level and the demands of managing training and schoolwork. I wish you all the best Liana with continuing success in your swimming and all your future goals.

### RAY AND JAN LONGFELLOW

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—For over 40 years Ray and Jan Longfellow have run the Ivanhoe post office, providing members of the Ivanhoe community a critical service. They also ran the local café for 10 years providing over 100 meals a day for school lunch orders. People in rural communities can wear many hats, they do this because they are driven by dedication to their community. Through unwavering commitment and the strong sense of community spirit they embody what it means to live in the bush. The Longfellow's, originally from Western Australia moved to Ivanhoe many years ago and have been stalwarts for the community ever since. They have served on numerous committees over the years, far too many to list. Even in retirement, I am confident they will continue to support the Ivanhoe community in various ways. Congratulations to Ray and Jan Longfellow on an amazing career.

### GHANAIAN AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION – INAUGURAL CEREMONY

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Ghanaian Australian Women's Association [GAWA] on the successful establishment of their association and inaugural ceremony. GAWA's mission to empower Ghanaian women living in Australia and promote their wellbeing is a commendable effort that will positively impact both the Ghanaian community and broader Australian society. Their focus on fostering inclusion, cultural understanding, and providing support for women is invaluable in promoting harmony and social cohesion within our multicultural community. It is also inspiring to see GAWA's commitment to addressing critical issues such as migration and cultural interaction, topics that are especially relevant today. The opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions around skilled migration and how Ghanaian

women can navigate cultural exchanges is vital in strengthening our diverse communities. I would like to thank President Philomena Quansah and all members of GAWA for their hard work and dedication in creating a platform that will empower women and promote multicultural exchange. Their efforts are greatly appreciated, and I look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of GAWA. Best wishes for a successful event and for the future of the Ghanaian Australian Women's Association.

#### **AUSTRALIAN CHINESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF NSW – 50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to attend the Australian Chinese Community Association of NSW [ACCA] 50th anniversary banquet on Friday 1 November 2024. This milestone represents half a century of tireless dedication, leadership, and care, and I would like to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of the Australian Chinese Community Association [ACCA] to our community. Since its founding in 1974, ACCA has been a beacon of support for the Chinese-Australian community, especially for its older and more vulnerable members. ACCA's work extends far beyond care—it is a vital hub for cultural connection and community engagement. Its language classes, cultural programs, and activities promoting multiculturalism have enriched our shared society. The Association's commitment to inclusivity and care is further demonstrated through its wide-reaching efforts to raise funds for victims of natural disasters, showing the generosity and solidarity of the Chinese community in times of crisis. I congratulate the ACCA on their 50th anniversary and best wishes to their continued success and impact in the years ahead. Their vision, leadership, and hard work have touched countless lives, and their legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

#### **PARA SYDNEY COMMUNITY EVENT**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to attend the Palestine Australia Relief and Action [PARA] Sydney Community Event for newly arrived Palestinians from Gaza on the 28th of October in Bankstown. This special gathering provided a safe and supportive space for newcomers to connect, share stories, and begin building new bonds within their community. This memorable event featured talented traditional musicians from Gaza, whose performance transported attendees back to the heart of Palestine. Adding to the vibrant atmosphere, a group of young girls performed traditional Palestinian Dabkeh dance, showcasing the enduring spirit and cultural pride of the Palestinian community. PARA has consistently dedicated itself to helping Palestinians migrants and refugees lead safe, happy, and fulfilling lives in Australia. Founded and led by Australian Palestinians, PARA's core mission is to amplify Palestinian voice and nurture their strength. Through practical support, advocacy, and community initiatives, PARA is helping newly arrived Palestinians navigate challenges, find stability, and work towards achieving their full potential, free from barriers of conflict and displacement. This event truly embodied PARA's commitment to fostering resilience and unity within the Palestinian community. I commend PARA for its unwavering dedication to creating inclusive, compassionate environment where every member can thrive.

#### **THE EASTERN SUBURBS MEDICINE CENTRE**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I am grateful to the Eastern Suburbs Medicine Centre [ESMC] for the exceptional medical care and support it has provided to families and individuals in the Coogee electorate over an extended period. The ESMC is a beacon of professionalism, compassion, and accessibility, having been established with a dedication to patient-centered care. The Centre has consistently satisfied the changing requirements of its patients by providing a comprehensive array of services, including specialised treatments and general healthcare, through its multidisciplinary staff of committed medical practitioners, specialists, and support individuals. Many have been positively influenced by ESMC's emphasis on preventative care, holistic health, and community outreach, which guarantees that individuals have access to high-quality healthcare in a caring and welcoming environment. In addition to its medical expertise, ESMC is a fervent supporter of community well-being, organising health seminars, workshops, and educational initiatives that encourage individuals to assume responsibility for their health. The Centre is a vital asset for the Eastern Suburbs due to its proactive strategy for healthcare and steadfast dedication to excellence. We are delighted to recognise its continuous contributions to the wellness and vibrancy of our community.

#### **BONDI SALTIES**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I am grateful to the Bondi Salties on behalf of the Coogee electorate, as they are a prime example of community, companionship, and resilience. This iconic component of Bondi is comprised of a diverse collection of ocean devotees who are committed to open-water swimming. The Salties have established a welcoming atmosphere for swimmers of all ages and abilities, whether it be an early morning plunge, an afternoon swim. Their shared passion for the sea and dedication to health and well-being extends beyond the water, as they actively advocate for inclusivity, sustainable development, and positive mental health. The Salties are more than a swimming club; they are a family that provides mutual support and celebrates each other's accomplishments. A sense of belonging is fostered by their passion for the ocean, which serves as a

reminder of the significance of connection and the power of nature. The Bondi Salties provide a distinctive and inspiring sense of community, demonstrating that we can effect positive change collectively, regardless of whether we are a resident or a visitor. Their dedication is worthy of acknowledgement and recognition for the lively spirit they bring to the Bondi Beach community.

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