

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Friday 15 November 2024**

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

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

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw members' attention to guests from Kirrawee Public School, who have joined us today in the gallery. They will view some of the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly and then, unfortunately, take part in some role-play in the Legislative Council. Welcome.

**Mr Michael Daley:** They're still going up there, are they?

**The SPEAKER:** It is apparently still a thing, Attorney General. I say to our guests that Parliament is not normally like it is today. It is usually a bit more robust during question time or during debate on some of the more contested bills. I am pleased that our guests are seeing today's proceedings as it is a much more civil view of the Parliament. I hope they are enjoying their day. I also welcome Kate Horrobin, Chrissie Tucker, Kevin Cranshaw, Mark Collier and Joseph Grech, guests of the member for Balmain.

### *Business of the House*

#### **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1960 to 1988 have lapsed.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Bills*

#### **PORTS AND MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (WHITE BAY CRUISE TERMINAL—SHORE POWER) BILL 2024**

##### **First Reading**

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

##### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (10:20):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024. This important legislation will require that all cruise ships plug in to the grid when berthed at White Bay Cruise Terminal, reducing the harmful emissions and noise pollution that nearby residents have endured for many years. It will give my community certainty and comfort that once shore power is finally installed at the end of 2026—and not this year, as the Labor Government had promised up until a couple of months ago—they will no longer be subject to ongoing noise and fumes from cruise ships berthed at White Bay Cruise Terminal.

I welcome the presence in the gallery today, as was acknowledged by the Speaker, of members of Stop Cruise Ship Pollution, Kate Horrobin, Kevin Cranshaw, Chrissie Tucker, Joseph Grech and Mark Collier. I thank them for being here today. They have campaigned tirelessly with the community for an end to cruise ship pollution at White Bay, and it is important I acknowledge them this morning. I hope that with the introduction of this bill we are one step closer to achieving our goal. I also acknowledge the many other community members involved in this campaign over many years who are unable to be here this morning.

The White Bay Cruise Terminal, which received development approval in 2011 by then Labor Minister for Planning, Mr Tony Kelly, was developed to accommodate domestic cruise ships and was sold as a way to

support local tourism. Opened in April 2013, the terminal replaced Barangaroo as a dedicated docking point for smaller vessels that could not access the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Circular Quay due to size constraints. For cruise ship operators, that was not good enough. They criticised the location because the largest of their ships could not fit under the Harbour Bridge to dock there. Local residents expressed concern about the extra pressure that thousands of cruise ship passengers would place on the area. The impact of cruise ships docking so close to homes and schools was front of mind, with many voicing concerns over increased air and noise pollution. That criticism arose due to emissions from idling ships, as there was no way of supplying power to the vessels to allow them to turn their engines off while docked.

Despite those concerns, the Keneally Labor Government waved it through just before its annihilation at the ballot box in 2011, but the community's concerns around noise and fumes have proven to be well founded ever since. It is important to note that the promised economic benefits from the location of the cruise terminal at White Bay have never materialised in our community. Despite cruise ships being docked within a couple of hundred metres of homes and a few hundred metres from two local primary schools, access to the terminal is disconnected from our local business centres. Tourists embark and disembark without stopping to take in all that nearby Balmain and Rozelle have to offer. Instead they are hopping into private cars or onto a shuttle bus service to be whisked away to the CBD or Circular Quay directly. They are bypassing our local businesses altogether, and any promised benefit has never been realised. But the noise and the fumes from the ships using the terminal are not whisked away to other places. They stay behind, and the nearby homes and schools have been forced to endure these impacts for more than 10 long years.

By way of example, records kept by former member for Balmain Mr Jamie Parker reveal the significant number of complaints that were raised with his office over the summer of 2018-19. In relation to unbearably noisy engines, vessels such as the *Sea Princess*, the *Pacific Explorer*, the *Insignia* and the *Crystal Symphony* featured regularly. In relation to the overpowering smell of burning fossil fuels, the *Seabourn Sojourn*, *Arcadia*, *Sun Princess* and *Columbus* were frequently named. These were complaints made by local community members who were at their wits' end. They had already raised concerns with the Port Authority of New South Wales and had no satisfactory outcome, because these huge, energy-sucking vessels were simply doing what they were designed to do: keeping their engines running in order to keep the lights on.

That was in relation to the noisy and smelly vessels berthing overnight. It was not just impacting people's peaceful enjoyment for a few hours during the day; it was genuinely getting in the way of a good night's sleep. More than five years on and we are yet to see any significant improvement. Is it any wonder that the community is so frustrated that the government has broken its promise to bring shore power online by the end of this year?

It is not just an issue for people in their homes. We need to remember the considerable impact it is having on students at Father John Therry Primary School and Balmain Public School, which are across the road from each other and within 500 metres of the cruise terminal. Balmain Public School has been unable to secure funding under the Cooler Classrooms program, which is designed to fund the installation of air conditioning in schools, because it falls below the average temperature threshold. The school must rely on natural ventilation, keeping windows open to manage classroom temperatures, air quality and, particularly during covid, the potential spread of disease among students. But during the scorching summer months, Balmain Public School is forced to keep its windows closed whenever one of the noisy and smelly ships arrives in port because they are faced with the choice between unbearable heat or breathing in unbearable fumes. That is simply unacceptable.

My community has never been one to take things lying down. Right from the beginning there has been a significant push to have the issue of pollution at the White Bay Cruise Terminal brought under control, and the community should be commended for their unrelenting commitment to having that resolved. Shore power gives vessels the option to plug into an onshore power supply, allowing them to cut their engines while berthed. It is an obvious solution. Shore power could greatly improve residents' quality of life, aligning port operations with international environmental standards seen in ports like Los Angeles and Vancouver. But we are told it would be too expensive.

In 2017 shore power was investigated by the Port Authority of NSW and was considered to be unfeasible due to the cost of installing cabling from the Rozelle sub-transmission station to the terminal. But the community was backed by Jamie Parker, my predecessor as the member for Balmain, who questioned the Government on why the terminal continued to operate without the necessary infrastructure to mitigate pollution impacts on local communities. He highlighted the health risks associated with emissions from idling cruise ships affecting nearby neighbourhoods in Balmain and Rozelle. He emphasised that shore power was a proven solution used internationally to reduce pollutants and noise in urban port areas.

When the Sydney Metro West project indicated it would be running an underground power supply from a Rozelle sub-transmission station to the adjacent Bays West metro site as part of its initial enabling works, he asked why that would not also include cabling for a shore power facility at White Bay Cruise Terminal. The community

mobilised quickly, backing in Jamie's plan. A new feasibility study was commissioned. It found that this would provide substantial savings, making shore power feasible. In March 2022, the Coalition Government confirmed a \$60 million project would finally bring shore power to White Bay Cruise Terminal by the end of 2024. From opposition, NSW Labor made a similar commitment, and subsequently included that promise in its election pitch. Our community celebrated.

Shore power allows docked ships to plug into an electrical power source at the port, enabling them to turn off their diesel engines while still operating necessary systems. That practice significantly reduces emissions and noise pollution, benefiting port workers, cruise workers and surrounding communities. Ports adopting shore power are reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and meeting stringent environmental regulations. Several ports worldwide, including those in California, Scandinavia and China, are leading the way in shore power adoption. The Port of Los Angeles, for instance, has mandated shore power for container and cruise ships, achieving a substantial reduction in nitrogen oxide and sulphur oxide emissions. Similarly, the Port of Shanghai, one of the busiest ports globally, has invested heavily in shore power, especially for passenger and cargo terminals, as part of China's initiative to curb port emissions.

Best practice in shore power involves the strategic deployment of infrastructure to ensure compatibility with various ship types and power needs. Ports like those in Norway have extended shore power to ferries, cruise ships and offshore vessels, integrating renewable energy sources to further reduce their carbon footprint.

In Europe, the Port of Hamburg has installed dual-frequency shore power systems to accommodate both European and international vessels, enabling the port to service ships with different electrical standards efficiently. Other best practices are regulatory support and incentives. The European Union has promoted shore power through grants and policy support, helping ports implement these systems and encouraging shipping companies to retrofit their vessels. Collaboration with shipping companies is also key, as vessels must be equipped with shore power capabilities.

Transparency and monitoring are important for success. Ports like Gothenburg in Sweden publish annual emission reports to track the impact of shore power and ensure continuous improvement. Globally, the shift towards shore power reflects a commitment to cleaner, quieter ports, aligning with sustainable maritime operations and supporting environmental goals. My community was looking forward, with great enthusiasm, to Sydney and White Bay Cruise Terminal joining this list of global leaders before the end of the year, but our celebrations were short-lived. Back in September, the New South Wales Labor Government quietly backed away from its commitment to shore power by the end of the year. It cited global supply chain issues brought about by the European Union's 2023 mandate that all European ports must be shore power-enabled by 2030.

When I questioned the Premier about this in Parliament, he confirmed that it would be delayed until the end of 2026. This does not explain the complete lack of progress on this initiative between Labor's election to government in March 2023 and the sudden news that it was not on track to be delivered in September 2024. The Greens raised this consistently over those 18 months and were told that the project was on track. The community was incredibly frustrated and disappointed when it heard the news that it would be delayed by at least another two years. I have formally raised this again with the Minister for Transport and I look forward to understanding what work was undertaken to progress shore power in that 18-month period.

The unwelcome delay means at least two more summers of unbearable noise and fumes from cruise ship pollution in Balmain and Rozelle. But at least, finally, the commitment is firm. Shore power is coming to White Bay Cruise Terminal, even if it is two years later than promised. Labor's plan will still allow ships without shore power capability to come to White Bay, meaning that cruise line operators know that, if they choose to, they will be able to continue sending their oldest and dirtiest ships our way. We need to go further if we are to solve this problem for my community once and for all. The Greens bill that I am introducing today will make it compulsory for all ships coming to White Bay to be shore power capable and to switch off their engines and plug in. That is what the community needs.

I take a moment to speak about the issue of fuel quality. Australian fuel standards for shipping, governed by MARPOL, which is the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, establish emissions and fuel quality requirements for vessels operating within Australian waters, including limits on sulphur content. MARPOL limits the sulphur content of marine fuel to a maximum of 0.50 mass per cent globally. However, in certain regions with stricter requirements, such as Sydney Harbour, additional directives apply to cruise ships and other large vessels. In Sydney Harbour, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority mandates cruise ships carrying over 100 passengers to switch to low-sulphur fuel with a sulphur content of no more than 0.10 mass per cent within an hour of docking. Ships must comply with these standards or face significant penalties for noncompliance.

Alternatively, vessels can use approved exhaust gas cleaning systems to achieve equivalent emissions reductions. This rule primarily targets sulphur oxide and particulate matter emissions, both of which contribute to air pollution and health risks in dense urban environments like Sydney. This all means that ships with high sulphur content in their fuel are coming into Sydney Harbour and continuing to belch out dirty, polluting fumes for an hour after they have arrived. We need to understand the proximity of White Bay Cruise Terminal to homes and schools. It is unacceptable that these vessels continue to pollute at that level an hour after they arrive in Sydney Harbour. Shore power alone will not fix this. The issue of shipping fuel quality has proven to be a bit of a political football that has been passed between the State and Federal governments, with multiple levels of regulation. I flag that once shore power is secured at White Bay, stopping cruise ship pollution will be the next issue on the community's agenda.

I turn now to the details of the bill. It will insert new section 105D into the Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995, which will apply from 1 January 2027, after the shore power installation has been completed. The section will impose duties on the Port Authority of New South Wales to only permit cruise ships to berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal if the ship is equipped to use shore power, and to require ships using a berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal to use shore power. It will make it an offence for the owner and the master of a cruise ship to use a berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal unless the ship is equipped to use shore power, and it will also make it an offence to fail to use shore power while using a berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal.

The bill is urgently needed to address the health impacts of cruise ship pollution on local communities. Balmain residents have suffered long enough from toxic cruise ship fumes. They have faced more disappointment this year after the Government broke its promise to deliver shore power by the end of the year. It is time to get this done. Our communities do not want more delays. They do not want loopholes that allow the cruise industry to continue to send its oldest and dirtiest vessels to White Bay. Once shore power is installed, even if half of the ships coming to White Bay are still running their engines, it is still not good enough after 10 years of pollution.

We do not want cruise line companies continuing to run their polluting diesel engines around the clock, pumping fumes into our homes and schools, and damaging the health of our community and our precious children. The European Union has mandated the use of shore power by 2030. The White Bay Cruise Terminal is so close to a residential area. With the capability to deliver renewable shore power coming in 2026, New South Wales should be leading the way. Again I thank Kate, Kevin, Chrissie, Joseph and Mark for being in the gallery today. I look forward to continuing this important work with them. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (VOTER ID AND ELECTRONIC MARK OFF) BILL 2024 (NO 2)**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Gareth Ward, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:37):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I acknowledge at the outset this is the second time that I have introduced this bill as, due to the provisions of the standing orders, the legislation that I introduced previously had, tragically, lapsed. At a time when there is greater concern about the fragility of democracy around the world—more than at any other time I have seen—this bill is necessary to safeguard our democracy to ensure that votes count and voter fraud is prevented. We live in a country with independent electoral commissions at State and Federal levels, and I am glad for that. I am sure that many members watched with interest the goings on of the recent United States elections. Members may also be interested to know that the electoral commissions there are not run by independent people. They are run by party people. People who are actually vested in the process are counting votes. That is not the case here.

Members will also be concerned to know that, when it comes to voter security, we have some of the weakest provisions in the world. When people in some countries overseas vote, they are required to dip their fingers in ink to show that they have voted on that day and cannot vote again. When we vote, whether at a local, State or Federal level, we are asked only a few questions: "What is your name?" "Where do you live?" and, "Have you voted today?" We are asked for no other information to prove our identity. There is no electronic recording of the fact that we have voted on that day. Electoral officials still rely on paper rolls, which are randomly checked.

I refer to the report of the Electoral Commission following the 2019 State election. It might interest members to know that report revealed that more than 3,000 people voted more than once at that election. There could be a whole range of reasons for that, but none of them could possibly be acceptable. When a person casts a ballot more than once, they are cancelling out the vote of someone who has legitimately cast a ballot in an election.

Be it in this House or be it at the Queensland election, there were a number of seats decided by literally handfuls of ballots, hence why I am proposing that when a person goes to vote, they have to show some form of identification and be electronically marked off.

As noted in the bill, that identification means a driver's licence; a photo card; a proof of age card issued by Australia Post; a Medicare card; a pensioner concession card, Department of Veterans' Affairs entitlement card or other entitlement card issued by the Commonwealth or a State government; a student identity card issued by an educational institution; or an Australian passport. That is a comprehensive list. In fact, it is more comprehensive than any list that has been included in any legislation put to the Parliament on this issue in the past. That is to deliberately ensure that we are not removing any person from the franchise and the opportunity to vote.

Those on the left of politics have previously argued that it would somehow prevent the most vulnerable from voting. People can say whatever they like about me, but when it comes to arguing for the most vulnerable, I have been one of the most effusive in this place, not only because of my own vulnerabilities, having a disability, but because of my previous role as Minister for Family, Communities and Disability Services. I remember that, when I was Minister, I was interested to know during COVID that 90 per cent of people in social housing have a smartphone. With those smartphones, it is very easy to have some form of identification. That nonsense is cooked up by those who often appear to be the beneficiary of fraudulent voting. They seem to be the ones who want to keep the current system in place without any safeguards.

When one considers the safeguards of other countries, which even come down to a finger dipped in ink, we do not have the same level of safeguards here, meaning that there is a question about the integrity of our democratic system. I cannot believe that those on the left of politics in particular believe that there is nothing to see here, when the Electoral Commission itself is reporting that thousands of people are voting twice. We have got the technology to do something about it. It is very simple to have electronic mark off at the very least. I accept that there is an argument that some people do not want identification—for what reasons, I do not understand. I think it is clearly self-motivated and self-interested. But we should have electronic rolls, so that when someone goes to vote, they are ticked off not just at their own polling booth but right around the State or, indeed, the nation.

The argument follows: What happens if that person is a fraudulent voter and someone turns up wanting to cast a ballot? A provision that has existed in the Electoral Act 2017 for a very long time is the capacity to conduct what is called a section vote, which means that person casts a ballot and that ballot is then investigated by the commission. That is done right now when someone might appear at a polling booth and say they are on the roll but the roll does not reveal that. It gives that person the opportunity to cast that ballot and for the ballot to be investigated. So that argument is nonsense. It is a red-herring argument put up by those on the left to continue to try to wave away the need for integrity measures in elections so that they can allow those fraudulent practices to continue. It is an old-favoured saying in the Labor Party: Vote early and vote often. We can do something about that by ensuring greater integrity in the electoral process. The bill seeks to do that.

I am not surprised that my previous bill was allowed to lapse and was not debated or voted on. I want to vote on this legislation. I say to the House that no matter what members of the Government might say, or whatever tricky, slippery parliamentary tactics might be used, I am going to keep on bringing these integrity measures to Parliament to make sure that we have a sound and stable democracy—one with integrity and one that has basic measures that are experienced over and over in third-world countries. If they can do it, we should be doing it too. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I welcome the guests to the gallery this morning. I hope you enjoy your experience.

## **HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS) BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Dr Joe McGirr, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (10:45):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of the Health Services Amendment (Industrial Relations) Bill 2024 is to make amendments to the Health Services Act and the Health Services Regulation consequent on the re-establishment of the Industrial Court. The purpose of the bill is to correct an anomaly that has appeared. It is a straightforward bill. The anomaly affects visiting medical officers. The bill simply brings visiting officers into line with other health workers in

relation to the arbitration system and Industrial Court. I disclose that I am a member of the Australian Medical Association [AMA], which brought this to my attention. I have been a member of that association for 40 years. I also disclose that my wife currently works as a visiting medical officer in the New South Wales health system and has done so for 30 years, very proudly contributing to that system.

For background, under the Health Services Act 1997, the Minister for Health or the Australian Medical Association may apply, jointly or individually, to the industrial relations Minister for the appointment of an arbitrator to determine terms of conditions of work, the amounts and rates of remuneration and the basis on which those amounts and rates are applicable. That can be for visiting medical officers under fee-for-service or sessional contracts. The arbitrator can also determine the date or dates on which those conditions begin. Prior to the dissolution of the Industrial Court in 2016, the Health Services Act provided that the Minister was to appoint a judicial member of the Industrial Relations Commission nominated by the president of the commission to be the arbitrator.

At the time of the dissolution of the court, the Health Services Act was amended to provide that the industrial relations Minister must appoint a person in accordance with the regulations. A provision was inserted that stipulated how that person was to be appointed. They were required to have a certain experience in relation to workplace relations matters. A qualified person was defined to be a former judicial officer of a superior court of record of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory, and an Australian legal practitioner of at least seven years standing. The fact is that the industrial relations bill subsequently brought by this Government, which reinstated the role of the Industrial Court in matters of interpreting visiting medical officer determinations, did not amend section 90 of the Health Services Act or clause 34 of the Health Services Regulation regarding the eligible persons to be appointed as an arbitrator.

The view of the AMA—and I think it is a sensible view—is that with the re-establishment of the court, the arbitrator should once again be appointed from the cohort. In other words, it is requesting that the arbitrator come from the Industrial Court as was the case for many years in this State up until the dissolution of the court. The AMA's view is that in the absence of that, if the arbitrator does need to be appointed, under the current provisions they will have to be drawn from candidates from interstate. It will be difficult to find someone appropriately qualified and experienced, and there will be associated costs. That arbitrator will need to familiarise themselves with the system. From my point of view, it will mean that there will be a separate system for visiting medical officers compared with the rest of the health workers. They should be brought into alignment. That is a simple request from the AMA. It is in the interests of not only AMA but also our health system, which is why I have introduced this legislation.

In the past couple of years there has been considerable misinformation about the role of visiting medical officers. It was clear that confusion had been put about by some people that visiting medical officers are the equivalent of locums or temporary workers in the health service and are expensive. The fact is that visiting medical officers and the visiting medical officer determination have been an important part of the New South Wales system for more than 30 years. Visiting medical officers have contributed immensely to the New South Wales public health system. The visiting medical officer conditions allow for the appointment of senior health practitioners, and New South Wales has some of the best specialists and general practitioners in the world. The conditions allow them to provide services to our public hospitals while at the same time conducting private practice, so those services are available to the public system.

I state for the record my thanks to visiting medical officers across the State for the work they do and the contribution they have made. I personally have been privileged to work with visiting medical officers in my previous roles and I know what a contribution they have made, which I think is very underrated and under-appreciated. The request to have access to the Industrial Relations Court is simply aligning their arbitration proposals with the system that is in place for other members of our State's health system. That is a straightforward change and it should be supported. I note that schedule 1 to the bill substitutes section 90 of the Health Services Act which, as I mentioned earlier, stipulates the conditions under which an arbitrator is appointed. The new section states:

On receipt of an application under section 89, the relevant Minister must appoint a judicial member of the Industrial Relations Commission nominated by the President of the Commission to be the arbitrator for the purposes of making a determination under this part.

Schedule 2 to the bill provides for a consequential change to the Health Services Regulation 2018. The bill is straightforward. It brings the arbitration and determination of conditions for visiting medical officers into alignment with that of other members of our health system. It recognises the role that visiting medical officers play. The Australian Medical Association has been requesting this in discussions with the Government since the beginning of this year and thinks it is a matter of urgency, which is why I have introduced the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**ROAD TRANSPORT AMENDMENT (DRIVING THROUGH FLOODWATERS) BILL 2024 (NO 2)**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Gareth Ward, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:53):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I present to the House the Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024 (No 2); I refer members to the official report of parliamentary debates on 20 June 2024 for my second reading speech on the previous iteration of this bill. The object of the bill is to amend the Road Transport Act 2013 to prohibit people from deliberately and recklessly driving through floodwaters, and to require penalties for breach of the prohibition to be paid into the NSW State Emergency Service Fund to support the hardworking men and women of the State Emergency Service. This bill has the support of the SES, who frankly are not impressed by people who do not heed the advice to not drive through floodwaters. I suggested the issue be expanded to penalise reckless and deliberate adventure-seekers, who also take up the time of rescue services. However, that is outside the scope of today's debate. I emphasise that the bill has no intention of penalising innocent or helpless people who are caught up in floodwaters.

The bill targets deliberate and reckless drivers, not accidental victims. It attempts to ensure that we penalise people who deliberately do the wrong thing by behaving recklessly and who deserve to be fined. The bill works within the realm of established police discretion and will provide the police with the option to fine people if they see that people have behaved in a manner that is reckless or endangers others. At the moment there is a situation where people can only be fined for driving through floodwaters if there is a "road closed" sign. Police can take action at that point. SES are now able to direct "road closed" signs, but in communities like mine there are many country lanes, culverts, drains and roads that flood, and signs cannot be put across all of those.

We would not drive into a bushfire, so I do not understand why people feel the need to drive into floodwaters when they do not know the depth or velocity of the waters, putting themselves, their passengers and potentially rescuers at risk. It makes no sense. I have alluded to and compared international laws and their effectiveness in deterring driving through floodwaters. The bill follows other countries that have surcharges in place for when people require rescuing. People will think twice if there is a penalty for a degree of risk-taking behaviour, ensuring some consideration of moral hazard. I need not rehash the statistics on the dangers and fatal consequences of driving through floodwaters.

I call for members to support the bill, which will in turn support the SES volunteers and emergency services responders who put their lives on the line, often in avoidable situations. Those SES volunteers do not just magically appear when they are required; they are engaged in training all year round. I thank all of our SES volunteers across my electorate and across the State for their courageous work. I urge members to vote for a bill that may save a life. In fact, I introduce the bill because of a very personal experience involving a friend of mine who took a wrong turn one evening. She was in a very small vehicle and she drove onto a causeway and was swept away and killed. I do not want to ascribe blame in that instance—of course not—but there are plenty of circumstances where people could think twice.

Because of that old issue of moral hazard and because people do not think about penalties, sometimes they just plough on through. I thank members of the National Party and my crossbench colleagues who have reached out to tell me that in regional electorates like mine there are circumstances that might make the bill tricky to apply, and they are concerned about its application. That is why I changed the wording in the original bill from "deliberate or reckless" to "deliberate and reckless". A higher bar must be established. I am not talking about penalising people who are caught unwittingly in floodwaters; I am talking about people where the police are of the view that they drove into circumstances that were entirely avoidable.

The most significant power police have is their discretion. Of course, it would be up to them whether or not a fine should be applied. The bill tries to send the right message about driving through floodwaters—that it is not on at any time. Everyone from the Premier to the commissioner to local members reiterate those statements every flood season: "If it's flooded, forget it." There is no penalty unless there is a "road closed" sign, and there should not need to be a sign. That gives the police the power they need. It also seeks to protect our SES men and women in Orange who are asking for this. That is why I have introduced the bill. It is not only based on my own personal experience of losing a friend; it is also because I do not want to see the lives of anyone else lost, particularly those gallant men and women of the SES who put their own lives on the line.

I believe the bill will make a real difference. As I said in my second reading speech to my former bill, which I outlined earlier, there are other instances around the world where fees are applied to rescue people who have engaged in risk-taking behaviour, including everything from exactly what we are talking about with floodwaters, right through to people who might have gone hiking and become caught. They must cover the cost of their rescue. I am not suggesting that we put in place those circumstances where countries ask that people pay for the whole cost of their rescue; I am simply suggesting a penalty that would be appropriate to deter people from driving through floodwaters. I am not suggesting that the full cost of the rescue be covered because I would not want a situation where people would not call authorities. That is not what the bill is meant to be about.

The bill is meant to be about a deterrent. Other countries have done it and I think it is sensible. If the Government does not like that this is my bill, it should introduce it. No-one has got a monopoly on good ideas, though I have a few of them. I am happy for the Government to introduce it and for it to be the Government's bill, as long as it becomes the law of the State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

### *Committees*

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

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

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (11:00):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House as the chair of the Legislation Review Committee. The committee tabled its reported entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 21/58* on Tuesday 22 October. The committee examined eight bills that were introduced during the prior sitting week. It also reviewed 10 regulations and statutory instruments, two of which it reported on with comment. The eight regulations examined and found not to reach the reporting threshold under the Legislation Review Act are summarised in part 3 of the digest. As members are aware, the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced and all statutory instruments tabled in Parliament. The committee's scrutiny of legislation informs members of both Houses and the community about the potential impacts of legislation on personal rights and liberties and any potential inappropriate exercise of government or legislative power.

I draw members' attention to some of the key issues raised in the digest. The committee reported on the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2024, which seeks to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. The amendments would reform the framework for residential tenancy agreements in New South Wales and restrict landlords from evicting tenants without reasonable grounds, limit how often rent can be increased, prevent renters from being asked to pay for background checks, and ensure that renters have a free and convenient way to pay rent. In the report the committee highlighted the bill's limitation on a landlord's ability to increase rent for all lease types to once every 12 months. That is because the provision may restrict the rights and obligations of landlords, who are contracting parties to residential tenancy agreements, and impact a landlord's contractual and property rights by limiting how they can negotiate and set rent for their property.

However, the committee acknowledged that the bill aims to protect tenants by offering security, clarity and certainty about how and when rent may be increased by landlords. The committee also noted that the bill aims to assist tenants by supporting housing stability and easing rental pressure. The committee considered that the bill introduces new absolute liability offences into the Act. The offences apply to landlords if they fail to offer free and convenient rent payment methods or if they ask for payment from a tenant for anything other than a holding fee or a registration fee when entering into a residential tenancy agreement. Those offences would carry maximum penalties ranging from \$1,100 to \$5,500.

The committee comments generally on absolute liability offences, as they depart from the common law principle that the mental element of fault should be proven to establish criminal liability. However, the committee acknowledged that those proposed offences are intended to protect tenants from unnecessary costs and that absolute liability offences are not uncommon in regulatory frameworks to encourage compliance and fair practices. For those reasons, the committee made no further comment on the bill. Turning to the private members' bills, the committee reported on the Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which proposes amendment to the Roads Act 1993, the Roads Regulation 2018, the Crimes Act 1900 and the Crimes Regulation 2020 to abolish offences for conduct that causes damage or disruption to major roads or major public facilities.

In its report, the committee highlighted that the bill would remove certain sections that currently provide exemptions. For example, section 144G (4A) exempts a person who commits prohibited conduct if the conduct occurs at the person's workplace and that workplace is a major bridge, tunnel or road. The committee noted that the omission of these sections would therefore remove existing exemptions for people who undertake prohibited



conduct as part of their employment, as well as for people who express their freedom of speech and political communication through protest. Under the bill's provisions, these groups would be liable for an offence, which carries a significant maximum penalty of two years imprisonment or a fine of up to \$22,000. The committee found that the bill could impact a person's right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention, as well as their implied freedom of political communication, and for those reasons it referred the matter to Parliament for further consideration.

Finally, the committee reported on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Administrator) Regulation 2024. The regulation amends the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to ensure consistency with the Commonwealth's Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009. The regulation allows for the Minister for Industrial Relations to determine the terms of an administration scheme for the Construction and General Division of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union—the CFMEU. In its report, the committee noted that the regulation allows the Minister to vary an administration order, which includes changes to the administration scheme, by publishing an order in the *New South Wales Government Gazette*.

The regulation allows the Minister to determine any other matter that the Minister considers appropriate. The committee noted that the regulation does not define or specify what factors the Minister must consider when determining what matters are appropriate and that it gives the Minister broad discretion to set the terms of the administration scheme. However, the committee acknowledged that this discretion could allow the scheme to operate more flexibly and noted that the orders are required to be published in the gazette for transparency. For those reasons, the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on the committee's twenty-first digest.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (11:06):** I update the House on the ongoing work of the Legislation Review Committee and its *Legislation Review Digest No. 21/58*. I thank the chair for her leadership of our committee and the secretariat for the amazing work they continue to do making our job easier by putting things in simple terms for simple people such as me. In the current period of review we considered eight bills. Five bills were identified with issues that are set out in sections 8A or 9 of the Legislation Review Act. The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2024 was found to have wide regulatory powers of police, which was referred to the Parliament; wide powers of delegation under ministerial powers, about which we made no further comment; and broad powers of the Executive implemented by written orders under regulatory policies and ministerial orders, about which we had no further comment.

The next bill we looked at was the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2024, which was found to have freedom of contract and property rights issues, about which there was no further comment; absolute liability offences, about which again there was no further comment; and retrospectivity and commencement on proclamation issues, about which there also was no further comment. The Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 was found to have retrospectivity—I love that word—about which we had no comment. The Roads and Crimes Legislation Amendment (Offences Repeal) Bill 2024 was found to have issues for the right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention and omission of certain exemptions, which were referred to the Parliament. The final bill we looked at was the Witness Protection Amendment Bill 2024, which was found to have wide regulatory power changes, and reversal of the onus of proof and wide deferral of powers to regulations, which were all referred to Parliament.

The bills that did not raise issue were the Creative Statement to Parliament Bill 2024, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (State Significant Development) Bill 2024 and the Health Insurance Levies Amendment Bill 2024. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

## **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Reports**

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

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:10):** As Chair: The Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development tabled its report on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024 on 22 October 2024. The bill seeks to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 to omit the use of virtual stock fencing. The bill was introduced by the member for Orange earlier this year. It was referred to the committee so that it could report back on its benefits, risks or any unintended consequences. Before I talk about the key findings and recommendations of the inquiry, I thank the member for Orange, who is in the Chamber, for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. It is because of the bill that we get the opportunity to learn about this emerging technology and its impact on farmers.

Throughout the inquiry, we heard about the benefits of virtual stock fencing. Inquiry participants told us the technology can reduce costs, increase productivity and allow farmers to use their land more efficiently. We also heard that the technology could benefit the environment and enhance biosecurity. Virtual stock fences can keep animals away from sensitive areas that cannot be easily fenced. The collars can also collect live health data that can help farmers with the early detection of diseases and also when a cow is in oestrous. To ensure that farmers can access the benefits of the technology, the committee recommends that the New South Wales Government legalise virtual stock fencing. That will bring this State into line with other Australian and overseas jurisdictions that already permit the commercial use of the technology. We know that animal welfare is a key consideration when legalising virtual stock fencing. During the inquiry, we heard from a wide range of stakeholders to understand the issue.

We heard that the features of the technology and how it is implemented have a big impact on animal welfare. Many participants told us that the use of virtual stock fencing should be regulated to protect animal welfare. To address those concerns, the committee recommended that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development develop a mandatory code of practice. The code should specify features like the maximum allowable electrical stimulus and the weight of the collars. The devices should also monitor critical animal welfare data. The committee heard that the current producers of the technology have implemented safeguard measures to protect animal welfare. A mandatory code of practice will ensure that new market entrants are kept to the same high standards. The committee also recommended that the department develop a community education campaign. The campaign should cover the operation, risks, benefits and permitted uses of virtual stock fencing. That will help farmers and communities better understand the technology.

Finally, the committee recognised that virtual stock fencing technology is fast developing. The legal framework should be reviewed and updated accordingly. The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is also working on harmonising virtual stock fencing regulations across the country through its animal welfare task group. The committee recommended that the New South Wales Government review amendments to legalise virtual stock fencing two years after they start to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The Government can also use the review to align New South Wales regulations with recommendations from the task group.

On behalf of the committee, I thank everyone who made a submission or appeared as a witness at the public hearing. The evidence helped members understand virtual stock fencing technology and provided us with valuable insights about its use and necessary safety features. I thank the members of the committee. The member for Blacktown and the member for Clarence, who are members of the committee, are currently in the Chamber. It is a good committee and committee members work well together. I acknowledge the collaborative way that we work. Virtual stock fencing is an emerging technology. The inquiry required committee members to develop long-term recommendations that balance animal welfare concerns and the benefits to farmers.

I acknowledge and thank the committee secretariat for their excellent work; it is nice to have a couple of them with us today sitting at the back of the Chamber. Their work behind the scenes in between meetings is incredibly valuable in making sure that committee members are well prepared and that our recommendations to Government are sound and based on good evidence. Committees are an incredibly important part of our democracy within this Parliament. They allow members to work through some difficult issues in a bipartisan way and make recommendations. With farmers in New South Wales facing increasing challenges from natural disasters, labour shortages and fluctuating markets, it is important to examine whether virtual stock fencing can help them. We hope this report and its recommendations will help inform the House and the Government when considering the bill and future virtual stock fencing legislation. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:15):** I contribute to debate on the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024*. I begin by thanking my good friend the member for Barwon, the chair of the committee, who had oversight of this inquiry into the bill. I also thank other members of the committee who participated in the inquiry, some of whom are in the Chamber today, including the member for Clarence and the member for Blacktown.

Earlier this year I introduced the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024 to legalise virtual stock fencing for farmers in our State. It is legal in States like Queensland and Tasmania, as well as in many overseas jurisdictions. I certainly welcome the inquiry's report and its recommendations and findings. New South Wales farmers do not have the opportunity to deploy this new ag technology. Farming is getting harder and harder and more expensive each and every year. Prices of fuel, chemicals and fencing materials go up, and farmers are always facing ever-increasing costs to make their farm and their business sustainable and viable. Virtual fencing is one way to reduce some of the costs that farmers encounter.

To give one example, the other day a farmer from Wellington emailed me; he lives in the Dubbo electorate but just on the outside of my electorate. He had 14 kilometres of fencing through his property destroyed in the floods along the Bell River. He is waiting on legislation, and he made a submission to the inquiry in favour of virtual fencing. As Deputy Speaker Hornery would know, fencing a creek or a riparian zone to keep stock out of a sensitive area is very windy and requires a lot of labour. The farmer is looking at a repair bill of potentially upwards of \$140,000 to replace that fencing. Virtual fencing would be a fraction of that cost, and he is keen to hear about the progress of the bill. There are certainly issues and concerns relating to animal welfare, but they can be mitigated. Overall, virtual fencing can benefit farmers, the agriculture sector and even the animals. The collar sensors can detect the health and wellbeing of cattle—for example, their temperature—and can advise the farmer if the animal is sick or has not moved or if they are on heat.

A whole range of different technology is becoming available that would make virtual fencing an attractive option. In New South Wales, our farmers are being denied the opportunity to embrace that technology. NSW Farmers has publicly supported virtual fencing. The bill must be passed by the Parliament and be brought in as legislation. It would bring huge benefits to our agricultural sector and to our farmers who face ever-increasing costs in supply chains, produce and equipment. Virtual stock fencing is one way to help mitigate some of those cost increases. I again thank the chair, committee members and the secretariat for their hard work and for showcasing and highlighting the benefits of virtual fencing. I also thank everyone who made submissions to the inquiry. All the feedback provided is valued. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (11:18):** I contribute to debate on the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024*. At the outset, I thank the chair and my fellow committee members for the way in which the inquiry was undertaken.

It was done in a bipartisan way, through healthy debate, and I think the committee reached a sound set of recommendations. I acknowledge the committee staff, and I agree with the chair that they do amazing work. I also acknowledge the member for Orange, and I thank him for bringing this matter to the House and, therefore, to the committee's attention. One of the highlights of the committee's work was the onsite inspection, where there was an opportunity to try out the devices, which I declined.

[Interruption]

I acknowledge the sound effect that has been played in the background by the member for Barwon. I note that the chair and a member of the committee staff did try out the device and, from their reaction, it was acknowledged that I did not need to. On this one occasion, I made a good choice. In all seriousness, this technology has profound advantages for my electorate of Clarence. As has been touched on by other speakers, that includes recovery from floods and fires, and virtual fencing will bring great benefits to producers in my electorate.

I am satisfied that the risk to animal safety is minimised through this technology. I have come to that conclusion not only from our onsite inspection but also from the submissions made to the inquiry. I fully support the committee's eight recommendations. They outline a framework that the Government and departments can work within. For those who may have reservations about this technology, I believe the committee's recommendations should bring them some comfort. Any risk to animals is certainly mitigated with those recommendations.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will need to develop a code of practice within three months of the tabling of the report, and that code of practice will make sure that animal welfare continues to be at the forefront of any discussions that this House may have. Hopefully, when legislation passes the Parliament, the community can have some comfort that animal welfare remains at the forefront of the decision-making process. As a member of the committee, I wholeheartedly support the findings and recommendations of the committee. Again, I put on record the work of the chair and my fellow committee members. I thank the House.

**Report noted.**

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

### **Reports**

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

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:23):** The Joint Standing Committee into Electoral Matters held an inquiry into the administration of the 2023 New South Wales State election and released its report entitled *Administration of the 2023 NSW state election and other matters*. The committee thanks the former NSW Electoral Commissioner and his staff for their professionalism in delivering the election in March 2023. The committee is

chaired by the Hon. Peter Primrose, and the deputy chair is the Hon. Robert Borsak. I thank them and all the committee members for their bipartisan and collaborative approach to the inquiry. The inquiry heard from a range of stakeholders about the conduct of the election, regarding what worked well and where improvements could be made for future elections. We thank all stakeholders who took the time to provide written submissions and to give evidence at the inquiry's hearing. Their insights were vital for the committee when forming the findings and recommendations contained in the report.

I thank the committee staff for their professionalism and support throughout the inquiry process. The committee's recommendations are wideranging, covering matters as diverse as party registration and access to enrolment information, early voting centres, vote counting, and expanding education programs and resources for culturally and linguistically diverse voters and voters with a disability.

There are many aspects to the report but I will only address a couple of issues. The committee heard a proposal by the NSW Electoral Commission to end the practice of political parties and candidates handling and distributing postal vote applications. The committee endorses the proposal for the NSW Electoral Commission alone to distribute and collect postal vote applications to help protect voters' privacy and to prevent them from being disenfranchised when parties fail to return applications by the cut-off date. In considering the issue of truth in political advertising, the committee considered the aspiration of many witnesses for an effective mechanism to regulate in that area against the weight of legal and practical evidence of the difficulties of achieving that. At the time of the inquiry, there was also a Commonwealth bill looking at combating misinformation and disinformation and, on balance, the committee considered that it was not possible to make clear recommendations until that legislation had been finalised. In regard to the conduct of the election, I note that the committee's recommendation 6 states:

That the NSW Electoral Commission publishes the locations of early voting centres and voting places well before the 2027 state election, where possible.

Also, given that the proposed election day falls on Easter Saturday, it is better sooner than later that an alternative date is identified so planning can commence. Recommendation 21 states:

That the NSW Government provides additional funding to enable education programs such as Vote Talk to be rolled out to a broader range of culturally and linguistically diverse communities for the 2027 state election.

Unfortunately, this was not in the recommendations but we also need better coordination and identification of polling booths as booths are identified as being composite and are located generally without any appropriate local feedback, particularly from candidates in previous elections. This has created a bit of a nightmare when polling booths are located almost on top of each other. Only 40 per cent of voters turn up on election day, with most doing pre-poll voting. I think it would be better to have fewer polling booths but better staffing and allocate staff to the remaining booths. The only way to achieve that is through local knowledge and the commission engaging with locals. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (11:27):** I rise to address the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled *Administration of the 2023 New South Wales state election and other matters*. I echo the thanks given to committee members, staff, stakeholders and all involved in working towards and generating this report. It is the case that the great bulk of the report's contents, findings, recommendations and otherwise are agreed across the Parliament, but there are two in particular I want to focus upon for a short period this morning and to raise concerns, if I may, on behalf of the Coalition. The first of those is in respect of recommendation 8, which proposes:

That the NSW Government prohibits political participants from distributing and collecting postal vote applications.

I, along with my colleagues in the Coalition, disagree with this recommendation, and I will outline why in a moment. We believe it limits access to postal voting and restricts a longstanding practice that has served and will continue to serve the public interest. What is of course happening out there in relation to postal votes is there is a greater desire for them. More people are taking it upon themselves to vote by postal vote, and it is an important means of ensuring a representative ballot and process and so on.

This current measure, whereby parties can send out and collect postal vote applications, allows that to happen and increases accessibility to the voting process, particularly for those who may otherwise find it challenging to participate. With an ageing population, and with people more mobile and travelling more, the flexibility of postal voting is essential. It helps to ensure that voters are not disenfranchised simply because they are not physically present at the polls on polling day. The benefits to the public are, of course, many and varied. But, ultimately, giving people the flexibility, freedom and opportunity to cast their vote in this fashion is in the public interest.

One of our chief concerns is that the report speaks to a number of apparent administrative issues. It speaks to risks in a number of instances, but in many instances what we have is a recommendation that is some sort of solution looking for a problem. The problem is not made out, nor is it evidenced at all. In fact, Labor's general secretary Dominic Ofner made it clear to the committee that he is not aware of any instances of fraud or misconduct in relation to this practice. We have real reservations about the evidentiary basis for this very strong recommendation, which would also be a significant departure, can I say, from other jurisdictions across Australia. Only in Victoria and South Australia, which has only gone halfway there, is this restriction in fact law.

This has not happened at a national level. The Australian Electoral Commission has not made it so, nor has any other jurisdiction. In the Queensland election recently, this happened; in the Western Australia election coming up soon, this will happen. This is a recommendation that, in our view, is not necessary, not timely, inconsistent with other jurisdictions and not made out in evidentiary terms. Finally, I reflect on the question of identification when going to vote. It is a longstanding position of the Coalition that the integrity of our system would be assisted by requiring people to provide ID as they go to vote, as they do for so many things in their lives. These days, ID is ubiquitous. It is not too much to ask that our system would require ID of a voter before they cast their very important democratic vote.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:31):** I contribute to the take-note debate on the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled *Administration of the 2023 NSW state election and other matters*. I am also a member of the committee. As we heard through the evidence given during the hearings, voter ID is a solution looking for a problem. Evidence from electoral commissions both State and Federal, from people who study this stuff and from people who gave submissions showed that there is no widespread voter fraud going on. This is simply an attempt by those opposite to disenfranchise people.

**Mr Mark Coure:** How do you know that? You're no expert, mate.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** While I may not be an expert, I do listen to experts. I turned up to all of the hearings. It is clear that this is a solution looking for a problem. There is no problem. The evidence is clear. Opposition members will keep banging on about this and they will keep supporting their mate from Kiama, but it is rubbish.

**Report noted.**

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

### Reports

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I call the member for Auburn, who I assume is chair of the Legislation Review Committee.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (11:33):** You would be correct in that assumption. You are also the chair of many committees, Mr Temporary Speaker. We get all the fun jobs.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** But I read all your reports.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** You read all the reports? Are you making an allegation against me? That is very cruel. You might have to put that in a substantive motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** It gives me great pleasure to address the House as chair of the Legislation Review Committee, which tabled *Legislation Review Digest No. 22/58* on Tuesday 12 November 2024. In the digest the committee examined seven bills introduced during the prior sitting week. It also reviewed 10 regulations and statutory instruments, two of which were reported on with comment. The eight regulations that were examined and found not to reach the reporting threshold under the Legislation Review Act are summarised in part three of the digest. I draw the attention of members to some of the key issues raised in the digest.

The committee reported on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024, which seeks to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008. The amendments would replace the current notification scheme with a new licensing regime for tobacco retailers and wholesalers; streamline the application process with an annual licence renewal requirement; introduce offences for unlicensed sales or acquisitions of tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products; create a standalone offence for improper retail display of tobacco price boards; and increase penalties for existing tobacco-related offences.

In its report, the committee noted the bill would grant the Secretary of NSW Health broad powers to issue, renew or revoke licences, along with imposing or varying licensing conditions for selling tobacco and non-tobacco smoking products. The committee also noted that applicants would be required to provide certain information to

the secretary when applying for a new licence or renewing an existing licence. The committee noted that, other than previous breaches of tobacco or vaping laws, there are no clear guidelines on the criteria that the secretary may consider when making licensing decisions. The committee recognised that this broad discretion may be intended to allow flexibility and to ensure the effective administration of what is a complex regulatory regime. However, the committee observed that applicants who fail to comply with the new licensing regime could face substantial fines and risk being barred from selling tobacco products in the future.

The committee also found that the bill would defer several significant matters to regulations, including eligibility requirements for licences; standard licensing conditions; 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 acknowledged that the flexibility afforded by these provisions may help regulators to respond to evolving circumstances under the new licensing regime. However, the committee noted the seriousness of the provisions and the significant penalties for noncompliance with the new licensing regime. For those reasons, the committee referred the matters to Parliament for further consideration.

Turning now to private members' bills, the committee reported on the Return of Proceeds of Crime (Gambling Companies) Bill 2024, which requires gambling companies to report to the Commissioner of Police if they suspect a person is using illegally obtained money to pay for gambling services. The bill also seeks to allow the Supreme Court to make compensation orders if a gambling company provides gambling services to a person who it suspects has used illegal money. In its report, the committee highlighted that the bill proposes a general regulation-making power under proposed section 9, allowing regulations to be made on any issue "required or permitted to be prescribed" or any matter "necessary or convenient" for the bill's implementation. The committee noted that as the terms "necessary or convenient" are undefined, the bill may, therefore, include a wide regulation-making power.

While the regulations would remain subject to parliamentary scrutiny and could be disallowed under section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1987, the committee pointed out that the wide regulation-making power could lead to significant matters being prescribed with minimal limitations. The committee further observed that the bill would allow regulations to include savings or transitional provisions that could take effect before the date of the regulation's publication on the NSW Legislation website. The committee acknowledged that the bill specifies that these provisions should not adversely impact pre-existing rights or impose liabilities for prior actions. However, the committee generally comments on provisions that are drafted to have retrospective effect because they impact the rule of law principle that a person is entitled to have knowledge of the law that applies to them at any given time. The committee noted that this would conflict with section 39 of the Interpretation Act, which requires statutory rules to commence on their publication date. For those reasons, it referred the matter to Parliament for further consideration.

Finally, the committee reported on the Crimes Amendment (Major Facilities) Regulation 2024. The regulation inserts specific metro stations—including Barangaroo, Crows Nest, Gadigal, Victoria Cross and Waterloo—into part 1 of schedule 6 to the Crimes Regulation 2020, which expands the list of "major facilities" under section 214A of the Crimes Act 1900.

Section 214A makes it an offence to enter, remain on, climb, jump from, trespass on or block entry to any part of a major facility if the conduct causes damage, serious disruption, obstruction or closure, or if it redirects persons attempting to use the facility. The maximum penalty for the offence is a fine of \$22,000 and/or two years imprisonment.

In its report, the committee observed that by expanding its scope to include certain new metro stations, the regulation limits certain conduct that may cause disruption at those locations, which may impact rights to freedom of movement and assembly. Those rights are protected under articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the implied freedom of political communication under the Australian Constitution. The committee acknowledged the Act contains several safeguards, such as a defence of having a reasonable excuse and exemptions for industrial actions, or obtaining prior consent. However, the committee highlighted the significance of the penalties for breaching the Act, including the potential for imprisonment. The committee further noted that in *Kvelde v State of New South Wales* the Supreme Court of New South Wales recently found that some subsections of the Act were invalid because they infringed the implied freedom of political communication under the Australian Constitution. For those reasons, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for further consideration. That concludes my remarks.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** It being 11.40 a.m., the time for debate on committee reports has expired and the House will proceed to Government business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

*Bills***STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2024****Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:41):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2024 continues the Statute Law Revision Program, which has been in place for 40 years. Statute law bills are an effective method of making minor policy changes. Schedule 1 to the bill contains policy changes of a minor and uncontroversial nature. The schedule contains amendments to 16 Acts and one regulation. Schedule 1 incorporates an amendment to the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 that inserts a subsection that was repealed by the Better Regulation, Fair Trading and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024 requiring an association to give a person a copy of the register of committees on request.

Schedule 1 also includes an amendment to the Biosecurity Act 2015 that removes a standard scientific naming from the definition of "bee" to clarify the meaning and ensure that there is consistency throughout the Biosecurity Act. The current definition of "bee" includes "Apis mellifera L.", with the "L." referring to Carl Linnaeus. No other scientific name recorded in the Act is presented in this way, and the current inclusion may cause confusion as to the intent and scope of the definition. The amendment aims to address this confusion and clarify the definition. Amendments to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 allow the Governor to appoint university officers as part-time members of the Information and Privacy Advisory Committee [IPAC]. Currently, university academics are considered to be officers of public sector agencies within the meaning of the Act. This is inconsistent with the purpose of the membership of the IPAC, which is to ensure there are representatives from varied interest groups with necessary expertise and experience.

The schedule also makes an amendment to the Community Land Management Act 2021 to ensure that the correct standards are referred to for the auditing of accounts and financial statements. Schedule 1 also makes an amendment to the Superannuation Act 1916, removing redundant references to the repealed Maintenance Act 1964. The schedule also includes amendments to update certain references to departments, Ministers and other office holders to reflect machinery of government changes. Schedule 2 to the bill deals with matters of pure statute law revision, consisting of minor technical changes to legislation that the Parliamentary Counsel considers are appropriate for inclusion in the bill. Schedule 2 includes amendments to correct typographical errors, correct provision numbering and omit redundant provisions.

Schedule 3 to the bill removes references to the "Government Printer" across the statute book. While the Government Printer was closed in 1989, references to the Government Printer remain across the statute book. The schedule ensures that any reference to the Government Printer is updated to reflect the functions that have been overtaken by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, including publishing of the *Government Gazette* and publishing on the NSW Legislation website.

Schedule 4 to the bill removes references to the Impounding Act, which was replaced by the Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act. The schedule contains amendments to 11 Acts and regulations to ensure the correct legislation and provisions are referred to across our statute book.

Schedule 5 to the bill repeals redundant legislation and provisions. For example, the Appropriation Acts since 2018 were only required for their respective financial years and no longer serve any purpose. Accordingly, the schedule will repeal the Appropriation Acts and Appropriation (Parliament) Acts made under previous governments from 2018 to 2022. The schedule also repeals previous statute law Acts from 2019 to 2023 that have since commenced. Schedule 6 contains general savings provisions, transitional provisions and other provisions. That includes a provision allowing for regulations to be made that are of a savings or transitional nature. I hope members appreciate the uncontroversial nature of the provisions contained in the bill. If any particular matter is of concern, the Government is prepared to consider withdrawing it from the bill, as has always been the case. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I welcome guests to the public gallery. We have a little girl aged about six months, which is at the younger end of democracy. It is never too early.

**Second Reading Debate**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (11:46):** I indicate that the Opposition will support the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2024, as we did in the upper House. It contains uncontentious matters, as have a number of the miscellaneous and justice bills brought forward this week by the Government. I do not

need to repeat what was said on behalf of the Opposition in the upper House. I indicate to the House that the Opposition will support the bill.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:46):** I contribute to debate on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2024. In 1603, William Shakespeare's Hamlet posed a question that plagued humanity for centuries: "To bee, or not to bee? That is the question." No longer shall the people of New South Wales have to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, for the Minns Government has at long last taken arms against a sea of troubles. The bill before the House takes our great State one step closer towards answering that question, updating the scientific definition of a bee to remove confusion. It does so by omitting "*Apis mellifera* L." from the definition of "bee" and inserting instead "*Apis mellifera*". While I appreciate that this change might sting for the descendants of Carl Linnaeus, to whom the "L." in the current definition refers, no other scientific name recorded in the Act is presented that way.

The people of New South Wales are buzzing with excitement and, truth bee told, it is easy to understand why. In fact, ChatGPT tells me that bees play several crucial roles in ecosystems and human life, with their most well-known function being as pollinators. I am further informed by ChatGPT that bees are among the most important pollinators for flowering plants. As they collect nectar and pollen for food, they transfer pollen from one flower to another, facilitating fertilisation and enabling the plants to reproduce. Many crops rely on bees for pollination. That includes fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds such as apples, almonds, berries, cucumbers and pumpkins.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: This is an uncontentious piece of miscellaneous legislation that the Opposition is not opposing. The contribution is not at all relevant to the bill before the House. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask you to direct the member for Liverpool to return to the subject matter of the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** As is the convention of this House, second reading debates are always wideranging in nature. This contribution is very wideranging. The member for Liverpool has the call.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I know the member for Wahrenoonga would like to go home early, but I seek to inform the House about matters that are within the context of the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Wahrenoonga has had his opportunity to contribute to the debate.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** As I was saying, around 75 per cent of flowering plants and about 35 per cent of global food crops depend, at least in part, on pollination by insects like bees. Pollination by bees supports the broader ecosystem by ensuring the reproduction of a wide variety of plants. This helps to maintain biodiversity, creates habitats for other species and contributes to the stability of our ecosystems.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I remind the member for Wahrenoonga that he has had his opportunity to contribute to the debate. I will call him to order if he continues to interject.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Mr Temporary Speaker, if you would like to remove the member for Wahrenoonga from the Chamber, I am happy to agree.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Wahrenoonga will come to order. The member for Liverpool will be heard in silence. The member has the call.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Bees are an important food source for other animals. Bees, particularly the larvae and pupae, serve as a food source for many predators, including birds, mammals, and other insects. Their presence in ecosystems contributes to the food web. Bees are also indicators of environmental health. Bees are often recognised as indicators of the health of the environment because they are sensitive to pesticides, habitat loss, and climate change. Declines in bee populations can signal problems in an ecosystem that might also affect other species, including humans.

Finally, bees are important cultural and economic insects. Bees are essential to the economic viability of many agricultural industries, especially those related to fruit, vegetables, and nuts. In regions where crops depend on bees for pollination, their decline can result in significant economic losses. They also have important symbolic value in various cultures, representing themes like hard work, community, and nature. Their role in honey production connects them to ancient practices in food preservation and medicine. In short, bees are indispensable for biodiversity, agriculture, and the functioning of ecosystems. Their pollination services alone make them vital to food security and environmental health worldwide. The bill is a welcome change and I am privileged to be speaking about it. I am pleased to provide the House with an appreciation of the important role that bees have. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:52):** I make a contribution to debate on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2024. I support the bill, which is part of the Statute Law Revision Program that has effectively maintained and modernised New South Wales legislation for over 40 years. The bill represents the continued efforts of this program, ensuring our legal framework is current, accurate, and efficient without introducing any substantial policy changes or controversial amendments. The bill's primary objective is to make minor, uncontroversial adjustments to our laws. It accomplishes this through six distinct schedules, each addressing a different category of legislative maintenance. These include minor updates, technical corrections, and the repeal of obsolete legislation, none of which would typically justify a standalone bill.

This omnibus approach consolidates a wide range of non-controversial amendments, enabling the efficient processing of legislative changes without drawing unduly on Parliament's time. Schedule 1 to the bill makes minor amendments to 16 Acts and one regulation. Those changes address small yet important updates that improve clarity and alignment within our legal statutes. For example, schedule 1 amends the Community Land Management Act to ensure proper references are cited regarding the auditing standards for accounts and financial statements. Similarly, it removes outdated references in the Police Regulation (Superannuation) Act to the repealed Maintenance Act.

Each amendment in the schedule is explained in detail in the accompanying notes, allowing for a transparent understanding of each modification's purpose and impact.

Schedule 2 is dedicated to technical adjustments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision. Those amendments focus on correcting typographical errors, renumbering provisions and removing redundant content. Schedule 3 takes on a unique task, addressing outdated references to the Government Printer across various statutes. Although the Government Printer was abolished in 1989, its references have persisted throughout our legislative texts. The bill corrects those references, recognising the Parliamentary Counsel's Office as the responsible body for publishing the *Government Gazette* and updating legislative documents online. That update, although administrative in nature, enhances consistency and reflects the current structure and responsibility of our government offices.

Schedule 4 addresses another modernisation effort by removing references to the Impounding Act 1993, which was repealed and replaced by the Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021. By updating those references across 11 Acts and regulations, the schedule ensures that the statutes are consistent with current legislation on property, impounding and management, which is crucial for efficient governance and effective law enforcement. Schedule 5 focuses on repealing redundant Acts and provisions that no longer serve a practical purpose—for instance, Appropriation Acts from as far back as 2018 are repealed as they were intended to serve only the financial years they covered.

Schedule 6 provides transitional and general savings provisions, ensuring continuity as the updated legal framework takes effect. It also allows for regulations of a savings or transitional nature to be introduced, ensuring a smooth legislative shift where necessary. The statute law revision program is also underpinned by strict guidelines, ensuring that only non-controversial amendments with minor policy impacts are included. That means amendments that could potentially infringe upon private rights, impose retroactive liabilities or involve contentious issues are excluded.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2024 embodies the core principles of the statute law provision program—precision, efficiency and accessibility. It makes essential but minor adjustments that are carefully considered and entirely uncontroversial. The bill not only upholds the integrity of the statute books but also enhances our parliamentary efficiency by consolidating routine business that would otherwise burden the Chamber with multiple individual bills. The bill exemplifies the due diligence we apply to keeping our laws clear, current and responsive to modern governance needs. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:58):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No 2) 2024, including the member for Wahroonga, the member for Liverpool and the member for Mount Druitt. The Legislation Review Committee has considered the bill and published its report in the *Legislation Review Digest No. 22/58*, dated 12 November 2024. In considering the bill, the committee noted one area of concern—that, in enabling the making of regulations which include provisions expressed to commence before they are published on the NSW Legislation website, the bill may trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties. We appreciate the concerns that were raised. As required by Sessional Order 188A, and consistent with the department circular entitled *C2021-18 Bills impacting on personal rights and liberties*, I address the matters and concerns raised by the committee.

In schedule 6 to the bill, which contains general savings, transitional and other provisions that are standard to statute revision bills, clause 5 allows the Governor to make regulations of a savings or transitional nature that are incidental to the matters arising out of the bill. The regulations may take effect from the date of assent of the

bill or at a later date, including a date prior to the publication of the regulation on the NSW Legislation website. Importantly, clause 5 (3) restricts any retrospective regulations operating in a way that would prejudicially affect any pre-existing rights of a person or impose liabilities on a person in respect of actions or omissions done before the publication of the regulation.

The Government does not anticipate regulations under schedule 6, clause 5 will be made. However, the ability to make such regulations is important to ensure any unforeseen consequences of the bill, which amends a variety of legislation across the statute book, can be addressed by regulation. In that regard, regulations are subject to disallowance and, therefore, sufficient parliamentary scrutiny. Further, clause 5, and the restriction under subclause (3) in particular, adequately limits the extent to which any regulation made under the revision may trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties while balancing the need to include the regulation-making power as a contingency. The Government acknowledges, as the committee noted, that clause 5 of schedule 6 is identical to the equivalent provision of the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024 and my comments are equally applicable to that bill. I thank members for their contribution to this debate and commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## ENERGY AMENDMENT (LONG DURATION STORAGE AND INVESTMENT) BILL 2024

### Second Reading Speech

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:01):** On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. This Government is committed to ensuring the New South Wales electricity system continues its important transition to renewable energy. Critical to that is the delivery of more long-duration storage. Over the next 10 years three of the four remaining coal-fired power stations in New South Wales are expected to retire as we move towards a net-zero future. We do not want coal-fired power stations to be open any longer than needed and we are working hard to replace them through a mix of wind and solar generation. As so many people like to point out, the wind does not always blow and the sun does not always shine. That is why we need storage, particularly long-duration storage. It is critical to avoiding high prices and reliability impacts in New South Wales. Currently the national electricity market has just over three gigawatts of utility-scale storage. The Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan shows the national market will need at least 15 gigawatts of additional utility-scale storage by 2030. That is an increase in capacity of more than 600 per cent in the next six years.

The New South Wales Government has a comprehensive framework to support long-duration storage through the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. We are fortunate that that remains a multi-party commitment in New South Wales. The road map is all about paving the way for a cleaner, greener future and storage is essential to that. We have had strong success with the Consumer Trustee's road map tenders to date. Those tenders will continue to be run regularly to get more long-duration storage into the market and encourage more suppliers to enter the space. We are adding to the State's framework with the establishment of the Energy Security Corporation, which will be funded with \$1 billion to invest in critical energy storage and other projects. I thank members for supporting the passage of the legislation establishing the corporation earlier this year.

The Government recently carried out a review into the long-duration storage needs for New South Wales, which included extensive consultation with industry and other stakeholders. I am grateful for all the very considered submissions received and discussions held as part of that consultation process. In New South Wales, long-duration storage has been defined as capacity that can be dispatched for at least eight hours. I am pleased to say the Government has decided to retain the eight-hour duration requirement for long-duration storage, as well as the minimum objective of 16 gigawatt hours of long-duration storage to be constructed by 2030. Through this bill, the Government is proposing to establish a new long-duration storage infrastructure objective of an additional 12 gigawatt hours by 2034. That additional objective will provide a clear signal for investors and demonstrates that New South Wales is committed to supporting more long-duration storage over the long term.

We know many of these projects are complex and have long lead times. We are committed to supporting this important sector; we are in it for the long haul. The Government is also in the process of implementing the

Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, the State's plan for more low-cost, reliable renewable energy. Last year we commissioned the Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up to kick the tyres on the State's energy policies. That check-up delivered a set of recommendations, the vast majority of which the Government accepted and is delivering. As we progress with the implementation of both the road map and the check-up recommendations, legislative changes will be required.

Accordingly, in addition to establishing the long-duration storage objective for 2034, the bill proposes a range of amendments that will strengthen consideration of social and economic benefits when reviewing the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plans; clarify the application of the maximum capital cost for renewable energy zone network infrastructure projects; provide for adjustment payments at the end of a network project's authorisation; clarify that the Australian Energy Regulator maintains its jurisdiction in respect of national electricity laws and rules, including where modified by the New South Wales Electricity Infrastructure Investment Regulation 2021; update competition authorisations; and enable the Treasurer to direct payments be made from the Energy Administration Account to the Consolidated Fund in certain circumstances. The amendments in the bill support investment certainty and improve implementation for the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

The bill amends two pieces of legislation: the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020, which I will refer to as the EII Act, and the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, which I will refer to as the EUA Act. Some amendments to the EII Act in the bill also modify the National Electricity (NSW) Law. I will address each schedule to the bill individually. I turn first to schedule 1 to the bill, which contains the amendments to the EII Act. The bill includes amendments relating to the Renewable Energy Sector Board plan. The Renewable Energy Sector Board was established to prepare a plan for the New South Wales renewable energy sector, including helping local workers and industries in New South Wales reap the economic benefits of the energy transition. It consists of important groups of representatives, including industry, manufacturers and unions—all groups which have a strong interest in the energy transition.

The amendments in the bill will ensure that the board's plan can better maximise the use of local goods, services and workers, and will improve the functioning of the board. The amendments will require an additional consideration, specifically, that the regulator is satisfied the plan promotes social and economic benefits for the New South Wales community and economy before it recommends the board's plan to the Minister. That is in addition to the existing requirements. Further amendments provide a process for the board to amend its plan for the New South Wales renewable energy sector and for the Minister to make changes to the proposed amended plan. Under the EII Act, on authorisation of a renewable energy zone network infrastructure project, the Consumer Trustee must set a maximum amount for the prudent, efficient and reasonable capital costs for development and construction of the project.

The purpose of the maximum amount is to act as a consumer protection against significant capital cost increases between the authorisation and the initial revenue determination. The EII Act can currently be interpreted as requiring the regulator to apply that maximum capital cost amount to the initial revenue determination as well as all future revenue determinations and remakes of revenue determinations. That is problematic because of the way the maximum capital cost is calculated and because it could, even where cost changes are justified and prudent, leave a project that is partially or completely constructed with no revenue to recover capital or operating costs. That could also expose the Government to financial costs.

The proposed amendments reduce these risks and provide legislative certainty to network operators, while retaining consumer protections by maintaining the maximum amount's application to the first revenue determination. Additionally, the current legislation requires the Consumer Trustee to keep the maximum capital cost amount confidential and only share it with the Australian Energy Regulator. This ensures the network operator is providing accurate cost estimates and working to minimise costs. The proposed amendments will require the Consumer Trustee to provide written notice of the maximum capital cost amount to the Minister upon authorisation of a renewable energy zone network infrastructure project.

The proposed amendments also give the Minister discretion to disclose the maximum capital cost amount to other persons via a ministerial disclosure notice. In practice, recipients will likely include the Treasurer and senior Government officials. These parties need this information to assess the financial risk associated with projects and to manage contracts with network operators. A ministerial disclosure notice may contain conditions to ensure the maximum capital cost amount is only shared with people who need to know, without compromising the commercial sensitivity of the number. The maximum capital cost will not be disclosed to the network operator for this project.

As I have said, the bill makes amendments relating to long-duration storage. The EII Act sets an ongoing objective for long-duration storage infrastructure to meet the reliability standard. The EII Act also sets a minimum objective for long-duration storage infrastructure by 31 December 2029. The bill introduces a new 2034 minimum objective for the construction of 28 gigawatt hours of long-duration storage infrastructure by 31 December 2033.

This new objective will require construction of at least a further 12 gigawatt hours of storage. The new minimum objective is intended to provide greater policy certainty for investors through a clear, long-term signal. It will enable the Consumer Trustee to commence tenders for long-duration storage infrastructure in the 2030s, which includes projects that cannot be constructed by 31 December 2029. The new 2034 minimum objective is expressed in gigawatt hours of electricity stored rather than gigawatts of capacity, so the Consumer Trustee has flexibility to choose the projects that have the greatest financial value to consumers.

For example, the 12 gigawatt hours could be delivered by a 1.5-gigawatt project that can dispatch for a minimum of eight hours, or it could be met by a 500-megawatt project that can be dispatched for 24 hours. The amendments to enable end-of-term payments will provide for reconciliation payments between the scheme financial vehicle and a network operator, once that network operator is no longer subject to an authorisation or direction for a network infrastructure project. Currently the EII Act does not expressly provide that the determined payment to or from the network operator can be made after the authorisation or direction for a network infrastructure project has ceased to have effect. The proposed amendments will provide for the regulator to determine whether a network operator is entitled to a different amount than what has been paid after the authorisation or direction for a network infrastructure project has ceased to have effect. The amendments also allow a reconciliation payment between the scheme financial vehicle and the network operator if an overpayment or underpayment has been made.

The next set of amendments will provide for access scheme functions under the EII Act to be exceptions to part IV of the Commonwealth's Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The EII Act already authorises certain activities in relation to the operation of the Commonwealth Act. The new authorised activities relate to the exercising of functions regarding administering and allocating access rights in an access scheme, including functions exercised by EII Act entities such as the infrastructure planner, consumer trustee and any administrator of an access scheme. The amendments have been proposed out of an abundance of caution. That is to ensure the infrastructure planner and others can deliver and administer access schemes with confidence.

The amendments do not apply to those holding or applying or competing to hold access rights such as generation and storage proponents. The application of the Commonwealth Act is imperative to prevent anti-competitive behaviour in tendering for or holding access rights. Amendments are included in the bill that seek to implement an appropriate compliance framework regarding modified National Electricity Rules under the EII Act. The EII Act enables regulations to be made to modify the application of the National Electricity Law and the National Electricity Rules in New South Wales for certain purposes. The amendments in the bill seek to ensure the variety of regulatory and enforcement provisions contained in the National Electricity (NSW) Law apply to modified rules, and to ensure that the Australian Energy Regulator is able to undertake monitoring, investigation and compliance functions as the regulator in respect of modified rules.

The amendments also seek to introduce a new head of power to allow modified rules to prescribe specific civil penalty provisions, as well as the civil penalty amounts that each provision attracts. The amendments will also provide that the Australian Energy Regulator has functions to monitor and investigate the infrastructure planner's compliance with any functions in relation to modified rules. The amendments will also provide that the Australian Energy Regulator may disclose to the Minister information given to the regulator in connection with its functions under the National Electricity Law or National Electricity Rules. The amendments to the EUA Act will enable the Treasurer to direct payments from the Energy Administration Account to the Consolidated Fund, to repay amounts that were originally appropriated from the Consolidated Fund, subject to the concurrence of the Minister responsible for administering the EUA Act and the EII Act.

The Energy Administration Account is managed by EnergyCo and is used to fund early works on renewable energy zones and other critical transmission projects before costs can be recovered from consumers. The amendments provide a legislated pathway to enable repayments to be made from the Energy Administration Account to the Consolidated Fund. The requirement for concurrence of the Minister administering the EUA Act and EII Act ensures payments do not inadvertently put the delivery of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap at risk. The amendments limit the payments that may be directed by the Treasurer to funds that were originally paid from the Consolidated Fund into the Energy Administration Account. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:18):** On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. We commend the Government. We need this reform, with granular detail, to roll out the renewable energy boom that we must have. It is not a choice, and we are happy to support it. We would like some tweaks to the bill, which we will definitely look at in the other place. The bill provides more detail about the Renewable Energy Sector Board plan. Currently, it is not possible to amend the plan—only for it to be remade and replaced. The proposed amendments will permit changes and tweaks to the plan. It is desirable to maintain certainty and continuity of the plan while permitting improvements. The

amended plan still would have to be approved by the regulator, who will have to include a new consideration of whether the plan promotes social and economic benefits for the New South Wales community and economy.

The Greens, alongside the union movement, have been pushing for those social and community benefits to be embedded in energy investment legislation, and we are glad to see those clauses included.

The Greens hold concerns that the definition of economic and community benefits remains quite broad. We encourage the Government to assist the regulator in its interpretation of that by accepting a definition of economic benefits along the lines of "delivering broad benefits by supporting social licence, maximising the use of locally produced and supplied goods and services, and providing secure employment as well as training and apprenticeship opportunities." The Greens think that would go a long way towards reassuring us and our stakeholders on some of our concerns, particularly while New South Wales is still immature in its approach to the expenditure of public money for public purpose and does not have robust procurement requirements like the Australian Capital Territory's Secure Local Jobs Code or the labour standards enshrined in Queensland.

Further provisions of the bill relate to the maximum capital cost for projects and how that is costed and works in conjunction with revenue determinations for projects. The Greens think that is very important. Under the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act, the Consumer Trustee must set a maximum amount for the prudent, efficient and reasonable capital costs for development and construction of a renewable energy zone network infrastructure project. The purpose of the maximum amount is to act as a consumer protection as, under the legislation, the capital costs for network infrastructure are passed through to consumers.

The Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act can currently be interpreted as requiring the regulator to apply the maximum amount to the initial revenue determination as well as all future revenue determinations and remakes of revenue determinations. That has caused issues due to the way that maximum capital cost is calculated. It could potentially result in a circumstance where, due to justifiable cost changes to develop a project, that project is unable to be completed or is completed inappropriately or below capacity in order to remain under that capital cost. It is ludicrous. Currently, the Government may be required to step in to finish the project if that happens. The bill seeks to amend the calculation such that the initially determined maximum capital cost only applies to the initial revenue determination. The Greens welcome that. The bill also permits the Minister to be notified of that maximum capital cost amount and to make a ministerial direction to other senior Ministers so that it can be modified.

The bill responds to public consultation on long-duration storage, which is something I am very passionate about, and establishes a new minimum objective of 28 gigawatt hours for long-duration storage by 2034. That would entail the construction of at least a further 12 gigawatts of storage above what is currently legislated. That is good news. There is currently an objective for 2030. That means that projects that could not be completed by 2030 are now able to be progressed and granted tenders. The new minimum objective is expressed in gigawatt hours of electricity stored rather than gigawatts hours of capacity, so the Consumer Trustee has flexibility to choose the projects it deems most appropriate. For example, 12 gigawatt hours could be delivered by a 1.5 gigawatt project that can be dispatched for a minimum of eight hours, or it could be met by a 500 megawatt project that can be dispatched for 24 hours.

Also included in the review into the long-duration storage needs for New South Wales was a discussion of whether the definition of long-duration storage should be amended from eight hours to four hours. AEMO Services initially recommended it be amended to four hours, as those projects would be cheaper and faster to develop. Following consultation with industry, in which opinions around this varied, the Government decided to maintain the definition as capacity that can be dispatched for at least eight hours. The Greens hold concerns that this approach could potentially delay the rapid rollout of energy storage as well as preference the interests of big business with access to the capital required to deliver eight-hour dispatchable energy rather than, for example, community projects. The Greens are pleased to see legislation that continues to hone and support the renewable energy boom that we must have if we are to have any chance of staying under two degrees of global warming. When we hear the Tories, mostly federally, quibbling over net zero targets, it is important to keep coming back to the truth of humanity's precarious survival on the planet. We must deliver this as though our lives depend on it, because our lives depend on it.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:24):** It gives me great pleasure to support the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for bringing the bill to the House. She is an enthusiastic advocate of the energy transition and would have liked to have talked more generally about it in her remarks rather than the technicalities of the bill. She might get that opportunity later. My contribution will not be so much about the technicalities of the bill but more the general nature of it. The bill is important because long duration storage is a really important part of the energy transition in New South Wales and Australia. It is just one of the things that the Government is doing to enable our energy transition in New South Wales. Long duration storage is necessary if we are to

transition to an environment where most of our power comes from either solar or wind. That is very achievable in New South Wales and Australia. It is important that we have storage.

I had the great pleasure of recently visiting, with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the Waratah super battery, which is either the biggest or second biggest in the world depending on which count is used; we will take the biggest because we are locals and we like to promote it. At 680 megawatt hours, it is the biggest battery in the world. That is an important part of working towards the transition. I am also very lucky to be the member for Monaro, where a lot of the workforce and a lot of the work is taking place for the delivery of Snowy 2.0. Again, that is a very important part of the energy transition and is a super battery. That will provide 350,000 megawatt hours of large-scale storage, enough to power three million homes for an entire week. That is a very important part of the energy transition to provide that backup and ensure that we have continuous energy supplies. The Government's legislation is important because missing in this area between 2010 and 2020 were the measures that provide certainty for investors to make the investments in the infrastructure that we need to make the energy transition. This sort of legislation is part of the energy transition—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I was coming to the Commonwealth but let me go through it. This sort of legislation is part of the energy transition to get investment in place. The certainty that is required requires legislation and the ability for investors to come in. Getting battery storage in place is part of the Government's measures to go through the energy road map. A number of initiatives have taken place over the past few years. It was interesting to see the report referred to by Nick O'Malley in *The Sydney Morning Herald* today which quotes the Productivity Commissioner Peter Achterstraat talking about the challenge of achieving the energy transition and the renewables targets. If we were setting transition targets which were easy to achieve, then we would not be doing enough. We needed to set ambitious renewable targets to make sure that we are doing our best to hit net zero by 2050.

The Productivity Commissioner, interestingly, was quoted in this article as saying that the most effective way would be an economy-wide emissions price, which he conceded was not on the table. That goes back to why the job is so difficult right now because in 2007 we had the rejection of the proposals put forward by the Rudd Government which would have provided economic certainty for people to invest in renewables and for investment in the transition and which were, unfortunately, rejected at the time because Tony Abbott decided short-term political gain was more important than the long-term future of Australia and the world. Unfortunately, The Greens also decided that perfection was more important than actually getting something going. That goes back to why we had such a difficult environment from the time the Abbott Government came in through to the change in Federal Government in providing the certainty that the energy market needed to make the transition.

Peter Achterstraat also said that New South Wales needed to accelerate electrification, provide incentives for households to change their behaviour, and give business certainty to commit to investment in large and long-term projects. That is exactly what the bill is talking about. The Government is trying to create an environment for further investment in long-term storage, which is why it has announced initiatives like the one to encourage households to take up batteries, which are an important part of the transition. We need to act to ensure that the planning system enables renewable projects to get built. Under the previous Government, while there was a lot of good talk and good targets, there was a very long hiatus in the approval of renewables projects.

Not all renewables projects like wind farms will go ahead—like any industrial development, there are right places and there are wrong places for them and they are not all going to happen—but it is important that they progress through the planning processes in an effective and efficient way to make sure that we can move forward. I continue to worry about the opposition and scaremongering around renewables projects, particularly from the Federal Nationals, which we also see from the Leader of The Nationals in this place. To his credit, he does focus more on community consultation, but he is still not averse to making negative comments about the prospects for transition. I have pointed out in this place before that for New South Wales to power its entire future energy needs with solar it would only take up a total of 1,200 square kilometres of land. New South Wales is 801,150 square kilometres.

Even if we had to fit all of Australia's needs into New South Wales, it would require only 0.15 per cent of the land—hopefully my maths is correct. That is a very small proportion. Making the transition to renewables and building solar and wind farms will not stop agriculture in New South Wales. Indeed, listening to sensible groups like Farmers for Climate Action, there are huge opportunities in agriculture if New South Wales participates in the transition to renewables. Farming continues under wind farms and grazing continues under solar farms. Clearly, if a farmer has a highly productive cropping area with high-value irrigated crops, they are probably not going to sell the land for a solar farm. They would make the decision that the return on that land would be better growing crops. But the bottom line is that farmers should be able to make decisions about their land, and many will choose to host renewables on their properties.

We should acknowledge processes that allow neighbours and communities to be consulted and share in the benefits of renewables. I have also mentioned before in this place that I was involved at an early stage in assisting my friend Karin Stark from Narromine with the National Renewables in Agriculture Conference, which showed the farming community the opportunities that can come from the transition to renewables. The conference is a fantastic initiative that Karin continues to run. It is important that New South Wales makes this transition. The Government is putting in place a range of different options, including this legislation, to make sure that the energy transition takes place in a constructive way so that the State can meet the objectives that the Government has embedded as quickly as possible, as well as to ensure that we are accountable to the people of New South Wales in achieving those objectives. I am proud to be part of a government that is working on this.

Recently I attended the Snowy Scheme's seventy-fifth reunion in Cooma. I note the pride that the old workers had in the role they played in the scheme. One of them took the time to explain to me the need to have a system that had inertia. When I got to the Waratah Super Battery, I learned more about what inertia meant. When systems ran on turbines they had inertia because the turbines would keep spinning. This has to be replicated when moving to batteries, which was educational for me. To hear it from the Snowy Scheme guys was great.

The Snowy 2.0 workers have the same pride in the work that they are doing. Despite negative publicity, over time we will see that to be an amazing engineering and workforce achievement just as the Snowy Scheme was 75 years ago. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (12:34):** I lead for the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals in debate on the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. I welcome to the New South Wales Parliament the people in gallery who are listening to important debates.. The purpose of the omnibus bill is to introduce a series of amendments to two pieces of energy legislation. The first is the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 and the second is the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to the bill. The Parliamentary Secretary alluded to the *NSW Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up* report, which I will refer to later. While the bill is a step towards a sustainable energy future in New South Wales, its timelines and some of its provisions can be viewed as urgent, given the rising energy costs and the accelerating impacts of climate change. Nonetheless, the Opposition supports the bill and its aims.

It is well known that the Liberals and Nationals have a strong and proud record with energy and climate change. We have always recognised the importance of energy that is affordable, reliable and clean. I am proud that it was the Coalition Government that pioneered the New South Wales electricity road map by designing, funding and implementing it with, importantly, bipartisan support. This support continues. The bill is necessary to enable various aspects of the road map to be continually implemented. The Minister in the other place said in his second reading speech:

The New South Wales Government has a comprehensive framework to support long-duration storage through the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. We are fortunate that in New South Wales that remains a multi-party commitment.

The road map is all about paving the way for a cleaner, greener future, and storage is central to that.

The bill focuses on three areas: first, to increase renewable energy infrastructure, particularly long-duration storage; secondly, to make sure there is regulatory transparency and control over capital costs in renewable projects; and, thirdly, to promote economic and social benefits to the community from energy infrastructure projects. These changes reflect a response to growing needs. First, the bill responds to local needs by creating sustainable energy solutions and responding to the economic needs of New South Wales; secondly, it responds to global needs by aligning with Australia's international commitments.

I make five points regarding the bill. First, a significant amendment in the bill is the requirement for long-duration storage infrastructure to reach a minimum capacity of 28 gigawatt hours by the end of 2033. Long-duration storage is critical for renewable energy reliability as it can store power for extended periods, balancing the grid when renewable sources, such as wind and solar, are unavailable. As has already been alluded to in this debate, an often asked question is, "What happens to supply when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining?" The bill helps solve that problem. The storage mandate indicates a clear move towards ensuring that renewable energy sources can reliably meet future energy demands. The long-duration storage requirement aligns with global trends and strategies focused on large-scale energy storage as a cornerstone for achieving low-carbon energy goals. By mandating storage capacity, New South Wales is taking concrete steps to support the integration of renewables, thereby enhancing grid resilience and, importantly, stability.

Secondly, the bill introduces mechanisms to improve the management and transparency of costs associated with renewable energy zone infrastructure projects. The Consumer Trustee will be responsible for setting a maximum cap on capital costs for these projects. Once determined, the trustee must notify the Minister, who will then disclose the information to relevant stakeholders under confidentiality requirements. This measure aims to control costs by ensuring transparency in large infrastructure projects, preventing excessive expenditures, and

protecting electricity consumers from potential financial impacts. Additionally, this oversight intends to keep renewable energy zone projects economically viable, indirectly encouraging investment by offering a predictable cost structure.

Requiring confidentiality for disclosed information, however, balances transparency with commercial sensitivity, allowing the Government to maintain control over public communication of those sensitive financial details.

Thirdly, the bill implements the requirement for the renewable energy sector plan to not only protect electricity customers' financial interests but also provide social and economic benefits to the overall New South Wales community. It is an issue that the Coalition has regularly brought to the attention of the Government. By explicitly including social and economic factors in its planning criteria, New South Wales is ensuring that energy projects contribute to local job creation, regional development and the overall economic wellbeing of the State. Fourthly, the bill addresses payment structures and adjustments related to network operators involved in renewable energy zone infrastructure projects. That includes mechanisms allowing the regulator to review and remake payment determinations, especially regarding adjustments that may be necessary over time due to changes in project scope, inflation or other unforeseen costs. By setting out clear processes for adjustment and review, the bill aims to ensure that network operators can recover legitimate costs, while also keeping those costs within reasonable limits. That is important for maintaining financial predictability in the energy sector and encouraging investment, while protecting consumers from abrupt cost increases.

Finally, to further streamline renewable energy zone projects, the bill proposes modifications to the National Electricity Rules as they apply in New South Wales. The adjustments allow for State-specific considerations within the broader national framework, focusing on access rights, civil penalties and the sharing of information with the Australian Energy Regulator. That alignment between State and national rules, or harmonisation, is critical to achieving regulatory consistency and efficiency, especially as energy infrastructure projects frequently span multiple jurisdictions. Coordinating New South Wales amendments with the national regulatory framework ensures that renewable energy zone projects can proceed smoothly and benefit from a standardised approach to compliance and enforcement.

In conclusion, the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024 seeks to integrate renewable energy infrastructure with economic, social and environmental priorities. By mandating long-duration storage, controlling capital costs, ensuring community benefits and aligning with national regulations, the bill is designed to position New South Wales as the leader in sustainable energy investment. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Opposition is concerned that by setting a distant target of 2033 for long-duration storage capacity and introducing overly complex regulatory steps, the Government appears out of touch with the scale and urgency of the energy transition required. I commend the bill to the House. I look forward to moving amendments during the Consideration in Detail stage.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:42):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. The legislation brings important enhancements to the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020, or the EII Act. It reinforces the Government's commitment to the renewable energy sector and to fostering a secure, affordable and sustainable energy future for New South Wales. The EII Act is the backbone of the State's renewable energy infrastructure and provides a framework for long-term investment in renewable electricity generation, long-duration storage, network infrastructure and firming resources. The bill will strengthen that framework and allow our energy transition to fully realise its potential for economic growth and environmental stewardship.

The Government is fully committed to a balanced and sustainable energy transition for New South Wales, and the bill will help to ensure that communities across the State experience the benefits. At the forefront of the effort is the Energy Corporation of NSW, or EnergyCo, which has the crucial role of managing the Central-West Orana, New England, South West, Hunter-Central Coast and Illawarra renewable energy zones. EnergyCo collaborates closely with communities to develop and recommend network infrastructure projects, while a regulator ensures that revenue for network operators is reasonable, prudent and efficient.

One important feature of the bill is the provision that enables the assessment of financial risks associated with renewable energy zone network infrastructure projects. By requiring the Consumer Trustee to notify the Minister of the maximum capital cost for each project, we add a layer of accountability and transparency, giving the Government better control over costs while protecting consumers from potential overrun expenses. Central to the EII Act framework is a 10-year tender schedule and a 20-year development pathway. These establish competitive tenders run by the independent Consumer Trustee, who then recommends long-term energy service agreements that provide certainty for investors and value for electricity consumers.

Building upon that solid foundation, the bill proposes a new minimum objective of at least 28 gigawatt hours of long-duration storage by 2034. That target sends a strong investment signal, supporting the reliability



and resilience of our power supply and spreading the benefits of these projects across the State. As we progress in implementing the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, we must monitor and adjust our framework. To this end, the bill aligns the regulatory and enforcement provisions of the National Electricity (NSW) Law with modified rules in the renewable energy sector, allowing the Australian Energy Regulator to perform its monitoring, investigation and compliance functions. Additionally, the bill introduces a mechanism for end-of-term adjustment payments between the scheme financial vehicle and the network operator after a project's authorisation or direction has ceased. That provides financial stability and fairness by allowing for necessary reconciliations after a project concludes.

New South Wales must prepare for significant changes to its electricity system. In the next decade, three of the State's four remaining coal-fired power stations are expected to retire as part of our net zero ambitions. That shift demands that we advance our storage capabilities. Currently, the National Electricity Market has just over three gigawatts of utility-scale storage. The Australian Energy Market Operator Integrated System Plan projects that at least 15 gigawatts of additional storage capacity will be needed by 2030—an increase of over 600 per cent. New South Wales is well positioned with the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and bipartisan support for that goal.

The establishment of the Energy Security Corporation, with a \$1 billion investment, further exemplifies our dedication to long-duration storage and other critical projects. The Government determined that long-duration storage in New South Wales should meet an eight-hour minimum dispatch requirement. We will maintain that standard, along with a 2030 target of 16 gigawatt hours of storage capacity. With the bill, we are establishing a new goal of 28 gigawatt hours by 2034, reinforcing investor confidence with a clear, long-term target for continued growth in storage. The bill specifies the maximum capital cost for each renewable energy zone project, adding transparency and flexibility in managing cost structures. That change allows for adjustments if cost changes are justified, while maintaining strong consumer protections.

The amendment provisions also cover long-duration storage requirements in the EII Act. By setting a new 2034 target for 28 gigawatt hours of storage infrastructure, we provide a long-term signal that solidifies the New South Wales commitment to storage solutions. That will allow the Consumer Trustee to select the best financial options for consumers, adding to our capacity for secure, reliable and affordable power.

Finally, the bill enhances transparency by enabling the Minister to disclose maximum capital costs to key government stakeholders while preserving commercial confidentiality. This balanced approach enables responsible project oversight and strategic decision-making. This is a critical bill that strengthens the path for long-duration storage and lays the groundwork for an energy-secure New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:49):** I am pleased to address the House in support of the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. With a New South Wales electricity system continuing to transition to renewable energy generation, this omnibus bill is committed to ensuring the New South Wales electricity system continues its important transition to renewable energy. Within the next decade, three of the four remaining coal-fired power stations in New South Wales are expected to retire as we move towards a net zero future. Our Government and our communities do not want coal-fired power stations open a day longer than necessary, so we are working hard to replace them with a combination of wind and solar generation while firming in batteries.

Critical to the success of this twenty-first century approach is ensuring there is capacity for storage, especially long-duration storage. Why? Because the wind does not always blow and, like today, the sun does not always shine, so investing in long-duration storage will assist to avoid high prices and reliability impacts across New South Wales. The bill seeks to amend two pieces of energy legislation to support investment in renewable energy infrastructure by establishing a new minimum objective for long-duration storage, clarifying the application of the maximum capital cost for network infrastructure projects, strengthening consideration of social and economic benefits when reviewing the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plans, providing for adjustment payments at the end of the network project's authorisation, and updating competition authorisations.

At this point in time the National Electricity Market has just over three gigawatts of utility-scale storage. However, the Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan shows the national market will need at least 15 gigawatts of additional utility-scale storage by 2030—a more than 600 per cent increase in capacity in the next six years. The New South Wales Government has a comprehensive framework to support long-duration storage through the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. It is pleasing that that remains a multi-party commitment. The road map is about paving the way for a cleaner and greener future and storage is essential to that. The Government has been successful with the Consumer Trustee's road map tenders to date, which will continue to be run more regularly to get more long-duration storage into the market and encourage more suppliers to enter this space.

The Government is also adding to the State's framework with the establishment of the Energy Security Corporation, which has been funded with \$1 billion to invest in critical energy storage and other projects as a result of legislation that was passed earlier this year. A recent Government review into the long-duration storage needs of our State included extensive consultation with industry and other stakeholders. Very considered submissions were received, and discussions were held as part of that consultation process. In New South Wales, long-duration storage has been defined as capacity that can be dispatched for at least eight hours. The Minns Labor Government has decided to retain the eight-hour duration requirement for long-duration storage as well as the minimum objective of 16 gigawatt hours of long-duration storage to be constructed by 2030.

The bipartisan Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap takes a technology-neutral approach to meeting New South Wales' long-duration storage needs. As part of the road map, the independent Consumer Trustee maintains a 10-year tender plan. Regulated competitive tenders for long-term energy service agreements are incentivising construction of enough long-duration storage infrastructure to meet the 20-year development pathway. Eligible projects must have been committed after 2019 to storage of electricity to be capable of dispatching their registered capacity for at least eight hours and be scheduled in the market operator's central dispatch process. The Consumer Trustee already has held two tenders for long-duration storage. Collectively, the projects that have been awarded long-term energy service agreements will deliver almost 4,600 megawatt hours of storage.

Around one-quarter of the 2030 long-duration storage objective has been locked in. It is clear that investment activity is spread across the State.

The first agreement was awarded in April 2023. Near Balranald in the South West Renewable Energy Zone, the RWE Renewables Australia Limondale battery will deliver 400 megawatt hours of storage. In December 2023 another three agreements were awarded. In Broken Hill, the Hydrostor Silver City energy storage project will deliver 1,600 megawatt hours of storage using compressed air, and in recent weeks we saw how that project will be a complete game changer for the Far West region when it is delivered. Near Merriwa, in the Upper Hunter, Lightsource bp Australia has the Goulburn River battery, which will deliver 392 megawatt hours of storage. Finally, at Myrtle Creek, in north-eastern New South Wales, Arc Energy's Richmond Valley battery will deliver 2,200 megawatt hours of storage. Those projects are driving investment and economic activity in a variety of regional areas.

The results of the Consumer Trustee's third long-duration storage tender are expected in early 2025, and a fourth tender is expected to open in May 2025. The new long-duration storage objective in the bill will continue support for investment in New South Wales' energy transition, enabling the Consumer Trustee to run more tenders to support more projects. Labor's energy plan will deliver more reliable energy, investment and jobs to regional New South Wales, and a more prosperous economy for us all. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:56):** On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to debate on the Energy Amendment (Long Duration Storage and Investment) Bill 2024. In particular, I acknowledge the contribution from the member for Ballina, who spoke very clearly about the social and economic benefits for New South Wales in regard to the bill and welcomed the steps within the bill that tackle climate change. The member for Monaro spoke to the measures that provide certainty for investors as we move through the transition stage and the significance of setting ambitious renewable targets. This bill is one step in that process. I acknowledge the member for Davidson, who, at the outset, said the Opposition would support the bill and its aims. I acknowledge the work of the former Government and the steps it took prior to us reaching this point.

The member for Mount Druitt has a keen interest in renewable energy and contributed to debate on the bill. Finally, the member for Parramatta focused on what our communities have said we need in a net zero future. This Government takes climate change seriously. We must act quickly to reduce climate pollution. We owe that to our children. That is why the Government is serious about implementing the road map and transforming our energy system. Over the next decade, three of the four remaining coal-fired power stations in New South Wales are expected to retire, as many members have alluded to. As we move towards that net zero future, we do not want coal-fired power stations to be open for any longer than they need to be. We are working hard to replace them through a mix of wind, solar and, through the bill, more long-duration storage.

I acknowledge the many staff in the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water who have worked incredibly hard on the bill. I thank also the good Minister's staff, who consult with members, make sure that we are all prepared and listen to what the community is saying to us as parliamentarians, regardless of our political affiliations, about what they want us to do in the future. As many have said, this Government has, as the former Government had, very ambitious plans for the transformation of our energy system.

We talk to our communities and they provide us with feedback. As parliamentarians across the Chamber and across the political system, we must deliver this plan for our communities and our State in order to meet our emissions reduction targets and ensure that we have reliable and affordable power for New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Matt Cross.**

#### Consideration in Detail

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

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (13:00):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-234D in globo:

**No. 1 Plan for NSW renewable energy sector**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], proposed section 8(4)(c), line 7. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

economy, and

- (d) ensures decommissioning plans are part of all future renewable energy projects and are supported by remediation bonds.

**No. 2 Plan for NSW renewable energy sector**

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], proposed section 8A(5), line 24. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

economy, and

- (d) ensures decommissioning plans are part of all future renewable energy projects and are supported by remediation bonds.

As members know, this legislation is in response to the Marsden Jacob Associates report commissioned by the Government entitled *Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up*. For those watching from the gallery and at home and, importantly, crossbench members watching in their offices, I am moving the amendments because I am asking for their support. Recommendation 41 of the report—

**Mr Stephen Bali:** I do not think the gallery is going to support you.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** Yes, and I need to get the Government on board. Recommendation 41 says the decommissioning plans are a part of all future renewable project approvals and that these should be supported by remediation bonds at an agreed point in the project life. For those at home who are pulling out the report, page 101 states:

9.3.3 Stakeholder also considered that neighbour and visual amenity impacts had to be addressed. Findings

Consistent, transparent, and efficient planning approach is needed

Consistency in approach to the renewable energy sector is needed across the state in some areas. This is particularly so in planning policy. This means transparent and consistent guidelines for wind, solar and storage in the regions, developed in consultation with the industry.

It also means standard approaches to issues such as decommissioning of renewable projects at the end of their life. Putting aside bonds in the latter part of a renewable asset's operating life for the costs of decommissioning may be needed. This is important as a single instance of a landholder being left with the remediation costs of end-of-life renewable assets is enough to have a significant impact on community support for the whole sector.

Policies need to recognise there is an asymmetry between the knowledge of a land holder and a renewable energy company. Standard agreement terms and templates accessible by landholders could help redress this imbalance.

We note that the Government, on an individual basis, has made some movements with respect to those issues. But, in determining the NSW Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan or any amendments to such a plan, it is important that consideration also be given to decommissioning, supported by remediation bonds to ensure that, as the report highlights, landlords are not left in the lurch. The sector plans have been expanded by this legislation to be required to take into consideration social and economic benefits for the New South Wales community and economy, which is also a clear theme of that report.

I quote further from the report, which states:

9.4.3 Findings

Life cycle approach to jobs in renewables is needed

A life cycle approach to renewable infrastructure focused on construction, operation and eventual decommissioning will help build a wider benefits narrative.

The amendments before the House seek to ensure that landholders and communities are at the centre of consideration of any proposals. One object of the Act is "to foster local community support for investment in new generation, storage, network and related infrastructure". The amendment I am moving will assist in that aim. When it comes to renewable energy projects, as well as commissioning, there may be recommissioning where other projects are approved and take place. Those are all things that the Renewable Energy Sector Board should take into consideration when formulating its plan. The amendment offered today is so that decommissioning, supported by remediation bonds, must be considered by the board in the formulation of its plans, for the regulator to be able to commend a board's plan or an amended plan to the Minister. I ask all members of this House to consider this amendment, and I commend these two amendments to the House.

**Business interrupted.**

*Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:06):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the following routine of business for the remainder of the day:

- (1) Government business to continue until its completion.
- (2) Community recognition statements, for up to 20 minutes.
- (3) Private members' statements, after which the House to adjourn without motion moved until the next sitting day.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:06):** I thank the Leader of the House for bringing this motion to the Opposition. We support the suspension.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills*

#### **ENERGY AMENDMENT (LONG DURATION STORAGE AND INVESTMENT) BILL 2024**

##### **Consideration in Detail**

**Business resumed.**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:07):** As Parliamentary Secretary, I inform the House that the Government will not be supporting the amendments. The amendments go to a set of genuine, serious, complex issues, but lumping them into this bill, which addresses energy matters not planning matters, is not the way to deal with such sensitive issues. The Opposition sought to move these amendments in the other place and gave an interesting speech about them. I guess there might have been a couple of different authors because the first page says the timeline in the bill is insufficiently urgent but the next page says the Opposition wants to impose onerous new requirements that would slow down projects and make them more expensive. Perhaps this is a case of the right hand not talking to the far-right hand.

The amendments deviate from the bill's objective to strengthen the justification for the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan to maximise the use of local goods, workers and services, which will further promote opportunities for renewable energy supply chains in New South Wales. The board was established to prepare and provide the Minister with a plan for the renewable energy sector in New South Wales, particularly in relation to the operation of the sector and the manufacture and construction of infrastructure in this sector. The board has developed a plan to support the growth and competitiveness of the renewable energy supply chain and to ensure that the benefits of renewable energy projects are shared with the workers, their families and their communities.

Requiring the regulator to be satisfied that the board's plan promotes social and economic benefits broadens the considered benefits to the whole of New South Wales instead of exclusively to electricity consumers. That provides a stronger justification for the board to maximise the use of local goods, services and workers, further promoting economic opportunities. But those amendments would mean the regulator must be satisfied that the plan ensures that renewable energy projects pay decommissioning bonds. That is not the role of the renewable energy sector board or its plan; that is an issue for the planning system. Just this week, the Minns Government released a new renewable energy planning framework. That framework makes clear that the Government will impose conditions upon all wind and solar energy projects to make sure that infrastructure is decommissioned.

There are a range of views when it comes to whether those decommissioning requirements should be extended to mandate that projects pay a decommissioning bond. Some argue that should be the case to mirror the requirements for mining projects. But extractive industries are very different to renewable energy projects. At the end of a mine's life, the mineral has been extracted and the value of the site to the developer is gone. That is not the case for wind and solar farms. When the solar panels or wind turbines have reached the end of their lives, the sun is still shining at that site, the wind is still blowing and the developer is still earning revenue from the project. The risk that a project will run out of money or disappear, leaving infrastructure in place, is much lower. That risk is addressed through development consents requiring projects to have decommissioning plans, and through agreements between landowners and developments. The Government has this week published a decommissioning calculator to help landowners assess the cost of decommissioning a renewable energy project.

The cost of decommissioning is heavily dependent on what the host landowner is willing to accept at the completion of that project. For example, if the landowner is willing to retain access roads and underground cabling, the cost of decommissioning a single turbine could be as little as \$3,000, after materials are recycled and resold. It is appropriate for the landowner to consider those costs when they enter into lease agreements and negotiate remuneration from the project. If government were to require a bond, it would come at significant cost. Bonds incur interest over time, and that would increase costs for the industry and for energy consumers. To maintain bonds for the renewable energy projects that come online from now until 2030 would cost up to \$1.36 billion, in present value terms, over 25 years. That cost is not proportionate to the risk. Unlike mining projects, almost all investment in renewable energy happens up-front.

Coupled with relatively small decommissioning costs, that means the ongoing risks are extremely low and the cost of decommissioning can be recuperated in as little as two years of operation. I also note that Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Regional NSW has commenced an inquiry into renewable energy zones and the impacts on regional communities. The terms of reference for that inquiry explicitly include reference to investigating the issues around decommissioning bonds. I would have thought that the Opposition would want to see the evidence and findings of that inquiry before rushing to insert amendments into the wrong bill and not thinking about how such a regime would actually work. For those reasons, the Government does not support the proposed amendments.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (13:13):** I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to the amendments. Members know that the electorate of Goulburn is saturated with renewable energy projects. We are also getting to the end of probably one of the first renewable energy projects in the State, the Crookwell Wind Farm. Decommissioning is certainly a concern. At the end of the life of a wind farm, which is around 20 to 25 years, the site must be decommissioned. Demolition and removal is a specialist and accordingly expensive enterprise.

While we are told decommissioning of the site is the responsibility of the owner of the wind farm, their reluctance to provide security up-front for decommissioning is a clear indication that they fully understand the cost of that process. While landowner contracts contain clauses explicitly setting out the amount of time between the wind farm's end of life and the decommissioning, and the expectations around rehabilitating the site, there is no legislative or regulatory requirement.

In its 2022 annual report, the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner advises that most planning permits state that decommissioning responsibilities rest with the project owner. It adds, however, that liability may ultimately rest with the landholder in the event of default by the project owner. Project operators and owners may change many times during the life of the project, and that can put at risk any long-term funding arrangements that are put in place to cover the costs of decommissioning. The State Government, which is the authority that approves those projects, has said that decommissioning costs were a matter for the relevant parties involved in the contract process, ultimately wiping its hands of any responsibility and potentially leaving landowners with a phenomenal bill in the event of default by the project owner.

The report also warns that decommissioning costs, predicted to be between \$400,000 and \$600,000 per turbine, could end up exceeding the total income generated for the landholder over the 25-year period of operation. Again, the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner highlighted that the project operator may sell the project to another company over the course of the life of the project, which could easily result in the arrangement to fund the decommissioning being lost and the enforceability of the agreement being eroded over time. There is nothing in the planning Act to provide for the development approval to bind the wind farm proponent/developer once it transfers the wind farm, or the successors in title to the wind farm, or the holding company of the proponent.

Often the wind farm proponent/developer is a two dollar subsidiary of a publicly listed company, with no resources to fulfil the conditions, particularly the decommissioning condition. We need to provide bulletproof legislation to ensure that before the wind farm lease is executed, the lease should contain detailed provisions on the removal and restoration process to be undertaken at the conclusion of the lease. There needs to be clarity and

legislation surrounding who is responsible for decommissioning, who pays, and how those funds are secured to protect the landholder from default and ensure that the work is completed properly. While landowners should protect their interests by ensuring the obligations of the wind farm owner regarding infrastructure removal and site restoration are clearly set out in the wind farm lease, as a government and as a Parliament, we should be doing more to protect these host farmers.

I have spoken to host wind farms in my electorate. When questioned about the legal responsibility of the proponent and the oversight of that responsibility, they have no understanding of whether any of those things have been done. My fear with our renewable energy transition is that, at the end of the day, it will either be the landholders or the State—possibly even the council—that could be subjected to those costs if the company is not able to do so. With the transition that is in place—and it is huge in regional areas—now is the time that we start to think about some protections and ensure that the framework gives comfort to the community and to landholders. With regard to proponents, we must also ensure that stakeholders are clear about their obligation with the decommissioning. I thank the House for the opportunity to speak on this matter.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-234D be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....26  
Noes .....46  
Majority.....20

#### AYES

Anderson, K	Kemp, M	Taylor, M
Ayyad, T	Lane, J	Toole, P
Cooke, S	Layzell, D	Tuckerman, W
Coure, M	Moylan, B	Tudehope, M
Cross, M	Petinos, E	Wallace, J
Crouch, A (teller)	Preston, R	Williams, R
Davies, T	Roberts, A	Williamson, R (teller)
Di Pasqua, S	Saunders, D	Wilson, F
James, T	Singh, G	

#### NOES

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

#### PAIRS

Car, P	Thompson, T
Chanthivong, A	Hodges, M
Daley, M	Clancy, J
Harris, D	Provest, G
Li, J	Williams, L
Scully, P	Sloane, K

PAIRS

Speakman, M

Minns, C

**Amendments negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

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

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

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.****PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (PUPPY FARMING) BILL 2024****First Reading****Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.****Second Reading Speech**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:27):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As the House knows, animal welfare is an issue that resonates deeply with the people of New South Wales. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill seeks to address community concerns by increasing transparency and oversight, strengthening breeding regulations and ultimately protecting the wellbeing of dogs across the State. The New South Wales Government takes animal welfare extremely seriously and the introduction of the bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to modernising animal welfare and delivering on our election commitment to ban puppy farming. Puppy farming is characterised by intensive breeding for commercial purposes with little regard for the dog's physical or mental needs. Those practices have no place in New South Wales. That is why we are implementing a robust framework of regulations and enforcement mechanisms to distinguish ethical breeders from puppy farms.

National data indicates that roughly seven in every 10 households have a companion animal, with dogs being by far the most prevalent. They are beloved members of our families and provide essential services within our community. However, the dark reality for some dogs is that they are bred in premises focused primarily on profit, often at the expense of their health and wellbeing. It is clear that puppy farming is an issue of substantial concern to many in the community and industry.

In 2022 the New South Wales parliamentary inquiry into puppy farming received more than 900 submissions and over 6,000 responses to an online questionnaire. Of those respondents, 86 per cent wanted puppy farming banned. This reflects the growing public demand for robust, ethical breeding practices. The bill has been developed through extensive consultation with the community, industry and other peak bodies, as well as several parliamentary inquiries to ensure that we reinforce the regulatory framework with practical, clear and simple provisions. The Government's approach is direct and builds on the existing regulatory framework within the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.

Strong legislative controls proportionate to managing animal welfare risks are critical for success. The bill balances regulatory burdens on breeders and stakeholders by requiring compliance through sensible and realistic animal welfare standards. All breeders in New South Wales, regardless of the scale of their operations, must comply with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and take reasonable care, control and supervision of animals, such as taking reasonable steps to alleviate pain and provide veterinary treatment where appropriate. Those operating a business that breeds dogs and cats for fee and reward must also comply with the Animal Welfare Code of Practice Breeding Dogs and Cats, known as the breeding code, which outlines requirements for animal housing, management and health.

However, it is the wild west in New South Wales. Currently, there are no specific restrictions on the number of fertile female adult dogs a breeder may have, the number of litters a female may produce in her lifetime or the staffing ratios required at premises to ensure proper care. There is also no mandatory registration scheme for dog breeders, meaning there is insufficient data on the size and scale of dog breeding in New South Wales. These gaps in the regulatory framework limit enforcement activities and reduce the Government's ability to promote and

ensure responsible breeding practices and adherence to relevant codes of practice and standards by all those involved in breeding. The provisions established in the bill are a sound starting point. They set minimum standards for all, improving breeding practices across New South Wales, providing transparency and greater accountability.

The provisions have been directly informed by previous consultation and recent targeted stakeholder engagement to ensure they are both practical, effective and fit for purpose. The Government acknowledges that the legislative landscape, industry practice and animal welfare science are ever evolving. To maintain the bill's effectiveness over time, a review process will be conducted as soon as possible after six years from the date of assent, being approximately five years from the date of commencement of the substantive provisions of the bill, on 1 December 2025. The review will assess whether the policy objectives of the bill, specifically part 2AA, remain valid and that the provisions remain appropriate for securing these objectives. The bill amends the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act in three key areas.

First, it introduces provisions to better track and trace unethical breeders and identify the source of puppies. This will enhance the ability of potential buyers to identify and verify breeders, helping to eliminate harmful practices. Second, the bill sets clear animal welfare requirements for dog breeders, including a maximum cap of 20 adult female dogs per premises, being female dogs that are over the age of six months old that have not been rendered permanently infertile. It also establishes lifetime litter limits and minimum staff-to-dog ratios. To ensure that there are no adverse animal welfare outcomes in implementing these new provisions, special circumstances will apply to support certain breeders to reduce their number of female adult dogs via an exemption over 10 years.

Finally, the bill mandates that all dog breeders must comply with the breeding code from 1 December 2029 onwards. This will create a more robust regulatory framework that promotes improved animal welfare outcomes for dogs and breeders, not just those breeding for fee and reward. These provisions deliver on the Government's promise to modernise animal welfare in New South Wales to benefit the community sector and the State's many dogs. I now turn to details of the bill. The bill will introduce mandatory breeder identification. Anyone breeding dogs, whether regular breeders, occasional breeders or those with accidental litters, will be required to obtain a breeder identification number, known as a BIN.

For organisations who have custody of seized or surrendered dogs, and where one of these dogs becomes pregnant accidentally, their rehoming organisation number, known as a RON, will be accepted in lieu of a BIN to avoid unnecessary red tape.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Some self-gratification there, calling it RON.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** We could call it "STEVE". Mandating the use of these identification numbers creates a near-universal traceability scheme within New South Wales that will enable the ability to trace individual dogs back to their original breeders regardless of their current ownership. This transparency will eliminate unethical breeders and provide consumers with confidence that their new family member has been raised in a humane and caring environment by a registered breeder. The new mandatory provision leverages the existing infrastructure of the NSW Pet Registry. There are over 19,000 companion animal breeders who have voluntarily registered for a BIN and over 100 organisations with a RON. While the application for a BIN will continue to remain free, changes will be made to the existing processes to support the new identification requirements, including seeking additional information such as the total number of dogs and dog premises the applicant is responsible for. These processes are designed to be as straightforward as possible and will provide transparency and oversight to strengthen compliance and effectiveness.

Individual breeders or organisations currently holding a voluntary BIN will be required to reapply and update their details by 1 December 2025 to comply with the bill; otherwise, their unique identification number will be cancelled. This initiative will commence on 1 December 2025. The bill acknowledges the importance of genuine working dogs in the community. Farmers breeding working dogs for the purpose of working on the land on which they were bred will be exempt from obtaining a BIN whilst they remain on that land. The bill will mandate greater identification for the sale or transfer of dogs, including when they are transferred or given away. The bill will require any advertisement of dogs born after 1 December 2025 to include both the microchip number and the breeder's BIN or, in the case of a rehoming organisation, where the identity of the breeder is not known, a RON. Previously, only one of these numbers was required to be displayed. To account for circumstances where an advertisement is not made, this information must be provided to the purchaser before or at the time of sale.

Dogs must be identified in accordance with the Companion Animals Act or, for retired racing greyhounds, the greyhound racing rules under the Greyhound Racing Act 2017. The bill recognises there are circumstances where identification through the insertion of a microchip may cause harm to an animal. For dogs being sold under eight weeks of age, the microchip number of the female parent of the dog is to be included in sale documentation to avoid any adverse welfare outcomes. These requirements will give buyers greater information to make wise



choices. Buyers will be able to search the NSW Pet Registry online to validate the authenticity of information being supplied. They will be able to check that the microchip number reflects the details of the dog being sold and if the breeder identification number is active or has been suspended or cancelled. These actions will support the greater monitoring of dogs being sold or transferred and reinforce ethical practices. The provision will commence on 1 December 2025.

The bill will also mandate that any person who manages or controls dog premises must not keep more than the maximum number of female adult dogs. New South Wales is adopting the toughest stance nationally with this provision, setting a maximum cap of 20 female dogs over the age of six months at any premises. This is the central element that delivers on the Government's election commitment. To continue essential services and specific animal welfare functions, exemptions will apply to New South Wales government sector agencies, such as police and corrections, and approved charitable organisations carrying out compliance and enforcement functions under POCTAA or those issued with a RON for the purpose of rehoming surrendered or seized animals. Premises used to temporarily keep or care for dogs, such as at dog shows, like the Royal Easter Show, and dogs rendered permanently infertile will also be exempted.

This is a significant step forward for New South Wales.

The Government recognises the need to allow certain breeders to scale down their business operations in a controlled manner and will introduce transitional provisions. These provisions will avoid situations where potentially healthy animals that are unable to be rehomed prior to commencement are euthanised. Firstly, while the maximum number of female adult dogs will commence on assent, the bill will provide an exemption until 1 December 2025 for breeders with more than 20 female adult dogs, so long as they do not keep any additional female adult dogs above the number that were kept on their dog premises immediately before the assent to the bill. Secondly, the bill will provide a limited grandfathering exemption to the maximum number of female adult dogs to allow certain persons to keep more than 20 female adult dogs on dog premises until 1 December 2025. This exemption allows a person with 20 or more existing dogs to continue to operate for a period of time.

The limited grandfathering exemption will commence on 1 December 2025 and will be conditional. Exemption holders and any staff member must not have a conviction for an animal cruelty offence. The number of female adult dogs on premises cannot exceed the number of female adult dogs on premises as at 24 October 2024 or as nominated by the departmental chief executive. No more than 50 female adult dogs can be kept on any premises after 1 December 2026. Exemption holders and any staff member must comply with the breeding code, and exemption holders must provide an annual breeding report. Finally, in the event of an exemption holder's death or circumstances where they become mentally incapacitated and unable to comply with the required conditions, the legislation will enable circumstances for another individual to apply for a continuation of the limited grandfathering exemption.

The bill will also set out lifetime breeding limits for female dogs by specifying a cap on the maximum number of pregnancies and types of births that a female dog may have in the dog's lifetime. The maximum number of deliveries for a female dog will be set at five different births. Given the increased animal welfare risks of caesarean deliveries, no female dog will be able to have any further births once the dog has had a third caesarean delivery. This provision is not just about numbers; it is about the welfare and dignity of the animals. Female dogs should not be treated as breeding machines. They deserve to live healthy, fulfilling lives, and the provision ensures that they are not subjected to excessive reproductive demands. Breeders will be required, within 14 days after the birth, to keep appropriate records, such as the date of birth and whether the birth was by caesarean or another method of delivery. The provision will commence on 1 December 2025.

The bill will also establish a minimum number of staff members for dog premises. A ratio of at least one staff member for every 20 dogs over the age of 12 weeks will be mandated to provide proper and sufficient care, such as food and water on the premises. In recognition of the role played by the female parent, a litter of puppies that are 12 weeks or younger will be counted as one dog. In a situation that a dog premises used for breeding has more than 20 dogs in total, the staffing requirement is to be rounded up to the nearest whole number. For example, a dog premises that has 18 dogs over 12 weeks of age, plus four litters of dogs under 12 weeks of age, would result in a staffing ratio of one to one, which is then required to be rounded up to the nearest whole number, being two staff members required on that dog premise. Staff members can be working full time or part time, and either employed or as volunteers. They can be the owner or manager of the dog premises or a family member.

Recognising the human health benefits, assistance animals within the meaning of the Companion Animals Act 1998 will be exempt. This provision is essential for addressing key welfare concerns associated with puppy farming, where dogs are often kept in overcrowded and understaffed conditions. It reflects the reality that one person could not possibly meet the daily welfare requirements of more than 20 dogs on their own. This provision will also commence on 1 December 2025. The bill will also require any person allocated a unique breeder identification number, such as a BIN or RON, to comply with the code of practice for breeding dogs and cats.

Any person owning, managing or controlling a dog premises must take all reasonable steps to ensure all staff members comply with the breeding code. This mandate reflects a significant commitment to the community and industry's demand for a more robust regulatory framework that promotes enhanced animal welfare outcomes for all breeders, regardless of whether they operate for fee or reward. By establishing these standards, the legislation aims to ensure that every dog is bred in an environment that prioritises their health and wellbeing. The provision will commence on 1 December 2029.

The bill recognises there are several existing statutory arrangements already in place and, to avoid duplication, the bill will not apply to racing greyhounds where they are owned and kept in relation to greyhound racing or by a registered greyhound racing industry participant. Sufficient controls for breeding will continue to be achieved through the Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission under the Greyhound Racing Act 2017. The bill will also not apply to animal research activities where they have been expressly approved and fall under an animal research authority that is conducted in accordance with the directions of an animal care and ethics committee under the Animal Research Act 1985.

The Government will implement substantial penalty offences for individuals or organisations that breach the provisions of the bill. These penalties are designed to deter illegal and unethical breeding practices by providing strong incentives to comply. Maximum penalties will range from eight penalty units or \$880 for individuals breaching the requirement to notify certain changes or events, to 1,000 penalty units or \$110,000 or two years imprisonment, or both, for an individual and 5,000 penalty units or \$550,000 for a corporation for breaching the maximum cap of female adult dogs. Penalty notice offences will range from \$500 for an individual and \$2,500 for a corporation for failing to keep a record of a litter birth, to \$1,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for a corporation for breaching information requirements when dogs are for sale.

The bill will also introduce consequential amendments to the Companion Animals Act 1998 and supporting regulations to achieve the policy intention of the Government's bill. These changes include, but are not limited to, new requirements for breeder identification registration, including prescribing the allocation, refusal, suspension or cancellation of breeder identification numbers; notification arrangements for registered breeders where their name or address changes, or if they have been convicted of an animal cruelty offence or are subject to a disqualification order; new requirements for breeder or rehoming organisation information; new requirements to apply the exemption to the maximum number of female adult dogs; consequential penalty offence provisions; and consequential transitional provisions to cancel existing BINs related to dog breeders on 1 December 2025, unless cancelled earlier.

I now deal with the amendments agreed to in the Legislative Council. The first amendment will require staff involved in dog breeding facilities to be over 14 years of age. This amendment recognises the important and critical role that staff members play in caring for dogs, needing the competence and skills in animal management and health required under the breeding code. Further amendments have been made to the lifetime breeding cap. These require breeders to keep written records for caesarean deliveries to specify the details of the vet and vet practice that performed the delivery. This amendment provides greater transparency and oversight of breeding activities, providing enforcement agencies with additional information to support their compliance activities. A separate amendment in relation to the lifetime breeding cap will require breeders, in the event where a dog has had two previous caesarean births, to obtain written approval from a vet before mating the dog again.

This approval should be in the form of a veterinary certificate as provided for under the Veterinary Practice Act 2003. This amendment will provide an extra animal welfare safeguard. Caesarean births are considered higher risk delivery methods. Further amendments have been made to require persons applying for the grandfathering exemption to the maximum cap between 2025 and 2035 to make reasonable inquiries about whether staff have been convicted of an animal welfare offence to ensure that animal welfare is paramount.

A further amendment will restrict the exemption of assistance dogs from the maximum cap and the minimum staff ratios for occupiers of dog premises that are members of specific groups, such as the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International. This recognises the additional animal welfare standards for the breeding assistance dogs.

A further amendment will remove the ability for holders of an existing development consent, who have not commenced operations and have no dogs on premises as of 24 October 2024, to apply for a grandfathering exemption to the maximum cap. This amendment will require any new facilities to comply with the requirement of 20 female adult dogs on premises, once commenced. Additionally, holders of a grandfathering exemption to the maximum cap will be required to be audited every two years. This amendment will be conditional and will provide greater oversight and monitoring of these facilities over the grandfathering exemption period. A further amendment will enable either a physical or email address to be displayed and searchable on the NSW Pet Registry for a rehoming organisation. This amendment recognises the privacy for smaller rehoming organisations that may operate out of residential facilities.

The Government wants to encourage the people of New South Wales to buy from reputable dog breeders or to adopt from our pounds and shelters that currently are full to the brim. In response to comments from members in the other place, we can assure the community that there is little risk of dogflation. The ultimate goal of the Government's bill is to eliminate unethical breeders and puppy farms operating in the shadows. These provisions will provide the people of New South Wales with the guardrails and knowledge to own dogs that have been raised and bred within the appropriate animal welfare standards. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024 is a testament to our commitment to animal welfare and ethical breeding practices. It addresses critical gaps in our current regulatory framework and aligns with the expectations of our community.

These provisions are fair, simple and clear, and create the necessary guardrails for breeders, buyers, owners and the welfare of our beloved dogs. By passing this bill, we take a significant step towards tackling puppy farming in New South Wales, ensuring that dogs are bred in humane conditions and that their welfare is safeguarded for the future. The bill represents the Government's strong resolve to improving animal welfare. The bill delivers on Labor's election commitment. People in New South Wales have created acceptable breeding operations. For this reason, it is time to ban puppy farming. The passing of this bill will mark a significant day for those special family members in New South Wales by providing the critical safeguards they require in their early lives.

More importantly, this bill will end the practice of unethical breeders treating female dogs simply as breeding machines for profit, with little care for the animals' health and welfare. This is a positive and significant step forward for animal welfare in this State and, on that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:53):** On behalf of the Opposition, I participate in debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024. It is important to note from the outset that the Liberals and The Nationals condemn all forms of animal abuse and unethical breeding practices. Illegal puppy farms are abhorrent and we support appropriate measures to tackle those types of operations right across the State. There is no place in this State for breeders who fail to care for their animals. I note the good intent behind this bill. However, in practice, the bill risks putting out of business the good breeders together with the bad, and I do not think that is a good place to be in. After careful consideration of the bill, and consultation with industry and animal welfare organisations, concerns have been raised with me about some of the unintended consequences.

There is certainly a lot of angst among professional breeders who do the right thing that this bill will end up putting them out of business. An even bigger concern is that it will foster a backyard marketplace where the types of abuse all members agree is most concerning will run rampant. I have met with some incredibly well-respected breeders, leaders of their industry, who take the responsibility of breeding dogs very seriously. They include people like Rob Ingram, who has a breeding facility in Dubbo. As it happens, I am catching up with him tomorrow to look at how the upgrades at his operation are progressing. They also include people like John Grima, who runs Kellyville Pets, which has been operating since 1983. Both John and Rob have made huge investments in their businesses to achieve the best standards of breeding not just in this country but probably anywhere in the world.

A stringent process is followed to make sure that any puppy sold is the right fit for the person, couple or family it is going to. I do not want to see those sorts of facilities close down because that would obviously defeat the purpose of what we are trying to achieve. It is important that the Liberals and Nationals have done a lot of ground work in this area. In 2018 the former Coalition Government amended the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act [POCTAA] to create tracking regulations for pups when they are transferred from breeder to owner. The amendments made it clear that ads for dogs and cats that were being sold or given away needed to contain an identification number. In 2020 we established a Puppy Factory Taskforce focused on the compliance of large-scale breeders. In 2021 we increased the maximum penalties for the most common animal welfare offences under POCTAA to ensure that people who were mistreating the animals in their care were appropriately dealt with.

While we know there is still work to do, we do not want a situation where we end up with worse outcomes for breeders, prospective owners and, of course, the pets we love so much. There are a few key concerns from industry around the bill, which is why the Opposition moved a series of sensible and workable amendments in the other place last night. It was extremely disappointing that the Government was not willing to budge on any of them, especially when there are very strong warnings about what this legislation could mean in practice. Firstly, the bill primarily regulates the cap on breeding dogs and the ratios for staff. Victoria and South Australia have led the nation in reforms to bring the cap on breeding dogs to 50 and the staff ratios to one to 25. Those reforms were widely supported by activists and industry.

In New South Wales, despite recommendations from industry, the Government is taking a more extreme approach than its fellow Labor States by capping the number of breeding females, as members heard again during

the Minister's second reading speech this morning, to 20 per establishment, with a staff ratio of one to 20. New South Wales has by far the most stringent limits in the country. That will drive sensible, law-abiding breeders like John and Rob out of business. In fact, Rob told me that a cap of 20 is completely unworkable. He does not understand why the Government would be setting a standard that no-one will be able to meet in the long term. If we drive more of the good breeders out of the industry, we are going to cause another impact that I like to refer to as "dogflation". Dogflation is real, and demand for puppies is currently high. The impact of dogflation will inevitably be an increase in the cost of puppies, and the result of that will be more underground, undeclared sales.

The idea that the bill will improve animal welfare is absolute malarkey. I also do not understand why there has been such a change in perspective. When the Victorian reforms came in, with a cap of 50 female breeding dogs, everyone supported them. Two years ago, on 16 November 2022, here in the New South Wales Parliament, then shadow Minister the Hon. Mick Veitch moved amendments on behalf of the Labor Party to support the cap of 50 breeding dogs and the staff ratio of one to 20 for commercial breeders. It begs the question why, just two years later, this more extreme position is being put forward that will do more harm than good. I know one thing: Mick Veitch would have worked with us to ensure the sensible solution that we all want. Even animal rights groups have said that the number of breeding dogs is not the concern; it is the total number of animals and the overall density at a facility.

The concern is about hoarders of animals who do not have the resources to provide adequate care, not law-abiding business owners who put the welfare of their animals first. Last night my colleague the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the upper House, moved responsible, sensible amendments to return to the very position that was supported by the crossbench and Labor two years ago.

We have also been very clear in our talks with the Minister's office and suggested other compromises to allow the Government to try to reach a middle ground that would support the animal welfare outcomes we all want and the top-notch breeders that this will cripple. We remain open to that.

When trying to explain where the cap of 20 for breeding females came from, the agriculture Minister said last night that she believes she has struck the right balance and only 15 or 16 breeders will be affected by that change. I was told by her office it was around 18, so the numbers are obviously a bit flexible and rubbery. Whether it is 16 or 18, the very best breeders in the business—the top end of town—will be affected by this. Why would we penalise those breeders, who are already doing the right thing? The exemption that breeders can apply for, which was also mentioned, lasts for 10 years. Do we expect those top-notch businesses to keep investing money and energy into their operations to achieve and maintain high animal welfare standards with the risk that their business will fall off the edge of that looming 10-year cliff?

Even more concerning is the fact that the Minister kept saying last night—and this morning—that the cap was an election commitment. No-one in the industry or the community voted for a cap of 20, so that is just not true. We all have the same commitment around animal welfare, but to suggest that the cap was an election commitment is simply laughable—there was absolutely no clarity about the numbers and this more than halves the number put forward by the former Labor shadow Minister. It seems the only election commitment Labor is keeping is sending decent breeders out of business. It is shameful.

Last night we also put forward changes to the definition of female adult dog, wanting that term to be "entire female dog". It was a small change that would have provided better clarity and avoided having an older dog no longer used for breeding being included in the cap. We also moved an amendment to update the age of an adult dog from six months to 12 months, which would keep it consistent with the Animal Welfare Code of Practice Breeding Dogs and Cats. The code clearly prohibits breeding until at least 12 months of age, so to avoid any confusion about what the legal age is and what it is not, it should be in the bill. All those suggestions were declined.

There were concerns raised around requirements to have a microchip number included in advertisements. While I acknowledge microchip numbers definitely help ensure the quality of the breeder and rehoming organisations, we do not want people's privacy and safety at risk. Unfortunately, it is the bad people who will use that information to do the wrong thing. All that relevant information is available to the compliance teams via the breeder identification number [BIN] anyway. Having the microchip number included in a sales ad gives a large amount of information on breeders and the whereabouts of dogs to people who are not yet entitled to it. We thought a sensible move would be to remove that requirement.

The other sensible amendment we put forward was about strengthening the exemptions for working dogs. If a farmer has a working dog that falls pregnant and they want to give away one or all of the litter, under the bill the farmer will still have to register for a breeder identification number, but that is completely unnecessary. Farmers who breed working dogs already register with a breeder's association for proof of bloodline if they are doing it to promote the breed. Whether it is a kelpie or a border collie, the farmer registers it to a particular breeding association. Having to get a BIN is adding another level of red tape. It is another example of not listening

to groups like NSW Farmers or the working dog breeders and associations about the reality of what happens on a farm.

I also raise a couple of concerns around enforcement. Last week, the Minns Government made major cuts to funding for enforcement agencies in this space. Under the former Coalition Government, the RSPCA received \$20.5 million to enforce the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. Under Labor, that funding has now been almost halved to just over \$11 million.

Similar cuts were made to the Animal Welfare League, going from \$5.5 million under the Coalition down to \$1.17 million under Labor. Those cuts come despite a record high number of animal cruelty complaints, which paints a concerning picture and raises the question of how enforcement of this bill will actually occur. It is all good and well to say that reporting is required. But if you do not have boots on the ground, it is unclear how this will work. Budget cuts mean it will be hard to catch people who are doing the wrong thing, and we cannot afford to make things harder for good operators and easier for bad ones. The fear is that that is exactly what this bill is doing. Without the capacity from those organisations I just mentioned, the overall result will be worse outcomes for animal welfare.

The Opposition will not stand in the way of animal welfare, but I am disappointed the Government did not take a more bipartisan approach. The Pet Industry Association of Australia, Dogs NSW and others have warned that the bill in its current form will have a devastating impact on the viability of those breeders who have the highest level of animal welfare practices that everyone can be proud of. The Liberals and Nationals want to work towards a legislative framework that allows for both welfare and sustainability in this space. But we need to make sure we are not inadvertently enabling underground backyard breeders and making it harder for families to access companion animals or pets. If we are not careful, we may just legislate that reality away.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:05):** I contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill, which I proudly support. An important Labor commitment at the last election was to end the cruelty of excessively large and unsupervised puppy farms in New South Wales, something that the people of New South Wales have been calling for for well over a decade. Back in 2015 I was part of the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales, chaired by the member for Northern Tablelands at the time, Mr Adam Marshall. The committee produced a unanimous report that recommended a number of the things that now appear in this bill. The only thing that came out of that report and was accepted by the Minister at the time, even though it was unanimous across all parties, from the Animal Justice Party through to the National Party, was to update the online register for dogs' microchips, which had at that point in time become quite out of date. When the former member for Northern Tablelands became the Minister for Agriculture, he launched a big crackdown on puppy farms, but he did not change the legislation.

This is really important legislation. Up until now, there have been no limits on the number of dogs at a breeding facility, no minimum staffing requirements and no limits on the number of litters a female dog can produce over the course of her lifetime. The Government is seeking to end what we have seen over the years in some of the media reports about dog seizures at puppy farms. I refer to an incident on 25 February 2021, when 79 dogs, all requiring medical attention, were seized in the Central West. On 13 November 2020, 120 dogs were removed from two farms in Albury. The number of dogs on the farm is not indicated.

Somewhat ironically, even though the legislation is called the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, when the RSPCA goes in, it can seize only animals that require immediate medical attention. You would think that if dozens and dozens of dogs are in dire need of medical attention, perhaps all of the dogs on the premises are at risk and need to be seized. But the powers under the Act do not allow that. One incident that led to the biggest prosecution for animal cruelty that has ever occurred in New South Wales, in which the full number of dogs was reported, was on 16 September 2020. The RSPCA simultaneously raided two properties at Wagga Wagga and Copeton, which is near Inverell. They were related businesses run by a father and daughter.

They inspected 441 dogs, and seized 21 adult dogs and 41 puppies.

The conditions described at that facility are obscene. The chief veterinarian at the time described a dog who had spent 40 hours suffering dystocia, a veterinary emergency in which there is difficulty expelling a litter of pups. That poor dog had been left untreated, and was left to suffer systemic illness, weakness and ultimately premature death. The 441 dogs found on the property were kept inside concrete kennels without bedding, on constantly wet floors. All the dogs had wet feet and underbellies, and some were covered in liquid faecal matter. That is the sort of obscenity that we are seeking to wipe out and make absolutely impossible to establish. The bill will place a cap of 20 breeding females at any premises. That is 20 female adult dogs older than six months of age. That is incredibly important to ensure animal welfare is maintained. It will be the strongest law of its kind in Australia.

There will also be a lifetime breeding cap of no more than five births or three caesarean births. Breeders will also be required to make and keep records of the birth within 14 days, including the date and whether the birth was by caesarean or another delivery measure. There will also be a minimum of one staff member for every 20 dogs, to provide proper and sufficient care on the premises each day. I understand that the measures are widely supported, including by Dogs NSW and the Master Dog Breeders and Associates, who advise that, of their membership, only 15 to 18 breeders in New South Wales have a limit of up to 50 dogs, which will be grandfathered over 10 years to ensure that dogs are not being unnecessarily put down or disposed of.

Leading for the Opposition, the member for Dubbo raised some very strange concerns about the bill. I address them all. The member said that the bill puts good breeders in with the bad, and that it will put good breeders out of business. The good breeders are members of Dogs NSW and the Master Dog Breeders and Associates and, as we are aware, only 15 to 18 of them have more than 20 breeding females. He also claims that the biggest breeders are the best. I am sorry, but someone from the National Party who goes to rural shows like the Royal Easter Show all the time will know that dog shows are not won by the biggest breeders; they are won by the best breeders. They are won by the ones who have the best-trained dogs and are best prepared for a dog show. It is quality, not quantity, that wins a dog show.

He also said that there is no need to register working dogs because they are registered with the breed. He made some valid points about how things operate on a working farm, but failed to note something that someone in the National Party should know: Some working dogs are crossbreeds. My dad used to breed kelpie-collie crossbreeds. They were in high demand even though he only bred a couple of litters of them. He was a very good dog trainer and, generations later, people still wanted pups bred from my dad's dogs. That is not unusual. He is not the only person in the world who has decided that a kelpie-collie cross is really good at working stock. I find it very strange that members of the National Party do not know that.

The bill is really important, and it will lead the nation. New South Wales is not the only place that has the problems the bill addresses. Even in July this year, the RSPCA in Tasmania shut down the largest puppy farm in Tasmania. It seized over 250 labradoodles more than a year after it issued 70 charges against the owners. In May, 183 dogs were seized at a farm in south-east Queensland. No-one can argue that it is an acceptable way to make money. It is actually quite obscene. The bill is an incredibly important reform and I am really proud that Labor is introducing it.

I bought my dog, Hugo, who is a blue Great Dane, from a small breeder in northern New South Wales. She claimed to be a small breeder. I actually checked, going through the records on her social media and on her Dogz Online page, to see how often she advertised puppies. It was only a couple of litters every year. That is important.

Most dog breeders in New South Wales who are registered breeders are interested in contributing to the breed as a whole. They want to sell a quality product, and breed dogs that have longevity and minimise their health conditions. They love their dogs, and they care for them. They do not have 441 of them. They do not need 50 breeding female dogs in order to make a living. If they do, then they are not doing it the right way. Generations and generations of dogs have gone through absolute hell because this long-overdue, important reform was not in place. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (14:15):** I contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024. This piece of legislation is aimed at banning puppy farms in New South Wales and delivering on Labor's election commitment. The bill represents Labor's promises to get elected and half-thought-out legislation to ensure its promises are kept, despite the repercussions. If the both the bill and Labor's election commitments were truly considered, then Labor would understand that the bill barely touches the recommendations from the 2022 report by the Select Committee on Puppy Farming in New South Wales.

The Liberal-Nationals Coalition condemns, and has always condemned, animal cruelty and unethical breeding practices. Puppy farms are reprehensible, exploiting animals with little regard for their welfare. During our time in government we implemented proactive measures, such as establishing the Puppy Factory Taskforce, to combat intensive breeding practices. We also strengthened penalties for animal welfare offences and introduced the companion animals register, bringing greater transparency and accountability to pet ownership in New South Wales. We acknowledge the necessity of the bill and share a commitment to eradicating puppy farms. However, in its current form this legislation risks unintentionally impacting responsible breeders who care for their animals, work within the law, follow high welfare standards and contribute to our economy.

Many reputable breeders have expressed the fear that they will be forced out of business due to the parameters of this well-meaning bill. The Pet Industry Association of Australia is highly concerned that the bill in its current form will, effectively, put members out of business. Animal Care Australia supports the bill with exceptions surrounding definitions and advertising rules. The RSPCA also supports the bill but proposes a range

of amendments, as does DOGS NSW. The bill's aims represent a significant step forward, but the Opposition has approached it thoughtfully and believes that consideration must be given to safeguard both animal welfare and the livelihoods of responsible breeders across our State.

The Select Committee on Puppy Farming in New South Wales tabled its report in 2022, recommending limits on breeding animals, litter caps and robust breeder licensing requirements. Those recommendations, some of which are now reflected in the bill, are commendable in spirit. However, aspects remain that warrant careful reconsideration. The example raised by DOGS NSW is that the bill currently mandates that female dogs over six months are counted in the maximum number of 20 allowed at any one premises, categorising six-month-old dogs as breeding adults, which it states is arbitrary and unsupported by science. DOGS NSW suggests that 12 months would be a more appropriate benchmark, aligning with legislation in other States and the New South Wales breeding code. In addition, the proposed 20-dog cap on female breeding animals, while targeting rogue breeders, may inadvertently harm legitimate and law-abiding breeders who have invested significant resources to meet their regulatory requirements. Those breeders are not the problem, yet they could face severe consequences if their operations fall foul of these strict limits.

The Government must also address potential loopholes. The exemption for working dogs, though practical in many contexts, could be misused by unethical breeders. Without clear guidelines, we risk seeing new "designer" breeds marketed under false pretences. Similarly, the use of guardianship agreements should be closely monitored to prevent rogue breeders from circumventing the legislation's intent by swapping females to stay under the cap.

I am disappointed that the Government did not support the Coalition's amendments to the bill. Those changes would have refined the bill's impact, enabling it to achieve robust animal welfare standards without penalising compliant breeders who contribute to genetic diversity and breed improvement. Those amendments would have helped achieve an outcome that safeguards both animal welfare and the companion animal industry's future. A solution that considers both rogue operators and legitimate breeders would serve New South Wales best. The Government should have supported a refined approach, allowing us to protect animals while providing clarity and certainty for responsible breeders who operate in good faith.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:20):** At the outset, I congratulate the Minns Labor Government on fulfilling yet another election promise with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024. I also commend the leadership of the Hon. Emma Hurst of the Animal Justice Party for her many years of advocacy and for the legislation that she drafted, which got us to this point. The pet industry has a dark secret hidden behind the cute puppies offered in pet shops, market stalls and online classifieds. Many of those animals come from cruel puppy farms and backyard breeders—facilities where dogs are treated as breeding machines and denied their basic needs. Raids on puppy farms have uncovered appalling conditions: overcrowded facilities covered in filth; dogs kept socially isolated with inadequate food and water; and back-to-back breeding that leaves mothers severely malnourished and suffering from conditions like hypocalcaemia, uterine infections and mastitis, with their poor health affecting the long-term health of their puppies.

Puppy farms are not run by responsible breeders, and animals in those facilities are not bred carefully to prevent health issues. The sole goal of a puppy farm is to flood the market with cute puppies at the lowest cost for maximum profit. Commercial outlets supporting puppy farms and backyard breeders encourage impulse buying, which sees many of those dogs ending up in overcrowded pounds and shelters because owners only realise the true responsibilities and costs of a companion animal after they have purchased one. Puppy farms and backyard breeders are out of public sight. They are not routinely inspected, and what we know about them largely comes from tip-offs to enforcement agencies. Existing regulations like the breeding code are out of date and not fit for purpose, and there is no general compliance regime.

While most people do not know about puppy farms, when they learn that the beautiful dogs they see for sale have been farmed on a semi-industrial scale, in appalling conditions and with no regard for the welfare of the puppies or their mothers, they are horrified. I have been asked many times by constituents why legislators do not shut down puppy farms and make them illegal. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024 will outlaw puppy farms. That is something the Government committed to ahead of the election, and it is something I have been calling for since I was elected in 2012. The bill sets a maximum of 20 female adult dogs at a breeding premise and mandates staff ratios of one person per 10 dogs. Female dogs will be subject to a breeding cap of five litters. The bill includes mandatory identifiers to help trace dogs offered for sale back to where they were bred.

I welcome the Animal Justice Party amendments that have further strengthened the bill. Transition provisions that would have allowed a premise with no dogs but with development approval for a puppy farm to acquire up to 50 female dogs have been removed.

Facilities that receive an exemption during the 10-year transition period should not be allowed to acquire more dogs above the legislated cap. Greyhound racing dogs should not be exempt. Severe animal cruelty occurs in greyhound breeding facilities, and the industry is one of the cruellest in the State. Greyhound dogs are purposely over-bred, with fast dogs sent off to race and the rest killed. The 20-dog cap should be reduced to 10 as Victoria has done. It is much harder to ensure animal welfare standards in a larger facility.

The cap should include dogs covered under guardianship arrangements that allow a puppy farm to keep dogs offsite between breeding, with strict contractual arrangements for dogs being returned for breeding. I understand that some facilities have hundreds of those contractual arrangements. The bill should also have included kittens. Kitten mills may not be common but they exist and contribute to animal suffering and cat overpopulation. We also need to address pet sales, as has been done in Victoria and other States where pet shops can now only offer rescue animals for adoption. Pet shops have long been the outlet for puppy farms, and I pay tribute to my predecessor Lord Mayor Clover Moore, who introduced legislation in this place almost 20 years ago to ban the sale of companion animals in pet shops. I also acknowledge the work of Tammy Nardone in my office, who I know put many hours of work into that legislation.

My biggest concern is that puppy farms will continue to operate and evade the controls in the bill because puppy farmers know they will not get caught. The Government is not providing new resources for enforcement and has cut RSPCA and Animal Welfare League funding for inspectorates in half. The new RSPCA budget is over \$12 million less than the organisation's bare minimum costs and over \$19 million less than its preferred costs estimates, which do not account for new enforcement roles under the bill. It will be difficult for our important enforcement organisations to undertake any proactive compliance checks on puppy farms or be able to gather the evidence needed for court in response to complaints. I call on the Government to fund a strong RSPCA that can safely and proactively enforce the State's animal welfare laws.

Animals are emotionally intelligent living beings. Those of us who have or have had dogs know that they experience feelings like humans, including happiness, sadness, jealousy, anger, pleasure, pain and boredom. Like us, they need social interaction, love and companionship. It horrifies me to think dogs like my late dog, Max—whom my husband, Vic, and I adopted from Monica's Rescue—could be subjected to the shocking cruelty of puppy farms. Animals should not be treated like commodities. Our laws need to catch up with the science that continues to uncover that animals need an emotionally and socially rich life without pain. Ending animal cruelty is a step towards ending suffering in the world. Puppy farming is unacceptable and I welcome the bill as a step forward in ending the barbaric practice.

As I said at the outset, I congratulate the Hon. Emma Hurst from the Animal Justice Party in the other place, who has been a strong campaigner in achieving the outcome of the bill. I commend the Government and the many advocates within the Labor Party who have also been calling for the reform for a number of years. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (14:27):** I contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024. I found it difficult to read certain sections of the submission of the Australian Veterinary Association to the inquiry of the Select Committee on Puppy Farming in New South Wales. The submission extensively detailed the neglect and cruelty of some aspects of puppy farming in our State. It stated:

Veterinarians in practice commonly see cases of animals being over-bred and receiving inadequate health care throughout their lives or having multiple litters without time to fully recover in between each pregnancy.

In a section on heritable defects, the Australian Veterinary Association cites a rise of selective breeding practices in recent years resulting in exaggerated features such as dwarfism and excessive skin folds. Those features lead to serious health and welfare problems and put additional strain on veterinary facilities.

As it concerns this legislation, the Australian Veterinary Association's submission identified an inverse relationship between the number of animals at intensive breeding facilities and the ability to guarantee positive welfare outcomes for animals. The overcrowding, lack of adequate nutrition, and poor health and welfare conditions of some farms must be acknowledged and acted upon. With this bill, the Minns Labor Government is honouring its election commitment to frankly and fearlessly assess the operation of the current system. Labor is honouring its commitment to evidence-based policy that will limit animal suffering from excessive and egregious practices.

Puppies and dogs have a sophisticated mental life. They have an advanced intelligence. They can read body language, understand our voice commands and learn hundreds of words, including the names of people and objects. Many researchers believe a dog's intelligence is comparable to that of a two-year-old child. We have an Italian maremma and a border collie. The border collie, Callisto, lets himself in and out of every door. He is so clever. The maremma, Clio, is a beautiful, protective, emotional little thing. She is gorgeous. The bill classes as



an offence breeding more than the maximum number of female adult dogs, now restricted to 20. It introduces mandatory registration schemes for dogs, preventing dodgy and unqualified practices. It limits the lifetime breeding caps for female dogs and introduces minimum staffing ratios for dog breeding premises of one person per 20 dogs. Those measures will limit the unnecessary and inhumane conditions that some puppy farms are guilty of tolerating. They will ensure that each dog receives proper and sufficient care, food and water.

The Government has learned from the experience of other States to construct regulations in a way that is simple and powerful, without introducing excessive complexity or overly burdensome costs on ethical breeders. The bill is a result of extensive consultation with stakeholders, stating that our reforms will raise the bar and set clear guardrails to improve puppy standards. We are resolutely on the side of considerate, humane puppy farming and ethical breeders, who share our concerns about the harmful consequences of certain practices. I commend the bill and the Minns Labor Government to the House. I thank the Minister and her staff for all their hard work and commitment to upholding animal welfare through compassionate and evidence-based policy.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (14:32):** I welcome and strongly support the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024. It is the product of many years of consultation and it comes as a relief to those who have long worked for reform. I commend those stakeholders for their part in shaping the bill before us today. In 2015 I served on the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in NSW, chaired by the then member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall. The committee was appointed amidst ongoing media reports of dogs being kept in horribly exploitative conditions in puppy factories, prosecutions of poor breeding practices and legislative changes in other jurisdictions to better protect companion animals.

It was obvious to me, as it was to the other members of the committee, that gaps in regulation, along with the slow implementation of some of the 2012 recommendations of the New South Wales Companion Animals Taskforce, created an environment in which the abuse of companion animals could occur and certainly could continue. I said in 2015—and I stand by it now—that this was one of the best committee inquiries I have participated in. It resonated strongly with the people of New South Wales, receiving 344 submissions, a petition containing 3,000 signatures, and over 2,200 emails and other correspondence. That strong community concern carried through to two more inquiries in the Legislative Council, in 2022 and 2023, which looked into puppy farming and pounds in New South Wales respectively.

Now, after three parliamentary inquiries, community consultation and cross-jurisdictional analysis, we have the bill that is before the House today. The bill will not fix all the problems associated with dog breeding, but it will certainly impose strict regulatory requirements and, hopefully, help shape a culture of responsible breeding in New South Wales.

One of the key provisions of the bill is the introduction of mandatory identification numbers for all businesses and individuals in charge of an adult dog. The value of creating near-universal traceability cannot be understated. It creates accountability in an industry in which abuse by certain breeders has historically gone unchecked. I commend the Government for continuing to make applications for identification numbers free so that there is no cost barrier to compliance with this statutory requirement. Various provisions in new part 2AA that will contribute to a better quality of life for breeding dogs. The bill introduces a lifetime breeding cap, where a dog can have no more than five births or three caesarean births. It mandates minimum staff to dog ratios to ensure that each dog receives proper and sufficient care, food and water. The bill also requires any person breeding a dog to comply with the *Animal Welfare Code of Practice Breeding Dogs and Cats* from December 2029.

I cannot speak on the bill and not address the introduction of a cap on female adult dogs that can be kept on a premises. The bill caps that number at 20, although certain breeders could apply for a 10-year exemption to have up to 50 dogs. Ten years is a long transition period for any regulatory scheme. I understand the Government's concern with ensuring that dogs are not euthanised by breeders seeking to comply with the scheme. However, once the exemption is granted, there is currently no statutory requirement for breeders to decrease the number of dogs at their premises until the end of that 10-year period. I trust this matter will be addressed by the Minister. I welcome the Animal Justice Party amendment in the Legislative Council that introduces audits and inspections of the premises of a breeder with an exemption. That is a vital and commonsense safeguard. The bill requires a statutory review approximately five years after the substantial provisions of the bill commence. I hope that this review utilises the information it will have at its disposal, by virtue of the bill's provisions, to consider whether the exemption provisions are fit to ensure the scaling down of large breeding operations.

Finally, the bill establishes various offences for breaches of the new regulatory scheme. On this point, I call on the Government to ensure that those organisations tasked with enforcing the scheme, in particular the RSPCA, are adequately funded. When it comes to enforcing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the RSPCA does the lion's share. It has advised that government funding does not cover its current costs for this financial year, let alone any additional cost imposed of enforcing the scheme. For the scheme to work, it is imperative that its

enforcement is not an afterthought. The concerns of the RSPCA are, of course, not new and came to the fore when we inquired into this issue in 2015.

The bill is a milestone for addressing cruel dog breeding. The gestation period for the bill was long; it has been nine years since I sat before industry, councils and animal advocates in response to reports of abhorrent animal cruelty and heard what might be done to address it. To say the bill is timely is a vast understatement; however, there is still work to do. We must ensure that the scheme works and that other settings where cruelty can arise, including at pet shops and kitten farms, are not overlooked. All companion animals—dogs, cats, rabbits, birds and others—are members of our families. They deserve to be bred responsibly and treated with dignity. On that basis, I thank all stakeholders who have brought us to this point. I thank the Minister and the Government generally for taking this issue seriously and fulfilling their election commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (14:39):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Bill 2024, particularly the member for Granville, the member for Heathcote, the member for Dubbo, the member for Goulburn, the member for Sydney and the member for Lake Macquarie. Unethical puppy farming is a scourge. The member for Lake Macquarie recalled his observations of the atrocious mistreatment of animals revealed in committee hearings from nine years ago. I listened to the Leader of The Nationals criticise the bill. The previous Government had every opportunity to address puppy farming. The bill has been a long time in the making, as the member for Lake Macquarie said, and was an election commitment of the Labor Party at the last election. It was an extremely difficult exercise for the Minister for Agriculture to address the issue and strike the right balance. The bill could not come quickly enough.

To those members, like the Deputy Leader of The Nationals, who ask, "Why the hurry to bring the bill here?"—he wants to return to Coffs Harbour—I stress how important it is for this bill to be law in New South Wales as soon as possible. The unethical conduct must stop. When the House passes the bill and the Governor gives assent to it next week we can begin a long overdue process. It is critical that prospective dog owners can be confident that when they obtain a puppy or a dog in New South Wales it has had the best possible start in life. The bill will achieve that outcome by putting in place, for the first time in New South Wales, specific requirements for breeders and their dogs that will drive real improvements in animal welfare.

The provisions of the bill—which include staff ratios, a cap on the number of dogs at breeding premises and mandatory breeder identification numbers—directly address key community concerns about animal health and welfare in the dog-breeding industry. The bill will enable prospective dog owners to make responsible choices when choosing a dog breeder and to have confidence that their dog has had a good start to life. I note that a substantial number of amendments were considered in the other place. That is testament to the fact that there will always be a range of views about the best way forward on animal welfare matters. Far from accepting the criticism of the member for Dubbo that the Government did not work constructively on a bipartisan basis with the National Party, it is pretty clear that a large volume of representatives in the other place had input in improving the bill. I respect the decisions made in the other place that improved the Government's bill when it was debated there. There will continue to be an exchange of views in this space.

This bill will take the law in New South Wales further along the path to put an end to unethical practices.

I make brief observations on each of the contributions to debate by members. In respect of the comments of the member for Dubbo and the member for Goulburn, the bill will provide greater transparency and accountability of breeders across the State. We currently have no oversight of where breeding is occurring. We do know that our pounds and shelters are at maximum capacity and that there is an oversupply of dogs in New South Wales. The bill will make it easier for purchasers of puppies to verify that their puppy is from an ethical breeder.

Regarding the maximum cap for female adult dogs, feedback from stakeholders revealed differing opinions. Advice suggests breeders would typically have under 20 female adults on premises. As the Minister indicated in the other place, the bill tries to set a balanced cap of 20 to address the diverse needs of breeders. Far from it being unfair, as asserted by the member for Dubbo, the bill provides for a smooth transition period of 10 years for breeders. It will not be putting people out of business any time soon. The bill is not targeted at those ethical breeders that the member for Dubbo might represent in his electorate. It is targeted at all those in New South Wales whose treatment of animals has been nothing short of outrageous.

In response to comments about working dogs, a working dog is a dog. Its health and welfare are not judged any differently to any other dog. Basic standards must be met. That may not be acceptable to the National Party but, as far as the Government is concerned, it will insist that all dogs and their welfare and health are judged the same. The bill provides a limited exemption, acknowledging the important role that working dogs play in the agricultural industry. Farmers breeding working dogs for working on that farm will be exempt from obtaining a

breeder identification number. Appropriately, all other provisions within the bill, such as staff-to-animal ratios, the maximum cap and lifetime litter limits, will apply.

The Government is committed to maintaining the bill's focus, ensuring it delivers effective outcomes for animal welfare and other community needs. The provisions of the bill are fair. They are simple and clear and provide necessary guardrails for breeders, owners and the welfare of our beloved dogs. Regarding the comments of the member for Goulburn on defining the age of a female adult dog, six months has been selected so that a dog may be aged by a teeth inspection by an inspector. I am advised that after six months it is very difficult to age an animal without accurate records, such as identification or a dog's microchip, or veterinary expertise. I thank the member for Sydney and the member for Lake Macquarie for their support of the bill.

Before closing, I address some specific aspects of the bill raised by the Legislation Review Committee. Firstly, the powers of delegation set out in the bill are necessary to ensure the effective administration and enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. They are consistent with other standard modern drafting policies and provide the flexibility required for efficient administration of animal welfare laws and regulations. Secondly, the bill provides that by 2029 all breeders of dogs will need to comply with the prescribed code of practice for the breeding of cats and dogs.

The POCTAA regularly relies on codes of practice to outline animal welfare requirements. Compared to regulations, codes allow for flexibility and can be updated more easily in response to developments in science and understanding of animal welfare as well as changing community expectations. Any substantial change to the code of practice typically is the subject of detailed public consultation.

Finally, the bill prescribes significant penalties for breaching some of the welfare requirements in relation to dogs. The Government's view is that this is appropriate. Consultation has made it clear that the community does not accept the mistreatment of dogs to make a profit. The relatively high penalties send a message that the Government is serious about stopping unethical puppy farms and takes seriously animal welfare offences. As I said in my opening remarks in reply, the Government is committed to ending puppy farming in New South Wales and this bill delivers on a Labor Party commitment. The bill legislates what the community has long been calling for, does so in an appropriate and responsible way, and allows breeders who are doing the right thing to get on with the job without imposing impossible red tape and costs.

The bill will deliver important reforms and will set the benchmark for puppy-breeding regulation in this country. The bill provides for transparency, oversight, and welfare outcomes for our best friends. As my portfolio intrudes upon the portfolio of the Hon. Tara Moriarty in respect of animal welfare issues, I know how difficult an exercise this legislation was to deliver on that election commitment and to find the right balance while at the same time proceeding with considerable haste to implement this long overdue reform. I thank the Minister for her contribution to the production of this important reform. I also recognise and thank her staff and the staff of her department, whose unenviable task of striking the right balance with the haste in which they proceeded has indeed been impressive. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **RAMIN'S FARM**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (14:52):** Last month, I had the pleasure of visiting Ramin's Farm in Leppington as part of Small Business Month. Owner and operator Harun is doing something truly special in Leppington. Since 2016, he has been growing fresh produce that brings the flavours of home from Bangladesh, India and Nepal to our local community. Harun missed the unique variety of vegetables he was accustomed to back home, so he decided to start growing them himself, sharing a taste of his heritage with the wider community. Harun's dedication to community goes well beyond farming. In the face of devastating floods in Bangladesh, he took it upon himself to make a difference and raised over \$30,000 to support relief efforts for those affected. Well done to Harun and all those who donated. Small businesses are the backbone of every community and Ramin's Farm is no different.

### COMMONWEALTH BANK BRANCH CLOSURES

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (14:53):** Earlier this year our Five Dock community was shocked when the Commonwealth Bank of Australia [CBA] on Great North Road shut its doors suddenly and without warning. Even though I had written to the chairman of the CBA and we had started a community petition to fight against the closure, the CBA still closed the branch, leaving the local community without a bank or an ATM. But people power has prevailed. Today, I sincerely recognise and thank Pharmacy4Less Five Dock, which recognised the need in our community and worked with the CBA to open an ATM at the front of its store on Great North Road. I sincerely thank the Pharmacy4Less owners, the Demayne family—Jason, William, Emil and Nick—for stepping up and taking action to support our community and for helping to provide this essential service for Five Dock residents. We are so fortunate to have local businesses like Pharmacy4Less that care so deeply about our local residents. On behalf of our community, I sincerely thank the entire team and staff at Pharmacy4Less Five Dock. Well done! I wish them all the best.

### TRIBUTE TO THE HON. JOHN O'MEALLY, AM, RFD

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:54):** I recognise the life of the late Hon. John O'Meally, AM, RFD, who died on 4 October 2024. Justice O'Meally was a wonderful person, a good human being, and a great judge and legal person. He was the first President of the Dust Diseases Tribunal of New South Wales and was also instrumental in its establishment in 1989. He did so much work for people, particularly those who had asbestos, asbestosis and mesothelioma. We travelled to Timor-Leste together as part of a delegation of the International Commission of Jurists to locate asbestos around the town. That in the early days. John was also the State President of the New South Wales branch of the International Commission of Jurists Australian Section. May he rest in peace.

### BRIONY SCOTT

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:55):** At the close of this school year, Wenona will bid farewell to its principal, Dr Briony Scott. Dr Scott has been at the helm since July 2011, and during her time she has truly become a cornerstone of the educational community across the North Shore. Dr Scott's extensive and impressive credentials include a Master and Doctorate of Education from the University of Sydney, with a particular focus on girls' education. Under her leadership, Wenona has flourished in countless ways, and the positive impact of her work will be felt for generations to come. Dr Scott has fostered an environment where both academic excellence and the development of strong, independent young women sit at the core of everything they do at Wenona. She leaves behind a remarkable legacy, and her dedication and service to the Wenona community and beyond have been nothing short of extraordinary. Dr Scott also shared her perspective on issues regarding parenting and education, making regular contributions to local papers and international publications. She has also spoken frequently at community forums and conferences. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr Scott and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

### REVESBY UNITING CHURCH COMMUNITY GARDEN

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (14:56):** I acknowledge the incredible work of Revesby Uniting Church for opening its beautiful Rivergum Community Garden to our community. It was a pleasure to attend the garden's open day last weekend, where locals came together to celebrate its vibrant and welcoming space. The Rivergum Community Garden, which opened last year, has grown into a colourful haven with bee-attracting flowers, fresh vegetables and peaceful spots for visitors to unwind. It is a place for people to connect with each other, with nature and with themselves while enjoying the joy of growing fresh produce. The open day was filled with community spirit. There were market stalls selling pickles, jams and more. I thank Julie, Ross, Rae and Ruth for their hard work in maintaining the garden, and I thank Fiona for her efforts in organising the open day. I encourage everyone to visit these inviting gardens, which are open daily. There are weekly working bees on Fridays from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. for those who would like to lend a hand in that wonderful community garden.

### NORMAN AND DIANE BAZELEY

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (14:57):** I recognise the achievements of Walcha locals Norman and Diane Bazeley, who bred this year's triumphant Melbourne Cup winner, Knight's Choice. I congratulate Norm and Diane on that impressive honour and the success of their thoroughbred stud, Elswick Park at Walcha. Knight's Choice was bred from their mare, Midnight Pearl, which was purchased in 2013 for \$1,000. I commend all who were involved in Knight's Choice reaching such an elite level in racing—none more so than Norm and Diane. I thank them for the significant contribution they have made to the sport of thoroughbred racing in Australia. The Northern Tablelands electorate congratulates them on that wonderful and memorable achievement. Knight's Choice is the second Walcha horse to win the Melbourne Cup after Blue Spec won in 1905.

### SCHOOLS FOR FUTURE

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (14:58):** On 19 October 2024 I had a fantastic time attending a fundraising event about accessibility to schooling for all, organised by Schools for Future [SFF]. SFF is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation with a noble mission: to reduce inequality in access to education and provide quality schooling for children who are unable to afford school fees or essential study equipment. It was inspiring to witness the passion and dedication of the SFF team, who are committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to receive an education. The event raised crucial funds to support children who would otherwise be excluded from the educational opportunities they deserve. Education is a powerful tool for change, and SFF is making a tangible difference in the lives of many. I extend my sincere thanks to Dr Tuong Phan and the entire organising committee for the kind invitation and their hard work in making the event such a success.

### SURF, HOPS AND HISTORY

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (14:59):** I congratulate local business Bennett Surf and the Brookvale Arts District for hosting Brookvale's surf culture festival Surf, Hops and History from 25 to 27 October. The three-day celebration brought together the northern beaches' unique blend of surf history, local breweries and the arts and showcased the potential of Brookvale as a vibrant business and entertainment precinct. The festival marked 60 years since the 1964 World Surfing Championships, held right on the northern beaches. With the support of local breweries like 4 Pines Brewing, Freshwater Brewing and more, the event truly captured the vibrant spirit of our community. It was a great night to attend with a very special guest, the Hon. John Graham, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy. Our community was very proud to show off this big local initiative. I congratulate everyone involved and thank them for making the event a success and a big, proud showcase of local surf culture.

### KELLY AND RYAN ADAMS

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:00):** I recognise two very active members of our Riverstone community, Kelly and Ryan Adams of RKA Industrial Solutions, and congratulate them on hosting an amazing community barbecue at the Riverstone and District Historical Society and Museum open day on Sunday 3 November. Having experienced the painful impact of suicide a number of times recently, they wanted to do something to make difference for other families in the community. Kelly, Ryan and their whole family worked non-stop to provide a delicious sausage sizzle and raised over \$800 for mental health services and programs to be run by North West Community Services. It was a wonderful day of fun and community connection, with many community members attending to support this important cause. I give my heartfelt thanks to Ryan and Kelly and all the family for being champions for mental health in our community.

### LIVERPOOL RSL REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATION

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (15:01):** On 11 November I was honoured to attend the Remembrance Day commemoration at the City of Liverpool RSL Sub-Branch. It was a solemn occasion honouring the courage, sacrifice and service of the men and women who fought for peace and freedom. The service was a reminder of the sacrifices of our diggers who served, and currently serve, to protect our way of life. The commemoration started with an acknowledgement of country from Gandangara, a welcome address by Mr Ron Christy, an ode by the president of the City of Liverpool RSL Sub-Branch, Geoffrey Tate, and addresses from Reverend Tim Booker of St Luke's Liverpool and Father Paul Monkerud of All Saints Catholic Church. I thank all who were involved in the organisation of the event. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

### DR GLEN VALAIRE AND LEE PITT

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:02):** I acknowledge Dr Glen Valaire and Lee Pitt for their efforts in rescuing a Vietnamese national off Blacksmiths Beach on Friday 8 November. The seafarer was reported missing from the vessel *Double Delight* on Thursday 7 November when it was off the coast at Redhead. Dr Valaire and Mr Pitt had been fishing offshore when they spotted the Vietnamese man in the water about six kilometres off Blacksmiths Beach. He had been in the water for around 18 hours. I thank Marine Rescue NSW, which had launched an air and sea search for the missing seafarer, along with the NSW Police Force and NSW Ambulance in responding to the incident. We are indebted to our emergency service respondents for the amazing work they do to keep our community safe and respond in times of crisis. Glen and Lee are fantastic community members, and our community is so proud of them. I thank them both for their efforts in ensuring that this search had a positive ending.

### MRS EMILY ESSEX

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:03):** I recognise and congratulate Mrs Emily Essex on her tireless advocacy, which recently saw the first sod turned for the complete redevelopment of Taylor Park in

Grenfell. The development will see Taylor Park transformed into an inclusive, fully fenced and safe all-abilities playground. The idea, as many good ones are, was conceived over a cup of coffee I had with Emily and has flourished from there. It holds a most personal connection for Emily and her family, with her son Billy being an inspiration for the genesis of the project. Commencing in January, the playground will be constructed as a certified Livvi's Place playground following the wonderful Touched by Olivia model. I was honoured to be invited to join Emily and the Weddin Shire Council at the official sod turn to get the exciting project underway. I congratulate Emily on all her efforts and her continued dedication to what will be an amazing space for everyone in the region to enjoy.

### LIVERPOOL CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:04):** I am pleased to announce that Christmas in Liverpool has not been cancelled this year. In fact, there is a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm for all things Christmas, particularly among primary school students in Liverpool. The enthusiasm was so high that I received over 400 entries to my inaugural Liverpool Christmas Card Competition. The creativity and Christmas spirit in our young talent is strong, focusing on themes such as Christmas in Australia, Christmas for everyone and Christmas in the best community in the world. I am grateful to the Liverpool Youth Action Group for helping me with the difficult job of picking winners and runners-up. I congratulate Aidah from Marsden Road Public School for winning the competition, and Maryana from Green Valley Public School, Zoffany from Bonnyrigg Heights Primary School, Dilan from Heckenberg Public School and Alegria from Gulyangarri Public School, who were the joint runners-up. I will be so proud to share their entries with my colleagues in this place, as well as with the rest of our community.

### SYDNEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (15:05):** Last year a member of the Sydney Speleological Society who is a Wollondilly local reached out to me about a caving site in New South Wales. I was impressed by the amount of work the society has done in documenting and restoring the caves around Sydney, including Jenolan Caves, and so I was honoured to be the keynote speaker at the Sydney Speleological Society's seventieth anniversary dinner, held on Friday 25 October 2024. I admit that caves are not exactly my comfort zone, but I realised that I have visited quite a few over the years. I congratulate the Sydney Speleological Society on this milestone anniversary and thank it for a memorable evening. We celebrated the launch of the society's 700th journal issue and the publication of *Karst in Paradise: Lord Howe Island Group — UNESCO World Heritage Site*. In addition, we celebrated John Bonwick's ninetieth birthday. I was thrilled, along with the Governor of New South Wales, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Premier of New South Wales, to present celebratory certificates to John. I thank John and the members of the Sydney Speleological Society for their work in preserving the unique and important habitats that are our caves.

### LAWRENCE DIMECH

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:06):** Today I recognise Lawrence Dimech's remarkable 60 years of dedicated service to the Australian Maltese community, a legacy of unwavering commitment, compassion and leadership. Lawrence's tireless efforts have not only strengthened the bonds between Australia and Malta but also enriched the lives of countless individuals within our community. From his early days of service, Lawrence has been a beacon of hope and a pillar of support, always ready to lend a helping hand and advocate for the needs of others. His work has spanned various initiatives, from cultural preservation to social welfare and, of course, *The Voice of the Maltese*, ensuring that the rich heritage of the Maltese community is cherished and passed down through generations. Lawrence's dedication is a testament to the power of community spirit and the impact one individual can have on the lives of many. His legacy is one of kindness, resilience and an unwavering belief in the strength of unity. In honouring Lawrence today, I speak for many in offering our deepest gratitude for his extraordinary contributions and look forward to the Maltese Australian community continuing the journey he has championed so passionately. I thank Lawrence for his 60 years of service.

### CAROLINE CHISHOLM CATHOLIC COLLEGE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (15:07):** I thank and commend the six alumnae from Glenmore Park's Caroline Chisholm Catholic College classes of 2000 to 2022, who returned to the college for the annual careers high tea as role models and mentors for the college's current year 12 students. The six alumnae were *ABC News* reporter Chantelle Al-Khouri, interior designer and business owner Blaire Marchand, exercise physiologist Isabella La Malfa, Clinique and Aveda general manager Corinne Duffy, nurse Alana Blowers and Ray White sales associate Ava Musumeci. I thank and commend partnership and pathways coach Adam Macnamara and his fellow staff members at Caroline Chisholm Catholic College for organising this important annual initiative, where students from the past come back to guide and mentor current students, who will then go on to pursue their own careers and pathways. A recent popular saying rings true: "You cannot be what you cannot see." I commend all

schools who go above and beyond their core business to organise these important and inspirational encounters between current students and alumni, which stirs the imagination and inspires hope for all.

### STRAPNGO

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (15:08):** It was a pleasure to visit StrapNGo in Condell Park, which is a fantastic local business making a real difference in safety for our truck drivers. Its innovative load restraint system, designed for tautliner trucks, not only improves safety but also boosts productivity, showing what is possible with local ingenuity. Joined by the Minister for Work Health and Safety, we saw firsthand the impact of this system, which allows truck drivers to load freight safely and securely with minimal labour. I thank founders Ray Charmand and Moe Etter, along with Fayssal Sari, for leading the way in safety and innovation and for extending an invitation to the Minister and me to see their system in action. StrapNGo exemplifies the innovative business solutions we are proud to see developed and manufactured in New South Wales, and in my electorate of East Hills. Its dedication to driver safety is a reminder of how powerful our local businesses can be in creating positive change.

### CHATSWOOD REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:09):** I recognise the recent Remembrance Day service held at the Chatswood Garden of Remembrance. The ceremony brought together a large gathering from our community, united in honouring the brave men and women who served and sacrificed their lives for our nation's freedom. The Chatswood High School vocal ensemble performed beautifully, and the Chatswood High School captains spoke with eloquence, adding a sense of reverence to the occasion and reminding us all of the importance of remembrance. Remembrance Day is the opportunity for us to commemorate the day on which the guns fell silent on the Western Front, effectively bringing the First World War to an end on 11 November 1918. At the ceremony, it was heartening to see people—school, sporting clubs and community—coming together to pay their respects. The event served as a powerful reminder of our community's shared values and commitment to honouring the sacrifices of those who served. I particularly recognise Barney Flanagan, Chatswood RSL Sub-Branch president, and all the hardworking members of the sub-branch, registered club, council and broader community who made such a moving ceremony possible.

### HAYDEN WESTWOOD

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:10):** I acknowledge a local young man who is using his athletic prowess to bring awareness to a national issue. Hayden Westwood will run 113 kilometres from Cronulla to Penrith from 7.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. today, 15 November, to raise awareness for the 113 women lost to domestic violence since the start of 2023. Hayden has teamed up with the KYUP! Project, a charity dedicated to empowering young women through education. Any money raised will go towards providing life-changing workshops to young women in schools across Australia. The young man is setting an example that we should all aspire to. No-one should feel afraid in their own community, and Hayden wants to do something about it by using his unique skills and talents. On behalf of the community, I thank Hayden and wish him luck as he embarks on his arduous run through the night to bring awareness to the lives lost and to the need to build a safer environment for women across Australia.

### BRAYDEN COOK

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (15:11):** I acknowledge Brayden Cook for receiving a Youth Community Service Award from the Governor of New South Wales. The prestigious award recognises exceptional contributions by students to their communities, shining a light on service that often goes unrecognised by traditional school accolades focused on academics, sports and leadership. Brayden stands out as a truly deserving recipient of the award, exemplifying what it means to lead with purpose and compassion. His commitment to volunteering and fundraising is nothing short of remarkable. Brayden has taken on leadership roles in over 20 diverse causes, demonstrating his unwavering dedication to issues such as health, homelessness, mental health awareness and support for the Rural Fire Service brigades. Moreover, Brayden's fundraising efforts extend beyond our community, impacting State, national and even international causes. His selflessness and determination to make a difference reflect a profound understanding of the challenges faced by others, reinforcing the values of empathy and service in our community. I thank and congratulate Brayden.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### KENSINGTON AND KINGSFORD HIGH-RISE STUDENT HOUSING

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (15:12):** I bring to the attention of the House my grave concern about high-rise student housing being developed and constructed in the Kensington and

Kingsford Town Centres. The Kensington and Kingsford Town Centres—or K2K, as the development was called—was a large-scale planning decision made in conjunction with the former Government. I must say that I am very grateful for their cooperation. K2K would provide something in the order of 5,000 to 7,000 homes, including affordable housing, in that precinct. It was designed to ensure a greater density of people along the light rail line, focusing on sufficient demographics to inject and redevelop the commercial parts of the town centre while providing affordable housing for nurses at Prince of Wales and Sydney Children's hospitals, police at Maroubra and Eastern Beaches police area command, and paramedics and other frontline workers who effectively have been priced out of that part of the south-eastern suburbs.

Unfortunately, the council subsequently prepared development control plans that allowed the prominent sites that were to provide homes in areas with massive housing shorting and transport corridors to be used for student housing and student accommodation to service the University of New South Wales.

As a matter of planning principle, the way to proceed with making provision for student housing is to zone an area for that purpose to facilitate each development. It is not by taking away the opportunity for homes—and affordable homes—in the south-eastern suburbs and making provision for student accommodation for overseas students. As the frontline workers who make such a great contribution to my community are being priced out of existence, overseas developers continue to construct student housing that, I would say, is inappropriate. Randwick council, through its change of leadership at staff and elected level, is trying to address those concerns. The council has made significant staffing changes, but the damage has substantially occurred.

In addition, the University of New South Wales has leased out a car park next door to the National Institute of Dramatic Art [NIDA] for 99 years, overshadowing such a significant part of Australia's education institution for dramatic arts, simply as a revenue-raiser for overseas students. The planning process has gone completely awry. That development, known as Iglu, overshadows the adjoining residents of Kensington and has very little planning merit. I am grateful that the planning Minister has listened to NIDA, and I should be pleased that at least the independent planning panel brought back that building slightly to try to reduce its impact. Regardless, it is bad planning policy.

There is a shortage of homes; there is a shortage of affordable housing. Zoning was in place to provide 5,000 to 7,000 of those homes. Other areas adjoining the University of New South Wales could be used to enact local environmental plans and encourage the development of student housing. In Kensington and Kingsford, we have enough small cafes to attract overseas students. We need quality commercial developments to encourage job generation and the redevelopment of a town centre and bring people back to utilise the light rail line that provides a reasonable service into the city.

### LAKE MACQUARIE WATER SAFETY

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:17):** For the past 99 years the public baths at Toronto have offered the people of Lake Macquarie and their visitors alike a relatively safe spot to swim, fish and tie up their boats. Back in the 1930s, they even featured a dressing shed. However, over the years, the ever-popular historic facility became somewhat dated, not quite keeping up with the needs of modern society. It was with great pleasure that I recently attended, along with Mayor Adam Shultz and the Hon. Emily Suvaal, MLC, the official opening of the newly revamped Toronto Baths. Thanks to a \$1 million grant from the New South Wales Government under the Places to Swim program and \$400,000 from Lake Macquarie City Council, the baths are looking better than ever, and more swimmers are returning to the facility. The baths now feature an accessibility ramp into the water, ensuring that people of all abilities can enjoy the facility. Decking was modernised and nets placed around the structure, ensuring safety from larger marine predators.

It was wonderful timing that the restoration project was completed just in time for the swimming season, and I congratulate Lake Macquarie City Council and the State Government on delivering that upgrade. On that note, as we head into summer and the school holidays, I highlight the importance of water safety, not just in the public baths and around the lake but also around the home. Lake Macquarie is a beautiful, thriving waterway, twice the size of Sydney Harbour. It is a majestic and beloved location for an array of water sports and recreation activities, but it can also be treacherous for the unprepared and those who lack basic swimming ability. This year got off to a tragic start in the Lake Macquarie community when six-year-old Sage Pearman drowned in a neighbour's pool at Teralba in January. He was unsupervised for a mere three minutes.

More recently, on 6 July, a 23-year-old man drowned in Lake Macquarie after his boat capsized in the Swansea Channel. Two more men aged 41 and 32 narrowly avoided a similar fate on 23 September when their boat capsized in Lake Macquarie at 11.00 p.m. They were not wearing life jackets and were clinging to their sinking aluminium boat for dear life. It was sheer luck that they were able to call 000 and that police were able to find them in the dead of night. Officers commandeered a jetski and were able to give them two life jackets while they awaited rescue from another privately owned boat. Drowning is a very real danger, particularly for a



community that is home to the biggest saltwater lake in the Southern Hemisphere, and not just to children but also increasingly to adults.

The *National Drowning Report 2024* produced by the Royal Life Saving Society Australia states that there were 323 drowning deaths across Australia between 1 July 2023 and 20 June 2024. That is a dreadful statistic, and it is 16 per cent higher than the 10-year average of drowning deaths in our nation. Some of the key findings in the report were that 40 per cent of people who drowned were adults aged 55 years and above. Further, 92 adults who drowned were aged over 65, which is 28 per cent of the total number of drowning deaths, the highest number ever for that group. People over 65 are drowning at a rate two to three times that of children under five. Those statistics show that swimming, water safety and lifesaving skills are not just important for our kids, though they very much are. Those skills are needed across all age groups. But there are other measures people can and should be taking to protect themselves and their loved ones, such as always wearing a life jacket on a vessel, supervising children, not swimming alone, being sensible around waterways, and fencing pools.

At this point, I acknowledge the incredible work of Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, which is the key organisation keeping our waterway safe. Volunteers man the radio base 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while others are always on call to assist with an on-water emergency. I also acknowledge the work of our emergency service personnel and all of the good citizens who look out for anyone who might be in peril on our waterways, taking up the call in an emergency and putting themselves at risk in order to help others. The importance of water safety needs to be front of mind in all water environments, whether a lake, river, pool or beach. Even a few centimetres of water in the bottom of an esky is a drowning risk for a child. While Lake Macquarie is known for its relaxed living, I appeal to members of our community and visitors alike to remain vigilant, keep each other safe and, hopefully, return for a good year in 2025.

#### PAUL STRANGIO

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:22):** On Saturday 6 February 2010 at approximately 10.11 p.m., emergency services were called to a home in Sheoak Place, Glenmore Park, following reports of shots being fired. Upon attending the scene, emergency services found that a 42-year-old male had been shot. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of paramedics, the man died at the scene. That man was Paul Strangio—a father, a son, a brother and a friend. He would have now been a grandfather as well. He was a truck driver and a Western Sydney local. I speak today on the unsolved murder of Paul Strangio, and I acknowledge the deep impact that has had on his loved ones and our community in the electorate of Prospect.

Paul was only 42 years old when he was shot and killed by at least three home invaders in his Glenmore Park home. Paul's family, long-term residents of Seven Hills in the electorate of Prospect, have expressed their pain and suffering at the loss of their son and brother and the awful circumstances in which he died. The fact that, 14 years later, they have not had a resolution to this unsolved crime just makes it that much worse.

Recently I sat with the Strangio family in my electorate office, and they told me about their wonderful memories of Paul. Paul's brother Julian remembered Paul as a caring father and much-loved member of their family. Paul leaves behind two adult children—his daughter, Jasmine, and son, Jessie—who are now in their thirties, as well as five beautiful grandchildren. The impact of Paul's murder has been especially hard on his loving mother, Lydia, who greatly misses her son.

Sadly, Paul's father, Frank, died without ever knowing the result of the investigation. It is Lydia's hope that she will have those answers in her lifetime. It is essential that we work to help the Strangio family in their search for answers to provide some closure to this tragic chapter in the family's story. In 2023 the NSW Police Force announced a \$500,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the persons responsible for Paul Strangio's murder. At that announcement, Detective Acting Superintendent Virginia Gorman appealed to the public for any information, no matter how small, because it could be the missing piece of the puzzle to solve the murder. Fourteen years after that tragic night, the case still remains unsolved and the offenders are still at large in the community. When I spoke to the Strangio family, they told me that they still hold out hope they will get answers. They still hold out hope the \$500,000 reward money will encourage the public to come forward with key information that will help solve the case.

I thank the NSW Police Force for its efforts to date, especially the State Crime Command's Homicide Squad under Strike Force Goodier. I applaud the work that the squad has done in this and in other homicide investigations, and commend their dedicated efforts to achieve justice and provide answers for families of victims of crime. On 6 February 2010 our community lost a friend. His family and our community are still waiting to see the criminals responsible for the tragedy held to account. I urge any member of the public who has information regarding Paul's murder to come forward and offer it to the NSW Police Force. If anyone knows anything that could assist police with the investigation, no matter how small, please contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. With the public's help, we can deliver justice for Paul and give closure to his loving family.

## RURAL WOMEN'S GATHERING

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:27):** On Saturday 19 October rural women from all walks of life travelled from across New South Wales to meet in Harden-Murrumburrah in the electorate of Cootamundra for the 2024 Rural Women's Gathering. Women and girls from remote stations in our Far West, from rural towns in the Northern Rivers and on the Murray-Darling, and from across our growing regional cities came together to share stories, plenty of laughter and some tears over an unforgettable day. The 2024 gathering committee, led by nine incredible local women, helped raise funds to make the event a shining success. The event was held at the redeveloped Harden Country Club. Rosie Fairfield-Smith, Bronwyn Ryan, Julie Roberts, Antonia Brown, Jessica Ryan, Ros Stewart, Sarah Karaitiana, Hannah Walton and Sarah Rowan put the twin town of Harden-Murrumburrah on the map.

This year's gathering theme was "Sowing the Seeds of Success: Creating Your Own Work-Life Balance", with Dr Jana Pittman sharing her own story of juggling raising a family and studying to become a gynaecologist, and challenging us to ask what would happen if we dared to push beyond our limits without the fear of what could go wrong. In the spirit of Dr Pittman's challenge, I joined in the Yarns of Wisdom workshop and had a wholehearted try at hand knitting a scarf. I thank the workshop facilitator Samantha Longmore for bringing some order to my very unique-looking snood.

Her calm guidance and good humour saw us through to success.

The gathering continues to be a touchpoint for rural women across our State, with the annual event being held in a different location each year so that more women can access an opportunity to connect without the tyranny of distance. I am sure my parliamentary colleague and Minister for Women, the member for Charlestown, would agree. Seeing the connection and kindness on this special day is testament to just how crucial these events are for rural and regional communities. Importantly, events like these place rural women firmly in the spotlight. Many attendees manage their own businesses with working on farm or with their families. More women are entering the agriculture workforce, but 96 per cent of bookkeepers are women and women make up just 31 per cent of total workers. In towns and villages women own and operate businesses, taking on new skills in an increasingly digital landscape through movements like Buy From The Bush.

As the member for Cootamundra, a large rural electorate, I am continually impressed by the excellent work that women do. In the middle of the continuing cost-of-living crisis, rural women from Ganmain to Grenfell and Tumblong to Temora are finding new ways to support each other, their families and their communities as they try to keep their towns and villages thriving. Across the State there are more stories of strong, courageous women waiting to be told. In each of our towns and villages, women are breaking the mould and building a better future for themselves, their families and their communities. On 19 October the candle was lit and passed to Tina Irish and Karen Hirst from Lismore, the host for next year's gathering.

On a personal note, I could not be more thrilled for this incredible community, especially given what we all saw them go through in 2022 and the ongoing recovery efforts. In a town recovering from catastrophic flooding, where the homes I walked through in 2022 are still waiting to be rebuilt, there is so much that we can still listen to and learn from. I wish the Lismore gathering committee all the best as members begin the work of organising and fundraising for their event. The success of the most recent Rural Women's Gathering shows that the Harden Country Club is ready to host more prestige events. I welcome any of my parliamentary colleagues to come and see how well we can put on a show all over the Cootamundra electorate.

## SYDNEY ELECTORATE PUBLIC HOUSING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:32):** The Sydney electorate has around 1,500 public housing homes. Supporting maintenance, repairs and tenants experiencing antisocial behaviour issues is a priority for me and my electorate office. Everyone has the right to a good standard of living, including housing. That human right is articulated in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Australia is a signatory. Further to this is the tenant's right to quiet enjoyment, which is a term of every residential tenancy agreement in New South Wales. Since I was elected, I have been calling on the Government to adequately fund public housing repairs and maintenance and make tenants' wellbeing a priority. Over 10 years later, I am pleased to see that the Minns Labor Government has responded significantly, with \$1 billion allocated for repairs and maintenance.

I thank Minister Jackson, the Minister for Housing, for undertaking quarterly public housing site visits in my electorate, together with her director of policy, Mat Campbell, and Homes NSW, who follow through with actions to address issues raised by tenants. I hear back from tenants that their experience of meeting with the Minister and telling their story directly to her is not as scary as they thought it would be. They have found the Minister attentive and genuinely responsive to their concerns and pleas. At times when tenants have felt

overwhelmed, believing public housing is their last shot to get a safe and liveable home, the Minister has been understanding and has helped put them at ease.

The Minister's visits have resulted in improved security in multiple complexes, the transfer of a constituent to accessible accommodation finally after seven years, and the attention and completion of legacy maintenance issues across the electorate, including the cleaning of gutters, the pruning of trees and the redesign of rubbish areas that were rodent magnets.

There are now more secure letterboxes, apartment blocks and public housing precincts. There is less graffiti and fewer abandoned cars, better community rooms and gardens, functional fire doors, lockable front doors, and still more plans on the way with corresponding work orders already in the system.

The Minister and I have learnt that trees can be "rat highways" and simply pruning them can raise a tenant's standard of living by preventing rats from entering homes on upper levels. We have witnessed that community spaces such as gardens and community rooms are the heart of public housing complexes, and the tending of these spaces encourages better health outcomes and social and education opportunities for all. I was honoured to attend the reopening of the Northcott community garden this week, which was also an issue raised with and resolved by the Minister. Not maintaining gutters can result in water ingress and mould in buildings and aggravated health issues for tenants. The link between repairs and maintenance and the wellbeing of tenants is evident.

We have also seen the nexus between antisocial behaviour and property damage—for example, on the grounds of one complex, a large number of customers of resident drug dealers created pathways of erosion that during rain events cause rivers of water to overload inadequate drains and to damage the property. The Minister's visits ensure that these vital assets are repaired and maintained for the future. That is both good news for the asset line on the State's balance sheet and for public housing tenants. The 2024-25 budget investment for repairs and maintenance of the portfolio is well overdue and welcome. Across time it will increase savings in other portfolios such as health and justice. Tenants' expectations of the department are exceptionally low because of the historical lack of follow-through with repairs and maintenance requests. I share their frustration and I know the Minister does too. My staff and I will continue to closely monitor the work orders that come from these visits.

I convey my appreciation to the public housing tenants of Surry Hills, Darlinghurst, Woolloomooloo and Paddington who have given their time generously on these visits at tenant meetings to get better outcomes for all their neighbours. I thank Mission Australia, whose contract facilitating tenant meetings ends soon. I urge the Minister to now pay tenant representatives at the government board remuneration rate, include local members as part of tenant meetings and submit to the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal the case for dedicated housing specialist positions in electorate offices. New South Wales is in a housing affordability crisis and more people are facing homelessness. I welcome the compassionate and proactive approach being taken to ensure that people living in social housing are treated with dignity and have a safe and secure home, which is something that is their right as a tenant. I also give a big thanks to my electorate office staff, including Annie McCall and Donna Brooks, and everyone in my office who has worked to support public housing tenants in the Sydney electorate.

### **CARNES HILL AQUATIC AND RECREATIONAL CENTRE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:37):** Today I speak about the Carnes Hill Aquatic and Recreational Centre. Successive local, State and Federal Liberal candidates have promised a new pool and recreation centre in Carnes Hill at successive elections for close to a decade. In that time, sadly, nothing has materialised. Instead, there is an overgrown paddock that cannot be safely used for any public purpose in this fast-growing community. The people of Carnes Hill and surrounding suburbs deserve better than a decade of inaction. I have spoken many times in this House about the huge growth in housing and the failure of infrastructure to keep pace in my electorate. This includes parks, open space and recreation facilities.

People in south-west Sydney deserve the same quality and access to facilities as those in other parts of Sydney. That is why, in part through my strong advocacy, the Minns Labor Government provided a grant of \$53.4 million to Liverpool City Council in the 2023-24 budget as part of the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program, or WSIG Program, for delivery of the Carnes Hill Aquatic and Recreational Centre. These funds were meant to go towards an outdoor Olympic-size 50-metre swimming pool, water play park and sporting fields. Members can imagine my surprise, then, on learning that Liverpool council convened an extraordinary meeting on Tuesday night at which they decided to significantly reduce the scope of the Carnes Hill Aquatic and Recreational Centre.

The 50-metre swimming pool has now been removed and a spa has been added. Further, the business papers reveal that the cost of the project has blown out from the initial \$53.4 million to more than \$100 million.

That is contrary to the mayor's own words, who said to *The Daily Telegraph* in April 2023 that the funding would cover the entire cost of the aquatic centre. Obviously, I am deeply disappointed by the fact that the residents of

Leppington and Liverpool will be deprived of the facilities they deserve due to the council's delay and mismanagement of the project. Those revelations raise serious questions around probity, management, planning and budgeting matters at Liverpool City Council.

First and foremost, given the project is funded by taxpayer money, why has the community not been consulted and kept in the loop about the significant change? When was council planning to tell residents that they are not prepared to deliver the Olympic-sized, 50-metre swimming pool that the community was promised many years ago? The papers for the meeting, which detail the proposed changes, were only published on the council's website on the weekend before the Tuesday meeting, despite the papers being from a deferred item for which the material was surely readily available for some time. To that end, why has the issue been shrouded in so much secrecy by council?

As the local member, I was only made aware of the proposal to scrap the 50-metre swimming pool when a councillor alerted me to it. Why were the proposed scope changes and budget blowout not raised with me when I met with council staff about open space and sporting facilities in Leppington in October? Has council advised and sought approval from the State Government on the significant changes to the scope of the project, which it is required to do under the terms of the WSIG Program? Importantly, where has the money gone from this budget black hole and how can council possibly hope to recover it and complete the project? Does council seek funding from either State or Federal government grants? Given that Liverpool City Council recently announced a deficit of \$11 million in the 2024 audited financial statements, that seems to be the only option to fill the funding shortfall, unless the Liberal-led council plans to sell off public assets. If that is the council's plan, given the lack of transparency on this issue, there is little chance that it is going to be up-front on any potential privatisation agenda.

After years of delays and broken promises, a budget blowout, the scrapping of the centrepiece Olympic-sized swimming pool and a lack of transparency surrounding the project—not to mention the myriad other issues facing the embattled council, including a much publicised investigation and public inquiry—the people of Liverpool deserve answers. I call on Liverpool City Council to front up to residents and provide answers on the future of the Carnes Hill Aquatic and Recreational Centre.

#### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:42):** I am pleased to be part of the Minns Labor Government, which is finally delivering Rouse Hill Hospital after more than a decade of false promises. The \$700 million Rouse Hill Hospital will improve access to acute care, with inpatient beds, a day surgery unit, paediatrics, antenatal and postnatal services, virtual care, medical imaging and, of course, an emergency department. The Government is working hard to get construction under way as soon as possible, but a new hospital alone is not enough to support the burgeoning population. Holistic health care is about more than hospitals and emergency rooms. Our community also needs strong primary care services, preventive health support and affordable, accessible options for routine health care.

Many of my constituents have highlighted concerns about access to healthcare services, from GP shortages to the strain on after-hours care. With that in mind, I conducted a survey of local doctors in the area to understand their experiences and challenges in delivering health services in the Riverstone electorate. I discovered that many GP services are not accepting new patients, and there is not one single practice in the Riverstone electorate that is open on a Sunday. Those insights have reinforced my commitment to working towards providing the infrastructure needed for better healthcare delivery and advocating for improvements that will better serve our community.

Many local doctors have shared that they are struggling to keep up with demand, with small practices facing recruitment challenges and large advertising costs just to fill GP vacancies. Some doctors who invest in recruiting new GPs have experienced high turnover, which disrupts continuity of care for patients. GPs and practice managers also noted that while mixed billing helps manage operational costs, it does not fully offset rising expenses in areas like electricity, medical supplies and staffing.

Local GPs are balancing the need to offer affordable care with the realities of high overheads, which means some practices are moving away from bulk-billing altogether. The Minns Labor Government passed nation-leading legislation that provides payroll tax offsets for GPs who bulk-bill 80 per cent of patients in metropolitan areas or 70 per cent in rural and regional areas of New South Wales, but our Federal counterparts need to do their bit as well. The reality is that the amount paid to GPs for bulk-billing patients must be increased, and that can only be done by the Federal Government. We must support GP practices so they can keep serving our community without compromising care.

I am committed to working on ways to ease those pressures and help practices grow sustainably. As the population continues to expand in Riverstone and throughout the North West Growth Area more broadly, it is clear we need a collaborative approach with our Federal counterparts to ensure that adequate resources are in

place. Addressing GP shortages is a key priority, and I will continue to advocate for targeted recruitment incentives and additional support to attract new doctors to our area. That partnership can also help us develop the allied health services that our community needs, from mental health support to physiotherapy, so that residents get comprehensive local care.

There is also a need for an urgent care clinic in our area. This type of Medicare-supported clinic would bridge the gap between regular GP visits and emergency care, giving residents a convenient option for treating non-life-threatening conditions. With a local urgent care facility, our community could get timely help without needing to travel out of the area for issues like minor injuries or acute illnesses. That not only benefits our local community but also alleviates the need for patients to seek treatment via emergency departments at Blacktown, Mount Druitt or the coming Rouse Hill Hospital.

Holistic health care is about ensuring that every resident in Riverstone has access to the services they need, when they need them, in our community. As I stated earlier, that is not something the State Government can do alone; it requires active collaboration with the Federal Government to make sustainable, community-driven improvements. I will continue to listen, consult and work alongside all levels of government to deliver the services our growing community needs and deserves. Together, we can build a healthcare network that will support Riverstone's needs today and into the future.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:46):** I commend the member for Riverstone for his contribution on this important matter. The New South Wales Government's historic intervention in providing a \$189 million bulk-billing initiative has never been provided by any previous New South Wales government. We have stopped blaming the State-Federal government divide on primary care and we have acted. It is such a serious issue, and our action provides a significant cost-of-living relief. We know that 72 per cent of people are quite or extremely concerned about the costs of their health care, that 40 per cent of adults cut back on their health care because of affordability and that, more seriously, 30 per cent of parents cut back on children's health care for that reason. There will be long-term health benefits to our community in both metropolitan and regional areas. It will protect bulk-billing of general practice and reduce the strain on our emergency departments by reducing the additional people who present there.

#### CLARENCE ELECTORATE

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (15:47):** The parliamentary year is drawing to an end. This is our second last sitting week for the year and my second last opportunity to reflect on what a year it has been in my electorate of Clarence. Many in my electorate continue to recover from the 2022 floods, a natural disaster that I have spoken about many times in this Chamber. I forecast that I will continue to talk about flood recovery in this Chamber because there is still much to do. To those in my community who are recovering, I again give the undertaking that we will get there eventually. Yes, things are moving more slowly than everybody wants, but my parliamentary colleagues from the Northern Rivers and I are completely focused on ensuring that the recovery continues.

It was Australia's most costly natural disaster and the recovery will take a long time. However, together those affected in my electorate will certainly get there. There is still much work to do but, as we look forward to the festive season, I know many people in my electorate are looking forward to breaking out the zinc cream and getting onto the beaches to enjoy some downtime.

The cost of living remains the number one overall issue in the Clarence electorate. Seniors are still bitterly disappointed that the regional seniors travel card was axed by the Government. Mums and dads remain bitterly disappointed that the Back to School vouchers have all but disappeared. The loss of rebates with regards to other activities, such as Active Kids, Back to School, or First Lap vouchers, still has a profound impact on my community. Businesses in the Clarence electorate are doing it particularly tough. I highlight one example of businesses in my electorate requiring support—a bit of a hand-up—from the Minns Labor Government. Last Sunday night a thunderstorm rolled across my electorate and damaged power infrastructure, consisting of a 66-kilovolt line that conveys electricity to approximately 4,000 of my constituents. The line was down for 24 hours.

I put on the record in *Hansard* my support for the incredible job done by Essential Energy staff and crews to ensure that the 24-hour outage was as short as possible. They worked through the night where it was safe to do so to ensure power was restored as quickly as possible. This week, I spoke to business owners who have had to throw out \$8,000 worth of meat from a butcher's shop and many thousands of dollars worth of confectionary from an ice cream store. Service station owners have been unable to pump fuel, which resulted in the loss of a day's trading. In fact, all small businesses lost a day's trading. While I do not for a second pretend that this outage was as bad as the one in Broken Hill, the effects on small business particularly in my electorate have been equally

demanding. I point out that those businesses continue to recover from the 2022 floods but, slowly but surely, they are crawling back to being viable again.

This week I wrote to the Premier to call upon him to support small businesses in my electorate after the 24-hour blackout that resulted in the loss of many thousands of dollars worth of stock. I called upon him to offer a support package to the business owners in my electorate similar to the one offered to small businesses in Broken Hill. If there is one thing that I believe this House can do, it is to support those who need support. I eagerly await a reply from the Premier to my letter. As I said, if there is one thing this House can do, it is to help small businesses who, in their hour of need, require government support.

### GRANVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:52):** Granville Public School is a fantastic local school that has been educating children since 1881. Its beautiful original Victorian brick buildings, facing William Street in Granville, are still in use and are not far from where the original Parramatta Junction train station was built and where the original western line terminated. Since then, the school has grown with classrooms and the hall having been constructed during different periods over the past 143 years. It is a school that is very closely connected to the wider community, with a very active P&C and a wonderful community hub onsite. The community hub is an incredible resource for families, especially those who are recent arrivals to Australia. The hub helps to connect them to the school community by providing English conversation classes and other invaluable skills.

The school also offers a playgroup program to support early childhood education and runs a Countdown to Kindy program. During the year, the school organises whole family excursions by bus to see Vivid and runs breakfast programs three days a week. The school also has a support unit, which makes it much easier for local families to educate all their children at the one primary school by ensuring that children in the support unit are part of the school community.

The incredibly multicultural school has five community language schools, offering classes in Arabic, Chinese, Nepali, Turkish and Tongan. The school brings the entire community together to celebrate major cultural events like the Chinese Moon Festival celebration, the Eid dinner, the Easter hat parade and Christmas carols. These events are wonderful for building community cohesion and making the most of the opportunities to learn about each other's cultural and religious values. I enjoy joining the school community at those events whenever I can.

Unfortunately, the school does not have air conditioning in its classrooms, despite being promised it by the former Liberal-Nationals Government in 2019. Granville Public School was among the first tranche of schools—being those with the hottest average summer temperatures across the State—to be sent a letter stating, "Congratulations, you have won air conditioning," conveniently before the 2019 State election. But it never happened, which is shameful. There were reasons for the ridiculous five-year delay, but none of them are justified. During that period the school has had four different principals, and the project took years to get started. Nothing much happened until just before the 2023 State election. It took far too long to identify that the school would need a substation upgrade to support air conditioning in classrooms. It also took far too long to engage an electrical contractor to install the units throughout the school.

Just when it looked like it might happen in late 2023, the contractor went broke in the middle of the installation and the project stopped. It took a while to cancel that contractor and engage a new one. There has been a further short delay due to protected industrial action between the Electrical Trades Union and Endeavour Energy. That has now concluded. In the meantime, portable air-conditioning units have been installed in some classrooms, including for the support unit, after a child had a seizure in hot weather. The poor child is allergic to the carpet, so has to wear long pants all year round. Unfortunately, the portable air-conditioning units are noisy and make it hard for the students to hear their teachers and each other. The school also has a large number of students who are Muslim—hence the lovely Eid dinner every year. Many of those students fast during Ramadan, which means no food or drink between sunrise and sunset.

Ramadan happens two weeks earlier each year, which means it will move into the hotter months of February and March next year, making the air-conditioning situation at Granville Public School a huge concern. Understandably, the P&C and the entire school community are quite frustrated. I raised their concerns with the education Minister, and I thank her for taking them seriously. I am pleased to advise that all the new air-conditioning units have been fully installed, with the exception of four rooms in block C. A new pad-mounted electricity substation has been installed, and its commissioning should occur shortly, despite delays due to industrial action. It is anticipated that the remaining works will be carried out before day one of term 1 in 2025. I will continue to monitor that over the summer holidays, because I share the fear that parents have about their children basting in stinking-hot classrooms from the end of February.

### KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (15:57):** On Sunday 3 November I had the honour of attending the Kokoda Day service at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord. I advocate for the importance of that site in honouring the sacrifices made by our service men and women, and educating our future generations. The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway was established in 1996 to pay tribute to the Australian and Papua New Guinean soldiers who served in the Kokoda campaign of World War II. Over 4,000 Australian soldiers lost their lives during the war, and an additional 1,600 were wounded. In 2022 the former Government formally recognised 3 November as Kokoda Day, marking the anniversary of Australian and Papua New Guinean soldiers raising the flag at the Kokoda village.

Currently, about one-third of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway is funded by the New South Wales Government. However, that funding will expire in June 2025. The memorial is a community memorial, and backing from the Government is fundamental to ensuring its preservation for generations to come. I call on the Government and the Office for Veterans Affairs to work together with local government and the Federal Government to fund the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway for years to come. I acknowledge the Minister for Veterans. He is a good person, and I have spoken to him many times about the issue. I acknowledge that since becoming Minister he has attended every service at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway bar one, when we both had to be here in Parliament House. I am confident we can work together to reach an agreement with the board for ongoing funding, because I know how passionate he is about supporting veterans.

Beyond its historical significance, the walkway serves as a testament to the relationship we have built with Papua New Guinea. I take this opportunity to read a letter sent to the Hon. Charlie Lynn, OAM, whom many may know as a former member of the other place. Charlie served in the Australian Army during the Vietnam War from 1965 and remained active until 1986. Since then he has led over 100 walks of the Kokoda Track. On his first hike, Charlie met Ovoru Indiki, elder of the Naduri village. Many years later he received a letter which read:

Dear Charlie Lin

I would like to address my petition to you.

During World War 2 I worked as a carrier of foods, weapons, and wounded soldiers for 3 years.

After working for World War 2 is over I was appointed as a colonial constable since Australia rule PNG.

When I became a Colonial Constable I look after village people under Australian Government rule till independence.

When Independence came I still think back to Colonial Government and people of Australia.

Till you visit us and we make a good friendship and you brought people of Australia back.

So I present you a bilum bag last visit.

I believe you will help me in some ways to get my world war 2 carriers payment.

Thank you,

Ovoru Indiki.

I read this letter today because, as Charlie says, "It's too late to record their names, pin a medal on their chest or mark the unknown grave where they fell but it's not too late to honour their legacy of service and sacrifice." Now, more than ever, it is important that unique community memorials such as the Kokoda Track are preserved. We must ensure the sacrifices of servicemen and servicewomen in pursuit of peace and freedom are honoured and our younger generations are educated on the history and violence of war. We have seen the immense value this site provides both as a memorial and an educational instrument. I know we can work in a bipartisan manner to ensure the commemorative site receives the funding it needs to continue to thrive.

At this year's Kokoda Day memorial service we were fortunate to have been joined by three veterans who served in Papua New Guinea during World War II. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and sincerely thank Bruce Robertson, aged 104, Reg Chard, aged 101, and David Trist, aged 100, for their service to our country. The men have been outstanding advocates for the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway and it is their stories that are preserved through memorial centrepieces. I extend my acknowledgement to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway chair, Jennifer Collins, AM, the honourable secretary Alice Kang, OAM, and all the board directors. I sincerely thank them for continued support and advocacy. I will continue to work with all levels of government to deliver the best outcome for our community. I look forward to seeing the continued support of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway for years to come.

### TRIBUTE TO FETHULLAH GÜLEN

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:01):** I acknowledge the passing of Fethullah Gülen, a man whose influence extended far beyond borders, reaching to communities around the world, including right here in

Australia. We live in a more homogenised world. From Netflix to McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Instagram, there is a universality to our modern experiences that bind us together more than ever, but this can also diminish the space for unique voices. With a global population now surpassing eight billion, for one individual to rise above and profoundly impact society speaks volumes about their character, vision and dedication. Fethullah Gülen was one such figure.

Born in the village of Korucuk, near Erzurum in Turkey, Gülen was a Turkish cleric, educator and Islamic scholar. Growing up in a devout Muslim family, Gülen was influenced by Sufi teachings and the Islamic philosophy of tolerance and service to others. In his youth he started Islamic theology and became an imam, eventually gaining a reputation for his sermons that emphasised education, interfaith dialogue and social responsibility. His contributions reflect a vision that transcended traditional boundaries, driven by commitment to education, dialogue and compassion. Gülen advocated a philosophy of serving humanity rooted in a dedication to intercultural understanding, peace and social cohesion. His ideas resonated with millions globally, inspiring projects, schools and institutions that reflect his principles.

In the 1970s Gülen began a movement known as Hizmet—meaning "service"—that promoted the ethos of service to humanity, with followers encouraged to contribute to society through education, social projects and interfaith dialogue. Gülen encouraged followers to establish schools, cultural centres and humanitarian organisations worldwide. The movement grew significantly and focused on a moderate interpretation of Islam and advocated for peace, tolerance and coexistence. Despite crackdowns on the movement in its native Turkey over the past decade, Hizmet has now grown into a global network, establishing schools, charities and cultural organisations that support education, relief and intercultural dialogue.

Service and cross-cultural respect is the philosophy underpinning the Hizmet movement. It has found a welcome home in Australia's multicultural and multi-faith landscape, demonstrating the universal relevance of his vision.

The Hizmet movement's reach is indeed remarkable. Countless educational and charitable initiatives carry on Gülen's legacy, fostering communities built on mutual respect, intellectual growth and compassion. Here in Australia, the movement has had a particularly meaningful impact, with schools, associations and centres dedicated to upholding the values Gülen cherished. Among these are institutions such as Galaxy Foundation and the Australian Relief Organisation, which provide essential support, outreach and development to individuals and communities in need. The Islamic Sciences and Research Academy represents another of Gülen's legacies, dedicated to nurturing interfaith dialogue and promoting scholarly pursuits that bridge divides and foster understanding.

Amity College, with campuses across New South Wales, is an example of this vision in the area of education. I am fortunate to have two campuses within my own electorate. Just around the corner from my office in Leppington is the newest addition, which I had the honour of officially opening earlier this month. For generations these schools have produced some of my community's best and brightest, producing academic excellence and valuing empathy and global awareness that echo Gülen's teachings. Another local testament to Gülen's legacy is the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. Affinity's interfaith and intercultural work, led by my esteemed cousin Ahmet Polat, is a great example of the spirit of harmony and dialogue championed by the movement. Through conferences, seminars and iftars, they have brought people of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds together in the spirit of unity and understanding. These gatherings, whether large public affairs or intimate home breakfasts, reflect a commitment to dialogue that is both rare and necessary in today's world.

Although Fethullah Gülen has now left us, his influence will continue to shape the lives of countless people. His teachings live on through the institutions and communities he inspired, in my community and far beyond. In a time when the world feels increasingly fragmented, a vision for a more harmonious, educated and compassionate world remains not only relevant but essential.

#### TRANS AWARENESS WEEK

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:06):** Today is the third day of Trans Awareness Week, which starts on 13 November and runs until 20 November each year, when we mark the Trans Day of Remembrance. This is a week to recognise and celebrate the trans and gender-diverse people who live within and contribute so much to all of our communities. It is a week to be even louder and prouder in calling out transphobia and standing with our trans and gender-diverse siblings and supporting their right to live proudly and authentically. And it is a week to recognise that, while some progress has been made, it is still way too slow and trans and gender-diverse people are still forced to contend with bigotry and transphobia every day.

According to a 2023 report by the Trans Justice Project, half of all trans people in Australia have experienced some form of hate, and one in 10 experienced transphobic violence in the past 12 months. These are shocking statistics, and we need to seriously grapple with them if we are to stamp out the insidious transphobia



that exists in so much of the public arena. Transphobia intersects with other forms of discrimination. Trans women, non-binary people, people of colour and First Nations people who identify as trans or gender-diverse face a disproportionate risk of transphobic hate crimes. The culture wars and the bigots who perpetuate them try to tell us that trans people are a tiny minority who somehow exist outside our communities, and they whip up fear of sinister agendas and secret motives.

But the truth is the bigots and transphobes, some of whom, regrettably, sit in this very Parliament, are the ones with the sinister agenda, one that is plain for all to see. This agenda is to further their own political power and influence by obsessively fearmongering about the trans community, to use the trans and gender-diverse community as scapegoats for any grievance, and to peddle lies about how giving trans people equal rights would somehow negatively impact everyone else. Everywhere and every time we see this kind of hateful rhetoric take hold, we must call it out. But it is not just about calling out the hate; it is also about expressing our solidarity and support loudly whenever we can. That can include introducing yourself and giving your pronouns, which in my case are "she" and "her", or joining actions and events, such as the upcoming Trans Day of Resistance, which will take place at Pride Square in Newtown next weekend, on 23 November.

Trans and gender-diverse people must have the same rights and respect as everybody else in our community. Human rights have never been a zero-sum game. I acknowledge that New South Wales has recently taken significant steps, passing the equality bill to allow gender self-identification on formal identity documents without requiring people to undergo surgery. In passing the equality bill, we also ensured that crimes motivated by hate for trans, gender-diverse and intersex people are finally treated the same as any other crimes when it comes to sentencing. While those are great first steps, they were long overdue and must be swiftly followed by plenty more.

Anti-discrimination laws in this State are still lagging pathetically and shamefully far behind other jurisdictions. In New South Wales, religious institutions and schools are still legally allowed to discriminate against students, teachers and staff on the basis of being queer, trans or gender diverse. The equality bill in its original form would have closed that loophole, but the hollowed-out version that passed did not. It was a missed opportunity to make that long-overdue change. But where the law continues to fall short of the mark, community members and organisations have thankfully always stepped up with loud and proud enthusiasm.

I acknowledge those organisations that do so much to advocate for and support the trans and gender-diverse community: the Inner City Legal Centre, who are holding their Trans Justice Symposium this weekend; Minus18, who provide education and vital resources to queer youth; the always-staunch Pride in Protest, who most recently provided direct support for Asian trans women in immigration detention; TransHub at ACON; the Gender Centre; Transcend Australia; as well as Twenty10, who have just moved into the heart of Newtown in the old Newtown Town Hall. All of them do important, often unsung work. I say to all the trans and gender-diverse people who are watching the broadcast or who work in the Parliament that their rights should not be up for debate. The Greens acknowledge the courage and strength it takes for them to keep showing up. We see them, we are with them and we will always amplify their voices and stories. We will continue to stand in proud solidarity until we finally achieve full equality with no exceptions.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:11):** On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, communities across the country and Commonwealth pause to reflect on the service and sacrifice made by those in the First World War and subsequent conflicts. Originally announced to mark the anniversary of the Armistice that ended fighting with Germany, today Remembrance Day gives us all the opportunity to acknowledge the service personnel who died while serving in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. For Australians, Remembrance Day has a particular resonance. During the Great War, Australia as a young nation lost over 60,000 of its sons and daughters.

From the beaches of Gallipoli, the trenches in France and the deserts of the Holy Lands, Australians served with great courage and resilience. Many of them were little more than boys, teenagers barely out of school leaving behind their families, friends and futures. Yet they answered the call to serve king and country with extraordinary bravery, giving their lives for causes they believed to be greater than themselves. The legacy of their sacrifice has lived on through every generation. As Australians, we carry forward the legacy of those who have fallen in both world wars, as well as in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and many other conflicts and peacekeeping efforts around the world.

We are reminded that our way of life, our values and our freedoms are built on the sacrifices of those who came before us. They laid down their lives not only for their own generation but for all who would come after them. Each poppy that adorns the chests of veterans, friends and family is a symbol of remembrance. It is a symbol that transcends borders and reminds us of the shared responsibility we have to uphold the legacies of those who

came before us. But remembrance also brings us face-to-face with the ongoing sacrifices of those who continue to serve. We thank our current members of the Australian Defence Force and their families. They face separation, upheaval and the dangerous environments of modern conflict. We owe them not only our gratitude but also our support, compassion and ongoing commitment to their welfare.

This year, as a co-patron of the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch, I joined them at the Remembrance Day service at the North Sydney War Memorial.

I thank the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch for its organisation of this poignant service—in particular, president Alex Wilson, honorary secretary Chris Greatrex and treasurer Andrew Wilson. Commander Fiona Eggins of HMAS *Waterhen*, which is a naval base in my community in Waverton, delivered a poignant address at the service. I also acknowledge maritime spiritual wellbeing officer Trent Bowen, bugler Jordan O'Brien and the 1st North Sydney Scout Group, as well as the Clan Macleod Pipe Band of Sydney, who regaled us with their music. The North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch was joined by members of the Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch in this year's joint service. I thank Kirribilli president John Kirton and his team and the committee for all of their work.

It is always especially encouraging to see so many local schools in attendance at these services. I recognise and thank the students and staff of the many schools that joined in, including Neutral Bay Public School, Cammeraygal High School, Marist Catholic College, Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney Boys High School, North Sydney Demonstration School, Wenona School and ANZAC Park Public School. I also thank Dr Helen Bendall, who attended the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch service at Mosman War Memorial to lay a tribute on my behalf while I was at North Sydney. I acknowledge the leadership team: president Alan Toner, vice-presidents Peter Handley and James Malcolm, secretary Geoffrey Rickards, treasurer Steven Ryan and Andrew James.

I understand that it was a wonderful service at Mosman as well, with significant involvement from the school and local community. May we remember them, not only on Remembrance Day but every day. May we keep alive their memory and their hope for a better world. May our remembrance inspire us to be vigilant, compassionate and committed to peace. Lest we forget.

#### NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:16):** Today public submissions close for the New South Wales Audit Office's performance audit of the Northern Beaches Hospital. The audit is both important and timely. The audit is important because the Northern Beaches Hospital is something of a paradox—a fully private hospital which is, in fact, our only local public hospital. Northern Beaches residents have every right to expect the same level of care they would receive at an equivalent public hospital. That is why I am particularly interested in the following from the terms of reference for the audit, which states:

Does the Northern Beaches Hospital provide quality care consistent with equivalent public health facilities in NSW?

Having the rigor and powers of the Audit Office brought to bear is particularly valuable because of the fundamental lack of transparency around the operation of the Northern Beaches Hospital. When I became a member of Parliament, I started asking what I thought were reasonable questions about the hospital—such as, does the Government pay the same amount for services contracted from Healthscope at Northern Beaches Hospital as at public hospitals? If they pay less, how much less? It turns out that the Government does pay less, but how much is commercial in confidence. Either the public system is inefficient or we are receiving a lower-standard service at Northern Beaches Hospital.

I started asking more questions about schedule 18 of the project deed, which contains the key performance indicators. I asked what are the thresholds for acceptable performance on the KPIs? How often have they been breached? How much has Healthscope had to pay in abatements for breaching the KPIs? Again, I thought they were all reasonable questions, and all, again, commercial in confidence. I also asked about the program of routine reporting and auditing required under schedule 19 of the project deed and if reports were publicly available. Those questions came back—you guessed it—commercial in confidence. I am more interested in another type of confidence: public confidence. Ultimately, I want our community to have confidence in their hospital, the Northern Beaches Hospital.

I appreciate that my perspective on the operation of the hospital is based on imperfect information. However, as a local MP, I am well placed to reflect on community sentiment, drawing on my many interactions with constituents, as well as with hospital staff and community leaders. From my perspective, the reputation of the hospital is very mixed, and the level of public confidence in the hospital is much less than it should be and definitely used to be. Where and if the audit finds the hospital to be performing well, we can build trust in the community. Where and if the audit finds areas for improvement, we can work to address them. Looking forward,

it also can inform our understanding of the overall success and sustainability of the public-private partnership model at the Northern Beaches Hospital.

The audit is particularly timely for several reasons. Firstly, there are declining trends in performance at the hospital, according to the Bureau of Health Information data. Secondly, Healthscope is clearly under immense financial pressure and is looking to cut costs wherever possible across the business. I acknowledge that the financial pressures on the private health sector are both systemic and significant. However, let us not lose sight of the fact that the latest accounts show that Healthscope had an operating income of \$82 million. Meanwhile, Brookfield Corporation, the Canadian asset management firm that owns Healthscope, made a cool \$4.8 billion in profits in 2023.

We cannot allow the financial motives of these for-profit private companies, with their complicated ownership and debt structures, to compromise service provision to public patients.

Thirdly, there is the statewide rollout of safe staffing nurse-to-patient ratios in public hospitals and the likelihood of a public sector pay rise. As a private hospital, those policies will not automatically be implemented at Northern Beaches Hospital. Why should it accept a lower standard of resourcing than is considered safe in public hospitals? That will only serve as another pull factor to draw experienced nurses away from our hospital. The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association is all too aware of this but has been in deadlocked negotiations with Healthscope over a new enterprise agreement for the past six months. On 5 November, 300 nurses and midwives from Northern Beaches Hospital went on strike, rallying outside the hospital. I know they do not take that action lightly. I am glad to see them using their rights, and I was proud to stand alongside them. I provide further detail on all of these concerns in my submission to the Audit Office, which has been informed by feedback coming through my electorate office.

I thank everyone who has written to me about their experiences and views and, more importantly, everyone who has written in as part of the audit. Their experiences and accounts of the hospital, good and bad, will make a difference to the audit. Please stay engaged.

#### **NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE YOUTH CRIME**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (16:20):** Crime is a serious problem not only in my home town of Moree but also across my electorate and, indeed, right across regional New South Wales. In the past 10 days alone there has been a series of serious break and enters in my electorate, including armed break and enters at Moree. There was an incident involving a knife in a shopping centre in Armidale. Multiple cars have been stolen from Uralla, and there has been a series of break and enters at Inverell. There has also been a series of break and enters and vandalism in Glen Innes. That is in just the past 10 days.

Disappointingly, the majority of offenders in those alleged crimes were youths. The theme of youth crime is spreading right across my electorate. The NSW Police Force does a fantastic job with the limited resources it has. Crime in Moree has received a lot of attention recently from the Minns Labor Government. I thank the Government for that attention, as does everyone who lives in my community, but I am hearing of an issue from our local police prosecutors around the common-law presumption of *doli incapax*, as established in *RP v The Queen*. All members will know that *doli incapax* means that an offender is over 10 but under 14 years of age. The other issue relates to the decision in *RP v Ellis*, which establishes that *doli incapax* is an element of the prosecution case that must be rebutted by the prosecution beyond reasonable doubt.

Young offenders are advised to not provide an interview at the time of arrest. As a solicitor, that is the right advice to give to one's client. Similarly, they are advised not to give evidence during a hearing. Again, I do not begrudge that advice. But the difficulty that creates is that it is impossible for the police to rebut the presumption of *doli incapax*. In a recent incident in Moree, the offender was roughly 13½ years old and had pages upon pages of criminal entries on his juvenile record. It was a serious break and enter involving a weapon, but nothing could be done with that young offender because the presumption of *doli incapax* could not be rebutted.

It seems to me that there are two options. One option would be to reverse the onus on *doli incapax* so that when a young person is arrested and the issue is that of *doli incapax*, the onus should be on the young person to prove *doli incapax* to the requisite standard, as opposed to having the police rebut the presumption. Alternatively, we deal with people who are suffering from mental illness who are unable to form the requisite criminal intent under the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act.

Under that particular piece of legislation, an offender who cannot form the requisite criminal intent can be dealt with through a diversionary process. We do not have that diversionary process for children, for example, to be either dealt with by the courts or let go through the forensic provisions Act.

If the Parliament is not looking at the issue of young offenders with criminal records—and we are not talking about someone pinching a bottle of Coke from the corner shop; we are talking about serious offences—then we are not living up to community expectations. One possible solution would be a diversionary scheme for young offenders between the ages of 10 and 14 in circumstances where the only issue is that of *doli incapax*, so that *doli incapax* remains but those young people are actually helped and given access to treatment and diversionary programs. At the moment we are failing young offenders and we are also failing our communities. I will be writing to the Attorney General and to the police Minister about the issue. We in Parliament have an opportunity to help young offenders, and I hope we can do that.

### RIVERWOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:25):** Each and every day thousands of commuters in our local area use our public transport network. Whether they are going to work, university, school or just out and about, people have historically used public transport to get where they need to go. We are fortunate enough to have two train lines in the St George area, the T4 Illawarra line and the T8 Airport and South line, which provide access to many different parts of Sydney. Those train lines are important parts of our public transport network, keeping our local economy moving and ensuring that people can travel as effectively and safely as possible. However, as our area continues to grow, with more housing being built every day, our public transport network is unfortunately struggling to keep up.

Residents are facing long commutes into the city, packed like sardines in crowded carriages, with frequent delays, some of which bring the whole network to a standstill. Week after week my office receives more complaints than ever. Trains are consistently late. Severe overcrowding is giving public transport in the St George area and throughout New South Wales a bad name. That is especially true on the T8 Airport and South line, with stations like Riverwood carrying the burden of a rapidly expanding population. Riverwood has experienced unprecedented growth and will continue to experience it in the near future. In fact, approximately 420 new homes will be built over the next few years, of which approximately 50 per cent will be social and affordable housing and the remaining 50 per cent made up of private dwellings.

While additional housing is an important asset for our community in the long term, I have always said that housing should go hand in hand with the delivery of supporting infrastructure, and my community deserves only the very best of additional supporting infrastructure. Assets like road upgrades, more parking, recreational spaces and public transport will make a significant difference to those who choose to live in Riverwood, a wonderful part of our local area. However, at the current rate, the public transport network in Riverwood will not be able to keep up with this new Government's broader housing push. That is not good enough. My community deserves so much better. We should not accept a substandard network that cannot meet our needs, and it appears that Government members agree—or at least they claim to.

In the lead-up to the 2023 State election, Labor made a clear commitment to the people of Riverwood. It pledged to bring express train services to Riverwood station. While I appreciate the enthusiasm for the public transport network, it has now been over a year since the election and we are still waiting. Despite the promises, no express train services have been introduced to Riverwood station. Commuters are still being herded onto slow, overcrowded trains during peak times, many of which are scheduled too infrequently to meet the growing demand.

In fact, recent train timetable changes implemented by those in the Labor Government have meant that Riverwood station has seen cuts to services, resulting in fewer trains stopping at the station.

The Liberal-Nationals are proud to have a history of record investment in the New South Wales public transport network. In our time in government, not only did we improve services and timetables but we also delivered significant upgrades to public transport networks to commuters across the State, including the brand-new metro that recently opened. However, it appears that this Labor Government's priorities are flawed. Whilst it is happy to take responsibility for the infrastructure the former Government signed and delivered, it will not spend the money to improve public transport in New South Wales. This is not good enough. Both my community and the people of New South Wales deserve better. They deserve a government that will put their needs first and invest in the future.

I truly believe that we need to ensure that our public transport network remains a viable option for generations to come, which is why I will continue to take up the fight for better outcomes in this space. I thank the members of my community who have contacted my office about this serious issue. I sincerely appreciate their experiences and frustration. Rest assured, I will hold this Labor Government to account and continue the fight for express services at Riverwood for the best public transport network in my community.

**ILLAWONG PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:30):** I bring to the attention of the House the gravely concerning situation that has been unravelling over the past week at Illawong Public School. From the outset, I make it clear that it brings me no joy to raise any organisation in my electorate in this matter, nor have I needed to do this in nearly 10 years. However, I felt compelled to do so due to the level of distress that I understand is being experienced by parents and students in the school community while the school and the department of education fail to provide any information about what is being done to address the issue and support those impacted.

As I understand it from the extremely concerned and upset parents, on Thursday 7 November a senior member of staff at Illawong Public School discussed advanced and graphic sexual content with year 6 students. This was following cohort participation in the Amazing Me program, which was provided by an independent facilitator and to which parents consented. What parents did not consent to, however, was a school staff member's discretion around an appropriate follow-up conversation and having any question students wanted answered by the individual.

I do not intend to repeat the error in judgement of the person in question and I am electing not to outline the graphic subjects that were discussed because I am conscious that *Hansard* is publicly accessible to all age groups. That being said, upon receipt of the email from the parent who brought this situation to my attention, I audibly gasped at the advanced content I was reading. I stress that this is well advanced sexual content that is not suitable for year 6 students and goes well beyond what would be expected to be taught in any conversations around health or consent. In fact, one concerned parent wrote that the person's "actions have advanced her child's sexual knowledge far exceeding the knowledge of a 12 year old child".

It has been relayed to me that the staff member specifically instructed the students not to tell their parents about the conversation. This is perhaps the most troubling piece of information I received in relation to the incident. With respect to child safety, it is often thought that one of the best ways to keep children safe is to ensure that they have open and honest conversations with safe and trusted adults. More often than not, this will include parents. I consider it a severe lapse in judgement for a senior staff member at a primary school to use any language and messaging that would jeopardise a child's ability to confide in those who they identify as a safe and trusted adult in their life.

As for the remainder of the situation in question, as I understand it, due to the concerns raised by parents, a small number—but not all—of impacted students were interviewed by the director of the Education Network and a senior staff member from Illawong Public School on Friday 8 November. I have been advised that on Monday 11 November some parents refused to send their children to school due to the school's inaction on the situation and the senior staff member still being at the school. I believe that the staff member in question is not currently performing any duties at the school and that the department of education is investigating.

I am disappointed and alarmed that it was left to parents to inform me about such a significant issue in my community. Not only has the department of education failed to proactively reach out, when I contacted Illawong Public School, I was placed on hold for nearly 13 minutes, only to be told that it was unable to advise me of the action that was being taken and that I needed to discuss it with the director of the Education Network.

I did advise them that I was unable to reach the person. This is not okay and does not reflect an attitude of wanting to collaboratively work to resolve this situation for our community. This is not the culture of transparency, collaboration and investment in student wellbeing that I have previously enjoyed with Illawong Public School.

I raise this important community issue today in the hope that Illawong Public School, as a community, will have better access to information and to help it heal following this incident that has been distressing for so many. I seek action from the education Minister to, first, ensure that this will be not permitted to occur to any other school community moving forward. Second, I seek transparency for the parents at Illawong Public School about the action being taken, because it is extremely concerning that confidence in the school—which I know to be an exceptional school—has been lost and that some parents have been reluctant to send their children to school. Finally, I ask that the Minister ensure that all impacted students have access to counselling and support services immediately so that there are no adverse impacts on these young people. I say to the community at Illawong Public School that I know the past week has been hard. I will continue to work with the entire school community to ensure that our little learners are supported.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:35):** I make a short statement in response to the member for Miranda. I take on board the concerns that the member has raised. I assure her that the issue has been forwarded to the Minister for further investigation. I assure the member that all efforts will be taken to ensure that the issue is treated with the seriousness it deserves and that impacted students will be supported as best as possible.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 16:36 until**

**Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**YOUR ANGEL CHARITY**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Your Angel Charity has received a \$10,000 grant from the Southern Highlands Community Foundation. The money will go towards their Recipe Kit program, which is helping families struggling with food costs. The program also endeavours to strengthen relationships with local community groups, and support isolated community members. Your Angel is a not-for-profit charity operating in the Southern Highlands region, bringing social, emotional and financial support to individuals in need. They are driven by achieving real impacts and positive changes in people's lives. Their food programs go beyond just a one-off handout, rather they look at creating long-lasting change through education, cooking classes and connection within the community. They host regular OzHarvest Community Cook-ups, where they turn local waste food into delicious meals, where everyone is welcome. They have school holiday and technology programs along with their focus on making nourishing healthy food accessible to all. Your Angel are empowering people to discover the joy and self-sufficiency of cooking from scratch, and their enthusiasm to contribute to the community is well recognised with this grant.

**VOCAL MUSTER 'VOCAL VIBES'**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Vocal Muster continues to go from strength to strength. They were recently awarded a grant of \$5000 from the Southern Highlands Community Foundation, in order to expand the current 'Vocal Vibes' program from 5 to 12 students. These students are able to access weekly musical performance and development lessons at Bowral High School. Vocal Muster was founded by Richard Lane, a former professional opera singer. Richard believes in the power of singing in bringing people together and creating a sense of community. He saw that unlike sports, where there are many opportunities to participate in many different formats, there was a lack of opportunities in the Southern Highlands for youth to explore their creativity and develop their singing abilities. The Vocal Muster offers diverse opportunities for young people to channel their energies into creative expression. It creates safe and inclusive spaces where participants can experience the joy of singing and feel a sense of belonging. This is a well-deserved grant and it will have a lasting impact on the students that now get to experience Vocal Muster.

**THE HIGHLANDS PIPES AND DRUMS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The sound of bagpipes is not uncommon to hear in the Southern Highlands. The Highlands Pipes and Drums group of musicians lend their musical talents to creating atmosphere at a range of community events through the instantly recognisable sounds of the bagpipes. The group is set to get a boost with the recent awarding of a \$5000 grant from the Southern Highlands Community Foundation for the purchase of musical equipment. Founded over 20 years ago, the Highlands Pipes and Drums welcome people of all ages to join. They offer lessons in piping and drumming, and have been active in competitions as well as regular performances including Australia Day celebrations and Anzac Day ceremonies. The pride and dedication of the group is evident in their commitment to giving back to the community with their unique and enriching musical performances. The group continues to nurture musicians and grow year on year, and is an asset to the Southern Highlands.

**JUNEE PRESCHOOL SKILLS ON SHOW**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to express my admiration for the fantastic talent of the little learners at Junee Preschool. Just recently, they were able to show the community just how clever they are, displaying several items at the Junee Show. Their beautiful artwork, including colourfully painted rocks, saw Junee Preschool winning four awards in the 'Best Creative Rock' category, including two highly commended, one-third, and one 1st place. This talent extends far beyond the classroom with entries from the garden, including some of the prettiest flowers, where second place was awarded for the student's Geraniums and first place for their Snapdragons. But it was not just flowers that caught the judge's eye; the children were also awarded first place for their amazing bright orange carrots. I can only imagine the surprise and delight of the judges when they saw these vibrant carrots. Our little learners have so much to share with us, and their potential is truly inspiring. This is all thanks to the wonderful support and learning they undertake, thanks to their teachers and parents who have been instrumental in their learning journey.

### NARRANDERA SPRING FAIR

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Narrandera came alive with great music and much dancing in the streets to celebrate their Spring Fair and I must mention the Community Dance Spectacular. So many activities made sure there was something for everyone and everyone had a smile on their face. The hard work of Narrandera Shire Council's Deputy Mayor Sue Ruffles and Mayor Neville Kshenka and the Narrandera Business Group volunteers brought this day together. Leanne Ivanoff from Sofab and her wonderful team are to be congratulated for their incredible vision which came to life. Street performers including Nic the Clown made everyone smile and artist, Kirrily Anderson designed the Community Mural which was created with many brush strokes from many hands and people were in awe of the impressive strength and beauty of the Zana Aerial Dance Academy. So much fun and laughter at a great community day which has been echoed by the community with their posts to the Facebook page. It is excellent to see community spirit alive and well in Narrandera.

### 2YYY - 20 YEARS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I wish to congratulate Young Community Radio station 2YYY on celebrating 20 continuous years of broadcasting. 2YYY is a community radio station which broadcasts on 92.3 FM in Young, New South Wales. The station holds a long-term community radio broadcasting licence and began broadcasting in September 2004. 2YYY was formed by a group of local people in Young which was headed by the former General Manager of 2LF and 93.9 Star FM, Graham McDonald. The station's office and studios were originally located in the old TAB building in Cloete Street and the transmitter is located on Reservoir Hill, on the Cowra Road. 2YYY is run by an outstanding local 7-member Board of Management and has 35 volunteers, who work tirelessly keeping 2YYY relevant, its content fresh and keeping the communities of Young and surrounds up to date. Local businesses also play a part by becoming sponsors and forming a major part of revenue to keep the station afloat. 2YYY is to be congratulated for 20 years of broadcasting, showing truly what it means to be a "community" organisation. We look forward to the next 20 years.

### ANNE CLARK RECIPIENT

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I stand today to celebrate and recognise an individual who truly shoots above the stars: Anne Peterkin, a dedicated and selfless volunteer of the Nambucca Valley Netball Association. Anne has been honoured with the prestigious Anne Clark Service Award, which recognises significant contributions to the development of netball at the association level, awarded to those who have provided at least ten years of outstanding service. Her selflessness and passion not only enhance the experience for athletes but also fosters a strong sense of community. Anne's remarkable contributions remind us that behind every successful game and every blossoming player, there are devoted individuals whose hard work keeps the spirit of netball alive. We are immensely grateful for Anne and all the volunteers who make the associations a vibrant and welcoming place. This award is a testament to Anne's unwavering dedication and the countless hours she has invested in ensuring the success of netball in our region. It is an honour to recognise her extraordinary contributions and celebrate the positive impact she has made. Congratulations, Anne! Your legacy will inspire future generations of netball players in the Nambucca Valley and beyond.

### BELINDA LORD RECEIVES RISING STAR AWARD

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—A dedicated careers adviser and a truly inspiring person, Mrs. Belinda Lord of Melville High School has received the Rising Star Award from the Careers Adviser Association. This prestigious award acknowledges a careers adviser who strives to make a difference through their work, significantly impacting their school and community. Since joining the team at Melville High School, Mrs. Lord has worked diligently to provide students with a variety of post-school pathways. She has successfully increased the school-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships and TAFE Vocational Education and Training [TVET] offerings and enrolments, delivered the Southern Cross University UniStart program, and supported students in participating in the WINGS program. Mrs. Lord's personal approach has made a profound difference in the lives of her students. A great careers adviser is not just a guide; they are the light that illuminates the path to children's dreams, inspiring them to believe in themselves and their potential. As a cherished member of the Melville High community, Mrs. Lord's passion and dedication inspires both students and staff. Congratulations to Mrs. Lord on this well-deserved recognition—her hard work is truly making a lasting impact!

### BOWRAVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL EXCELS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—2024 has been an utterly fantastic year for the Bowraville Central School Cattle Team, showcasing remarkable talent and dedication at local agricultural shows! The success began at the Kempsey Agricultural Show, team members Jaz, May, Sierra, Layne, and Mikayla brought home four first-place ribbons, along with the Under 13 Champion title and several Reserve Champion honours. The excitement continued at the Macksville Show, where the students displayed their creativity in the fancy-dress

competition, transforming their heifers into "Halloween Cow," "Xmas Cow," and even "Rainbow Cow." Layne shone bright, winning the 12 and Under Junior Parade Class, while the school's stud cattle, including Gina and Softy, claimed Champion and Supreme Champion titles. At the Coffs Harbour Show, the team won the coveted Perpetual Trophy for Best Presented Animal by a School and excelled in Junior Judging, with Layne, Mikayla, and Lailana taking the top three spots. As the Bellingen Show wrapped up the 2024 season, the Cattle Team finished strong with more accolades in Junior Judging and a first place in Junior Parade. Their hard work and commitment have truly proven that they are the cream of the crop!

#### **BOTANY BAY FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the Botany Bay Family History Society on its 40th anniversary, which members celebrated last month with a lunch at Woollooware Golf Club. The society was founded in 1984 after a public meeting highlighted the lack of an organisation in the Shire where people could meet and further their family history research. The society now has more than 400 members. Thanks to much lobbying and hard work its research centre and library at the Port Hacking Community Centre in Caringbah South provides a meeting place for genealogists and family historians to pursue their common interests. The centre houses a collection of research aids including computers, books, CDs, DVDs, microfiche, copiers, and a film scanner, and volunteer librarians are on hand to help people explore the story of their families. It is an impressive centre and a great credit to the society's members who have established a valuable facility for the community. I acknowledge the efforts of the society's volunteers and recognise its management committee led by president Jennie Fairs, with Carole Goodyer, Noele Watkins, Anthony Wright, Brenda Connors, Jackie Butters, Jean Campbell, Maree Kirkland, Leonie Bell and Richard Linklater.

#### **UPPER LACHLAN GAZETTE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise three years of publication for the community-led Upper Lachlan Gazette. Congratulations to everyone involved in this milestone – which is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the committee, volunteers, local businesses that advertise, contributors, and loyal readers. The Gazette has become a vital part of the Upper Lachlan Shire community, growing from strength to strength thanks to the unwavering support from the community. The collective efforts have fostered a platform that not only informs but also connects and engages the entire region. I celebrate this achievement and look forward to many more years of reading the shared stories, promoted local events, and support of the voices that make the Upper Lachlan region what it is – a vibrant and close-knit community. Thank you to the Upper Lachlan for your commitment to this important community resource.

#### **YASS LIBERTY THEATRE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the efforts of the Friends of the Liberty Theatre and Cultural Centre in the restoration and upgrade of the iconic 1939 Art Deco Liberty Theatre in Yass. As Australia's sole surviving 1939 ocean liner-style cinema, designed by architects Crick and Furse from Sydney, the Liberty Theatre is a prominent feature of Yass's main street. Operating as a cinema until its closure in the early 1970s, subsequently becoming a roller-skating rink, an upscale gift shop, and mini offices until 2019 when the theatre became under the care of the Friends of the Liberty Theatre and Cultural Centre. The not-for-profit today is dedicated to restoring and reviving the building to enable the community of Yass Valley to enjoy cinema, theatre, stage productions, and other performing arts once again. Their initiative also aims to bring tertiary education in the arts to the area, providing sound, film, video, and production experience for those seeking employment in these fields. I take this time to thank the Friends of the Liberty Theatre for their dedication and work undertaken to date.

#### **YASS REPERTORY SOCIETY**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the Yass Repertory Society, under the dedicated leadership of Ann Holmes. The Yass Repertory Society is the longest continuously running Repertory Society in NSW and has been running for nearly 100 years. The Society revived its performances at the Liberty Theatre over winter last year, following a challenging period marked by the impacts of COVID-19. The Society has demonstrated remarkable resilience and creativity. Their productions of *Last Tango in Little Grimley* and *Last Panto in Little Grimley* showcased the talent of local actors and delivered a delightful comedic experience over three weekends. I also acknowledge the generous support of the Rotary Club of Yass and Yass Valley Council, as well as the goodwill of the Liberty Theatre, who enabled the Society to bring theatre back to Yass. Despite operational challenges, including a need for additional crew and a call for audience support, the Yass Repertory Society persevered. I sincerely congratulate and thank all present and past members on their dedication to the Society.



**GRADUATION - LEON HEWITT**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Leon Hewitt on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Leon's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Leon 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 Leon 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 Leon and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Leon and their family.

**GRADUATION - MATTHEW KERRIGAN**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Matthew Kerrigan on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Matthew's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Matthew 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 Matthew 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 Matthew and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Matthew and their family.

**GRADUATION - NATE KILLIBY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Nate Killiby on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Nate's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Nate 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 Nate 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 Nate and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Nate and their family.

**LOGAN MONTGOMERY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate Logan Montgomery on winning a gold medal at the regional round of the 2025 World Skills competition in the fitter-machinist trade category. Logan is in the third year of his apprenticeship with Forbes firm Ace Machining under mentor Greg Drabsch. The gold medal is a great reward for Logan who, during the regional competition, had six hours to complete a set of skills-based tasks in the turning category. This included machining a bolt, nut and sleeve to specifications that were then assembled within the required tolerances. Logan finished with time to spare and topped the competition, held at the Orange TAFE campus, with 81 points. As expected of a gold medallist, Logan's work demonstrated accuracy, precision and patience. Ace Machining has a largely agricultural clientele making Logan's growing depth of expertise invaluable at this time of year when harvest is in full swing. As the regional winner, Logan has the opportunity to progress to the national finals to be staged in Brisbane next year. I commend Logan for excelling at his chosen trade. Congratulations again on your gold medal, best of luck at nationals.

**WANITA SMITH**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate Wanita Smith on being named the Central West's Outstanding Out of School Hours Educator for 2024. Wanita was given the honour at the recent Central West Early Childhood Awards, held in Orange, as an acknowledgement of her commitment and dedication to the children in her care and the support she gives to their families. The Forbes Community Out of School Hours Care coordinator, Wanita also runs vacation care, another invaluable service for working parents who can rely on a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for their children. Forbes OSHC also has a mental health strand to its care with Wanita putting programs in place to ensure the children's wellness. Reliable out of school hours care is indispensable to many parents and carers in our community, providing peace of mind that their children are in capable, caring hands while they manage work and other responsibilities. The tireless work of Wanita and her team has a profound impact on children and their families. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Wanita for her contribution to our community and her commitment to the continued well-being of its younger members.

### ASHA MUNODAWAFA

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate Parkes' Asha Munodawafa for the input she has in her community through her involvement in the town's tennis scene. Asha is a progressive young member of the Parkes Tennis Club. Apart from attending Tennis Australia Youth Programs and coaching younger children, Asha founded The Hey Sis Project. This project is for young women and Asha's aim is to inspire, uplift, build confidence and empower them. Her efforts have also been recognised by Tennis NSW, who awarded her the 2024 Young Volunteer Achievement Award for 2024. This is deserved recognition for a young woman who is a great role model to other girls in Parkes and the wider Central West community. It is also fabulous to see sport being used to promote The Hey Sis Project with Asha using physical health as a way to improving and protecting mental health. Asha is now the NSW entrant for the Tennis Australia Awards for the Young Volunteer Achievement Award. Best of luck, Asha, I congratulate you on your innovation and great community, and sporting, spirit.

### JULIE'S BIGGEST PINK BREAKFAST

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—It is a great pleasure to recognise the efforts of one of the Cronulla electorate's most enthusiastic fundraisers, Julie McKinnery, who's now raised more than \$140,000 for breast cancer research through her annual Julie's Biggest Pink Breakfast. On 19 October Julie held her ninth breakfast event, which is more than a breakfast as the menu shifts mid-afternoon from bacon and eggs to grazing tables, with supporters staying well into the evening. Julie outdid herself again in 2024 by raising an extraordinary \$39,000, which is testament to how infectious she is in generating support for this important cause. More than 200 people joined in this year's event, which as usual was hosted by Julie in her Caringbah home. It's now become a social highlight in the calendar for many in our community and regulars arrive 30 minutes early to take their favourite seats for the day. Julie is now looking ahead to next year's tenth anniversary breakfast, and with her vowing to step things up yet again the National Breast Cancer Foundation should look forward to another big donation towards their essential research. As a cancer survivor herself, Julie's passion for the cause is evident to everyone.

### CRONULLA RETRO SURF COMP

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Surfing Sutherland Shire board riders on raising \$4,400 for mental health support through the second annual Cronulla Retro Surf Comp on Saturday 9 November at the North Cronulla Alley. Organiser Dan Larter said his own mental health struggles and the loss of local surfers to suicide prompted him to start the competition to fund training for members of the surfing community to support others facing mental health issues. Surfers from all clubs were invited to take part in the event, which saw around 70 people compete using pre 1985 single or twin fin boards. 20 people were trained thanks to last year's fundraising and Dan is excited about what can be achieved with the money raised this year. I acknowledge the hard work of Dan and his wife Amie Larter to organise the competition and the support of the Cronulla Sharks Boardriders Club, which hosted the event. Sponsors RB99 Commercial, Hairyman Brewery, Hydro Logistic Drainage Solutions, Mountain Assets and Cronulla Surf Design deserve recognition for supporting this important cause and helping make the day such a success.

### BERYL PASFIELD

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise a milestone for former Wingham resident, Beryl Pasfield, who celebrated her 100th birthday on Monday, November 11. Born in Cessnock, Beryl was one of four siblings and began her career as a dancer, studying for six years in Newcastle during World War II. Finding the late-night train journeys home difficult, she shifted her focus to dressmaking, a career that kept her busy through the week while she enjoyed swimming at the local pool on weekends. Beryl married James Pasfield, with whom she had two daughters, Fay and June. Tragically, James lost his life in a mining accident after 19 years of marriage. Later, she married Ronald Pasfield, a World War II infantryman who endured time as a prisoner of war at Changi. Beryl and Ronald eventually settled in Wingham in 1997 to be near family. Now a resident of Storm Village in Taree, I was invited to celebrate her 100th birthday among friends, family and staff. Congratulations Beryl.

### NADIA'S ART GALLERY & GIFTS

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Nadia Zarb on her debut solo exhibition at her art gallery in Taree, named It's Ok to Be a Little Nutty at Times. I was honoured to officially open the exhibit, surrounded by our supportive local art community. Each piece of artwork on display has its own unique story, and I was taken by one of her photographs that I had to place a little red sticker on it myself. Nadia finds inspiration in colour, nature, recycling, and positive energy, which radiates throughout her work. She is so supportive of other artists in our area and her creativity brings a unique energy to our local art community. Having

curated numerous art exhibitions for others, Nadia has now reached an exciting new milestone with her own solo exhibition. Congratulations to her on this incredible achievement.

#### **WHIDDON WINGHAM**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the thoughtful work of the team at Whiddon Wingham, who have created a unique space called the Allambee Room to support residents living with dementia. Drawing on the concept of reminiscence therapy, this room is filled with carefully selected items from the 1930s to 1950s, including furniture, vintage games, a record player with vinyl records, and a classic Singer sewing machine. Each piece serves as a familiar prompt, allowing residents to connect with memories of their earlier years. Regional Manager Ines Reynolds led this initiative, collaborating with staff who contributed personal family items and ideas. Ines envisioned a calming space where residents could relax, enjoy peaceful interactions, and escape the clinical environment of high-care. The Allambee Room has transformed from a storage area into a welcoming space, providing a place of peace, reflection, and joy.

#### **HORNSBY MUSICAL SOCIETY - URINETOWN: THE MUSICAL**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I rise today to commend the Hornsby Musical Society for their exceptional production of Urinetown: The Musical. I had the pleasure of attending this outstanding show on Saturday 9th November at the Pioneer Theatre in Castle Hill, and was thoroughly impressed by the talent and dedication displayed through this production. Urinetown is a sharp, satirical musical that tackles issues such as capitalism, social irresponsibility, bureaucracy, and even the conventions of musical theatre. Set in a dystopian society, a water shortage forces the privatisation of public toilets and the ban of private toilets. The story follows a rebellious janitor, Bobby Strong, who leads the revolt against the corrupt corporation controlling the restrooms, blending dark humour and social commentary. Congratulations to the principal cast on this spectacular performance: Nick Hiebl, Kate Addison, Samuel Byres, and their alternates: Lachlan Alexander, Caitlin Parr, and Max Waterson, and congratulations to the supporting cast. A special thanks to Director Emma Young, Choreographer Lauren Oxenham, Music Director David Lang, and Production Designer John Goggin for their creative leadership. Finally, congratulations to the entire cast and crew for delivering a truly outstanding performance that was both hilarious and thought provoking.

#### **MR TACK SIRIVONG, LCAC**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise Mr Tack Sirivong for his remarkable contributions and commitment to the Lao community in my electorate and across Australia. A former military captain in the Royal Lao Army, Mr Sirivong arrived in Australia in 1978 as a political refugee after enduring an arduous period of hard labour in a prison camp under the Lao communist regime. Upon settling in Australia, Mr Sirivong dedicated himself to serving others. He became a pastor in the Lao Baptist Church in Cabramatta and Campbelltown. His leadership and compassion have touched the lives of many within the community. As a long-time member of the Lao Community Advancement Co-op NSW [LCAC], Mr Sirivong has been a passionate supporter of initiatives promoting Lao culture and heritage. He has also been a vocal advocate for promoting social cohesion, unity, and harmony within the community. His lifelong service and dedication to fostering a vibrant and supportive community are truly commendable. Mr Sirivong's impact is profound, and we are grateful to have him as a respected leader in our community.

#### **THE CAMBODIAN AND KHMER KROM ART NETWORK**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—The Cambodian and Khmer Krom Art Network [CAKKAN] was recently founded in 2023 by Mr. Sawathey Ek OAM, a former refugee from Cambodia, legal educator, and a person respected by many in the community. CAKKAN aims to promote Australian values, fostering compassion and inclusion through artistic expression. This initiative seeks to build trust and respect among groups that have endured conflicts, such as those from Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Kampuchea Krom. Based at the Khmer Krom Cultural Centre in Cabramatta, CAKKAN features a team of volunteer artists led by Ms. Phina Camilleri, a Khmer Krom descendant who advocates for ASEAN (Australian South East Asian Network) values. CAKKAN artists engage in collaborative performances with Vietnamese, Laotian, Burmese, Indonesian, and Indian artists, enhancing intercultural dialogue. Notable events include performances during Refugee Week at Parliament House and at the Lao Community Advancement (NSW) Co-op. The establishment of CAKKAN supports Australia's commitment to multiculturalism. I commend Mr. Sawathey Ek in his efforts to positively impact our broader community through advocacy, policy work, legal education and the arts. I eagerly anticipate their future performances that celebrate diversity and unity in our community.

#### **MR MAHA INPENG BOUTSABA LCAC**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr. Maha Inpeng Boutsaba, distinguished by his title of "Maha," which signifies the highest level of Buddhist religious studies in Laos, is a venerated figure within the Laos community

in my Cabramatta Electorate. Arriving in Australia with his family in 1984 as political refugee, Mr Maha Inpeng Boutsaba quickly became an invaluable asset to the Laos Community Advancement Cooperative NSW [LCAC]. As a qualified Buddhist practitioner, Mr Maha Inpeng Boutsaba has devoted his life to serving the Laos Community in Australia. He provides essential cultural expertise through key roles, such as Master of Ceremony for significant religious and cultural events, and traditional Laos weddings. Mr Maha Inpeng Boutsaba's unwavering commitment to promoting and preserving Laos culture is truly commendable. On behalf of the community, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Mr Maha Inpeng Boutsaba for his lifelong service and his significant contributions to maintaining Lao's religious and cultural heritage within my electorate and beyond.

#### **CENTRECHURCH BACK IN THE HEART OF LISMORE'S CBD**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate Lismore's CentreChurch which recently celebrated the reopening of its Molesworth Street base following the devastating floods of early 2022. I recall taking then NSW premier Dominic Perrottet to visit with Associate Pastor Rebekka Battista, who was determined the church, part of the Acts 2 Alliance network, would 'build back better'. Local journalist Samantha Elley interviewed Rebekka for Sight Magazine, chronicling the rebuilding process, complicated by the need to replace damaged pillars underneath the large hardwood floor. Samantha reported that the church had contents insurance of \$230,000 and received a \$200,000 grant from the NSW Government which I advocated for. Rebekka told Sight Magazine that the floor cost \$600,000 to fix. "So (we received) donations of other churches from south-east Queensland and all over Australia. Also from Convoy of Hope, Hillsong, King's Care, Love Our City based out of the Gold Coast," Rebekka said. Post-flood, these organisations gave the church vouchers to buy washing machines, beds, dryers and fridges, and they would store them in their foyer for people to pick up. CentreChurch Lismore's first Sunday service was held on 3 November and was attended by about 300 people.

#### **GLENROCK GARDENS, A MUST-SEE IN TENTERFIELD**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—A Trip to the Birthplace of Federation, Tenterfield, must include a visit to Glenrock Gardens, nowadays a beautiful venue for weddings, events and functions. Glenrock was originally part of Tenterfield Station, an iconic local property which was subdivided in 1901. It is a 200-acre working farm, which has been home to many families since those early days. Annie and Chris Jones purchased Glenrock in May 2016 from Carolyn Robinson, a renowned garden designer, and her husband Peter. Carolyn designed and developed the gardens over a 25-year period and many Tenterfield residents have had strong associations with the venue either through work or regular visitations. Annie and Chris have put their own stamp on Glenrock, overseeing renovations to The Cottage, a rebuild of the Main House, opening of The Nursery and the grand opening of The Barn. Theirs has been a true labour of love. Annie, who has a background in nursing and OHS, hails from Hobart, where her love of gardens, especially temperate gardens, began. Chris, originally from Narrabri, has a background in business, accounting and financial planning. While the couple has Glenrock Gardens on the market, they have no plans to leave Tenterfield.

#### **THE TWEED VALLEY WEEKLY SETTLES IN TO NEW OFFICE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Staff at Murwillumbah's The Tweed Valley Weekly newspaper are settling into their new CBD office at Shop 7, 41-45 Murwillumbah Street. The relocation marks a new chapter for the publication, which has been a trusted source of local news and information for residents and businesses for more than 30 years. Editor and owner Jonathon Howard says he and his team are thrilled to have relocated to Murwillumbah's main street at Palm Court, and the feedback has been positive from readers. "This new space will not only enhance our visibility but also allow us to better connect with the community we serve," Jonathon told readers. Jonathon recently emphasised the importance of local stories and a local newspaper to strengthening our democracy and delivering quality journalism to Tweed Shire residents. "We have grown our circulation significantly over the years from around 19,000 papers to 21,500 copies delivered every Thursday across the Tweed," he reported. Since my election as State Member for Lismore in 2019, I have found The Weekly to be highly professional, balanced and fair. I wish Jonathon Howard, Sales Manager Richard Bowe and the rest of this hard-working team continued success.

#### **INDI GARVEY – GFAA NATIONAL JUNIOR CHAMPION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I share some exciting news from the world of fishing. Port Macquarie's Indi Garvey has taken out the Australian National Junior Tournament for Junior Female Release at the Game Fishing Association [GFAA] Awards presentation evening held on 19th October in Melbourne, Victoria. Port Macquarie Game Fishing Club are honouring their new junior champion after she recently accepted the Australian National Title with a total of 220 points. Indi received her accolade on the release of a Black Marlin estimated to be 50kg on 10kg, along with a Mahi Mahi weighing 15kg. The Game Fishing Association [GFAA] Junior Tournament was first established in 2000 to promote the competitive sport of fishing, through the growth of its junior anglers. The competition is open to anglers under the age of 16, is held over the

financial year, with the start date commencing on the 1st July. Tag and Release is an essential component taught and encouraged by the GFA, to endorse the principal of sustainable fishing and the collection of valuable data by Australian scientists. It is a proud moment for our community, and I congratulate Indi on reaching this incredible milestone.

#### **JUSTIN GILLIGAN**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise and congratulate Lord Howe Island photographer Justin Gilligan, on winning the 60th International Wildlife Photography Award recently held at the Natural History Museum in London. This prestigious annual competition and exhibition highlights the stunning and unique relationship between photography, science and art. Justin's award-winning mosaic-style image is composed of 403 pieces of plastic that were removed from the digestive tract of a flesh-footed shearwater - a seabird that washed up on the shores of Lord Howe Island. The grim discovery was made by researchers with the Adrift Lab, a group that brings together researchers from around the world to study the impacts of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems. Lord Howe Island boasts a remarkably unique ecosystem of endemic wildlife, a spectacular World Heritage-listed environment, and pristine, coral-rich waters. As part of my Electorate, I am incredibly proud of its unique significance. It is a shocking and sobering statistic that currently at least eight million tonnes of plastics are put into our oceans each year. I applaud Justin on his accolade and thank him for documenting the impact of plastics on our wildlife through photography.

#### **AHA NSW AWARDS – FINNIAN'S TAVERN**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to Finnian's Tavern in Port Macquarie who were recently received a well-deserved accolade at the Australian Hotels Association NSW Awards night. Finnian's Tavern took out the 'Best Live Music Venue' at the ceremony, which was held on 29th October at Randwick Racecourse. This was the venue's first nomination and Finnian's Licensee Lachlan Horsley was ecstatic with this result. This award is a fitting acknowledgement of a family-friendly, locally run venue, that pride themselves on staging quality live music on Friday and Saturday nights. Touring acts also frequently book midweek spots when passing through the town during east coast and national tours. The most recent example of this was a sell-out live performance of Grinspoon, as part of their 45-day regional and capital city national tour called 'Whatever, Whenever, Wherever.' I applaud Lachlan Horsley, a local lad who grew up in Port Macquarie - and his team, for stepping up and supporting the original music scene and staging quality entertainment to bolster the resurgence of live music in our local area. As 'music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life,' (Berthold Auerbach) so too does a good cold brew! Congratulations Finnians!

#### **MUNGINDI TENNIS CLUB CELEBRATES 100 YEARS**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Mungindi Tennis Club on their 100 year anniversary. The club celebrated the milestone with the opening of the new surfaced courts, social tennis, a barbeque and a display of historical memorabilia. I congratulate the current and past members of the Mungindi Tennis Club on this outstanding achievement. Thank you to committee members including: President Kelly Chapman; Vice President Wayne Taylor; Secretary Brooke Luhrs; and Social Media Coordinator Karen Taylor. Special thanks to the community members for giving their time, effort and in some cases machinery, in preparation for the new courts and for assisting with the success of the celebrations. Finally thank you to Moree Plains Shire Council, for being instrumental to the upgrade to the courts, ensuring they remain available as a vital hub for community engagement. I commend all those involved with the club, for their hard work, selflessly and voluntarily giving to better their local community and ensuring the game of Tennis can be enjoyed for future generations. Clubs in regional towns benefit greatly from the ongoing support and commitment their volunteers give.

#### **BINGARA SCRAPHEAP ADVENTURE RIDERS**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Bingara Scrapheap Adventure Riders on raising funds to support Down Syndrome Australia, with the riders contributing to the cause for the past six years. The riders have recently returned from a 3,000 km road trip over 10 days, riding from the outback to the snowies, through to the coast and back again. I congratulate all involved in this wonderful achievement, with thanks to team Captain Debi Bancroft and current members on the ride: Wally Cover, Joe Lanagan, Ian Armstrong, Jamie Lanagan, John Bancroft-Arnott, Florian Archan, Kev Williams, for their support. Thanks also to the sponsors for backing this accomplishment, including: The Sportsman's Hotel, The Sporting Club, Senior Citizens Committee, Community Op Shop, Meat on Maitland, Bilsborough's Mechanical and Buses, Destinee Designs and Print Anything. Special thanks to the support crew, volunteers and many members of the Bingara community, who have attended fund raising events and activities, supporting the group over the years. I commend all involved in the Bingara Scrapheap Adventure Riders, especially for taking the opportunity to raise money to give to such a worthy cause to improve the lives of others.

**MELBOURNE CUP WINNER - WALCHA BORN AND BRED**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Walcha locals Norm and Diane Bazeley, on breeding this year's triumphant Melbourne Cup winner Knights Choice. In the race that stops a nation, the outsider won the 3,200m race in a photo finish against Warp Speed and Okita Soushi finishing third. I congratulate Norm and Diane on this impressive honour and on the success of their Thoroughbred Stud Elswick Park, at Walcha. Knights Choice was bred from their mare Midnight Pearl, being purchased by the family in 2013 at the Inglis Great Southern Sale and sired by Extreme Choice. This winning combination produced a champion, who's name will go down in racing history books alongside the very best of the best. I commend all involved in Knights Choice reaching this elite level in racing, but no one more so than Norm and Diane. Thank you for the significant contribution made to sport of racing in Australia and the Northern Tablelands Electorate congratulates you on this wonderful and memorable achievement.

**BRAXTON WALLACE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Braxton Wallace, from the Shellharbour Sharks RLFC, for his successful 2024 season. Braxton was awarded 1st Grade Top Try Scorer at the Group Seven's Michael Cronin Medal Awards Night in September 2024, with 16 tries. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Braxton on this this wonderful achievement and wish him all the best in his future sporting endeavours.

**SHAYLEE DODD**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Shaylee Dodd, from the Shellharbour Sharks RLFC, for her successful 2024 season. Shaylee was awarded Open Women's Tackle Top Try Scorer at the Group Seven's Michael Cronin Medal Awards Night in September 2024, with seven tries. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Shaylee on this this wonderful achievement and wish her all the best in her future sporting endeavours.

**SHELLHARBOUR SHARKS RLFC**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of the Shellharbour Sharks Rugby League Football Club, for their Group 7 Season. The Shellharbour Sharks were awarded the 2024 Club Championship at the Group Seven's Michael Cronin Medal Awards Night in September 2024, with 548 points. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate the Shellharbour Sharks for this wonderful achievement.

**DIWALI**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was very pleased to celebrate Diwali, the Festival of Lights, at NSW Parliament House this week with friends from the Indian community across Sydney. Diwali is one of the most important Hindu festivals and symbolises the victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Happy Diwali to all who celebrated in my local electorate of Badgerys Creek and across NSW.

**KFC ORAN PARK**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate the franchisee at KFC Oran Park for the opening of their store on 16 September 2024. They were the 800th branch to open in Australia and to celebrate the occasion they gave away 800 of their famous Zinger burgers with cans of Pepsi. The community were entertained with performances from a live DJ, a Colonel Sanders mascot and participation in a KFC-themed race car in honour of Oran Park's heritage as the former home to a racing track. I wish the franchisee and staff of the KFC Oran Park store the very best as they serve our community and visitors alike.

**PENELOPE PEACHEY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—Congratulations to Penelope Peachey of Regentville Public School for being named the joint winner of the Kindergarten to Year 2 category of my 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! I thank Penelope for her amazing work and wish her the very best in all her schooling endeavours.

**PILU RETAINS TWO HATS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the superb Pilu at Freshwater in my Electorate of Manly who I am so pleased to announce has retained its two hats as part of the prestigious Good Food Guide Awards 2025. For 20 years, Giovanni and Marilyn have been consistently hitting new heights, spoiling locals and drawing visitors from across the country and indeed the world. Earning two hats is an

impressive feat in itself, but retaining these accolades is where the real challenge lies – and Pilu has managed to pull this off for two decades. This is a real testament to just how good this place is, and the talent, passion, drive, and vision of the entire team. I congratulate Pilu on this phenomenal recognition and wish them every success going forward.

### **WHITELEY WINS BIG**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to inform the House that Whiteley Corporation has been named NSW 'Business of the Year' at this year's Business NSW Awards. In addition, Whiteley was awarded an 'Excellence in International Business' recognition to top off what was an incredibly successful night for this outstanding company. As Australia's largest manufacturer of sterilants, disinfectants and professional cleaning technologies, Whiteley exports to over 35 markets globally, supporting hospitals and medical centres, aged care facilities, schools, hospitality businesses, veterinary clinics and many more. Whiteley boasts a proud history of family ownership and a deep connection to the Northern Beaches. Having been acquired by Reginald K Whiteley in 1971, the company is now led by his son and Manly local, Dr Greg Whiteley. Greg and his team pride themselves on a committed focus on clinical research to drive constant innovation in infection and disease prevention, a vital area of research given recent global events. This prestigious accolade is a great acknowledgment of Whiteley's status as a world leader in medical infection prevention and professional hygiene solutions. I congratulate Greg and his entire team on this fitting and well-deserved achievement.

### **FULL OF JOY PLAYGROUP**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to congratulate Carlton South Playgroup, known as 'Full of Joy', on celebrating their 50th anniversary. Full of Joy was started by Joy Cuthbertson in November 1974 as a place where local parents could take their children to play and socialise while meeting other parents in the area. Mrs Cuthbertson is still an active member of the group to this day, preparing her signature fruit salad for the children's morning tea every week. Full of Joy started small, but now has grown to 20-30 children every Friday morning. The playgroup provides a friendly place where children can come together to share, play, and learn how to make friends with other children. For children who don't attend daycare, the group gives an invaluable opportunity for children to adjust to being around other children. For parents, the group provides them with an opportunity to make friends, exchange parenting tips, and be part of a supportive community. The Full of Joy playgroup has provided a supportive and nurturing environment for children for 50 years, and I am honoured to recognise this extraordinary achievement and wish them the best of luck in the years to come.

### **MAHASH PRASAI**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—On behalf of the St George community, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Mr Mahash (Max) Prasai on his business success. Max arrived in Australia in 2008 as an international student from Nepal, with only \$135 in his pocket. From humble beginnings, Max has overcome many challenges and ultimately built the thriving small business, Country Fresh Rockdale - clearly exemplifying a true Aussie success story. For over eight years, he worked tirelessly in a variety of jobs just to make ends meet, including a cleaner, kitchen hand, delivery driver and a prison support service officer. In 2015, he took a chance to establish his own business. While there have been many significant challenges and setbacks throughout the process, his perseverance has clearly paid off. Last month, I had the pleasure to officially launch his refurbished supermarket and recognise Max's achievements and all he has done for the community, serving as an inspiration to all. His supermarket stands as a testament to his determination and resilience. It is more than just a grocery store, it's a cultural hub that services the rich multicultural St George community. Thank you, Max and congratulations, on all your hard work.

### **PEDRO SIDOTI**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and acknowledge Mr Pedro Sidoti for his outstanding and selfless service to the Child Jesus and St. Joseph Church in West Botany. Pedro has been the principal altar server for Child Jesus and St Joseph's for over 40 years. He has become an integral part of the church community, known for his calm demeanour, humility, and leadership. He has personally trained nearly 100 altar servers, imparting not only technical skills and knowledge, but instilling his students with a deep sense of faith, discipline, and service, values which can be carried over into their personal and professional lives. His dedication has made him an inspiration to generations of parishioners. Pedro is consistently the first to arrive at church, ensuring everything is prepared for the mass, and the last to leave, selflessly tidying up and offering assistance wherever he is needed. Pedro truly exemplifies the spirit of community service, quietly working behind the scenes to support the spiritual strength of the Kogarah community. His legacy is one of faith, dedication, and mentorship, and I am honoured to recognise his service and wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

**BOWLO SPORTS AND LEISURE YAMBA FAREWELLS PHIL BOUGHTON**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to long serving manager of Bowlo Sports and Leisure Yamba, Phil Boughton, who has retired. Originally from Moree, Phil arrived to work at Yamba Bowlo almost 14 years ago in 2010, after being drawn to the community spirit. When Phil joined the club, though it was debt-free, it was facing serious challenges and in dire need of upgrades. Under Phil's leadership, Yamba Bowlo has not only been revitalised, but it has flourished. During Phil's time at the club, many changes took place including the introduction of the very popular family Leisure Centre, inclusive of ten pin bowling and mini golf. Phil's efforts and considerable achievements have earned him a well-deserved place in the Club Managers Association Hall of Fame, which is a testament to his dedication. I send my best wishes to Phil, who plans to spend some time travelling the country with his wife and dog. I would also like to congratulate and welcome Yamba Bowlo's new CEO, Greg Targett. All the best for the continued success of the club.

**COMMUNITY BROADCASTING CELEBRATES MILESTONE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Volunteers at the Clarence Valley's very own community radio station, Loving Life FM 103.1, celebrated the 50th anniversary of Australian community broadcasting in September. In September 1974, the Whitlam Labor Government made a Cabinet decision to create a community broadcasting sector for "those who represent organisations that think they have something to say and want some better means of saying it, and those who are associated with communities cut off from their rights and entitlements." 50 years on, the community broadcasting sector today delivers over 500 services and two dedicated television services. The Clarence Valley's local community radio station, Loving Life FM was founded in 1999 and celebrates a remarkable 25 years of operation in 2024. I congratulate the team at Loving Life 103.1 for continually putting the interests of the Clarence Valley community first with their unique and varied radio programming. Well done on the 25-year milestone, and I hope the station continues to thrive within the community for many more years to come.

**COWPER PUBLIC SCHOOL - 150 YEARS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Former and current staff and students recently celebrated Cowper Public School's milestone 150th anniversary at a special ceremony held at the school. Built in 1874 following the request of a local gentleman, JB Carlton, to establish an education facility for the growing rural village, Cowper Public School currently has 11 enrolled students, all keen to create their own stories in the school's ongoing history. Many photos, newspaper articles and bulletins about the school dating back to the 1800's made for an interesting history lesson for those that attended. A standout piece of history discussed was that Lionel Howard, the father of former Prime Minister John Howard, was born in Cowper and attended the local school. As part of the special sesquicentenary celebrations, students joined in on a ribbon cutting ceremony to unveil a newly refurbished school bell and pavers engraved with the names of current and former staff to commemorate the occasion. What a great asset the school is for the community of Cowper. I send my well wishes for many more great years of education at Cowper Public School.

**MINI FABRICATION & MECHANICAL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Mini Fabrication & Mechanical is a family-owned and family-run small business located in Beresfield is the winner of the Specialised Business Award at the 2024 Hunter Local Business Awards held at NEX (Newcastle Exhibition and Convention Centre) on Tuesday, 3 September. The awards recognise the vital role business people play in the lives of their communities. On a 5-star night of high-quality food and entertainment, finalists, families and staff, sponsors and local dignitaries who helped to present awards to the winners gathered to celebrate local endeavour and ingenuity. The auto body shop specialises in chassis/suspension fabrication, custom vehicle fabrication, driveline upgrades, performance upgrades, mechanical servicing and repairs. Mini Fabrication & Mechanical's Dylan and Kurt are the dream team. Many loyal customers have been dealing with them for years and their workmanship and attention to detail are second to none. Kurt is a talented fabricator/mechanic and Dylan contributes with the professional quality of his work, advice and communication. In a world where short-cuts are not uncommon, Mini Fabrication & Mechanical goes above and beyond in serving their customers. Congratulations to the team!

**LASER PLUMBING NEWCASTLE CENTRAL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Founded in 2004, Waratah family business Laser Plumbing Newcastle Central, has taken out the award for the Plumbing Services category at the Hunter Local Business Awards 2024 held at NEX Newcastle (Exhibition and Convention Centre) on Tuesday, 3 September. The awards recognise the vital role business people play in the lives of their communities. On a 5-star evening of high-quality food and entertainment, finalists, families and staff, sponsors and local dignitaries gathered with the deserving winners. Laser Plumbing is an affordable and reliable plumbing service, with a highly skilled team in all aspects



of plumbing, drainage, gas fitting and hydraulic solutions for commercial, government, industrial and residential works across the Hunter. They have won previous awards, are an Industry Employer of Choice, WHS compliant and a Safety Forward company. They ensure consistent national pricing, high service standards and punctual, highly skilled plumbers, taking pride in their work, looking after our environment through a dedication to creating a more eco-friendly Australia, meeting and exceeding their customers' expectations every time. Congratulations to all the team on your well-deserved achievements in plumbing services.

#### **FIRE AND RESCUE NSW – METRO NORTH**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Metro North Area Commander Terrence Farley presented the John Hunter Children's Hospital Burns Unit with a \$20,000 cheque, the money raised through the Metro North Charity Race Day which featured a silent auction that saw enthusiastic bidding from patrons and which added significantly to the total donation. The funds will be invested in the most modern burn pain management and scar minimisation techniques, as well as new burn treatment technology, helping to make hospital stays as comfortable as possible for families experiencing burn trauma. Firefighters have been busy for a few months with many incidents over the end of winter and the start of spring. Preparation is underway, as always, for the upcoming bushfire season, though it is becoming harder to predict Mother Nature. Several training initiatives have been instigated by firefighters across the Command, collaborating with other agencies and preparing for real-life incidents. Showing dedication, and to hone and demonstrate skills, firefighting teams participated in the Wagga Wagga State Firefighting Championship from 24-26 October. Thank you for the hard work, dedication and professionalism shown by all crews.

#### **PENRITH CITIZENSHIP**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—It is with great pleasure that I congratulate all those new Australians who became citizens in Penrith on 13 November 2024. The Penrith community are richer for the diversity of culture you all bring to our city: Keshni Bai, Tian Chen, Lakshmi Chockalingam Thankam, Bahavathi Chadayappan, Jishnu Chadayappan Bahavathi Perumal, Carl Cleaver, Melanio Jr Cu, Latu Fifita, Juha Gurney, Shivon James, Jeethu Ramachandran, Clint Jeethu, Arshdeep Kaur, Mohammad Arabi, So Min Park, Peter Choi, Jerome Puia, Mayziel Pedernal, Sharokina Ramsin, Philip Roy, Thelma Salusalu, Raghav Sharma, Yahoshua Thakkar, Amrita Thapa, Ajay Thapa, Aarav Thapa, Muhammad Abdullah, George Daniel, Romesa Ghias, Gretel Matangi, Lilly Matangi, Sindhupriya Periasamy, Wannpa Srihong. Again, congratulations and I wish you all the best for your futures as Penrith locals.

#### **NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Today is National Agriculture Day when we acknowledge and appreciate our farmers. In the Tweed, we are fortunate enough to be home to incredibly fertile agricultural land that produces world class produce. The two main industries are sugar cane and cattle, with local producers also farming flowers, vegetables and fruit to name a few. Tweed farmers are represented by the very active and involved North Coast branch of the NSW Farmers Association lead by chair Craig Huf. Craig also sits on the NSW Farmers Executive Committee and serves on the Conservation Resource Committee. Branch secretary Sandra Hawken is a member of the NSW Farmers Rural Affairs Committee as well as the Ag Science Committee, and Branch treasurer Jan Fletcher sits on the Cattle Committee. Thank you to the North Coast Branch of the NSW Farmers Association for your continued advocacy and representations and to all the Tweed farmers for all you provide for our region, local jobs, the local economy and for producing excellent agricultural goods for the Tweed and beyond.

#### **PETER CONNELL**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Congratulations to Tweed resident Peter Connell who has been conferred a Knight in the Order of Lifesaving, the first Australian Surf Lifesaving official to receive this prestigious award. A member of Cudgen Headland Surf Lifesaving Club, Peter was awarded the Knight medal by International Life Saving. The criteria for receiving the award is to have attended 14 World Life Saving Championships, held every two years, and to have held senior positions. Peter has attended Championships as a Referee, Deputy Referee or Sectional Referee. Peter's commitment has seen him made a life member of the Cudgen club as well as a member of branch, state and national associations. Congratulations to Peter on receiving this impressive award and thank you for your service and dedication to Surf Lifesaving.

#### **WOLLUMBIN ART AWARD**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Congratulations to Tweed artist Hannah Lange on being awarded the prestigious \$15,000 2024 Wollumbin Art Award for her painting Weaving by the River. Hannah's painting pays tribute to traditional weaving by First Nations people. The award also includes a two-week residency at the Tweed Regional Gallery. There were 461 entries in the competition and included paintings, ceramics, works on paper,

sculpture and digital works. Winners of the Wollumbin Youth Art Award were also announced with talented artists from throughout the Northern Rivers and Gold Coast recognised in the age categories of 5-8 years, 9-12 years, 13-15 years and 16-18 years. Well done to all the artists recognised at the Wollumbin Art Award and Wollumbin Youth Art Award.

#### **ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Armenian Evangelical church is a close-knit community of faith. Founded in 1966 by Armenian Congregational missionaries, it is the spiritual hub for those in the Armenian community of Willoughby who worship in the Protestant tradition. Led by Pastor Hagop Sarkissian of the Uniting Church in Australia, it is a growing church of 250 active members with 65 families. As well as holding regular Sunday services, the church runs a variety of ministries including a Sunday school, weekly Bible studies, youth groups, couples groups, and an annual church retreat. The church is a wonderful community of fellowship for people of all ages and stages of life. Hosting regular meals and other social activities, it provides its members with a real sense of belonging. I honour Pastor Hagop for his faithful ministry and pastoral care of his congregation. With his leadership, I am very grateful for the contribution the Armenian Evangelical Church makes to the spiritual life and personal wellbeing of so many in my community.

#### **MARY'S HOUSE 10KM WALK**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to recognise the recent 10km walk organised by Mary's House, dedicated to raising awareness and funds for domestic violence support. This remarkable event brought together community members who walked in solidarity, highlighting the ongoing need for resources and support for those affected by domestic violence. Mary's House continues to provide invaluable assistance, offering a safe haven and essential services for women and children in need. The funds raised through this walk will go directly towards supporting these vital programs, helping to make a real difference in the lives of those experiencing domestic violence. Thank you to everyone who participated, donated and supported this important cause. Your efforts are a testament to our community's commitment to creating a safer, more supportive environment for all. Well done and thank you to the Mary's House CEO Yvette Viganando and everyone who made this special event happen.

#### **ARTARMON STREET FESTIVAL**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to acknowledge the vibrant celebration that was the Artarmon Street Festival, held along Hampden Road to mark the revitalisation of Artarmon Village. After months of streetscape upgrades, this event brought our community together for a fantastic day of fun, food and entertainment. The festival transformed Hampden Road into a bustling hub of activity, with local shops offering outdoor dining, unique products and interactive experiences. There was truly something for everyone, from free kids' activities and rides to live performances on the entertainment stage. Families enjoyed everything from an animal farm and reptile show to the thrilling Lava Rush obstacle course and Meltdown ride, creating memories and enjoying the new energy of Artarmon Village. I want to extend my gratitude to all the local retailers, community organisations and volunteers who made this event possible, as well as to the residents and visitors who came out to support and celebrate the heart of Artarmon. It was a day that showcased the strength, creativity and community spirit that defines Artarmon and I look forward to seeing even more people enjoying all it has to offer.

#### **LAKE MACQUARIE CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend a Lake Macquarie Citizenship Ceremony, and I want to take a moment to reflect on what a special event this was. Citizenship ceremonies are such a significant moment in many people's lives, and it's always heartwarming to see so many proud new citizens and their families celebrating together. At this ceremony, 97 people from 33 different countries took the Australian Citizenship Pledge, ranging in age from just five to 88 years old. It was fantastic to see so many smiling faces, all excited to take this step and become part of our community. These new Australians bring with them a wealth of diverse cultures and traditions, adding even more richness to Lake Macquarie. Every ceremony is a reminder of how much our community continues to grow and evolve, and it's always a joy to be part of. Congratulations to all the new citizens and welcome to the next chapter of your Australian journey!

#### **CRAIG SPARROW**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I'd like to take a moment to recognise the incredible work of Craig Sparrow, whose dedication to supporting those facing mental health challenges is making a profound impact in our community. As the Director of Healing Path to Wellness, Craig has been a driving force

in helping those struggling with mental illness, emotional distress, trauma, and chronic pain. His passion for supporting others is evident in everything he does. I recently had the opportunity to meet with Craig and discuss one of his new initiatives. Craig has created the first non-clinical Lake Macquarie suicide prevention safe space. This hub, operating after hours, offers a crucial alternative to hospital visits for people in crisis. It's staffed by volunteers with lived experience, offering a unique, empathetic approach to those in crisis. Craig's vision to further expand this service shows his deep commitment to ensuring no one in our community has to face a crisis alone. His work is invaluable and continues to make a real difference. Thank you, Craig, for everything you do.

#### **MICHELLE FRASER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I'm delighted to recognise Michelle Fraser for the incredible work she does every day at Felton Street Community Preschool. Michelle's commitment as Codirector of the preschool and early childhood teacher goes well beyond classroom hours. Her dedication to supporting each child's development, helping families navigate school readiness, and creating a welcoming space is truly inspiring. Michelle brings so much heart to her work. She's introduced thoughtful touches like a fresh fruit and veggie stand to help families with grocery costs and get kids excited about healthy snacks. Her efforts to upgrade the preschool with energy-efficient improvements and new equipment have transformed it into a modern, cosy space that kids, families, and staff all love. Thanks to Michelle's warmth and creativity, the children at Felton Street Preschool are building confidence, independence, and a love for learning. Her work has a lasting impact on our community's youngest members, and we're lucky to have her leading the way.

#### **MOSMAN BENDIGO BANK**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the incredible work that Bendigo Bank is doing within our local community. Each year, up to 75% of their profit is reinvested into the community through sponsorships and grants. In partnership with the Mosman Environment Foundation, Bendigo Community Bank Mosman has recently announced its inaugural joint grant initiative. This grant will provide support for projects that focus on improving local habitats, raising environmental awareness, and fostering the sustainable conservation of native wildlife in our region. Beyond this, Bendigo Bank has consistently supported a wide array of local programs and organisations, helping to strengthen our community. These include sponsorship of the 'Out and About 2024' festival, the Art Explorers Program at the Mosman Art Gallery, the Mosman Physic Club, Mosman Football Club, North Sydney Bears, Mosman Scouts, Mosman Netball, Mosman Cricket Club, and the Community Marketplace. It's genuinely heartening to see Mosman's Bendigo Community Bank reinvesting its profits into initiatives that benefit us all. Their ongoing support make a real difference to the vibrancy and sustainability of our local community. I extend a heartfelt thank you to the entire Bendigo Bank team. We are grateful for your commitment to helping our community..

#### **MOSMAN PREP WIN THE NBA TOURNAMENT**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate the Mosman Preparatory School 1st Basketball team on winning the NBA Schools Prep Hoops Tournament. The tournament was held at Cranbrook School. The Mosman Prep School team amazingly won all their games against some of Sydney's top schools, including St Augustine's, The Scots College, and fellow North Shore school St Aloysius. Both Mosman Prep and St Aloysius made it into the final. After a nail-biting game, Mosman Prep took home the gold. The final score was 37-34. Incredibly close. I commend Mosman Prep student Adam S, who was awarded Most Valuable Player for the tournament. I also want to congratulate the rest of the 1st squad: Miles B, Will D, Charlie F, Tristan S, Jakob S, Ed T, and George Y. Finally, Well done to the Mosman Prep 1st Coach and Basketball Coordinator, Tom Giles, I'm sure many hours were spent preparing the boys for the tournament. Congratulations, Mosman Prep 1st basketball team. What a fantastic achievement.

#### **SYDNEY BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION LADIES LUNCH**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I acknowledge the incredible efforts of the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation. The Foundation raised a staggering \$375,000 at its annual Ladies Lunch, which celebrated its 20th year and focused on raising funds for tangible support for those facing breast cancer, including research, specialist equipment, and patient services. The lunch originated as a place for breast cancer patients to get together, share their experiences, and support each other through their journeys. It has blossomed into such a vibrant event that still holds human connection and support at its core. I was in awe of all the stunning fashion on display featuring some iconic Australian brands, including Carla Zampatti and Rachel Gilbert, modelled by breast cancer survivors. I want to acknowledge the remarkable work of the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation and its continued efforts to support those impacted by breast cancer. I congratulate Breast Cancer Foundation Ambassadors MC Jessica Rowe and Angela Bishop for leading such a successful event. Finally, I want to

acknowledge the efforts of Mosman Local and Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation Chair Lynne Crookes OAM. I look forward to continuing to support the Foundation and its incredible work.

#### **CATHERINE MCAULEY SPECIAL AWARDS**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—The sheer leadership, academic, and sporting talent present in Parramatta is amazing. Time and time again students display their commitment to making their community a better place and their school community proud. Catherine McAuley Westmead is highly regarded as one of 80 Catholic primary and secondary schools within the Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese system. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, Catherine McAuley is a Catholic girls' school with a strong Mercy charism reflected in the approach and actions of its students. Congratulations to all the students on your outstanding efforts and achievements. Mikaela Barrientos Salazar for The Catherine McAuley Award; Alyssa Aoun for The Sister Eugene Dobson Award for Leadership; Sacha Sahyoun for Bishop of Parramatta Award for Student Excellence; Lea Zeydan for Academic Excellence; Amelia Chadszinow for the Sister Barbara McDonough School Spirit Award; Rihanna Boulous for the Ampol Best All Rounder Award; Shreya Devi for the ADF Long Tan Leadership and Teamwork Award; Mahika Cherukuri for the ADF Future innovators Awards; Ella Bouchaaya for the Reuben F Scarf Award for Commitment; Naydeen Poumale for the Culture Award; Alicia David for the Service Award; Alyssa Calderon and Sophie Stancic for the Sports Award.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS NEW SCHOOL LEADERS AT ST PATRICK'S MARIST COLLEGE DUNDAS**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to the following students from St Patrick's Marist College Dundas on their recent selection as school leaders. Zoe Anderson, Chloe Boorer, Molly Boorer, Akshara Elele, Jonah Fenech, Anton Galati, Serena Hanley, Luke Heiler, Madeline Kemp, Nadia La Macchia, Stephanie Liang, Aaliyah Mapagu, Mary-Rose Mejalli, Amelia Nagy, Isaac Nott, Matthew Ogrizek, Erin Poole, Jeremy Saliba, Macus Schembri-Green, Hayli Sayan, Katelyn Velasco, Isaac Vinton, Evan Zorbas. Congratulations to Anya Barker and Gordon Boulous on being elected School Captains, and Dunja Grudic and Keshon Shanmuganathan elected as Vice Captains. I know that you will all serve your time as school leaders dutifully and diligently, developing vital leadership skills that will be invaluable to you for the rest of your lives.

#### **A TRUE BLUE TALE**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Cricket in Parramatta has a long, storied history, going back to 1843. It was one of the foundation members of the Grade competition and lays claim as the oldest club in NSW and the 2nd oldest club in Australia. Since cricket found its way to Parramatta it has grown to now involve men and women's teams largely thanks to the volunteering spirit that we possess in Parramatta. Tom Wood, a volunteer for the Parramatta District Cricket Club and a former first grade cricket player, has been a stalwart of the cricket community who also wears the title of Club historian. 'A True Blue Tale' written by Tom Wood and self-published by the club, is a 1,100-page chronicle of the long history of the club that illustrates Tom's passion for the club. Tom has volunteered much of his life to the club as an official and volunteer. He has captained the over 70's Ashes in Australian and the UK, helping veteran cricket players get back into the game and have fun with old mates. Thank you Tom for your dedication to cricket and the Parramatta District Cricket Club.

#### **GREYSTANES DEVILS JRLFC**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Sunday 27th October, I was delighted to join our rugby league juniors for the annual Greystanes Devils Junior Rugby League Football Club Presentation Day at Darling Street Park, Greystanes. Established in 1979, Greystanes Devils JRLFC celebrated their 45th Anniversary earlier this year and are part of the bedrock of our Prospect Electorate sporting community. Today, the Club is comprised of historic local families who love Rugby League, as well as a new generation of Australians who call Western Sydney home. At the event, I was pleased to present awards to our up-and-coming Devils footballers and catch up with proud Greystanes locals to celebrate another bright season for the Club. Special congratulations to Devils coach Brendan Onorato on being awarded Life Member and Club Person of the Year on the day. I extend my warm congratulations to Craig McLaren, President, Guy Coleman, Secretary, Nick Peel, Treasurer, Carl Albrecht, Life Member, and all players, parents, coaching staff and volunteers of the Greystanes Devils on an excellent junior presentation. I thank you all for your dedication and your tremendous community spirit in our local Prospect Electorate. I look forward to the 2025 season. Go Devils!

#### **ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – KINDERGARTEN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Krisvi Satia and Saviana Vaiaku on receiving a 2024 Mercy Award, at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. An exceptional student in the KW Class at St Anthony's Primary School, Saviana received the Mercy Award for Respect, recognising her courteous and thoughtful interactions with others. Setting a wonderful example for others, Saviana is inclusive and accepting of

all members of the school community. Krisvi is an outstanding member of the KG class at St Anthony's Primary School. She was awarded the Mercy Award for Compassion, recognising the kind and caring way she engages with peers and teachers. Krisvi's gentle nature guides her to take time to appreciate others' perspectives and situations, showing true empathy and compassion. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Krisvi and Saviana were selected as the kindergarten winners of this important award. Congratulations once again Krisvi and Saviana. You are commended for the example of compassion and respect you set to your peers. Thank you as well to Principal Patricia Reilly, and the dedicated teaching and support staff for guiding our students through their Catholic faith.

#### **ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – YEAR ONE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Shanav Chandrathas and Navya Tamrakar on receiving a 2024 Mercy Award at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. An outstanding member of the 1G Class at St Anthony's Primary School, Shanav received the Mercy Award for Compassion. Guided by his big heart, Shanav is always willing to lend a helping hand. He shows initiative in the classroom and the playground, helping his peers understand learning activities and ensuring everyone feels safe and included. Navya is an excellent student in the 1W class at St Anthony's Primary School, who received the Mercy Award for Compassion. Navya models compassion in her kind and thoughtful interactions with others. In fulfilment of St Anthony's mission, Navya's friendly nature helps all students to feel they belong. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Shanav and Navya were selected as the Year One winners of this important award. Congratulations again Shanav and Navya. You are commended for the example of compassion you set to your peers. Thank you to Principal Patricia Reilly, and the dedicated teaching and support staff, for guiding our students through their Catholic faith.

#### **REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Australians come together in solemn silence to honour the 106th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice on the Western Front marking the end of World War 1. Across the Central Coast, hundreds gathered to remember and pay respect to those who served and sacrificed so deeply over a century ago. Remembrance Day is a time to reflect on the courage and resilience of the more than 400,000 Australians who served, with over 60,000 never returning. Their sacrifices have given us the freedoms we hold dear today, and on this day, we recognise the extraordinary debt we owe them. I extend my gratitude to the Davistown RSL Sub-Branch for inviting me to their commemoration service, where school leaders Colby Lewis and Flynn Oldfield recited moving poems, We Salute You and In Flanders Fields. I would also like to acknowledge Ian Medlicott, Shona Sutherland, Bernadette Enright, Jared Wright, Alan Pappas, Cath Wade, and Jim and Betty Ferlazzo who represented me at other services on the Central Coast. Their efforts and presence ensured our community's respect and remembrance echoed across the region.

#### **PETER BAINES**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to acknowledge Peter Baines, founder of Hands Across the Water, who has committed to a remarkable journey—a 1,400-kilometer trek across Thailand to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Boxing Day tsunami. Starting on December 1 in Yasothon and finishing on the anniversary at the tsunami memorial in Khao Lak, Peter will travel the distance of 33 marathons in just 26 days. This journey embodies resilience, hope, and the power of community. Peter's story began in the tsunami's devastating aftermath, where, as a forensic specialist, he witnessed unimaginable loss. It was this tragedy that inspired him to start Hands Across the Water, a charity founded to provide long-term support to children orphaned or displaced by the disaster. Over the years, the charity has grown, supporting education, vocational training, and sustainable development across Thailand, breaking cycles of poverty and adversity. Peter's goal is to raise \$1 million to fund initiatives such as a Hospitality Training Centre, a Digital Learning Centre, and an Agricultural Learning Centre, all aimed at equipping young people with the skills needed for brighter futures. His journey is a testament to what we can achieve together—a brighter future for generations to come.

#### **AUSSIE ARK GALA DINNER**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible work of Aussie Ark. What began in 2011 as a mission to save the Tasmanian devil from extinction has grown into a bold vision to secure the future of Australia's threatened species. Through dedication and innovation, Aussie Ark has evolved to become a leader in species conservation. Today, the organisation is expanding its reach to create protected wild sanctuaries, ensuring that our native wildlife thrives, free from unnatural threats. Aussie Ark's adaptability and forward-thinking approach make it a beacon of hope for Australia's unique and endangered species. I was honoured to attend the Aussie Ark Gala Dinner, a powerful evening that celebrated the success of the Tasmanian Devil breeding program and rallied support to secure its future. Congratulations to Co-founder Tim Faulkner and Director Liz Gabriel for your tireless advocacy and commitment to this vital cause. Thank you

for your vision and dedication to changing the course for Australia's precious wildlife. Aussie Ark is a testament to what's possible when passion and purpose come together to protect our planet's irreplaceable natural heritage.

#### **VALE GREG TURNER**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the passing of Mr Greg Turner, a beloved local journalist. I pay tribute to his outstanding contribution to our community, and to the wider Ryde and Inner West areas. Greg served as a journalist at The Weekly Times newspaper where he would frequently engage with local events, sporting clubs and politics. I first met Greg in 2017, when I became a Councillor at the City of Canada Bay Council. He was always kind, considerate and respectful. Among Greg's countless achievements throughout his career, his dedication to animal welfare was truly commendable. Greg worked closely with the World League for the Protection of Animals to launch his 'Cat of the Week' column in The Weekly Times, resulting in hundreds of adoptions from local shelters. Beyond his work at TWT, Greg was dedicated to the community in all aspects of his life. He was an active member of many local religious and charitable organisations, working to better the lives of others. On behalf of the Drummoyne electorate, I offer my sincerest condolences to Greg's family, friends, colleagues and loved ones. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Vale Greg Turner. May he Rest in Peace.

#### **COM.IT.ES NSW**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of Com.It.Es, the Committee of Italians Abroad NSW, a vital organisation supporting the Italian community and culture in NSW. Since 1985, Com.It.Es has provided support to the Italian community through their cultural events, language assistance, and engagement with Italians. Their tireless efforts have assisted many Italian migrants and their families as they settle into life in Australia. I sincerely thank members of the Com.It.Es NSW Board including President Luigi Di Martino, Vice President Lisa Genovese, Treasurer Alessandro Frino, Secretary Luciano Gerry Gerardi, Executive Member Marco Zangari and committee members Maurizio Aloisi, Michele Grigoletti, Dominic Leuzzi, Allan Micallef, Paolo Rajo, Antonia Scorciapino and Giammarco Testa. I acknowledge their time and dedication in supporting our Italian community. It is wonderful to see this organisation embody the spirit of Italian culture and language, and to keep it alive for generations to come. I thank everyone that has been involved in making Com.It.Es the important organisation that it is today. Your dedication to the Italian community is to be commended and I wish you all the very best. I hope we can work closely for our Italian community.

#### **GRUPPO DELL'AMICIZIA IN MEMORIA DI ENRICA INGLESE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to recognise Gruppo dell'Amicizia, in memoria di Enrica Inglese. Gruppo dell'Amicizia are a local Italian cultural organisation, established in May 2018 by La Fiamma journalist Armando Tornari in memory of his beloved wife Enrica Inglese. Enrica was a passionate person who dedicated countless hours to teaching the Italian language, supporting those in need and to preserving the Italian culture in Australia. She was employed at La Fiamma and for many years she taught students Italian with Co.As.It at Saturday morning school. Each year, Gruppo dell'Amicizia supports The Italian Education Awards. The Awards provide scholarship opportunities for students in primary and secondary school to learn Italian. Scholarship opportunities are also awarded for teachers to attend courses and training in Italy for professional skills development. I sincerely acknowledge all members of the Gruppo dell'Amicizia. I pay special tribute to Armando Tornari for his compassionate and kind-hearted dedication for the community. I also acknowledge Honorary Secretary Matilda Di Certo, all members of the committee and sponsors for their efforts in supporting this wonderful initiative. Thank you for your dedication to our Italian community. I wish all Members the very best.

#### **NARARA ECO VILLAGE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would love to acknowledge Narara Eco Village, a wonderful community that is pioneering in producing over 40% less emissions than the average household on the Central Coast. The Ecovillage has set an impressive goal to achieve a 75% reduction in the next 6 years. This fabulous Eco Village community is made up of more than 200 interesting people in the age range from newborn to early 80s. The current residents have diverse backgrounds such as plumbers and bankers, property valuers, landscapers, social workers and midwives. With a strong community spirit that combats any feeling of isolation, this village is the perfect home office to folks who are working from home. The villagers follow a form of governance called Sociocracy, which epitomises transparency and fairness, allows all voices to be heard. The members are very conscious of their carbon footprints and as a result, residents walk, cycle, share vehicles and use electric vehicles powered by their own solar panels, as much as possible! I applaud Narara Eco Village for the wonderful community spirit and your pioneering in leading our region to a greener future.

### UMINA MEN'S BOWLING CLUB

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—In the NSW Parliament tonight, I would like to acknowledge the Umina Beach Men's Bowling Club (The Club) for their unwavering support to the Central Coast Health system. The Club is a wonderful group of friends and competitors who come together regularly to do so much more than bowling. The Club was established in June 1957, and the land was bought from Gosford Council on Easter of 1959 for £300. Their recent donation of \$8,600 has been used to purchase urological equipment to be used by Cancer Services at Gosford and Wyong hospitals. The club has organised a fabulous event at Umina Beach Club for the Ron Pursehouse Prostate Cancer Charity Day. This wonderful group of people has been a long-time support for our much-needed Central Coast Health's services and donated an accumulating whopping amount of \$72,000, allowing the hospitals to purchase equipment as well as items that improve patients' experience. Massive thanks to Umina Men's Bowling Club's members, partners and supporters who continuously work tirelessly to better our community.

### ETHEL WIGGINS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to wish an outstanding Hawkesbury constituent a very happy birthday. Ethel Wiggins celebrated her 100th Birthday on the 1st October 2024, surrounded by family. It was an honour to meet Ethel and offer my good wishes for this momentous occasion. I witnessed the love and care provided by her family which undoubtedly has attributed to Ethel's contentment and fulfilling life. Over the decades, Ethel has made many cherished memories and spoke fondly of them. Memories such as gardening with her friends. She also shared significant experiences such as being at a cinema in Sydney City the night of the World War II Japanese submarine invasion. Hearing a first-hand account of this event was astounding and I am so grateful to Ethel for sharing her stories and experiences. When asked what the secret to living to such a long life was, Ethel stated with emotion that it was family. Having unconditional love, support and care has provided her the opportunity to reach this milestone in comfort. I wish Ethel the best of health and happiness as she progresses in time. God bless you Ethel – you are a shining star. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### COREY HAMMOND

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge and congratulate the efforts of Corey Hammond, a Hawkesbury resident who participates in the sport of enduro bike racing. Corey placed fourth in the Finke Desert 2024 race in the Northern Territory this year. Hammond's journey into desert bike racing began when he was introduced to the sport by his uncle. Reluctant at first and finding the sport daunting, Corey attempted the Finke Desert race in 2021 and fell in love with the atmosphere and energy within the event. Entering three times after the 2021 race, Corey's best result became 7th place. This year he showed great determination and persistence, resulting in an achievement of 4th place. Corey's performance in the world of enduro bike racing has undoubtedly inspired fellow riders and on behalf of the Hawkesbury community I congratulate him on his notable results thus far. I wish Corey all the best in his future career endeavours. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### NSW RFS SECONDARY SCHOOL CADET PROGRAM RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I congratulate the fifteen year nine students of Richmond High School who completed the challenging Secondary School Cadet Program in July 2024. The program, run by the Rural Fire Service aims to provide participants with an engaging experience and educate them on the various skills and attributes held by firefighters. Running for a period of thirteen weeks, the Cadet Program was delivered by forty volunteers from several local brigades under the direction of Deputy Group Captain Phil Hurst. Students were taught to examine fire behaviour and apply various fire safety techniques. They also learned of vital firefighter values including teamwork, confidence, comradeship and leadership. Congratulations to the students who completed this program where they faced challenging tasks whilst building their knowledge of fire safety. It is both inspiring and admirable that so many students have taken this step in understanding firefighting and supporting our community. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### HUGH METCALF

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Ensuring the values of honesty, trust, support, friendship and camaraderie are always maintained have been a feature of Hugh Metcalf's unwavering service to the NSW Rural Fire Service. Hugh Metcalf's service was acknowledged by receiving the Long Service Medal for 41 years of service as a member of the Bathurst Brigade. Hugh has been a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1983, Hugh has held the rank of Deputy Captain within the Brigade from 2004 to 2005 and again from 2010 to 2013, he has also been the Brigade treasurer for 7 years. Today, he continues to reflect these positive values through his manner, good humour and integrity which all place Hugh as a highly respected member, not only of the Bathurst

RFS Brigade, but also the wider RFS community. Congratulations Hugh on a job well done. Your community owes you a vote of thanks.

#### PAUL SEAMAN

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Ensuring the values of honesty, trust, support, friendship and camaraderie are always maintained have been a feature of Paul Seaman's unwavering service to the NSW Rural Fire Service. Paul Seaman's service was acknowledged by receiving the Long Service Medal for 41 years of service as a member of the Bruinbun Brigade. Paul started going to fires when was around 8 or 9 with his dad Mark. One of his jobs in these early days was to ride his horse down to the creek and fill the jerry cans with water and take the water to the fire ground to wet the hessian bags. Paul has been a Deputy Captain with the Bruinbun Brigade since 2010, he has also served as Brigade secretary and the Captain from 2004 to 2010. Throughout changes over the decades towards fire response, equipment and firefighting strategies, Lester has embraced his role as a loyal Brigade member. Congratulations Paul on a job well done. Your community owes you a vote of thanks.

#### BOOMALLI ABORIGINAL ARTISTS CO-OPERATIVE GALLERY FUNDRAISER

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the launch of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative's Annual Fundraiser Exhibition, which opened in Leichhardt just last week. Boomalli is the longest-running Aboriginal-owned and -run arts organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting NSW language group artists. They survive on very little funds and rely on lots of love, hard work and dedication from staff, volunteers and supporters. I was pleased to attend the opening night of this year's fundraiser exhibition, which showcases the beautiful artworks of over 50 Aboriginal artists from the Boomalli community. The event was filled with music, an incredibly moving Welcome to Country by artist Nadeena Dixon, a fun silent auction and delicious food and drinks. Congratulations to Curator Kyra Kum-Sing, Senior Strategist Dr. Bronwyn Bancroft, Chair of the Board Dr. Liesa Clague, and MC Kagara Maling. Congratulations also to all the exhibiting artists, musicians, organisers, staff members, board members, and artists of the collective. Your tireless work to provide a safe space for our artists to exhibit, work and tell their stories through art is so important.

#### LITTLE NICHOLSON'S HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work of the Nicholson Street Public School in bringing together this year's Halloween Festival. The Nicholson Street Halloween Festival has become a local institution, with families from right across the Balmain Peninsula and beyond coming to enjoy the Haunted House, wizard magic, box maze, rides, games and fun. It was fantastic to see the amount of hard-work and energy that went into transforming the school into a haunted Halloween scene. I was delighted to attend the event at the school with two of my kids, and seeing the colourful costumes on display. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the organising team including President of the P&C Carly Freel, Vice-President Kerrie Fergusson, Alice Bradbury-Delaney, Sandy Pedley, Alessandra Brook, Karina Giblin, Claire Middleton, Sabrina Mondschein and Anna Merlo. I acknowledge also all the parents, teachers, students and volunteers who staffed the various activities and made sure the day ran so smoothly. Congratulations on another wonderful community event.

#### CAKES ON COLLINS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Cakes on Collins, a beloved bakery in Kiama, which recently faced a troubling incident. On November 6, owner Kelly Morgan was opening the shop when a male suspect stole two pink bags containing her MacBook, cards, and other personal items. Morgan, unaware of the theft at the time, heard a noise she assumed was from the fridges, but later discovered her handbag and one of the bags were missing. Shortly after, Morgan received an alert from her banking app about a transaction at Woolworths. She and a friend quickly confronted the suspect, but he fled before they could catch him. Despite efforts to pursue him, he escaped. Fortunately, the stolen card was later found by a member of the public, who returned it to Morgan. While this was a traumatic experience for Morgan, the Kiama community's response was overwhelmingly positive. Many people visited her bakery, with cupcakes selling out, and one local even dropped off a potted plant to express sympathy. This strong show of support highlights the incredible spirit of togetherness that defines Kiama, where the community always comes together in times of need.

#### CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Clean Up Australia Day, Australia's longest-running and largest national environmental action day. In 2025, this iconic event will mark its 35th anniversary, celebrating over three decades of communities coming together to protect and improve our environment. Clean Up Australia Day, held on Sunday, 2nd March, is calling on all Australians to register and participate in what promises to be the biggest event yet. I would like to acknowledge and thank Pip



Kiernan, Chair of Clean Up Australia, for her unwavering dedication to this cause. The FY23 Clean Up Australia Litter Report highlights that plastic waste remains the dominant form of litter, accounting for 81% of all collected waste. It also showed that 44% of the litter was cleared from waterway sites, 16% from parks, and 11% from bushland, underscoring the need for continued action. Volunteers can register now for Clean Up Australia Day 2025 and receive a free Clean Up kit. For those unable to participate, donations are always welcome, with 100% of funds supporting future clean-up efforts. Together, we can make a real difference for our environment.

#### **GERRINGONG LIBRARY SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the 150th anniversary of Gerringong Library and Museum. I was delighted to attend the recent "Night at the Museum" celebration on Thursday, 7 November 2024. Hosted by the Gerringong & District Historical Society, this evening was brought to life through the dedication of many, including Historical Society President Carolyn Lynch, whose passion for preserving Gerringong's heritage has inspired countless locals. Special thanks also go to long-time volunteers like Paul and Jenny O'Connor, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, and to historian Gwen Jones, whose knowledge added depth to the night's exhibits and displays. With live music, captivating photo displays, and exhibits that showcased Gerringong's journey from a humble coastal village to the thriving community it is today, the evening reminded us all of the importance of honouring our roots. A special thank you to everyone whose vision brought the Gerringong Library and Museum to life. This anniversary reminds us of the enduring importance of libraries as hubs for learning, community connection, and cultural enrichment. Congratulations to all involved in reaching this impressive milestone.

#### **GREGORY TURNER**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – It is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to Weekly Times Journalist, Gregory Turner, who passed away recently in October. A passionate advocate for his community, his accomplishments are too many to mention and the lives he touched for the better are numerous. He will be sorely missed by many. Vale Greg Turner.

#### **PETER COMINO**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – I would like to pay tribute to Lane Cove resident, Peter Comino, the last remaining World War 2 veteran in the Lane Cove RSL Sub-Branch. A RAAF veteran of the Pacific, Peter served with the No. 79 Spitfire Squadron in the Dutch East Indies. His stories and learning from the war are a vital part of Australian History and I would like to thank Peter for his continued effort to share his experiences with our community, so that we never forget the brave sacrifices so many made.

#### **JAMES RODGERS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – I would like to acknowledge the superb work of James Rodgers, Alumni Ambassador for the Old Ignatians Union. An institution of the College, James has dedicated the latter part of his career to researching and publishing two books on College Graduates who fought in World Wars 1 and 2. I would like to thank James for his continued commitment to keeping their stories and their sacrifices alive, so that we may remember those who gave so much for our enduring freedom.

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